

REGION VI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

4-Year LOCAL PLAN

JULY 1, 2024-June 30, 2028

Counties Served:

**Barbour, Braxton, Doddridge, Gilmer,
Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston,
Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, Upshur**

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Section 1: STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Region VI Workforce Development Board (WDB), located in White Hall, provides services in a thirteen-county region in the north-central portion of the State.

(A) An analysis of the regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of businesses in those industry sectors and occupations. The analysis should identify local priority industries based on employer (and WIOA partner) input.

Growing and declining industries in WIOA Region VI, as identified by the state in the Unified State Plan, are shown in the table below:

Source: WV State Plan 2024-2027

Workforce Development Region 6 Industry Employment Projections 2020-2030				
Industry Title	Estimated 2020 Employment	Projected 2030 Employment	Numeric Change	Annual Growth Rate
Growing Industries				
Hospitals	15,564	17,446	1,882	1.1
Food Services and Drinking Places	13,087	14,612	1,525	1.1
Ambulatory Health Care Services	9,026	10,396	1,370	1.4
Administrative and Support Services	5,101	5,868	767	1.4
Social Assistance	4,156	4,855	699	1.6
Declining Industries				
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	1106	924	-182	-1.8
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	1589	1441	-148	-1.0
Health and Personal Care Stores	1271	1137	-134	-1.1
Gasoline Stations	2281	2151	-130	-0.6
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	2634	2526	-108	-0.4

The Region 6 WDB demonstrates a robust demand for positions in the hospitality sector, as evidenced by Fast Food and Counter Workers, Restaurant Cooks, and Waiters and Waitresses, projecting 1610, 970, and 910 openings, respectively. Home Health and Personal Care Aides follow closely at 940, which, along with Registered Nurses at 490, reflect the region's emphasis on healthcare support services. Construction Laborers and Registered Nurses also feature prominently, showcasing the region's commitment to infrastructure development. The demand for skilled workers extends to management roles, such as General and Operations Managers and Food Service Managers, indicating a need for leadership across industries.

In addition to the growing industries listed in the table above, as identified by the state in the Unified State Plan, Region VI considers the following industries as emerging and growing within our local area:

1. Aircraft Repair and Maintenance
2. Advanced Manufacturing
3. Oil and Gas Extraction

4. Information Security Analysts

Workforce Development Region 6 Occupational Employment Projections 2020-2030 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	1610
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	970
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	940
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	910
47-2061	Construction Laborers	570
29-1141	Registered Nurses	490
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	480
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	360
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	250
35-3011	Bartenders	240
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	220
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	200
11-9051	Food Service Managers	190
53-3058	Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	180
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	170
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	170
Workforce WV Labor Market Information Division		

Source: WV Labor Market Information Division as stated in the 2024-2027 WV State Plan

(B) An analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the businesses in the Local Area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The West Virginia Skills Assessment for the period 2020-2030 highlights crucial skills that play a pivotal role in employment dynamics. Data from this assessment shows the current employment levels and projected growth for skills that are key for success across industries. Critical Thinking, Active Listening, and Speaking emerge as the three skills with the highest projected employment growth, underlining their significance in the evolving job market. However, challenges are evident, as skills like Mathematics show a negative growth trend, indicating a potential gap that requires attention.

Additionally, the data underscores the importance of interpersonal skills such as Social Perceptiveness, Service Orientation, and Persuasion, which are integral for effective communication and collaboration in diverse work environments. Projected numbers of exits and transfers alongside that project growth signify the need for strategic initiatives to address potential skills gaps and ensure a skilled, adaptable workforce in West Virginia. Policymakers and educators can utilize this data to align training and education programs with the evolving demands of the job market, fostering a resilient and competitive workforce for the state's economic future.

West Virginia Skills Assessment					
2020-2030					
	Occ Base Year Employment	Occ Proj Year Employment	Exits	Transfers	Projected Employment Growth
Skills					
Critical Thinking	506,986	542,133	218,176	343,658	35,147
Active Listening	467,887	501,401	205,140	315,164	33,514
Speaking	455,182	488,350	201,377	305,596	33,168
Reading Comprehension	425,780	453,206	180,208	274,573	27,426
Monitoring	407,359	436,977	181,253	279,119	29,618
Coordination	347,479	373,359	161,083	247,883	25,880
Social Perceptiveness	337,383	360,065	158,895	228,565	22,682
Service Orientation	257,626	276,303	130,812	180,121	18,677
Writing	228,278	242,740	90,408	131,016	14,462
Time Management	222,972	236,280	110,949	155,098	13,308
Judgment and Decision Making	183,088	195,865	78,639	115,328	12,777

Active Learning	153,538	170,463	60813	87,117	16925
Operation Monitoring	104,372	110,534	38,540	78,129	6,162
Operation and Control	93,090	99,397	34,815	70,960	6307
Persuasion	90,184	95,243	45,102	71,569	5,059
Complex Problem Solving	70,048	75,561	23,721	41,301	5,513
Quality Control Analysis	59,515	64,159	23,598	45,491	4,644
Management of Personnel Resources	51,763	54,334	19,867	38,157	2,571
Mathematics	52,691	52,554	28,220	36,526	-137
Troubleshooting	48,362	50,795	15,621	33,751	2,433
Source: Workforce West Virginia Labor Market Information Division as stated in the WV State Plan 2024-2027					

In the evolving landscape of West Virginia's workforce, critical concerns emerge as we examine knowledge gaps projected from 2020 to 2030. The data delineates the anticipated exits, transfers, and changes within various knowledge domains, shedding light on areas where the state may face challenges. English Language and Customer and Personal Service lead the charts, with substantial numbers of individuals exiting or transferring within these knowledge realms. Education and Training, Mathematics, and Administration and Management closely follow, underscoring the importance of addressing gaps in these areas. The projections emphasize the need for targeted educational and professional development initiatives to ensure a seamless transition and sustainable growth across diverse sectors within the state.

West Virginia Knowledge Gaps 2020-2030			
Knowledges	Exits	Transfers	Change
English Language	212,323	328,735	35,199
Customer and Personal Service	210,985	325,793	34,106
Education and Training	138,239	224,577	30,591
Mathematics	153,099	250,974	18,668

Administration and Management	114,656	191,742	17,619
Psychology	62,693	89,929	17,197
Public Safety and Security	83,869	136,697	15,880
Medicine and Dentistry	18,697	24,118	10,666
Computers and Electronics	119,006	186,090	10,555
Clerical	89,733	144,394	9,235
Therapy and Counseling	19,941	26,114	8,963
Production and Processing	38,479	77,564	8,712
Mechanical	55,984	109,070	8,548
Biology	16,295	22,278	7,845
Food Production	23,733	37,882	7,017
Sociology and Anthropology	17,991	25,059	6,739
Sales and Marketing	63,259	98,412	5,658
Personnel and Human Resources	24,945	50,999	5,645
Transportation	26,542	45,976	5,302
Chemistry	25,109	40,251	4,508
Engineering and Technology	23,095	50,536	4,071
Law and Government	19,760	33,124	3,047
Building and Construction	19,349	40,848	3,005
Philosophy and Theology	7,667	11,069	2,094
WV Labor Market Information Division as stated in the WV State Plan 2024-2027			

(C) An analysis of the workforce in the Local Area, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the Local Area, including individuals with barriers to employment

The U.S. Census Bureau's QuickFacts overall population estimate as of July 2023 for the region is 395,108, a decline from the last plan report in 2022 of 12,760.

In Region VI, 11.87% of the population under the age of 65 is living with some type of disability, a decrease of .43% since the last plan report in 2022.

According to the North Central West Virginia Economic Outlook 2021-2025 published by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University, the North Central West Virginia regional population is younger and more highly educated than the statewide norm, with the median age sitting at 38.4 years as opposed to the overall state median age of 42.9. The population with bachelor's degree or higher in the area is at 28.6% compared to the overall state percentage of 21.3%. These differences could be attributed to the location of West Virginia University situated in the center of North Central West Virginia.

In PY 22 Region VI yielded the largest civilian labor force (188,000) among the seven workforce development regions of the state. Workforce participation rates exceeded the statewide averages here in North Central West Virginia, with Region VI being the second-highest labor force participation rate (56.4%) among the seven workforce development regions. In addition, workforce participation in North Central West Virginia tends to exceed the statewide averages. An example, Monongalia County has the highest rate of 60% either holding a job or actively seeking employment, according to the Economic Outlook of 2021-2025.

According to Workforce WV LMI as of January 2024, the average unemployment rate in Region VI was 5% with the highest unemployment rate in Gilmer county at 8.4%, and the lowest unemployment rate in Monongalia county at 3.5%.

(D) An analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the Local Area, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the Local Area

Currently, there are 24 providers within Region VI seeking funding through ITA's to offer training to jobseekers. These 24 providers offer a total of 85 courses of training related to healthcare, personal services, IT, aviation occupations, culinary and food service, office and business administration, skilled trades, and CDL training. Customers interested in ITA's are also directed to the state eligible training provider list for more training opportunities.

In addition to the classroom training provided by the service providers, On-the-Job Training (OJT) is a method of training which provides employers with reimbursement of up to 75% of the wages paid to eligible new hires while in training. The training is provided by experienced workers designated by the employer. The trainees receive this training while actively producing on the job, as compared to being trained in a classroom environment and then applying the learned skills on the job in the workplace. This type of training provides the employer with the means to obtain a skilled workforce without the extensive time commitment sometimes needed when waiting for potential hires to complete formal classroom training. In PY 23 to-date, 54 individuals have participated in OJT with 16 different employers throughout the region. It is anticipated that this training program will continue to play a significant role in assisting the employers of Region VI to obtain and retain a more skilled workforce.

Customized Training is training that employers can utilize to upgrade the skills of current employees or train eligible new hires through classroom training provided by the employer or through a service provider and can be in combination with On-the-Job Training if needed. Employers can be reimbursed up to 50% of the costs of the training.

Incumbent Worker Training is another type of training for employers to utilize. It is training designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (or group of employers) to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees by assisting workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment and conducted with a commitment by the employer to retain or avert laying off incumbent worker(s) that are trained in order to increase the competitiveness of the employee and/or employer. The reimbursement level to employers for this type of training is determined by the size of the employer's workforce. In PY 23 to date, six employers have taken advantage of this program to train 23 individuals. We anticipate this program to continue to grow in popularity with our area employers as information about the program spreads.

Strengths of the system in Region VI: The Region VI service area employers and job seekers have access to a variety of training options as shown in the prior paragraphs of Section D. The service providers strive to offer training which provides demand occupation employment, and the employer training options offer the employer opportunities for providing training to their employees which will meet the employer's specific needs. Services such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training, Transitional Training, and Customized Training provided to employers in Region VI have increased due to the addition of an Outreach Coordinator who has been able to meet with employer and other community groups to provide information about all these programs and services. Additionally, collaboration with other partner agencies and staff, such as the Veteran LVER's staff, have helped to ensure that the employers receive a full array of information when visited by the staff from various programs in the region.

Weaknesses of the system in Region VI: With the increase in the use of the internet to provide some workforce system services virtually to customers, the lack of adequate broadband capabilities in the rural parts of the region have raised concern over the success of broadening the use of virtual technology in the future. Since the use of this virtual technology will only increase in the future, investment in broadband expansion will continue to be vitally important to the region.

(E) A description of the Local Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in Section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA in order to support Local Area economic growth and economic self-sufficiency

The Region VI WDB will fully support and provide services to customers in Region VI in alignment with the state vision for the workforce development system. That vision recognizes the vital importance of West Virginia's employers having a well-trained

workforce-ready labor force, while additionally providing more individuals with the opportunity to be productive members of that labor force. This vision will be accomplished through the implementation of strategies and services by the Region VI WDB which mirror the state level strategies and goals. The following goals will be supported by the Region VI WDB:

Goal 1 - West Virginia will expand and implement high-quality work-based learning opportunities for youth and adult learners.

Strategies:

- Region VI WDB will support increasing the establishment of work-based learning opportunities through the CTC system.
- Region VI WDB will promote the development of Apprenticeship programs, with a focus on non-traditional industries and occupations. The WDB will refer employers to the Office of Apprenticeship for technical assistance in establishing an apprenticeship.

Goal 2 - West Virginia will increase referrals and integration of services to improve access to supportive services customized for individuals needing education and employment.

Strategies:

- Region VI WDB will provide comprehensive counseling through the AJC partners to ascertain supportive service needs of individuals. Skills assessments will be provided in order to determine skills needs/ upgrades pertinent to obtain desired education/employment.
- Through integrated efforts, the Region VI WDB WIOA core partners will increase awareness and access to services to individuals with barriers to employment. These efforts include maximizing resources, co-enrollment and cross referrals, outreach and service delivery will allow for increased awareness and access to services.

Goal 3 - West Virginia will implement comprehensive sector strategy approaches to reduce skills mismatches and enhance faster labor market attachment while informing education and training priorities.

Strategies:

- Region VI currently is a partner in the Tristate Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium, which was formed to respond to the need for a properly trained workforce for the predicted 100,000 jobs to be added to the regional economy of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia over the next ten years. These jobs, which will be in support of Royal Dutch Shell's \$6 billion ethane cracker plant in Monaca, PA, include mid-stream jobs such as transportation and distribution, and in downstream jobs in petrochemical processing and manufacturing. TEAM brings together partners from industry, higher education, and workforce and economic development to build clear and accessible pathways to energy and manufacturing jobs in the region.

Goal 4 - West Virginia will implement the Blue Ribbon Franchise Model of workforce service delivery to increase the efficiency of service delivery and effectiveness in serving businesses, workers, and job seekers.

Strategies:

- Region VI will require AJC case management staff to participate in trainings which will expand their knowledge of all workforce programs so that customers get the benefit of the No Wrong Door approach to obtaining workforce system services.
- Region VI WDB will monitor and revise local policies as necessary in order to implement strategies that will maximize positive impact of services for customers while meeting regional economic development priorities.

Performance – Region VI will strive to meet the performance accountability measures as shown below, which will help the WDB to focus on the issues determined to be of significance by the DOL, which in turn will aid in improving the economic well-being of the region. Performance levels for Region VI WDB specifically may change after the region negotiates those levels with the state. Those numbers will be reported if or when they are revised.

WIOA Performance Measures	West Virginia Final Negotiated Goals	
	PY 24	PY 25
WIOA Adults		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	73%	74%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	71%	72%
Median Earnings	\$7,000.00	\$7,500.00
Credential Attainment Rate	79%	80%
Measurable Skill Gains	48%	50%
WIOA Dislocated Workers		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	79%	80%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	83%	84%
Median Earnings	\$10,500.00	\$11,000.00
Credential Attainment Rate	83%	84%
Measurable Skill Gains	44%	45%
WIOA Youth		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	65.7%	66.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	64.6%	67.7%
Median Earnings	\$3,600.00	\$4,100.00
Credential Attainment Rate	61%	62%
Measurable Skill Gains	50%	51%
Labor Exchange (LEX)*		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	61.6%	61.6%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	64%	65%
Median Earnings	\$6,500.00	\$6,700.00

(F) Taking into account analyses described in subparagraphs (A) through (D), a strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources

available to the Local Area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in subparagraph (E)

The Region VI WDB will work with the core partners to ensure that services provided to the individuals and employers of the region will be aligned to meet the needs of both groups.

Strategies will include:

- Developing memorandums of understanding between core partners in order to provide clear statements of how the partners will work together to provide workforce services and to avoid duplication of services;
- Participation of core partners in the state IT system in order for all partners to have the information at hand needed to ensure the provision of appropriate services to the individual and employers without the duplication of efforts;
- Maintaining frequent and open communication between partners.

Section 2: ALIGNMENT OF THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

(A) A description of the workforce development system in the Local Area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the Local Board will work with the entities carrying out workforce development programs identified in the State Plan. The description should also include how the Local Board and the programs identified plan to align and integrate to provide services to customers. The description should also include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.);

Required partners of the one-stop delivery system are the entities responsible for administering the programs and activities in the local area. Per 20 CFR, 678.400, these partners are:

Programs authorized under Title 1 of WIOA, including:

Adults;

Dislocated Workers;

Youth;

Job Corps;

YouthBuild;

Native American programs;

Migrant and seasonal farmworker programs;

Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service programs;

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) programs;

Vocational Rehabilitation programs;

Senior Community Service Employment Program;

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act programs;

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA);

Jobs for Veterans State Grants;

Community Services Block Grant programs;

Department of Housing and Urban Development programs;

Unemployment programs;

Second Chance Act programs; and
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

All the required partners are accessible in the Region VI WDB one-stop system through electronic or a physical presence. The Partner MOU outlines in the attachments to the MOU whether the partner is providing services through electronic means or as a physical presence in the one-stop. The Partner MOU for PY 24 is attached. Signatures are in the process of being gathered and will be submitted as an update to the plan by July 1, 2024. **(See Attachment A- Region VI West Virginia Workforce Development System Memorandum of Understanding and Attachments)**

(B) A description of how the Local Board, working with the entities identified in A, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the Local Board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable);

The Region VI WDB understands the importance of having a recognized postsecondary degree from the perspectives of both employers and job seekers. The core partners are always striving for quality, career-based employment outcomes for its customers, when appropriate. A wide range of education and training paths are offered by the partners. West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services for example, offers individuals with disabilities opportunities to prepare them for the West Virginia economy. Pre-employment transition services, including job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences; counseling on enrollment opportunities; workplace readiness training; and instruction in self-advocacy, are provided for those who need assistance in finding a career path that matches their interests and abilities. Once a career path has been selected, post-secondary education and training programs are made available with West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services funds to help individuals get the specialized college, apprenticeship, or employment supports they need to be successful in the workplace.

The Region VI WDB will fully support and provide services to customers in Region VI which align with the state vision for the workforce development system. That vision recognizes the vital importance of West Virginia's employers having a well-trained workforce-ready labor force, while additionally providing more individuals with the opportunity to be productive members of that labor force. This vision will be accomplished through the implementation of strategies and services by the Region VI WDB which mirror the state level strategies and goals.

Goal 1 - West Virginia will expand and implement high-quality work-based learning opportunities for youth and adult learners.

Strategies:

- Region VI WDB will support increasing the establishment of work-based learning opportunities through the CTC system.
- Region VI WDB will promote the development of Apprenticeship programs, with a focus on non-traditional industries and occupations. The WDB will refer employers to the Office of Apprenticeship for technical assistance in establishing an apprenticeship.

Goal 2 - West Virginia will increase referrals and integration of services to improve access to supportive services customized for individuals needing education and employment.

Strategies:

- Region VI WDB will provide comprehensive counseling through the AJC partners to ascertain supportive service needs of individuals. Skills assessments will be provided in order to determine skills needs/ upgrades pertinent to obtain desired education/employment.
- Through integrated efforts, the Region VI WDB WIOA core partners will increase awareness and access to services to individuals with barriers to employment. These efforts include maximizing resources, co-enrollment and cross referrals, outreach and service delivery will allow for increased awareness and access to services.

Goal 3 - West Virginia will implement comprehensive sector strategy approaches to reduce skills mismatches and enhance faster labor market attachment while informing education and training priorities.

Strategies:

- Region VI currently is a partner in the Tristate Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium, which was formed to respond to the need for a properly trained workforce for the predicted 100,000 jobs to be added to the regional economy of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia over the next ten years. These jobs, which will be in support of Royal Dutch Shell's \$6 billion ethane cracker plant in Monaca, PA, include mid-stream jobs such as transportation and distribution, and in downstream jobs in petrochemical processing and manufacturing. TEAM brings together partners from industry, higher education, and workforce and economic development to build clear and accessible pathways to energy and manufacturing jobs in the region.

Goal 4 - West Virginia will implement the Blue Ribbon Franchise Model of workforce service delivery to increase the efficiency of service delivery and effectiveness in serving businesses, workers, and job seekers.

Strategies:

- Region VI will require AJC case management staff to participate in trainings which will expand their knowledge of all workforce programs so that customers get the benefit of the No Wrong Door approach to obtaining workforce system services.
- Region VI WDB will monitor and revise local policies as necessary in order to implement strategies that will maximize positive impact of services for customers while meeting regional economic development priorities.

(C) *A description of the steps taken by the Local Board to engage entities identified in A in the formulation of its Local Plan.*

Partners were invited to contribute their suggestions and ideas for the development of the local plan during discussion at regular meetings of the Region VI WDB One Stop Partner Network.

(D) A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the Local Area— To facilitate engagement of businesses, including small businesses and businesses in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs; To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the Local Area; To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; To strengthen linkages between the American Job Center delivery system and Unemployment Insurance programs.

All of the strategies and services listed in Goals #1-4 will be utilized in the Region VI WDB local area to facilitate engagement of businesses, support the local workforce development system to better meet the needs of businesses in the local area, and to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development. In order to strengthen the linkages between the American Job Center delivery system and the Unemployment Insurance program (UI), UI offices are physically located in the Region VI WDB American Job Centers located in Fairmont and Elkins, Clarksburg, and Morgantown.

(E) A description regarding the implementation of apprenticeship, incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, integrated education and training, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of businesses in support of the strategy described in Section 1.

Region VI WDB will implement the full array of training programs as outlined in WIOA, i.e. apprenticeship, incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, customized training, industry and sector strategies, integrated education and training, and career pathways initiatives, through yearly budget development, planning of activities to promote business participation and job seeker participation (job fairs, employer informational workshops, etc.), pursuing the expansion of training providers in efforts to provide a diverse array of relevant training opportunities for the customers of Region VI, working closely with adult education to promote greater participation in educational opportunities by the customers of Region VI (individual job seekers), promoting the training programs to businesses through the dissemination of information to chambers of commerce, development authorities, and other business-oriented groups, and working with Workforce partners to ensure that all partners are aware of the services available to their customers via cross training of staff within the system.

(F) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area with economic development activities carried out in

the Local Area in which the Local Area (or planning region) is located, and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services;

The Region VI WDB works closely with the business representatives of the WV State Department of Commerce working in the Region VI WDB local area. Services to businesses are coordinated through ongoing open communication between these business representatives and the local WDB staff in order to provide the most comprehensive services to the local businesses, without duplication, as possible. Both the local WDB staff and the business representatives will provide information to employers they contact about each other's programs and services, including entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, in order to educate local businesses on the wide array of programs and services available to them. Funding provided by the local and state programs is coordinated in order to provide the most comprehensive coverage of training costs for the employer.

(G) A description of how the Local Board will leverage and coordinate supportive services in the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area. Specifically, the Local Plan should address how the Local Board will work with Local Management Boards and other providers to deliver supportive services to jobseekers;

The Region VI WDB provides for the provision of supportive services through an assessment of the needs of the individual who will be participating in a WIOA funded training, and then referral to either supportive services provided for under a particular grant which will be paying for the training, or through referral to other partner agencies or providers who may be able to provide the necessary supportive services to the customer. (See **Attachment B- Region VI Guidance Letter 7-15, R-5 Supportive Services for Adult and Dislocated Workers**)

(H) A description of how the Local Board intends to provide a greater business voice in the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area. The description should include how the Local Board will engage businesses on decisions regarding the type and content of training activities;

Region VI WDB is committed to expanding the involvement of business in decisions made on the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the local area. In order to do this, Region VI WDB will:

- Region VI WDB will use data and work with employers to identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain family-sustaining employment and will offer high quality training to individuals to obtain those skills.
- Promote and develop sector strategies based on labor market information and employer need. This includes supporting the growth and expansion of the industry partnerships through increased regional investment.
- Region VI WDB will continue to encourage employers to participate in business education partnerships. These partnerships connect schools, employers, and youth-

serving community organizations with students and Out of School Youth (OSY) to provide career-related experiences and exposure opportunities for youth and young adults through soft skills development, internships, workplace shadowing, and career mentoring. When possible, business-education partnerships will recruit business representatives from Industry Partnerships, apprenticeship programs, or multi-employer groups that identify common workforce needs of businesses that provide jobs that pay living wages.

- The Region VI WDB will build new and strengthen existing partnerships with employers to increase work-based learning experiences such as internships and apprenticeships that provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages. The WDB will encourage employers that receive WIOA funds and receive funds from economic development and other programs to utilize the public workforce development system.

The Region VI WDB will continue to be business driven as required by law, with the current business membership of the board at 58%.

(I) A description of how the Local Board will promote and cultivate industry-led partnerships in the delivery of workforce training opportunities.

The Region VI WDB will promote industry-led partnerships in the delivery of workforce training opportunities through the continuation of having a business-led WDB (58% business represented) whose active participation in the development of WDB workforce activities has kept the business community aware and involved in how the workforce is served in the local area. The Region VI WDB will also continue to meet with a variety of local area industry leaders to invite their participation in workforce programs with the aim of ultimately involving them in partnerships with education leading to specific input from the businesses which will result in training to meet their needs and the needs of individual job seekers.

Executive Director Maria Larry is a member (representing Region VI) of the Tri-State Energy & Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium, which is a collaboration of energy industry employers as well as higher education, and workforce and economic development organizations. This partnership is working on the development of career pathways leading to stackable credentials in the expanding energy industry in a 27 county, tri-state area, which encompasses two Region VI counties – Monongalia and Marion.

Executive Director Maria Larry was also asked to join the Tri-State Apprenticeship Consortium whose ultimate goal is to strengthen and expand registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in OH, PA and WV. The goal of the planning phase of the project is to identify ways to make apprenticeship more appealing to employers. The consortium also seeks to determine methods to stimulate more employer involvement and interest in a way that will benefit both employers and job seekers.

In early 2024, Executive Director Maria Larry and Region VI Board Member Jason Fridley of the 152 Plumbers & Pipefitters agreed to participate on the West Virginia Sector Strategies Team to complete a sector partnerships/employer engagement strategies study. They will join other statewide partners and stakeholders in fostering collaboration, sharing expertise and addressing workforce challenges across the state of West Virginia.

(J) A description of the role (if any) of local faith or community-based organizations in the local workforce development system.

The Region VI WDB currently has 1 community-based organization represented on the WDB. Located in Monongalia County, LiveAbility provides assistance in the form of assistive technology, accessibility items in the home, skills training and more. The Region VI WDB will continue to seek input from this and any other faith-based organization which may be interested in supporting the board's efforts to improve the local area workforce development system.

Section 3: AMERICAN JOB CENTER DELIVERY SYSTEM

(A) List the American Job Centers in your Local Area, including address and phone numbers. Indicate the One-Stop Operator for each site and whether it is a comprehensive or satellite center.

In Region VI, the Fairmont American Job Center has been designated as the single regional Comprehensive One-Stop Center by vote of the Region VI Workforce Development Board and the Region VI Local Elected Officials board.

Fairmont WorkForce West Virginia Career Center (Comprehensive)
416 Adams Street, Suite 220
Fairmont, WV 26554
800-252-5627
Counties served: Marion and Taylor

Elkins WorkForce West Virginia Career Center (Affiliate)
1023 N. Randolph Avenue
Elkins, WV 26241
800-252-5627
Counties Served: Barbour, Randolph, Tucker, and Upshur

Clarksburg WorkForce West Virginia Career Center (Affiliate)
153 Main Street, Suite B
Clarksburg, WV 26301
800-252-5627
Counties served: Braxton, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, and Lewis

Morgantown WorkForce West Virginia Career Center (Affiliate)
40 Commerce Drive Suite 200
Westover, WV 26501
800-252-5627
Counties served: Monongalia and Preston

The Fairmont Comprehensive site and the affiliate sites are jointly operated by a Core Partner Consortium consisting of representation from each of the core partners: Adult Education, Workforce West Virginia, and the WV Division of Rehab Services.

The One-Stop Operator contract is currently held by the Human Resource Development Foundation, Inc. (HRDF). April Pierson is the One Stop Coordinator and can be contacted regarding Region VI One Stop questions at apierson@hrdfwv.org or 681-404-6377.

(B) Customer Flow System - Describe the customer flow process used in the Local Area. This description should include eligibility assessment, individualized training plans and case management.

The Region VI WDB will commit to the state promoted “No Wrong Door” approach to the delivery of services to employers, workers, and job seekers. In Region VI, customers entering the workforce development system through any of the core partner’s services will be provided a common intake process that will allow all of the partners to access information and provide referrals. The Region VI WDB One–Stop service delivery model provides comprehensive and targeted referrals to the other core partners.

Customers are provided career services (previously core and intensive services) through the core partners. These services are provided through the American Job Centers and other affiliate sites. If the customer is deemed to be ready for gainful employment after receiving career services, American Job Center staff assists the customer with job search and placement. If the customer is deemed to need training services, then the American Job Center staff refers the customer to the other core partners based on the needs of the customer. Funding for training services may then be provided to the customer through the Region VI WDB, WorkForce West Virginia, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services, Adult Education Services, or other sources of funding.

With integration of service delivery, it is anticipated that more WIOA customers will access core partner services. Core partners have gathered data about the current strategies and resources devoted to basic skills development; researched the current and projected need; learned about promising practices for system redesign; and engaged diverse stakeholders in conversations about improving adult learning opportunities and results.

The WIOA core partners work, in tandem, on many workforce development activities. The partners all have memorandums of understanding with the Region VI WDB. Education

also collaborates in the Region VI WDB as part of WIOA One–Stop Management Partner meetings with local development groups to better identify and facilitate needed services for the local area.

Services provided through the Region VI American Job Center system comprise a network of both physical facilities and online electronic services. Through the cooperative efforts of partners an effective delivery system meets employer and job-seeker needs. All physical sites are linked electronically, as well as links to each of the thirteen counties.

(C) Describe how the Local Board will ensure meaningful access to all customers.

The Region VI WDB will ensure that all customers have meaningful access to the American Job Center services by monitoring and enforcing the provisions of the partner MOU's and Schedule B's, which outline how customers will be provided the services of each partner. In this way, there will be a continuous process of oversight of the access customers have to partner services.

(D) A description of the process the Local Board intends to provide for the solicitation and selection of a One-Stop Operator as identified in Section 107 of WIOA.

Per the Region VI Guidance Letter 23-16, the WDB and the LEO Board awarded the One Stop Operator contract to the Human Resource Development Foundation (HRDF) as a result of an RFP issued for Program Year 2021. The One-Stop Operator contract will be awarded for up to an additional three program years dependent upon program performance and funding levels. (See **Attachment C- Region VI Guidance Letter 23-16 One Stop Operator Procurement and Selection**)

(E) A description of how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local businesses, and workers and jobseekers;

The Region VI WDB will continually examine the level of services provided through the American Job Centers by partners. This will be done through scheduled meetings of the partner network, where discussions will cover customer satisfaction information gathered by the American Job Centers along with discussions on how to better provide smooth customer service to the job seekers and employers of the region.

The state is the primary approval authority over eligible providers of services in the WV workforce development system. Region VI WDB has adopted the state policy (See **Attachment D - Region VI Guidance Letter 4-15, R-2 Eligibility Requirements for Eligible Training Provider List**) and will follow the procedures outlined by the state in the approval of eligible providers of services, which includes a review/comment period of 10 days by the WDB after the state has initially reviewed the provider application. After

the WDB reviews and makes any comments on the provider application, the state will give a final decision to approve or not. The WDB will utilize the review/comment step as a means of addressing the issues of whether the provider meets the employment needs of local businesses, workers and jobseekers, thus striving to promote continuous improvement in the eligible provider's services.

(F) A description of how the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the American Job Center delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means;

The Region VI WDB MOU with the partners to the American Job Center system covers how each partner will deliver their services to the customers of the American Job Centers. (See **Attachment A- West Virginia Workforce Development System Memorandum of Understanding and Attachments**). The Attachment B to the MOU shows the on-site representation levels of each partner to the MOU. Partners are encouraged to at a minimum provide electronic links to their websites in order to provide information on their services to customers. This is especially crucial to those living in outlying areas who may not be able to physically travel to the American Job Center, but can obtain that information by utilizing the internet, either at home or at local libraries or through other sources of WiFi connections.

Region VI broadened the ability of outlying communities in the region to access American Job Center services through the provision of Mobile AJC's being held in 5 counties of the region where there is no comprehensive or affiliate American Job Center located. Lewis, Barbour, Upshur, Taylor, and Doddridge counties were visited by the One Stop Coordinator, April Campbell, and other partners who were interested in participating. The Preston County Senior Center, WV Women Work, Pierpont Community and Technical College, Adult Education and UniCare were partner agencies that participated in the Mobile AJC's. Information on the American Job Center services was made available to those visiting the Mobile AJC's. It is anticipated that in the future the Mobile AJC's will be offered in at least the remaining counties without a comprehensive or affiliate site- Braxton, Gilmer, Preston, and Tucker counties.

(G) A description of how entities within the American Job Center delivery system, including American Job Center operators and the American Job Center partners, will comply with Section 188 of WIOA, 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;

The Region VI WDB Partner MOU (See **Attachment A**) specifies on page 10:

All Parties to this agreement shall comply with:

- ❖ Section 188 of the WIOA Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity

Regulations (29 CFR Part 38; Final Rule, published December 2, 2016),

- ❖ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352),
 - ❖ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended,
 - ❖ The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336),
 - ❖ The Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288) pertaining to priority of service in programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor,
 - ❖ Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 37-14, Update on Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Discrimination Based on Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Stereotyping are Prohibited Forms of Sex Discrimination in the Workforce Development System and other guidance related to implementing WIOA sec. 188,
 - ❖ The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR part 99
 - ❖ Confidentiality requirements governing the protection and use of personal information held by the VR agency (34 CFR 361.38),
 - ❖ The confidentiality requirements governing the use of confidential information held by the State UI agency (20 CFR part 603),
 - ❖ all amendments to each, and
 - ❖ all requirements imposed by the regulations issued pursuant to these acts.
- The above provisions require, in part, that no persons in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, age, disability, political beliefs or religion be excluded from participation in, or denied, any aid, care, services or other benefits provided by federal and/or state funding, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination.

Additionally, pages 16-17 of the MOU state:

Accessibility

Accessibility to the services provided by the American Job Centers and all Partner agencies is essential to meeting the requirements and goals of the Region VI American Job Center network. Job seekers and businesses must be able to access all information relevant to them via visits to physical locations as well as in virtual spaces, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, national origin, disability, veteran's status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law.

◆ **Physical Accessibility**

One-stop centers will maintain a culture of inclusiveness and the physical characteristics of the facility, both indoor and outdoor, will meet the latest

standards of accessible design. Services will be available in a convenient, high traffic, and accessible location, taking into account reasonable distance from public transportation and adequate parking (including parking clearly marked for individuals with disabilities). Indoor space will be designed in an “equal and meaningful” manner providing access for individuals with disabilities.

Virtual Accessibility

The Region VI Workforce Development Board will work with the West Virginia State Workforce Development Board (State WDB) to ensure that job seekers and businesses have access to the same information online as they do in a physical facility. Information must be clearly marked and compliant with Section 508 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services code. Partners will comply with the Plain Writing Act of 2010; the law that requires that federal agencies use "clear Government communication that the public can understand and use" and all information kept virtually will be updated regularly to ensure dissemination of correct information. Partners should either have their own web presence via a website and/or the use of social media, or work out a separate agreement with the Region VI Workforce Development Board to post content through its website.

◆ Communication Accessibility

Communications access, for purposes of this MOU, means that individuals with sensory disabilities can communicate (and be communicated with) on an equal footing with those who do not have such disabilities. All Partners agree that they will provide accommodations for individuals who have communication challenges, including but not limited to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, individuals with vision impairments, and individuals with speech-language impairments.

◆ Programmatic Accessibility

All Partners agree that they will not discriminate in their employment practices or services on the basis of gender, gender identity and/or expression, age, race, religion, national origin, disability, veteran’s status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law. Partners must assure that they have policies and procedures in place to address these issues, and that such policies and procedures have been disseminated to their employees and otherwise posted as required by law. Partners further assure that they are currently in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding these issues. All Partners will cooperate with compliance monitoring that is conducted at the Local level to ensure that all American Job Center programs, services, technology, and materials are physically and programmatically accessible and available to all. Additionally, staff members will be trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, or comprehension or education level. An interpreter will be provided in real time or, if not available, within a reasonable timeframe to any customer with a language barrier. Assistive

devices, such as screen-reading software programs (e.g., JAWS and DRAGON) and assistive listening devices must be available to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility within the American Job Center network.

The Region VI WDB, per the state EO compliance requirements, requires the American Job Center to complete an assessment of their ADA accessibility, both programmatic and physical, on a yearly basis. Since the American Job Center are all housed in state-owned facilities, the state of West Virginia is ultimately responsible for the physical accessibility of the Centers, while each agency participating as a partner in the facilities are responsible for their programmatic accessibility requirements. The Partner Consortium and network strives to keep updated on requirements and provides training to staff as needed on providing services to individuals with disabilities.

The Region VI WDB collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188 of WIOA.

(H) An acknowledgment that the Local Board understands that, while Section 188 of WIOA ensure equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, sub-recipients may also be subject to the requirements of: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by recipients of Federal financial assistance; Title I of the ADA, which prohibits discrimination in employment based on disability; Title II of the ADA, which prohibits State and local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability; Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act; and West Virginia Anti-Discrimination laws;

Added to the Partner MOU and to all sub-recipient contracts is an additional certification of compliance as follows:

Certification of Compliance with Additional Requirements (partners/sub-recipients may be subject to any one or more of the following):

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation ACT, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by recipients of Federal financial assistance;

Title I of the ADA-prohibits discrimination in employment based on disability;

Title II of the ADA- prohibits State and local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability;

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act- requires applicants for new grant awards under Department of Education programs (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs; and West Virginia Anti-Discrimination laws.

(I) A description of the roles and resource contributions of the American Job Center partners;

The Region VI MOU outlines the role of the partners as follows:

Each Partner commits to cross-training of staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous quality improvement.

Partners will further promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through:

- Effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration with the one-stop operator,
- Joint planning, policy development, and system design processes,
- Commitment to the joint mission, vision, goals, strategies, and performance measures,
- The design and use of common intake, assessment, referral, and case management Processes,
- The use of common and/or linked data management systems and data sharing methods, as appropriate,
- Leveraging of resources, including other public agency and non-profit organization services,
- Participation in a continuous improvement process designed to boost outcomes and increase customer satisfaction, and
- Participation in regularly scheduled Partner meetings to exchange information in support of the above and encourage program and staff integration.

The resource contributions by partner will be updated after receipt of all new PY 2024 Partner MOU's. This information will be submitted to the state as an update to the plan after July 1, 2024. The new MOU will be effective through June 30, 2025. (See **Attachment A**)

(J) *A description of how the Local Board will use Individualized Training Accounts based on high-demand, difficult to fill positions identified within local priority industries identified in Section 1(A);*

The Region VI WDB will promote the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) to customers seeking training services in order to obtain jobs. Currently, Region VI has approved 24 providers eligible to receive funding through ITA's. Those 24 providers offer a total of 85 courses of training. The courses offer a variety of trainings in occupations such as healthcare, personal services, office and business administration, culinary and food services, aviation, skilled trades, and CDL training. Providers are added to the list throughout the calendar year as customers request trainings to be approved and or providers offer new courses that will benefit the regional workforce demands.

(K) *A description of how the Local Board will provide priority of service that conforms with the State Plan. This should include a description of additional local requirements or discretionary priorities including data to support the need and how the local requirement and/or priority will be documented and implemented for the Adult program.*

The Region VI WDB will provide priority of service with Adult funds following state policy and as outlined in the local policy. (See **Attachment E- Region VI Guidance Letter 1-15, R-5 Priority of Service**)

Priority 1: First priority will be given to veterans or eligible spouses (covered persons) who are low-income or recipients of public assistance or are basic skills deficient.

Priority 2: Second priority will be given to individuals (non-covered persons) who are low income or recipients of public assistance, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Priority 3: Third Priority will be given to veterans and eligible spouses who are not low-income and are not recipients of public assistance or basic skills deficient.

Priority 4: Fourth Priority will be given to individuals who do not meet the above priorities.

There are no additional local priorities of service established by the Region VI WDB.

(L) A description of how the Local Board will utilize funding to create incumbent worker training opportunities.

The Region VI WDB will utilize up to the maximum allowed by WIOA for funding incumbent worker training opportunities in the region. Information on incumbent worker training funding will be a part of the package of information on training opportunities given out at meetings with industry sector leaders, associations, business organizations, economic development organizations, and educational institutions along with meetings with individual employers. This will lead to opportunities to develop incumbent worker trainings with employers who need to train their incumbent workers.

(M) A description of how the Local Board will train and equip staff to provide excellent, WIOA-compliant customer service.

The Region VI WDB will provide ongoing training to staff through outside training opportunities (i.e.-offered by WorkForce WV, other state agencies, federal agencies, attendance at conferences/workshops, or training offered through other entities with programs related to workforce development issues) and then through follow up training to other staff by the staff persons who attended the outside training opportunities so that everyone can share in the information. Webinar trainings have been attended and will continue to be promoted to staff as a means to keep trained on work-related issues. Ensuring that WDB staff will receive continuous training means that the workforce customer (job seekers and employers) will receive WIOA compliant customer service.

Section 4: Title I- Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker Functions

(A) A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the Local Area;

According to the “Workforce Development Service Inventory and Strategic Roadmap” prepared for Region VI by HRDF, Inc. and Vogt, Williams & Bowen, LLC, there are a

variety of state-run programs that relate to improving conditions for West Virginians to enter into and participate in the workforce. Included in those programs are the following:

- Employment Services for Unemployed, Underemployed, and Dislocated Workers
- Employment Training Services for Youth and Adults
- Employment Readiness Services for Youth and Adults
- Vocational/Technical Education
- Higher Education
- Literacy Programs
- Community and Economic Development Programs
- Supportive Services for Families and Individuals
- Justice Services—Education and Training for Incarcerated Youth and Adults
- Rehabilitation Services for Individuals with Disabilities
- Senior Employment Services
- Veterans' Affairs—Employment and Supportive Services

In addition to the above programs, financial resources to assist individuals in paying for training include private loans from local banking institutions, training provider scholarships, Stafford Loans, PELL, WIOA, WV Invests, and HEAPS scholarships.

Economic Development Councils and municipal and county governments also contribute to meet the regional workforce development needs.

Region VI WDB has a diverse array of training opportunities available in the local area for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Pierpont Community and Technical College, Fairmont State University, Glenville State College, Davis & Elkins College, and West Virginia University all offer 2 year and 4 year or better degree programs, while there are numerous private institutions offering 2-year degree and certificate programs. In addition, Vocational and Technical schools offer a variety of certificate/license programs.

Currently, Region VI has 24 providers who were approved in the Region VI area to be providers of training eligible for funding through ITA's. Those 24 providers offer a total of 85 courses of training.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services provides training services to their clients with disabilities to assist in meeting their employment goals, and include vocational training, college or other academic training, personal and vocational adjustment training, job coaching, on-the-job training, job-seeking skills training, as well as books, tools, and other training materials.

On-the-job training opportunities have been a popular and successful method of training for both individuals and employers in the region. In the current program year to date, 16 companies have participated and trained 54 individuals through On-the-Job training dollars.

Incumbent Worker Training has proven to be a valuable training tool in the region. In the current program year, 6 companies have taken advantage of this program to finance the skills upgrade training of 23 employees.

Transitional Training will provide eligible customers with the opportunity to obtain work experience. Transitional Training provides an employer with an incentive to provide a limited work experience to individuals with barriers to obtaining or retaining steady employment.

(B) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities, as described in Section 134(a)(2)(A).

Employment activities and services offered in the region include rapid response informational/resource meetings targeting laid off workers, job fairs and apprenticeship fairs sponsored by the American Job Centers and employers which provide job seekers with opportunities to explore their employment options. Labor market information for employers and individual job seekers is available through the American Job Centers and through the public workforce site www.workforcewv.org. Workshops are offered through the American Job Centers for individuals to brush up or develop their resumes and job search assistance is offered through the American Job Centers.

Per the current Rapid Response process as outlined by state policy, the Region VI will provide Rapid Response activities and services for reported layoffs of 49 or less employees in the region.

West Virginia conducts rapid response activities to dislocated workers primarily through employer outreach which is coordinated as a joint Rapid Response Team approach between the State Dislocated Worker Services Unit and the Local Workforce Development Board. Employers are identified and contacted through WARN notices and other notifications of mass lay-offs. Because no two layoffs are identical, the needs of employers and dislocated workers will differ, as will the type and scale of needed services, the impact on the economy, and the availability of job opportunities.

While Rapid Response must be consistent across all layoffs with respect to the quality, effectiveness, and timeliness of service delivery, the response must be customized and responsive to each specific event. Therefore, additional Rapid Response team partners are added at the state and local level for Rapid Response Informational Meetings depending upon the needs of the dislocated workers. For example, if a dislocation has occurred and impacted workers do not receive paychecks, etc. then a representative from the State DOL may participate in the meeting to take statements from the impacted workers, etc. for taking steps for resolution of the problem.

The most common Rapid Response activity is to provide information to dislocated workers in the form of group settings or Rapid Response Informational Meetings. These meetings are held on site at the employer location, One-Stops, union halls, community centers and other locations within the community. On-site Rapid Response meetings are generally held when there are larger groups of dislocated workers in order to take group Unemployment Claims and sign-up for One-Stop services and One-Stop orientation sessions. Critical Dislocated Worker Questionnaires are distributed to the dislocated workers to determine their training and reemployment needs so that services can be coordinated at the local and state level in order to meet the needs of the dislocated workers. For instance, if several of the impacted workers identified they were interested in starting their own business then these individuals would be linked to the technical assistance that could be provided through Bureau of Commerce's Small Business Development Center.

Rapid Response provides a comprehensive array of services to offer transitional services in the form of community resource lists of available services and contact information and reemployment services available through the local One-Stops, such as job search and training opportunities, UI services to accelerate reemployment. Other Rapid Response activities may include Community Resource Fairs, Job Fairs, Training Provider Fairs, etc. that may be conducted in conjunction with Rapid Response Informational Meetings or separately. While most of the effort is usually expended in the early stages of a dislocation event or an impending dislocation, it is important to continue Rapid Response services until all worker and employer needs are met.

(C) A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in the Local Area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities;

Youth workforce activities in the Region VI WDB area include WIOA funded activities provided by the current contractor, HRDF, Inc. for Out of School youth, services provided by the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services for youth with disabilities, Department of Health and Human Resources programs, and a multitude of community-based and faith-based programs.

Assisting area youth in obtaining their high school equivalency diploma where necessary is a priority but encouraging the youth to continue with their education through the vocational schools, private schools, community colleges, and apprenticeships in order to increase their earning ability and success in the job market has been an emphasis in the program.

Occupational exploration and work experience such as On-the-Job training in in-demand occupations in the region are key components in the menu of services offered to the youth in the region through the YouthReady program. Continuing efforts are made to recruit employers to provide the youth in the program with meaningful employment experiences,

while the YouthReady staff provide counseling and mentoring to program youth in efforts to keep them on track with their goals.

(D) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate education and workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

Region VI WDB provides preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities, strong linkages between academic and occupational learning, preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, and effective connections to local and regional employers. The Region VI WDB coordinates education and workforce development activities carried out in the local area by providing training services to those who meet the eligibility requirements for program acceptance. Region VI WDB American Job Center staff are required to interview the job seeker to determine what other services they are currently receiving. Outreach is then conducted with those agencies to coordinate strategies and services to avoid duplication.

E) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the Local Area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the Local Area.

The vast geographic area which makes up the service area of the Region VI WDB and the lack of comprehensive public transit complicate the ability to meet the needs of the industry and jobseekers alike. Public transportation (i.e. bus service) is available in 4 of the 13 counties of the region, with small private taxi companies operating in just a few of the other counties. Transportation assistance is offered when available as a supportive service to eligible customers of the region. The need for this supportive service is determined through an assessment of the customer's needs when developing the individualized plan for employment search or training determination.

Additional supportive services that may be available through partner agencies and other organizations in the local workforce area, and as may be determined appropriate for each individual, may include, but are not limited to the following: Child care and dependent care costs; Housing and utility assistance; Interview clothing, uniforms, and other appropriate work attire; Tools or other work or training-related materials; Work and training-related licenses, permits, and fees

(F) A description of how the Local Board will utilize Local Adult Funding, based on adult priority groups as specified in the State Plan.

The Region VI WDB will provide priority of service with Adult funds following state policy and as outlined in the local policy. **(See Attachment E- Region VI Guidance Letter 1-15, R-5-Priority of Service)**

Priority 1: First priority will be given to veterans or eligible spouses (covered persons) who are low-income or recipients of public assistance or are basic skills deficient.

Priority 2: Second priority will be given to individuals (non-covered persons) who are low income or recipients of public assistance, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Priority 3: Third Priority will be given to veterans and eligible spouses who are not low-income and are not recipients of public assistance or basic skills deficient.

Priority 4: Fourth Priority will be given to individuals who do not meet the above priorities.

Local adult funds will be utilized by individuals to provide training services such as ITA's, OJT, transitional job training, incumbent worker training, and other allowable services provided for under WIOA.

(G) A description of how the Local Board will utilize Local Dislocated Worker Funding;

The Region VI WDB will utilize dislocated worker funding to provide training services such as ITA's, OJT, transitional job training, incumbent worker training, and other allowable services provided for under WIOA.

(H) A description of how the Local Board will define "self-sufficiency" for employed Adult and employed Dislocated Worker participants.

For the purposes of determining eligibility for receipt of a WIOA ITA (Individual Training Account), an adult is considered to be economically self-sufficient if he/she has received income, or is a member of a family that has received a total family income for the six-month period immediately prior to application for WIOA training services, that is above 70% West Virginia Lower Living Standard Income Level (non-metropolitan) for the current year. On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, or Transitional Training self-sufficiency has been established at 150%.

An employed Dislocated Worker is considered to be economically self-sufficient if he/she is making a wage that is equal to or greater than 80% of his or her wage at the time of dislocation. **(See Attachment F- Region VI Guidance Letter 17-16, R-3 Self-Sufficiency).**

(I) A description of the Local Board's definition of "unlikely to return to previous industry or occupation" when required for eligibility for Dislocated Worker services.

The Region VI WDB has defined what constitutes circumstances leading to the "unlikely to return to previous industry or occupation" part of the WIOA Dislocated Worker eligibility criteria in the following policy:

Region VI Guidance Letter No. 18-16, R-1

To: All WorkForce West Virginia Career Center staff
All WIOA Career Planners/Eligibility Determination Staff
All Local Service Providers

From: Region VI Workforce Development Board

Subject: Definition of Unlikely to Return to Previous Industry or Occupation

1. PURPOSE: To establish local criteria for purposes of defining “unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation” as part of Dislocated Worker eligibility determination to receive WIOA training services.

2. REFERENCES: WIOA Section 3 (15)(A)(iii)

3. BACKGROUND: WIOA specifies that one of the eligibility criteria in determining a person eligible under WIOA Dislocated Worker Services is that the person is
”unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation;”

3. POLICY: Region VI WDB has defined that to mean the following:

- Skill Oversupply – State or local supply of persons with the specific skills of the applicant exceeds current demand for those skills; or
- Obsolete Skills – Applicants can no longer meet the minimum requirements of jobs available in their field or occupation (e.g., clerical worker without word processing skills, etc.); or
- Only Stop-Gap-Available – Jobs available to applicant would be temporary or substantially below applicant’s accustomed skill, hour, or wage level; or
- Local Layoff Impact – A local plant or business closing or layoff has had a significant negative impact on the availability of jobs in the applicant’s primary occupation and accustomed wage/hour/skill level; or
- No Job Offers Received – Applicant has been available and looking for work and has not received an offer for work; or
- Physical Limitations or Disabilities – Newly acquired physical limitations or injuries occurring which limit the individual’s ability to perform the job from which they were dislocated may make an individual unlikely to return to the previous occupation. Such individuals are eligible if they fit one of the categories of the WIOA dislocated worker program eligibility; or
- Other Factors – Factors that can be recorded in the clients file from written or verbal sources, including, but not limited to, the WIOA application and MACC case notes showing staff judgment indicating “unlikely to return to previous industry or occupation.”

4. EFFECTIVE: Effective June 18, 2020, until rescinded or modified by the Region VI Workforce Development Board.

(J) A description of how the Local Board will interpret and document eligibility criteria for “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” as set forth in the State’s Guidance and WIOA Sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VII) and (a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII);

Per state guidance, an individual must meet the following criteria in order to be identified as a youth who needs additional assistance:

1. Must be between the ages of 14 and 24; and
2. Require additional assistance to complete an educational program or secure and hold employment; and
3. Meet one or more of the following conditions:
 - a. Youth at risk of dropping out of school. Students at risk for dropping out display certain easily identifiable characteristics, some of which are demographic and some of which are related to their performance in school.

Factors associated with dropping out of high school:

- Comes from low-income family lack of credits earned
- Poor attendance
- Members of racial or ethnic minority group
- Poor grades (especially in core courses)
- Older than the average student in their grade
- Pregnant/Parenting
- Substance Abuse
- Youth offender

b. Immigrant Youth.

c. Youth with limited English proficiency.

d. Youth deficient in basic skills. Basic skills deficient means the individual computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth-grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function of the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.

e. Youth who resides in areas with high rates of poverty, crime and/or unemployment.

f. Youth who has serious barriers to employment, including but not necessarily limited to, stated current or past substance abuse, truancy, absence of positive adult role models, and diagnosed emotional disorders.

By expanding the definition of “youth who needs additional assistance” WDB’s will be able to serve at-risk youth in a more equitable manner.

The following is a list of acceptable source documents required to support an eligibility staff person/case manager identifying a youth as needing additional assistance (clearly identifying which condition the youth met):

1. Individual Service Strategy (ISS).
2. Case Note.
3. WIOA intake of registration form.
4. State MIS.

5. Self-Attestation

(K) A description of the documentation required to demonstrate a “need for training.”

The Region VI WDB utilizes the following as means to document an individual’s need for training: local WIOA application for services, case management assessment tool, requests for exceptions to the Region VI WDB policy of 1 training in a three-year period, and case notes (See **Attachment G- Region VI WDB WIOA Application and Exception Request form**)

(L) A description of how the Local Board will provide the fourteen required program elements for the WIOA Youth program design.

The Region VI WDB has currently contracted, through the RFP process, with HRDF, Inc. to ensure that each of the 14 program elements are administered in the Region VI WDB local area. An RFP for PY 2023 was issued and awarded in March of 2023. (See **Attachment H- PY 2023 Youth RFP**)

Annual contract evaluations and monitoring by Region VI WDB staff will determine the degree to which the 14 program elements are being made available to the youth of the Region VI WDB area. Random monitoring of MACC data entry by HRDF will be performed throughout the contract period. HRDF will be notified of any deficiency and a corrective action plan will be required. The 14 program elements, listed below, were included with the RFP statement of work and are also included in the current contract between the WDB and HRDF.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS—In order to support the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participants, programs shall provide elements consisting of—

- (A) tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
- (B) alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- (C) paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include—
 - (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
 - (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs;
 - (iii) internships and job shadowing; and
 - (iv) on-the-job training opportunities;

- (D) occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123;
- (E) education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- (F) leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;
- (G) supportive services;
- (H) adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
- (I) follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
- (J) comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
- (K) financial literacy education;
- (L) entrepreneurial skills training;
- (M) services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- (N) activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

The provision of all of these elements will not be required to be provided by HRDF through WIOA funds only but may be provided through referrals and agreements with other appropriate agencies in the area. All fourteen elements must be made available to the youth, but with some or all actually being provided after assessment of the youth's needs by HRDF staff.

(M) A description of the steps the Local Board will take to ensure at least 20% of Youth Funds are used for work-based training activities;

Included in the RFP and the resulting contract for the provision of youth services in the Region VI WDB local area is the requirement that 20% of youth funds are to be used for work-based training activities. In order to ensure this occurs, Region VI has provided a monthly invoice reimbursement form for services provided, which HRDF uses to show line items showing expenditures in work experience for both in school and out of school youth participating in the program. This invoice form has an additional Statement of Cost form included which has documentation attached to it supporting the amounts of work experience listed in the work experience line items. The Fiscal Officer uses the invoice, Statement of Cost, and supporting documentation to track work experience expenditures in both the in school and out of school funding streams.

(N) A description of the Local Board's plan to serve 75%+ out of school youth and identify specific steps that have been taken to meet this new goal;

Since Region VI will serve Out-of-School youth only on a year-round basis, meeting the 75% goal will be accomplished.

(O) If the Local Area has contracted with youth service providers, provide a list and description of services.

The Region VI WDB as stated previously, has contracted currently with HRDF, Inc. to provide WIOA youth services in the local area. An RFP was issued for PY 2023, from which a contract for the provision of youth services was awarded in March of 2023. This contract has an option of being extended for an additional two (2) years depending upon continued funding levels and contract performance.

The services to be provided include the fourteen (14) program elements as required by WIOA as stated previously in this document. They are as follows:

- (A) tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
- (B) alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- (C) paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include—
 - (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
 - (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs;
 - (iii) internships and job shadowing; and
 - (iv) on-the-job training opportunities;
- (D) occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123;
- (E) education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- (F) leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;
- (G) supportive services;
- (H) adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
- (I) follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
- (J) comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;

- (K) financial literacy education;
- (L) entrepreneurial skills training;
- (M) services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- (N) activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

(P) A description of how the Local Board will provide basic and individualized career services to customers. The description should explain how individualized career services will be coordinated across program/partners in the American Job Centers, including Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, and Adult Education and Literacy activities. This description should specify how the Local Area will coordinate with these programs to prevent duplication and improve services to customers.

The Region VI WDB will provide basic and individualized career services to customers through the integrated workforce delivery system of the American Job Centers. Establishing the No Wrong Door approach to customer service means customers entering the workforce development system through any of the core partner's services will be provided a common intake process that will allow all of the partners to access information and provide referrals and will coordinate the services delivered to the customer to avoid duplication and improve services to the customers. The American Job Centers provide comprehensive and targeted referrals to the other partners based on the assessment of the customer's needs. Other partners include TANF, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Customers are provided career services through the core partners. If the customer is deemed to be ready for gainful employment after receiving career services, American Job Center staff assists the customer with job search and placement. If the customer is deemed to need training services, then the American Job Center staff refers the customer to the other core partners based on the needs of the customer. Funding for training services are then provided to the customer through the Region VI WDB, WorkForce West Virginia, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services, Adult Education Services, and other funding services as applicable.

With integration of service delivery, it is anticipated that more WIOA customers will access core partner services. Core partners have gathered data about the current strategies and resources devoted to basic skills development; researched the current and projected need; learned about promising practices for system redesign; and engaged diverse stakeholders in conversations about improving adult learning opportunities and results.

During the lockdown portion of the pandemic, 100% of case management for WIOA customers was provided by phone and virtually. As the lockdown measures lifted, that

provision of virtual services has remained as a widely used method of case management. Career Planners do meet in person with many customers, but there are still customers who experience difficulties in transportation to meet with Career Planners who benefit from being able to utilize the virtual services where possible. Region VI strives to be flexible in meeting the needs of customers and will continue to improve the virtual experience for those working in that environment.

(Q) Describe the Local Board's follow-up services policy. This should include follow-up requirements, frequency of contact, and required documentation.

The Region VI WDB has established policy on follow-up services (**See Attachment I-Region VI Guidance Letter 16-16 Updated Case Management**) as follows:

Adult and dislocated workers follow up services, as described in Section 134(c)(2)(A)(xiii) of WIOA and 20 CFR § 678.430(c), must be made available, as appropriate, for a minimum of 12 months following the first day of employment, to registered participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 680.150) Follow-up services must be provided, as appropriate, including: counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in adult or dislocated worker workforce investment activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. (20 CFR 678.430)

The Region VI WDB will make follow-up services available to all youth participants for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation. (20 CFR 681.460). Follow-up services are critical services provided following a youth's exit from the program to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or post-secondary education and training. (20 CFR 681.580) A list of potential follow-up services for youth can be found at 20 CFR § 681.580(b). Follow-up services may be provided beyond 12 months. (20 CFR 681.580) However, follow-up services must include more than only a contact attempted or made for securing documentation in order to report a performance outcome. (WIOA 129(c))

Required documentation for follow-up is mainly case notes entered into the MACC by staff performing the follow-up contact.

Section 5: Wagner-Peyser Functions

(A) A description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the Local Area through the American Job Center delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Wagner-Peyser is represented on the Region VI WDB by Jason Roberts, Employment Programs Specialist Senior, under WorkForce West Virginia. This membership promotes the direct flow of communication between the board, Wagner-Peyser programs, and the American Job Centers. This link between the American Job Centers, the board, and the core partners, aids in avoiding duplication of services among the partners of the workforce system. Employment Service and UI staff and WIOA staff are fully cross trained to assist individuals in accessing a full range of services. Staff cross training is an ongoing process and ultimately means customers will get the best service while in the process also avoiding duplication of services.

Wagner-Peyser Employment Service offices are physically located in all four (4) American Job Centers in the region. Services are provided in each of the American Job Centers in Region VI WDB local area by Wagner-Peyser staff, along with other partner staff, and may include any and or all of the following: determination of participant eligibility to receive assistance under Subtitle B of Title I of WIOA; outreach, intake, and orientation to One-Stop; initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs; labor market information; performance information on local area and One-Stop delivery system; provision of information about and referral to supportive services such as child care and transportation; assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid assistance not funded under WIOA, but available in the local area; job search/placement assistance and career counseling; service provider performance and program cost information.

(B) A description of how the Local Board will utilize the Wagner-Peyser program to provide access to local workforce development services for Unemployment Insurance claimants.

UI offices are co-located in each of the four American Job Centers in the region, so in addition to the above services, Wagner-Peyser staff will provide assistance in filing UI claims when needed and will provide information on and referral to training and education opportunities where appropriate. Since Wagner-Peyser and UI are co-located in each of the four American Job Centers, it is easy for staff to make referrals between Employment Services, UI and WIOA programs.

(C) If applicable, a description of how the Local Board will ensure that migrant and seasonal farm workers in its Local Area will be provided employment services.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker services are available in each of the American Job Centers through the WorkForce West Virginia Employment Service staff. Additionally, Wagner-Peyser staff will be responsible for:

Outreach Activities- Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices staff.

Proposed Outreach Plan:

- AJC staff, MSFW Outreach Specialists and State Monitor Advocate will contact employers during the pre-harvest and post-harvest seasons to assess their farmworker needs;
- SWA staff will contact and provide services to MSFWs during the peak season statewide at the worksite and camps;
- Partner agencies will contact and provide services to MSFWs at their homes and labor camps.
- In the field MSFW Outreach staff utilize the following strategies to provide services via personal contact and/or translators to communicate with workers:
 - At the One-Stop and in the field staff use written materials such as brochures and facts sheets printed in the language familiar to the workers in order to inform MSFWs about the core, intensive, training and career services available to them at no charge;
 - Outreach workers have laptop computers and cellphones to complete orientation and registration as well as aid them in meeting the customer's needs for supportive services, counseling and job development;
 - Additionally, there are computers which contain Spanish language registration instructions; and
 - Should any MSFW require or request career and training services which are available under WIOA Title I to enhance their skill level or to transfer into another career, services would have to be adapted to meet the needs of that specific customer by outsourcing a staff person to assist him in the field or provide transportation into the One-Stop Center for assistance.

Section 6: Title II- Adult Education and Family Literacy Functions

(A) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities in the Local Area integrating the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA, including, but not limited to, the implementation of the career pathways model.

West Virginia's adult education and literacy programs assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency, assists adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children, and assists adults in completing a secondary school education.

There has always been a strong history of coordination and referral between the Region VI WDB, the American Job Center system, and adult education entities in the region and that relationship continues under WIOA. Orientation sessions and other joint activities are shared between partner locations to maximize services. Referrals are routinely made

between the organizations in cases where customers served initially by one organization are deemed to be able to benefit from services provided by the other.

It is imperative that the workforce development system provide education and training for skills that lead to quality employment in high-demand jobs or entry-level occupations that lead to high demand jobs. Career pathways must be diverse with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low-skilled adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to have realistic access to pathways. The Region VI WDB will support career pathways that help adults and youth enter the labor force and/or advance among multiple occupations, advance within an occupation or move to a new occupation that has similar skills to a previous occupation.

(B) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate efforts with Title II providers to align basic skills and English language assessments. The description should include: An outline of the agreed upon steps that will be taken to align basic education skills and English language assessments within the local area, including, but not limited to, any Memoranda of Understanding entered into by the workforce development and adult learning partners; An identification of how assessment scores will be shared among WIOA Title I areas and Title II providers (Consideration must be given to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)); An identification of who will conduct which of the approved assessments (including for Trade Participants) and when such assessments will be conducted, consistent with this policy; An outline of how the local area will coordinate testing between workforce development and adult education providers; and, An outline of how the local area will ensure that test administrators are to be trained in accordance with this policy and applicable testing guidelines as set forth by the applicable test publisher.

English language learners have access to services to help them achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English. These competencies allow them to obtain secondary school credentials and succeed in further education and training. Immigrants acquire an understanding of what it means to be a citizen and to participate in civic responsibilities. Programs are designed to provide high-quality math instruction, evidence-based English language instruction and civics education that is responsive to, and respectful of, the diversity of immigrants and English learners. Additionally, WFWV Guidance Notice 2-17, “Communication with Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)” details some methods that are used, such as translating vital documents into Spanish (and other languages, as needed) and providing interpreters when requested.

TABE testing is done at adult education centers administered by adult education staff. These test results can be shared with the American Job Center staff. Per the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, this type of information may be shared with permission by the participants.

The test administrators have all been trained to administer the TABE tests and have on hand the test administration handbook when administering the tests. Training of test

administrators is performed internally from staff already trained to perform the tests to new staff utilizing the guidelines set up in the administration handbook.

(C) A description of how the Local Board will ensure that the individual appointed to represent Title II services on the Board will coordinate with all Title II Grant Administrators in the Local Area in a uniform, regular and consistent manner.

The Region VI WDB includes adult education as an active partner in the local and regional workforce system. Ann Mezzanotte, Adult Education Regional Coordinator, is a member of the Region VI WDB, has signed an MOU as a partner of the American Job Centers, and is a member of the Core Partner Consortium currently managing the operations of the American Job Centers. (The signed PY 2024 MOU will be available on or after July 1, 2024 as an update to the plan.)

Ms. Mezzanotte will coordinate the services of the adult education and literacy program in the Region VI WDB area with the full-time Adult Education instructor located at the Fairmont Comprehensive American Job Center and with other Adult Education instructors located in the region.

Region VI WDB also has Dr. Michael Waide, President, Pierpont Community and Technical College as a member representing education. Pierpont has maintained a close relationship with the workforce system and has always been ready to work with the workforce system and employers in the area to establish training programs to meet their needs.

(D) A description of how adult education services will be provided in the American Job Center system within the Local Area.

Adult education is an integral part of the system of services offered through the American Job Centers system. Information on adult education services will be part of the broader array of services given to customers entering the system, including information on AE-provided instruction for career pathways programs. As a partner, adult education will participate in cross training of American Job Center system staff in order to enhance the coordination of their services with other partner services. After assessments, and based on the needs of the customers, referrals are made between the American Job Center to the adult education program and vice versa on a daily basis. Full Circle classes are offered by Adult Ed in the Fairmont Comprehensive American Job Center on a monthly basis.

Section 7: Vocational Rehabilitation Functions

(A) A description of the cooperative agreements (as defined in section 107(d)(11)) between the Local Board or other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services) (other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741))

and subject to section 121(f)) in accordance with section 101(a)(11) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

The Region VI WDB has in place a current MOU with the regional DRS office. (The signed PY 2024 MOU will be available on or after July 1, 2024 as an update to the plan.) The region has a strong relationship with the DRS through the participation of Ms. Diane Heldreth, District 2 Manager, as a WDB member and through her service as a Core Partner Consortium member overseeing the operations of the regional American Job Centers.

DRS will maintain regular communication with partner agencies within and outside the American Job Center system in order to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This will be accomplished through regular meetings of the American Job Center System, written communications, teleconferences, and other media, as appropriate. DRS, particularly through its employment specialists, will also stay informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information is shared within the American Job Center system partner network.

The DRS has offices located in the comprehensive American Job Centers located in Fairmont and also offices located in the Elkins and Clarksburg Satellite American Job Centers. This co-location allows for easier scheduling of cross-training of staff and provides the opportunity for clients to receive a comprehensive array of services through referrals from the DRS to the other partners located in the American Job Centers and through referrals from those partners to the DRS.

(B) A description of how individuals with disabilities will be served through the American Job Center system in the Local Area.

DRS services available for individuals with disabilities are determined by his or her unique employment barriers, chosen employment goal, and individual circumstances. DRS services include the following:

- evaluation and diagnostic services may be provided to determine eligibility and services needed by the individual;
- vocational counseling and guidance;
- training services;
- rehabilitation technology services to address barriers to employment;
- physical and mental therapeutic services;
- specialized services for individuals who are blind, deaf, and deaf-blind;
- placement services to assist in finding employment;
- support services;
- post-employment services needed to maintain or regain employment.

Section 8: Jobs for Veterans State Grant Functions

(A) A description of how the Local Board will provide priority of service to veterans and their eligible spouses.

The Region VI WDB will follow federal WIOA legislation and state guidance in providing services to veterans in the local area. Veteran clients and their spouses, once identified as such through the assessment process in the American Job Centers, will receive first priority in the provision of training and career services throughout the partner network. (See **Attachment E- Region VI Guidance Letter 1-15, R- 5-Priority of Service**) In summary, it states:

Priority 1: First priority will be given to veterans or eligible spouses (covered persons) who are low-income or recipients of public assistance or are basic skills deficient.

Priority 2: Second priority will be given to individuals (non-covered persons) who are low income or recipients of public assistance, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Priority 3: Third Priority will be given to veterans and eligible spouses who are not low-income and are not recipients of public assistance or basic skills deficient.

Priority 4: Fourth Priority will be given to individuals who do not meet the above priorities.

(B) A description of how the Local Board will engage Local Veterans Employment Representatives in engaging and providing services to local businesses.

Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) are responsible for compliance of priority of all veteran services provided by American Job Center staff and work with employers to promote the hiring of veterans. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) are responsible for providing intensive services to qualified veterans at the American Job Center or itinerant site.

LVER's and DVOP's accomplish these job goals through networking with employers and community-based organizations, veteran specific job development and recruitment activities, to assure employers receive qualified Veteran referrals.

Section 9: Fiscal, Performance and Other Functions

(A) An identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)

The Region VI WDB utilizes the services of an in-house staff person (Fiscal Officer) as the person responsible for oversight of the disbursement of grant funds for the WDB. A third party CPA firm, Conley CPA Group, PLLC is utilized to perform bookkeeping and accounting services for the board. (See **Attachment J- Bookkeeping and Accounting Services Quote**)

(B) *A description of financial sustainability of the American Job Center services with current funding levels, and a description of the ability to make adjustments should funding levels change.*

The funds utilized to support the costs of the American Job Center delivery system and infrastructure costs are the funds provided by each partner from funds available for the costs of program service delivery and administration under the program administered by each partner and shall be subject to the program's limitations with respect to the portion of funds under each program that may be used for program service delivery and administration. This infrastructure cost information is updated quarterly by the One Stop Operator, who obtains updated cost information from the partners. This allows for the flexibility needed to make adjustments in operations as necessary. The funding levels of each partner for PY 2024 will be included with the updated PY 2024 signed MOU's sent to the state as an update to the plan on or after July 1, 2024.

(C) *A description of the competitive process to be used to award the subgrants and contracts in the Local Area for activities carried out under this title, including risk assessment of potential subgrantees and contractors;*

The Region VI WDB has a competitive process that follows rules safeguarding fair and objective decision-making when awarding sub-grants and contracts. These rules must comply with appropriate federal, state, and local requirements. The Region VI WDB complies with 2 CFR Part 200. (See **Attachment K-Procurement Methods** for the full policy.)

Procurements for Programmatic activities:

1.4 Procurement by *Competitive Proposals* shall be used for programs or services if the following conditions are present:

The nature of the item or service needed precludes developing a specification or a purchase description so precise that all interested parties have an identical understanding of the requirement;

Two or more responsible suppliers are willing and able to compete effectively for the award.

1.5 Procurements by Competitive Proposals for programs for the Region VI Workforce Development Board shall be secured by:

Soliciting offers by distributing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to an adequate number of qualified sources to ensure competition and by publicizing the RFP and honoring requests for copies of the RFP to the maximum extent practicable;

Ensuring that the RFP identifies all significant evaluation factors, including cost, or price, and the relative importance of each;

Providing technical evaluation of proposals received and determinations of responsible offerors for the purposes of holding written or oral discussions; for conducting negotiations

with offerors deemed to be in the competitive range (offerors whose proposals, when evaluated, are believed to have a reasonable chance of being selected for award); and for selecting the contractor; and awarding a fixed-price or cost reimbursement award to the responsible bidder or whose proposal will be most advantageous to the Region VI Workforce Development Board, price and other factors considered; and notify unsuccessful offerors of the award.

1.6 Procurement by *Non-Competitive Proposals*. Procurement occurs through solicitation of a proposal from only one source, the funding of an unsolicited proposal, or when, after solicitation of a number of sources, (which may include advertising for a letter of Request for Interest (RFI) to provide services in order to determine if an RFP is needed) , competition is determined inadequate. The use of sole source procurements shall be minimized to the extent possible, but in every case the use of sole source procurements shall be justified and documented. If this method is used, the following requirements apply:

The award is not feasible under any of the other procurement processes mentioned herein and one of the following circumstances applies:

The item or service is available only from a single source;

The public exigency or emergency need for the item or service does not permit a delay resulting from competitive selection;

The Region VI Workforce Development Board authorizes noncompetitive proposals following the states normal sole source approval;

After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

A cost analysis is required. This entails verification of the proposed cost data and evaluation of the specific elements of costs and profits, including comparison with the agency's prior independent price estimate. Profit must be separately negotiated in the award, and cost plus a percentage of cost agreements are not allowable.

1.7 Transactions between units of government. Except as provided under 2 CFR 200, all procurement contracts and other transactions between Region VI WDB and units of the state or local governments must be conducted only on a reimbursement basis. No provision for profit is allowed.

(D) A description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to section 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 subtitle B, and the American Job Center delivery system, in the Local Area;

Region VI WDB will utilize the PY 24 and PY 25 Performance levels outlined in the table below.

WIOA Performance Measures	West Virginia	
	Final Negotiated Goals	
	PY 24	PY 25
WIOA Adults		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	73%	74%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	71%	72%
Median Earnings	\$7,000.00	\$7,500.00
Credential Attainment Rate	79%	80%
Measurable Skill Gains	48%	50%
WIOA Dislocated Workers		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	79%	80%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	83%	84%
Median Earnings	\$10,500.00	\$11,000.00
Credential Attainment Rate	83%	84%
Measurable Skill Gains	44%	45%
WIOA Youth		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	65.7%	66.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	64.6%	67.7%
Median Earnings	\$3,600.00	\$4,100.00
Credential Attainment Rate	61%	62%
Measurable Skill Gains	50%	51%
Labor Exchange (LEX)*		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	61.6%	61.6%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	64%	65%
Median Earnings	\$6,500.00	\$6,700.00

(E) A description of the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board; This should include a description of the process used by the Local Board to review and evaluate performance of the local American Job Center(s) and the OneStop Operator.

The Region VI WDB strives to perform at the highest level of service for the customers of the region, i.e.- our individual job seekers looking for their first job or those who need training and other services to improve their employment circumstances, and our employers looking for employees and services to improve their businesses. To perform at this level, the WDB:

- Reviews the annual performance report as well as quarterly MACC performance reports to locate the areas of performance that need to be improved and/or maintained to exceed the negotiated levels of performance. Region VI WDB has a staff person dedicated to constantly monitoring the activities of WIOA adult,

dislocated worker, and youth participants in the system, which allows the WDB to be responsive to making changes and enhancing services where and when needed;

- Undergoes an annual audit of its fiscal practices through an independent auditing firm, and is audited by WorkForce West Virginia for compliance with all WIOA programmatic and fiscal requirements;
- Monitors contract compliance with the providers of youth and case management services. The monitoring covers programmatic and fiscal activities under each contract;
- Regularly participates in and provide information on WDB services at employer meetings, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and training provider meetings;
- Staff are encouraged to participate in professional development trainings and to cross train other staff in the strategies and information learned at trainings.

(F) A description, including a copy of, of the Local Area’s Individual Training Account policy. The description should include information such as selection process, dollar limits, duration, etc.

Region VI Workforce Development Board 17 Middletown Road White Hall, WV 26554	Classification: Individual Training Account Scholarship Policy December 4, 2023
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Region VI Guidance Letter No. 5-15, R-8

To: All Region VI WorkForce West Virginia Centers- Managers and Staff
 All Career Planners/Eligibility Determination Staff
 All Youth Subcontractor staff
 All Local Approved Service Providers

From: Region VI Workforce Development Board, Inc. (WDB)

Subject: Individual Training Account (ITA) Scholarship Policy

Purpose: This policy outlines the process for the Individual Training Account (ITA) system, (referred to as an Individual Training Account Scholarship in Region VI), established under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), to purchase training from a certified eligible provider of training services for adults, dislocated workers, or out-of-school youth who qualify for training services.

References: Sections 134, 181 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and 20 CFR Part 680, and 681.550.

Background: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act identifies the Individual Training Account as a means of providing training to individuals. The ITA system should be designed to provide customer choice within guidelines established by the local Workforce Development Board.

Policy: Region VI will not fund training for an individual who has obtained a Master's degree or better.

Region VI will not fund training for an individual who has obtained a certification/license, 2-year associate degree, or 4-year or more college degree from an accredited training provider. Exceptions to this policy may occur if the training is supported by the Career Planner and has been approved by the Exceptions Committee of the Region VI WDB. The provisions of #8 in this policy apply to this circumstance.

ITA Scholarship funds will only be obligated based upon Region VI funding levels at any point in any program year. Reductions in funding at any point, in any program year, may reduce, and, or eliminate ITA Scholarship obligated funds.

The Region VI Workforce Development Board has established the following guidelines to be used when implementing ITA Scholarships:

1. ITA Scholarship's will be issued to eligible participants for a maximum training period of 12 months at a time, not to exceed 24 months.
 2. In the event a participant is approved for a course of training, which will take 13 to 24 months to complete, it is the responsibility of the participant to re-apply with their WIOA Career Planner for additional WIOA funds necessary to cover the costs of completing their training by the first day of the 12th month of their training.
 3. WIOA funds obligated to cover training costs shall be in accordance with the following fee structure:
 - Maximum of \$6,000.00 for 0-1200 clock hours of training (training time up to 12 months) *
 - Maximum of \$10,000.00 for 1201-1800 clock hours of training (training time over 12 months to 18 months) *
 - Maximum of \$12,000.00 for 1801-2400 clock hours of training (training time over 18 months to 24 months) *
- *The tuition levels outlined above will be awarded based on the course information entered in the MACC by the Training Provider.***

4. Funds will cover required costs, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, tools and special equipment.
5. Participants who begin training prior to receiving an ITA Scholarship may be covered by Region VI (subject to the availability of funding), if the following conditions are met prior to the training start date:
 - Participant has been issued a Conditional WIOA Funding Voucher by a Career Planner
 - Participant has maintained WIOA eligibility
 - Participant has been tested and assessed

- Participant has completed the research assignment
 - Participant is currently enrolled and not changed his/her original training plan.
 - Participant has maintained satisfactory academic progress and is in good standing as determined by the service provider.
6. Customers who receive a Conditional WIOA Funding Voucher that has expired prior to receipt of WIOA funding will be eligible to apply for second year funding.
 7. The training provider and participant shall document other sources of funding on the ITA Scholarship form.
 8. Participants will be limited to one (1) WIOA funded ITA training opportunity in a 1 (one) year period. (“Training opportunity” means the customer started a training program and WIA/WIOA funds were utilized to pay for the training, and the customer may or may not have successfully completed the training program.) The one (1) year period begins on the date the individual completes/separates from the training program.

Should a customer request a second WIOA funded ITA training upon expiration of the 1-year time limit, the request must be submitted to the Exceptions Committee for consideration. The following must occur before the request can be submitted for consideration by the Exceptions Committee:

- The customer must meet current WIOA eligibility guidelines; and
- The WIOA Career Planner must recommend and provide appropriate documentation justifying the funding of a second training.

The preceding guidance pertaining to 1 WIOA funded training opportunity in a 1-year period or requesting a second WIOA funded training upon expiration of the 1-year time limit, will **not** apply to:

- ✓ Customers who have participated **at the request of an employer** in a WIA/WIOA-funded, Customized, Incumbent Worker, Transitional, or On- the-Job Training program. Those customers will be assessed by a Career Planner, on an individual basis, to determine if they are eligible for additional WIOA funded training through an ITA Scholarship without having to go through the Exception’s Committee for approval.
- ✓ Customers who have completed a Pre-Apprenticeship program who want to participate in an Apprenticeship may still be eligible for that training without having to go through the Exception’s Committee for approval. Assessment and support of the Career Planner for the customer to be funded for the Apprenticeship must still be done.
- ✓ Customers who are applying to upskill from one level of medical certification to another (ex. - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)/ Medical Assistant to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), or certified LPN to Registered Nurse (RN)) and who:
 - Paid for the training with WIA/WIOA or non-WIA/WIOA funds; and
 - Who have a minimum of 9 continuous months of work history in their medical field of certification.

BUT Career Planners must follow the guidelines below in approving the upskill training:

 - Customers who have gaps in employment history of 3 months or more, or termination from one or more jobs, must still have their funding request submitted to the Exceptions Committee; and

-Customers who have lost their medical certification/license for any reason (ex.- let it lapse, misconduct on the job, etc) must still have their funding request submitted to the Exceptions Committee.

Note: WIOA funding will not be allowed for a 3rd ITA training.

9. A degree or certificate must be obtained upon completion – not to exceed Bachelor’s level. A degree or certification must lead to a demand occupation as defined here:

Revised June 29, 2017

For purposes of awarding a WIOA ITA Scholarship, a Demand Occupation will be defined as:

- A. Occupations listed on the current list of West Virginia Demand Occupations for Workforce Development Area 6; OR
- B. Occupations showing a minimum of 2% growth rate on the current list of Long-Term West Virginia Demand Occupations for Workforce Development Area 6; OR
- C. Occupations showing a minimum of 25 projected openings and/or 25 replacement openings on the current list of Long-Term West Virginia Demand Occupations for Workforce Development Area 6; OR
- D. Occupations which do not fall under A, B, or C above, but which the DOL/ETA are funding training for through National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG).

Additionally, for purposes of funding WIOA On-the-Job Training (OJT), Customized Training, Transitional Training, or Incumbent Worker Training, any or all of the above may apply, plus:

- E. Documentation of support employment in the OJT, Customized Training, or Incumbent Worker Training occupation following completion of training.

10. Individual Training Account Scholarships will be issued to residents of Region VI, with residency being verified through a WV Driver’s License, State ID Card, or other document(s) which can verify current residency in the Region VI service area. Services can be offered to Dislocated Workers who are laid-off from a company located in Region VI, but who reside in another state/region as long as they are not receiving WIOA benefits from their state of residence.

11. Individual Training Account Vouchers are allowable for online training programs with the following conditions:

- The Online training course must meet all initial and or subsequent eligibility requirements per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- The cost of personal computers or laptops and/or operating systems/other software will not be absorbed by Region VI. Exceptions will be considered when a specific computer and/or operating system/software is required and billed as part of the training provider’s tuition.
- The training provider agrees to comply with the Region VI Invoicing Policies and Procedures for Online training programs. (See attached Policy)
 - A. Individuals enrolled in a “self-paced” online training program may have up to 12 months to complete the training (regardless of the length of time established to complete) at the discretion of the Region VI Workforce Development Board Executive Director.

12. Individuals changing programs will not be eligible for WIOA funding nor will the costs of any repeated course(s), lost books, etc. be borne by WIOA, unless extraordinary circumstances are involved and a re-assessment is conducted by a Career Planner, who recommends

the change and documents the reason for the change. If both the Career Planner and the training provider are in agreement in allowing the change, the change request must be submitted by the Career Planner to the Region VI Workforce Development Board Executive Director for consideration. Extraordinary circumstances should not include someone who simply changed their mind and does not like the program that they chose. Extraordinary circumstances may include someone who has attended class faithfully, who has made an effort to attain their original goal, but for some reason does not have the ability to complete said program successfully. An extraordinary circumstance could also include a school closing, forcing the student to transfer to another school to complete training. If the request for transfer is denied by the Executive Director, the training provider may appeal the decision to the Region VI Exceptions Committee by emailing Amy Hall at ahall@region6wv.org or by calling the Region VI WDB office at 304-368-9530.

13. The participant will be required to apply for a PELL grant if attending a training provider that participates in the PELL grant program. WIOA funds will then cover any tuition and approved costs not covered by PELL, not to exceed the current cap.
14. Service Provider should notify the appropriate Career Planner within seven (7) days of all withdrawals/completions (successful or unsuccessful).
15. Participants must adhere to the Region VI WDB attendance policy of either 80% of the instructional hours, or the training provider's attendance policy, whichever is higher. If this attendance policy is not being met at any time during the approved training time frame, the Region VI WDB may, at their discretion, terminate the funding of the participant failing to meet the attendance requirement.
16. Participants must maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by the policy of the training provider institution they are attending. In the event this progress is not maintained, the participant may lose their status as a WIOA funded student.
17. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, eligible WIOA participants with special needs may request reasonable accommodations to be made by service providers (i.e. – special textbooks, equipment, etc.) in order for the participant to be able to complete course requirements during training.

Region VI may provide referrals for technical assistance to Service Providers and participants in meeting the requirements of ADA. Any requests for assistance above and beyond technical assistance must be submitted by the Career Planner on behalf of the participant to the Exceptions Committee.

18. There is no limit to the number of times an ITA may be modified. A modification to an ITA may be made by request of the training provider to the Career Planner, which then must be approved by the Career Planner (but only if the modification request does not involve changes in the funding level of the ITA). If the requested modification involves a change in the amount of funding, the Career Planner must submit the modification request to the Region VI WDB for final approval. No modification to the ITA involving changes to the funding level can be made until approved by the Region VI WDB.

The Region VI Workforce Development Board Executive Director may waive provisions of this policy when the Executive Director determines it is necessary in order to serve individuals with special circumstances.

Action: The Region VI WORKFORCE West Virginia System will be made aware of this policy. This policy will be sent to each Training Provider and a copy given to each WIOA participant.

This policy will become effective **October 15, 2021** and shall be in effect until revised or cancelled by the Region VI Workforce Development Board.

Disclaimer:

This policy may be subject to change as additional federal regulation and TEGLs and or state policies are released that are contrary to or otherwise different from Region VI WDB's interpretation of WIOA.

(G). A description of how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with Section 134(c)(3)(G), including, if contracts for the 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;

In accordance with WIOA Section 134 (c)(3)(G), contracts for training services (such as customized training, transitional work experience, incumbent worker training, or On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs) may be used in lieu of or in conjunction with Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). The client, with the assistance of the WIOA Career Planner will determine the best route to self-sufficiency/re-employment and document this in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP). WIOA customers engage in an active case management process that is customized to meet their unique needs and life situations. Documenting transferable skills and career interests are just as important as assessing basic skill or other potential barriers to employment, such as transportation needs, child care, housing, etc.

Region VI WDB clients are provided with a Training Provider list which includes all approved regional demand-occupation training courses. Included on the list is performance information on each course as provided by the training provider at the time they are approved at the state level to be a training provider. This information includes the cost of the training, the placement rate of all persons who took that course over the previous year, and the placement rate of just WIOA participants who took the course, the average hourly wage participants can expect to make after training, the drop-out rate of WIOA participants who took the course over the last year, and the number of WIOA participants who took the course over the last year. This information assists the customer to make an informed choice of training provider.

If the WIOA customer is more interested in returning to the workforce immediately, then an On-the-Job training or transitional training program may be their best avenue to re-

employment. Customers interested in this type of training are provided information to provide to prospective employers on the programs with the aim of using the programs as a marketing tool for themselves, and WIOA staff are kept informed by the Career Planners of those interested in OJT or transitional training and provided with a resume of those clients to have if an employer is hiring and contacts the WIOA staff for assistance in finding employees. (See **Attachment L – Guidance Letter 3-15 R-10 On-the-Job Training and Attachment M Guidance Letter 13-16 R-7 Transitional Training policies**)

(H) A description of the process used by the Local Board, consistent with subsection (d), to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the Local Plan, prior to submission of the plan;

The Region VI WDB solicited input from both the Full Board and LEO boards through meetings and emails prior to the submission of the plan. Representation on the board includes business and labor organizations, so their input was solicited at board meetings prior to the plan release and for public comments. Partners of the American Job Centers were also asked for their input through regular meetings. The board meetings are advertised to the public through PSA's in newspapers throughout the region so the public has an opportunity to attend all board meetings, where they are invited to address comments to the board at all meetings. WDB meetings are held in locations accessible to people with disabilities.

The Region VI website www.regionviwv.org has board information for the public to view, including policies, board memberships, meeting minutes, and program information.

The plan will be advertised for public comment through legal ads in newspapers in all thirteen counties of the region and notice of the plan availability is posted on the Partner Facebook page. The plan will be available for review for public comment on the Region VI WDB website at www.regionviwv.org, found under the Public Information tab, from May 5 through May 18, 2024. Copies of the plan can be requested by contacting the Region VI office. Comments may be submitted by sending them by mail to Maria Larry, Executive Director, at the WDB offices – 17 Middletown Road, White Hall, WV 26554.

(I) A description of how the American Job Centers are utilizing the MACC as the integrated, technology enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by American Job Center partners;

The Region VI WDB will continue to utilize the MACC in order to promote uniformity in information collection and case management and to increase access to services by the customers of the region, both job seekers and employers. Job seekers register in the MACC in order to access labor market information, job availability listings, comply with UI requirements, and in general tap into all the services available to them. Employers

register in the MACC in order to post job orders, access labor market information, and tap into all the services available to them.

(J) A description of the Local Board's procedures for conducting oversight and monitoring of its WIOA activities and those of its subgrantee and contractors. The monitoring plan shall address the monitoring scope and frequency and shall include the following: The roles and responsibility of staff in facilitating this procedure; A requirement that all subgrantee agreements and contracts be monitored at least annually; Procedures for determining that expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in the Act and WIOA regulations; Procedures for determining compliance with other provisions of the Act and regulations and other applicable laws and regulations, including the method of monitoring to be used for subgrantees and contractors; Provisions for the recording of findings made by the recipients' monitor(s), the forwarding of such findings to the subgrantee or contractor for response and the recording of all corrective actions; Provisions of technical assistance as necessary and appropriate; and Specific local policies developed by the Local Board for oversight of the American Job Center system, youth activities and employment and training activities under Title I of WIOA.

The Region VI WDB's policy on monitoring (See **Attachment N- Region VI Guidance Letter 8-15 Monitoring**) provides for the monitoring of adult, dislocated worker, and youth activities as follows:

- A monitoring date is set with the activity to be monitored and a letter sent to the monitored organization advising of the process and aspects of the program to be monitored, and includes a copy of the monitoring tool to be used and a list of files and other documentation to be available the day of the monitoring. 2 weeks is usually given the organization to gather the materials together for the monitoring;
- WDB staff conducting the monitoring meet with the monitored organization staff on the day of the monitoring to address any questions and make sure all documentation is available;
- WDB staff monitor the files and documentation in order to determine compliance with WIOA and Region VI WDB policies and procedures
- Upon completion of the monitoring, an exit interview is done with pertinent organization staff to go over any issues and allow for resolutions of any dispute of issues found;
- A letter outlining the results of the monitoring visit is sent to the monitored organization within 30 days of the monitoring date. The letter details issues found and corrective action to be done;
- The monitored agency has 30 days to respond with a corrective plan of action if required;
- Follow up and technical assistance will be given by WDB staff to the organization if needed in order to bring them into compliance with WIOA and Region VI WDB policies;
- All of this process is documented and kept on file in the WDB offices.

Fiscal monitoring is conducted separately from the programmatic monitoring but follows the same process using different forms.

(K) A description of the Local Board's policy and procedures regarding the handling of personally identifiable and confidential information.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines personally identifiable information (PII) as: "information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, biometric records, etc. alone, or when combined with other personal or identifying information which is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, etc."

Staff in each American Job Center partnering agency work under their program's particular policies regarding PII. WorkForce West Virginia staff and WIOA staff use MACC identification numbers (which are not considered to be PII information in and of themselves) in referring to individuals in any correspondence about the individual. The Region VI WDB has the following Employee Privileged and/or Confidential Information Agreement signed by all employees upon hire with the agency.

Region VI Workforce Development Board Employee Privileged and/or Confidential Information Agreement

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The privacy of each individual in the thirteen counties making up Region VI is an important fundamental right that must be safeguarded in our highly technological society. Computers must be used to protect the privacy of our citizens, as well as to improve the effectiveness of the Region VI Workforce Development Board operations. These objectives are not incompatible but require positive action to assure their accomplishment.

West Virginia code, Chapter 61, Article 3C (also known as the West Virginia Computer Crime and Abuse Act), states in part that any person who knowingly, willfully, and without authorization, accesses or causes to be accessed any information filed by any person with the Region VI Workforce Development Board which required by law to be kept confidential shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or confined in the county jail not more than six months, or both.

Access only the data required to accomplish your **official duties**. You must not discuss it unless work-related. If you do, you will be subject to the above penalties and/or discharge. Do not remove computer printouts or other documents from the workplace unless approved by your immediate supervisor.

All employees in electronic data processing operations and others having access to privileged data in any form are required to take proper precautionary steps to avoid any breach of privacy of any of our clients, employers, or employees of Region VI Workforce Development Board. Both the effective use of computers and their use in the protection of privacy are necessary to fulfill our obligations to the citizens of Region VI, Claimants, employers, employees of this Region, activities and participants under the Job Training act, employment service, and other applicants.

CODE OF ETHICS AGREEMENT

In consideration of the trust placed in me by the Region VI Workforce Development Board:

I will regard electronic data and other manually maintained records on individual persons, employers, and other systems as confidential in nature, to be held in trust, and I will protect and cause to be protected such data and systems against unauthorized disclosure and/or use.

I will withhold confidential data from persons, to include, but not limited to, relatives, friends, etc., not accorded access to privileged data that I receive by virtue of my position.

I will not permit private or personal dealings to corrupt or adversely influence the quality, quantity, or integrity of advice or service that I provide from knowledge obtained from agency records.

I will not be involved in any way with the processing of personal records or records of relatives and friends. I understand that I am responsible for the safeguarding of the terminal password and name assigned to me for access to or entry of computer records.

I understand that the Code of West Virginia, as amended, provides penalties for the unlawful release of privileged information. Depending upon the severity of the breach of confidentiality, disciplinary action could result in an oral or written reprimand, suspension, demotion and/or dismissal, in accordance with Administrative Directive 6400.20. Certain violations could also result in civil or criminal prosecution.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that these statements have been read to me and that I have read the statements included herein. I also acknowledge that I have had ample opportunity to ask any questions that I may have regarding this matter.

(L) A description of the Local Board's procedures for handling grievances and complaints from participants and other interested parties affected by the local American Job Center system, including partners and service providers. Provide a separate description for the: Complaints alleging discrimination on the ground of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in any WIOA Title I – financially assisted program or activity; Complaints and grievances not alleging illegal forms of discrimination. This includes grievances from individuals alleging labor standards violations. Remedies that may be imposed for a violation of any requirement under WIOA Title I, limited to, suspension or termination of

payments under the title; prohibition of placement of a participant with an employer that has violated any requirement under WIOA Title I; reinstatement of an employee, payment of lost wages and benefits, and reestablishment of other relevant terms, conditions, and privileges of employment (where applicable); and other equitable relief as appropriate.

The Region VI WDB Grievance and Complaint Policy, updated per state WIOA Policy 03-17 Change 1 - Grievance and Complaint Procedures, detailing the answer to the questions above is included here in its entirety and as **Attachment O** to the plan.

**REGION VI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (Region VI WDB)
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)
GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Purpose:

This document establishes the policy of West Virginia on the development, maintenance and implementation of programmatic grievance and complaint procedures. This policy and related procedures cover complaints alleging noncriminal violations of the requirements of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the operation of local WIOA programs and activities and transmits policy governing WIOA Title I related grievance and complaint procedures at the local and State level.

Scope:

Title 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subpart F Section 683.600 requires that Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) and sub-recipients of WIOA Title I grant funds comply with the grievance and complaint provisions of the WIOA. This policy applies to programmatic grievances and complaints pursuant to WIOA Section 181(c) and does not address the procedures for processing complaints alleging discrimination under WIOA Section 188 and/or Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 37. Information and complaints involving allegations of fraud, abuse, or other criminal activity must be reported directly to U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Inspector General.

REFERENCES:

- WIOA Section 181 (c)
- Title 20 CFR Part 683.600
- Title 29 CFR Part 37

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:

This policy implements the requirements of WIOA Section 181(c) and 20 CFR Part 683.600. Retain this policy until further notice.

BACKGROUND:

Title 20 CFR Section 683.600 requires each LWDB, State, and direct recipient of funds under Title I of WIOA to establish and maintain a procedure for grievances and complaints from participants and other interested parties affected by the local workforce development system, including American Job Center partners, service providers, and the statewide workforce development programs.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

Definitions:

Complainant means any participant or other personally interested or personally affected party alleging a non-criminal violation of the requirements of WIOA.

Complaint file is a file that is maintained in a central location within each office which includes a hard copy of each complaint filed along with pertinent documentation.

Days means consecutive calendar days, including weekends and holidays.

Grievance or complaint means a written expression by a party alleging a violation of WIOA, regulations promulgated under WIOA, recipient grants, sub-agreements, or other specific agreements under WIOA. All complaints, amendments to a complaint, and withdrawals shall be in writing. This policy is intended to resolve matters which concern actions arising in connection with the WIOA Title I grant program.

Hearing Officer means an impartial party who shall preside at a hearing on a grievance or complaint.

Local Workforce Development Board includes the Local Workforce Development Area's/Region's administrative entity and any sub-recipients to which the administrative entity has delegated the complaint and grievance resolution process.

Participant means an individual who has been determined to be eligible to participate in, and who is receiving services under, a program authorized by WIOA.

Participant case file means either a hard copy or an electronic file.

Recipient means an entity to which a WIOA grant is awarded directly from DOL to carry out a program under Title I of WIOA. The State is the recipient of funds awarded under WIOA Sections 127 (b)(1)(C), 132(b)(1)(B), and 132(b)(2)(B).

Sub-recipient means an entity to which a sub-grant is awarded, and which is accountable to the recipient (or higher tier sub-recipient) for the use of the funds provided.

Policy:

It is the policy of the State of West Virginia that:

- The principles and procedures set forth in this Policy 3-17, Change 1 shall be used by all West Virginia LWDBs in the development of local-level grievance and hearing procedures; and
- The principles and procedures set forth in this Policy 3-17, Change 1 shall govern the treatment and handling of all grievances or complaints in connection with all WIOA Title I grant programs and activities conducted by the State, or pursuant (directly or indirectly) to sub-grants from the State.

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) concurs with this policy and has approved the local policy and procedures contained in this document.

Procedures:

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS

These procedures will guide the receipt, hearing, and resolution of non-criminal grievances and complaints relating to WIOA Title I grant programs and activities that are funded with WIOA Title I grant monies provided to the LWDB by the State. These procedures will be available for use by all individuals and entities, including WIOA Title I grant participants, LWDB staff, sub-recipients of the LWDB, and other interested parties. Local procedures must include “a process which allows an individual alleging a labor standards violation to submit the grievance to a binding arbitration procedure, if a collective bargaining agreement covering the parties so provides.” [Title 20 CFR Section 683.600(c)(3)].

Additionally, all LWDB’s and sub-recipients of WIOA Title I grant funds must make reasonable efforts to assure that information about the content of the grievance and complaint procedures will be understood by affected participants and individuals, including youth and those who are limited English-speaking individuals. Such efforts must comply with the language requirements of Title 29 CFR Section 37.35.

At all levels of the grievance or complaint process, complainants have the right to be represented, at their own expense, by a person(s) of their choosing.

Grievances or complaints must be filed within 30 days of the alleged violation. All grievances or complaints, amendments, and withdrawals must be in writing. All persons filing grievances or complaints shall be free from restraint, coercion, reprisal, or discrimination.

II. LOCAL GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Pursuant to Title 20 CFR Sections 683.600 through 683.610, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) has established this procedure for resolving grievances and complaints alleging a violation of WIOA Title I, regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA. The following outlines the procedures for resolving issues arising in connection with WIOA Title I grant programs operated by the administrative entity for the LWDB and its sub-recipients. Any participant or other interested party adversely affected by a decision or action by the local workforce development system, including decisions by One-Stop partners and services providers, has the right to file a grievance or complaint with the LWDB.

A. Notice to Affected Parties

Initial and continuing notice of the local grievance and complaint procedures and instructions on how to file a complaint must be:

- Posted in a public location and be made available to any interested parties and members of the public.
- Made available to each participant. A copy of the written description of the local grievance and complaint procedure shall include (1) Notification that the participant has the right to file a grievance or complaint at any time within 30 days of the alleged violation; (2) Instructions and timeline for filing a grievance or complaint; and (3) Notification that the participant has the right to receive technical assistance. Such information shall be modified, as needed, whenever the procedures are changed.

The LWDB has the responsibility to provide technical assistance to the complainants, including those grievances or complaints against the LWDB. Such technical assistance includes providing instructions on how to file a grievance or complaint, providing relevant copies of documents such as the Act, regulations, local rules, contracts, etc., and providing clarifications and interpretations of relevant provisions. This requirement shall not be interpreted as requiring the LWDB to violate rules of confidentiality.

B. Form and Filing of Grievance or Complaint

The official filing date of the grievance or complaint is the date the written grievance or complaint is received by the LWDB, its service providers, One-Stop partners, or sub-recipients. The filing of the grievance or complaint will be considered a request for a hearing, and the LWDB shall issue a written decision within 60 days for the filing of the grievance or complaint.

The grievance or complaint must be in writing, signed, and dated. For resolution purposes, the SWDB requires that the following information be obtained or provided for all complaints:

- Full name, telephone number, and mailing address of the complainant.

- Full name, telephone number, and mailing address of the respondent.
- A clear and concise statement of the facts and dates describing the alleged violation.
- The provisions of the WIOA, the WIOA regulations, grant, or other agreements under the WIOA, believed to have been violated.
- Grievances or complaints against individuals, including staff or participants, shall indicate how those individuals did not comply with the law, regulations, or contract; and
- The remedy sought by the complainant.

The absence of any of the requested information shall not be a basis for dismissing the grievance or complaint.

A grievance or complaint may be amended to correct technical deficiencies at any time up to the time of the hearing. The 30-day period in which a grievance or complaint may be filed is not extended for grievances or complaints that are refiled with amendments. Grievances or complaints may be withdrawn at any time prior to the issuance of the hearing officer's decision. The LWDB shall send a copy of the grievance or complaint to the respondent and immediately (within one business day) notify the State WIOA Unit.

C. Investigation

After the complaint has been filed and the State notified, the LWDB will assign a staff member to investigate the claims being brought forth. WorkForce West Virginia will provide at least one other investigator in all such matters. The scope of the investigation should be limited to the allegations within the grievance or complaint; however, other observable violations that may warrant further investigation can be noted by all parties involved. Each party to the investigation must do their due diligence in obtaining any evidentiary statements as there must be no coercion, leading, or otherwise interfering with the willful and unadulterated obtainment of statements from the complainant, respondent(s), and any witnesses.

The investigation and written summation of all statements and evidence should be completed within 10 working days to allow for a Hearing if an Informal Resolution cannot be reached between the parties.

D. Informal Resolution

The LWDB shall notify the complainant and the respondent of the opportunity for an informal resolution. Respondents must make good faith efforts to resolve all grievances or complaints prior to the scheduled hearing. Failure on the part of either party in the grievance or complaint to exert good faith efforts shall not constitute a basis for dismissing the grievance or complaint, nor shall this be considered part of the facts to be judged in the resolution process. Where a complaint alleges a violation of the WIOA Title I grant or any agreements under WIOA, the LWDB must assure that every grievance or complaint not resolved

informally or not withdrawn is given a hearing, regardless of the grievance or complaint's apparent merit or lack of merit.

When a complaint is resolved through the informal resolution process, the LWDB must attempt to contact the complainant and have him or her provide a written withdrawal of the complaint within 10 days of the receipt of the notice of resolution or impasse where a complainant decides not to proceed to an administrative hearing. The LWDB shall maintain copies of correspondence in the local office complaint file and provide a copy of such materials to the State, when requested.

E. Notice of Hearing

Hearings shall be conducted within 30 days of the filing of a grievance or complaint. The complainant and the respondent must be notified, in writing, of the hearing 10 days prior to the date of the hearing. The 10-day notice may be shortened with the written consent of both parties. The hearing notice shall be in writing and contain the following information:

- The date of the notice, name of the complainant, and the name of the party against whom the grievance or complaint is filed.
- The date, time, and place of the hearing before an impartial hearing officer.
- A statement of the alleged violations. These statements must accurately reflect the content of the grievance or complaint as submitted by the complainant; however, clarifying notes may be added to assure that the grievance or complaint is addressed accurately.
- The name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

F. Conduct of Hearings

An impartial hearing officer shall conduct the hearing. The LWDB will seek impartial hearing officers from among the staff of legal offices or personnel departments of municipalities or counties that will not be directly affected by, or will not implement the final resolution of, a specific grievance or complaint.

The hearing will be conducted in an informal manner with strict rules of evidence not being applicable and according to the procedures established by the LWDB. Both parties will have the right to present written and/or oral testimony and arguments; the right to call and question witnesses in support of their position; the right to examine records and documents relevant to the issues; and the right to be represented. The hearing will be recorded electronically or by a court reporter.

G. Decision

Not later than 60 days after the filing of the grievance or complaint, the hearing officer shall mail a written decision to both parties by first class mail. The hearing officer's decision shall contain the following information:

- The names of the parties involved.
- A statement of the alleged violation(s) and issues related to the alleged violation.
- A statement of the facts.
- The hearing officer's decision and the reasons for the decision.
- A statement of corrective action or remedies for violations, if any, to be taken; and
- Notice of the right of either party to request a review of the decision by the State Review Panel within 10 days of the receipt of the decision.

H. Appeal

If a complainant does not receive a decision at the LWDB level within 60 days of the filing of the grievance or complaint, or receives an adverse decision, the complainant then has the right to file an appeal with the State.

The complainant may request an appeal hearing by submitting a written notice to:

WorkForce West Virginia
Office of the Commissioner
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Building 3, Suite 300
Charleston, WV 25305

III. STATE-LEVEL GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Title 20 CFR Section 683.600(d) requires the State to provide a process for dealing with grievances and complaints from participants or interested parties affected by the statewide workforce development programs, resolving appeals of decisions issued at the LWDB level, remanding grievances and complaints related to the local WIOA Title I programs to the LWDB grievance process, and affording an opportunity for an informal resolution and a hearing to be completed within 60 days of the filing of the grievance or complaint.

In cases where the State has imposed either administrative or financial/monetary sanction(s) resulting from monitoring, investigations, or audits, the complainant may file an appeal with the State through the procedures established in their Audit Resolution guidance.

A. State-Level Informal Resolution and Hearing Procedures

All complaints of noncriminal violations of the requirements of WIOA by the State, or complaints by individuals or interested parties affected by the statewide workforce development program shall be filed in writing with the Office of the Commissioner,

WorkForce West Virginia. All requests for State hearings shall include the same basic elements necessary for local level hearings. These are:

- Full name, telephone number, and mailing address of the complainant,
- Full name, telephone number, and mailing address of the respondent,
- A clear and concise statement of the facts and dates describing the alleged violation,
- The provisions of the WIOA, the WIOA regulations, grant, or other agreements under the WIOA, believed to have been violated,
- Grievances or complaints against individuals, including staff or participants, shall indicate how those individuals did not comply with the WIOA law, regulation, or contract; and
- The remedy sought by the complainant.

Upon receipt of the request for a State hearing, the Commissioner or his/her designee shall review the grievance or complaint and shall provide an opportunity for an informal resolution. The Commissioner shall notify the complainant and the respondent within 10 days of receipt of the grievance or complaint and proceed with the informal resolution process. If the State cannot resolve the grievance or complaint informally, then a hearing will be held.

Hearings on any grievance or complaint shall be conducted within 30 days of the filing of a grievance or complaint. The complainant and the respondent shall be notified in writing of the hearing 10 days prior to the date of hearing. The hearing notice shall advise the following:

- The date, time, and place of the hearing before an impartial hearing officer.
- The pertinent sections of the WIOA or any other federal regulations involved.
- A statement of the alleged violations. These statements must accurately reflect the content of the grievance or complaint as submitted by the complainant. However, clarifying notes may be added to assure that the grievance or complaint is addressed accurately.
- The name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

B. Appeals of LWDB Decisions or Requests for WFWV Review

1. A complainant may file a request for review with WFWV if no decision has been issued at the LWDB level within the 60-day time limit. A complainant may file an appeal if the LWDB has issued an adverse decision. The request for a WFWV review or appeal shall be filed or postmarked (if mailed) within 10 days from the date on which the complainant received an adverse decision from LWDB or 15 days from:

- The date on which a complainant should have received a decision regarding a locally filed complaint, which is defined as five days from the date the decision was due, or

2. All requests for review or appeals shall include the following:

- The full name, telephone number, and mailing address of the complainant,
- The full name, telephone number, and mailing address of the LWDB,
- A statement of the basis of the request or appeal, and
- Copies of relevant documents, such as the complaint filed at the LWDB and the local decision, if any.

3. WFWV shall request the record of the hearing from the LWDB and shall review the record. WFWV shall notify the concerned parties and the LWDB by first class mail, certified with a return receipt, of the following information at least 10 days before a scheduled hearing:

- The date of the notice, name of the complainant, and the name of the party against whom the complaint is filed.
- The date, time, and place of the hearing before a hearing officer.
- A statement of the alleged violations. This statement shall accurately reflect the content of the complaint as submitted by the complainant.
- The name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

C. Hearing

1. The WFWV hearing shall be conducted in an informal manner with strict rules of evidence not being applicable. Both parties shall have the right to present written and/or oral testimony under oath and arguments; the right to call and question witnesses; the right to request and examine records and documents relevant to the issues, and the right to be represented. The hearing shall be recorded.

2. The WFWV hearing officer shall be an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ).

D. Referral of Local Grievances or Complaints

Grievances or complaints filed directly with the State related to the local WIOA programs will be remanded to the LWDB grievance process in accordance with LWDB Grievance and Complaint Procedures.

E. Remedies

1. Remedies that may be imposed for a violation of any requirement under WIOA Title I shall be limited to:

- Suspension or termination of payments under WIOA Title I,
- Prohibition of placement of a participant with an employer that has violated any requirement under WIOA Title I,
- Reinstatement, where applicable, of an employee, payment of lost wages and benefits, and reestablishment of other relevant terms, conditions, and privileges of employment; and
- Where appropriate, to other equitable relief.

2. Nothing in paragraph 1 shall be construed to prohibit a complainant from pursuing a remedy authorized under another federal, State, or local law for a violation of WIOA Title I.

F. Federal-Level Appeal Process

Under Title 20 CFR Section 683.610(a)(1), if the State or Local Workforce Development Board has not issued a decision within the required 60-day time limit, the complainant can file an appeal to the Secretary of Labor. The appeal must be filed with the Secretary of Labor no later than 120 days of the filing of the grievance or complaint with the State, or the filing of the appeal of a local grievance or complaint with the State.

In cases where a decision has been reached and the State issued an adverse decision, the complainant can file an appeal to the Secretary of Labor within 60 days of the receipt of the decision being appealed.

The request for appeal must be submitted by certified mail, return receipt to:

Secretary

U.S. Department of Labor

200 Constitution Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20210

Attention: ASET

A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the Region 2 ETA Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor—Employment and Training Administration, Suite 825 East, The Curtis Center, 170 South Independence Mall West, Philadelphia, PA 19106, and the opposing party.

ACTION:

All recipients and sub-recipients of WIOA Title-I funding through the Workforce Development Board of West Virginia shall utilize the grievance and complaint procedures specified in this policy or ensure that any policies or procedures established by the recipient or sub-recipient are in accordance with these requirements.

INQUIRIES:

Please direct inquiries about this directive to the Region VI Workforce Development Board at 304-368-9530.

COMPLETE, SIGN AND MAIL AN ORIGINAL SIGNATURE COPY OF THE FORM ON PAGES 12-13 TO:

**REGION VI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
17 MIDDLETOWN ROAD
WHITE HALL, WV 26554**

KEEP A COPY OF THE COMPLETED FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.

**REGION VI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WORKKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT FORM
PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION.**

COMPLAINANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

If Organization, Name of Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

Zip

Phone #: _____ Cell phone # _____

RESPONDENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

If Organization, Name of Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

Zip

Phone #: _____ Cell phone # _____

Please provide the following information: (You are encouraged to seek technical assistance from the Region VI WDB staff in completing this section, if needed. You may attach additional pages if necessary.)

1. Please provide a clear and concise statement of the facts and dates describing the alleged violation:

2. What provisions of the WIOA, the WIOA regulations, grant, or other agreements under the WIOA, were violated?

3. Grievances or complaints against individuals, including staff or participants, shall indicate how those individuals did not comply with the law, regulations, or contract.

Remedy Sought:

Complainant Printed Name _____

Complainant Signature _____

Date _____

Region VI WDB follows the state WorkForce West Virginia Section 188 Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedures as follows. See also **Attachment P WorkForce West Virginia Section 188 Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedures:**



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WIOA Section 188 Discrimination Complaint Procedures

Equal opportunity employment/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

PURPOSE:

WorkForce WV provides this issuance as guidance on the WIOA Section 188 Discrimination Complaint Procedures.

REFERENCES:

These policies and procedures govern discrimination complaint investigations arising under Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) at 29 U.S.C. § 3248, as implemented by 29 C.F.R. §§ 38.69-38.79. The policies and procedures are issued in compliance with:

- WIOA Section 188, which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity;
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color and national origin;
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq., as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. § 6101 et seq., as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 29 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq., as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.

DEFINITIONS:

Beneficiary – Individual or individuals intended by Congress to receive aid, benefits, services, or training from a recipient of Federal financial assistance under a program or activity established by Federal statute.

CRC – U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management/*Civil Rights Center*.

Complainant – Individual filing discrimination complaint based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, on the basis of either citizenship as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or participation in a WIOA Title I financially assistance program or activity.

Federal Financial Assistance – Refers to more than just monetary forms, it can include nonmonetary forms of assistance, such as the provision of personnel at the grantmaking/recipient agency's expense, or the grant or donation of property, among other things.

Mediation – A process of alternative dispute resolution whereby the negotiation of issues is facilitated by a neutral party. It is a voluntary and confidential process and can result in a binding agreement.

Recipient – Any entity that receives financial assistance under WIOA Title I, either directly from the US Department of Labor or through the Governor or another recipient. American Job Center Partners are considered recipients to the extent that they participate in the one-stop delivery system.

Respondent – A grant applicant or recipient against whom a complaint has been filed under the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA.

BACKGROUND:

This policy issuance is intended to ensure that WorkForce West Virginia, the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), and other grant recipients/program providers implement complaint policies and procedures in compliance with guidelines provided by the Director, Civil Rights Center, U.S. Department of Labor (CRC), regarding the nondiscrimination/equal opportunity provisions of Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Section 188 of the WIOA, and the implementing regulations at 29 CFR Part 38, prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, gender identity, and transgender status), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability or political affiliation or belief, citizenship status, or participation in any WIOA Title I financially-assisted program or activity.

Each Workforce Development Area has designated a Local Equal Opportunity Officer who is responsible for adopting and publishing discrimination complaint policies and procedures

(already established by the state-level Equal Opportunity Officer) and ensuring compliance with those procedures. A recipient/program provider must provide initial and continued notice that it does not discriminate on any prohibited ground. A copy of the "Equal Opportunity is the Law" notice is provided to each participant and made a part of each participant's file per the regulations. If a complaint is filed, a copy of this Equal Opportunity (EO) Discrimination Complaint Processing Policy and Procedures is to be provided to the complainant, along with a copy of the "Equal Opportunity is the Law" notice.

The Discrimination Complaint Package may be made available in alternative formats on request of a person who is blind or has low vision by WorkForce WV. Moreover, all complaint notices, procedures, and forms must contain a "Babel" notice pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 38.9(g)(3), which provides:

Recipients must include a "Babel notice," indicating in appropriate languages that language assistance is available, in all communications of vital information, such as hard copy letters or decisions or those communications posted on websites.

BABEL NOTICE (29 C.F.R. § 38.9(g)(3)): This document contains vital information. If English is not your preferred language, please let any WorkForce WV employee know of your needs or contact your local or state WIOA EO Officers:

EO Officer Information:

Region 1

Barbara Dawes
200 New River Town Center
Beckley, WV 25801
(304) 253-3611

Region 2

Melissa Bias
2699 Park Avenue, Suite 240
Huntington, WV 25704
(304) 429-5900

Region 3

Amy Farley
405 Capitol Street, Suite 506
Charleston, WV 25301
(304) 344-5760

Region 4

Miranda Lough
709 Market Street
Parkersburg, WV 26101
304-424-7271

Region 5

Erinn Kittle
1245 Warwood Avenue
Wheeling, WV 26003
(304) 231-1170

Region 6

Amy Hall
17 Middletown Road
White Hall, WV 26554
(304) 368-9530

Region 7

Stacy Swick
151 Robert C. Byrd Industrial
Park Rd.,
Moorefield, WV 26836
(304) 530-5258

Nicholas Allen

**State WIOA EO Officer
WORKFORCE WV (Recipient)**
1900 Kanawha Blvd., E.
Building 3, 3rd Floor, Suite 300
Charleston, WV 25305
304-558-1600

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Discrimination Complaint and Filing

All grant recipients/program providers under Title I of WIOA are responsible for complying with the discrimination complaint procedures consistent with 29 CFR Part 38, as outlined in this policy: Any person who believes that he or she, or any specific class of individuals, has been or is being subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, gender identity, and transgender status), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in WIOA Title I, has the right to file a complaint within one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days of the alleged discrimination. The filing period may be extended for good cause in some limited circumstances; however, only the Director of CRC may extend the filing time.

Receipt of Complaint

A complainant must file a complaint within 180 days of the alleged act(s) of discrimination or retaliation. Please note, complaints can be accepted by an employee in a WorkForce West Virginia American Job Center, or the EO Officer of a local Workforce Development Board. The employee or local WDB EO Officer will immediately accept the complaint and forward the complaint to the WorkForce West Virginia EO Officer.

The complainant may file with WorkForce West Virginia or the Department of Labor, Director, Civil Rights Center (Federal). Filing a complaint with WorkForce West Virginia does not affect a complainant's right to file a complaint with the Civil Rights Center if he or she is not satisfied with the resolution provided by WorkForce West Virginia. The WorkForce West Virginia EO Officer is responsible for determining if the complaint is covered by 29 CFR Part 38, and for resolving jurisdictional issues, if any. Complaints may be submitted, in writing, to:

Nicholas Allen, State WIOA EO Officer
WORKFORCE WV (Recipient)
1900 Kanawha Blvd., E.
Building 3, 3rd Floor, Suite 300
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-1600
WV Relay 7-1-1

OR

Naomi M. Barry-Pérez, Director
Civil Rights Center (CRC)
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Rm. N-4123
Washington, D.C. 20210
(202) 693-6502
TTY (202) 693-6515 or electronically at

Forms Used to File Complaint

State - An individual may file a complaint at the state level by completing and submitting the WorkForce West Virginia Discrimination Complaint Form (WFWV CIF), which may be obtained from the WorkForce West Virginia Equal Opportunity Office, or local Workforce Development Boards. Complaint information is also available on the WorkForce West Virginia website at <https://workforcewv.org/about-us/equal-opportunity/complaint-procedures>.

Federal – An initial complaint filed directly with CRC must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination. CRC may extend the filing time for good cause. Complainants are encouraged to file by completing CRC's Complaint Information Form (CIF) and Privacy Act Consent Form, which are available at the link below:

- [Complaint Information Form](#)

If the CIF and Privacy Act Consent Form are not submitted initially, CRC will send them to the complainant to be completed, signed, and returned. CRC will not process a complaint without these forms.

Complaints and Privacy Act Consent Forms may be submitted to CRC in the following ways:

- Sent by postal mail to:

Director
Civil Rights Center
ATTENTION: Office of External Enforcement
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Room N-4123
Washington, DC 20210

- Faxed to 202-693-6505, ATTENTION: Office of External Enforcement (limit of 15 pages)
- Emailed to CRCEXternalComplaints@dol.gov

Required Contents of Complaint. (29 CFR§38.70)

No verbal communication may be accepted for processing as a discrimination complaint. Any individual attempting to do so must be notified that only written, and signed, complaints may be accepted for processing. Each complaint must be filed in writing, either electronically or in hard copy, and must contain the following information:

- The complainant's name, mailing address, and, if available, email address (or another means of contacting the complainant).
- The identity of the respondent (the individual or entity that the complainant alleges is responsible for the discrimination).
- A description of the complainant's allegations. This description must include enough detail to allow the Director or the recipient, as applicable, to decide whether:
 - CRC or the recipient, as applicable, has jurisdiction over the complaint;
 - The complaint was filed in time; and
 - The complaint has apparent merit; in other words, whether the complainant's allegations, if true, would indicate noncompliance with any of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA or this part.
- The written or electronic signature of the complainant or the written or electronic signature of the complainant's representative.

Due to the signatory and identity requirements, anonymous communications (verbal or written) shall not be considered a discrimination complaint.

Right to Representation (CFR 29§38.71)

Both the complainant and the respondent have the right to be represented by an attorney or other individual of their choice.

State-Level Complaint Processing Procedure

As stated previously, a complainant must file a complaint within 180 days of the act of alleged discrimination to be accepted as timely. Once received, the State-Level EO Officer will date stamp the signed Discrimination Complaint Form to establish the timeliness of the complaint.

At this point, the complaint will be assigned a unique identifier for the purpose of tracking the complaint throughout the rest of the process. This designation will follow the sequence of calendar year + Title I Program + sequential number in which the complaint was received. For example, if a complaint arrived from a participant in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program and it was the fifth complaint received in the calendar year of 2019, the designation for this case would be 2019-WIOADW-5.

Next, jurisdiction must be determined to ensure proper handling of the complaint. The complaint must meet all requirements for content, allege a prohibited basis of discrimination, set forth an adverse action, and identify a respondent that qualifies as a “recipient” under 29 CFR §38.4(zz).

If it is determined that WorkForce WV **DOES NOT** have jurisdiction over a complaint, the complainant will be notified in writing within 5 business days of the determination. This Notice of Lack of Jurisdiction will include a statement of the reasons for such determination and a notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with the Civil Rights Center within 30 days of the date on which the complainant receives the notice.

If it is determined that WorkForce WV **DOES** have jurisdiction over the matter, the EO Office will provide written notice to the complainant within 10 working days containing the following:

1. Initial, written notice that contains:
 - An acknowledgement that the complaint has been received.
 - Notice that the complainant has the right to be represented in the complaint process.
 - A copy of the “Equal Opportunity Is the Law” Notice.
 - Notice that the complainant has the right to request and receive, at no cost, auxiliary aids and services, language assistance services, and that this notice will be translated into non-English languages as required.
2. A written statement of the issue(s) and, for each issue, a statement on whether the issue will be accepted or rejected and the reasons for each determination.
3. Notice of the period of fact finding or investigation of the underlying circumstances of the complaint, which may take around 20 working days.

4. Information regarding Mediation (the Alternative Dispute Resolution method chosen by WorkForce WV), and the Election Form, will be provided. If the complainant chooses to mediate, they must inform the WorkForce WV EO Officer within 5 days of receiving this written notice.
5. Notice of Investigatory Use of Personal Information and Consent Forms.
6. Information regarding the Notice of Final Action.

Respondent will be notified that a complaint alleging discrimination has been filed and is being processed. A summary of the complaint and a notice that retaliation is against the law will be provided to respondent. The respondent will also be notified if mediation has been chosen by the complainant as a means of resolution.

Mediation Process

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) may be attempted any time after a written complaint has been filed with the recipient, but before the Notice of Final Action has been issued. The choice whether to use mediation or the customary investigative process rests with the complainant. If the complainant chooses mediation the respondent will be notified. WorkForce West Virginia mediation procedures are as follows:

- If mediation is elected, the WorkForce West Virginia EO Officer will notify the mediator within two (2) business days of receipt of the Mediation Election Form. The session will begin no later than fifteen (15) business days after the mediator is notified.
- Parties will receive notice of time and location where the mediation session will be conducted.
- Two (2) business days will be allowed for the mediation session to achieve a resolution. If the parties do not reach an agreement within the two-day mediation session, a notice will be issued within fifteen (15) calendar days from the end of the two-day mediation session, outlining the facts or circumstances relevant to the attempt to settle the issues. Notice will be given that the complaint has been referred for investigation.
- If mediation is successful, a description of the resolution will be provided. A copy of the settlement agreement will be provided to the complainant and respondent within

fifteen (15) days from the conclusion of the mediation session and the agreement will contain the following:

- Signatures of the mediator, complainant, and respondent.
- Description of the settlement of the issue(s).
- Future responsibilities of both parties.
- Notice of rights, to both complainant and respondent, that if either party to the agreement breaches the agreement, then the non-breaching party may file a complaint with the CRC within 30 days of the learning the agreement was breached.

Breach of Agreement

A party to any agreement reached under ADR may file a complaint with the Civil Rights Center in the event the agreement is breached. The non-breaching party may notify the Director of the Civil Rights Center within 30 days of the date on which the non-breaching party learns of the alleged breach. The Director must evaluate the circumstances to determine whether the agreement has been breached. If the Director determines that the agreement has been breached, the complaint will be reinstated and processed in accordance with the recipient's procedures.

Notice of Final Action

A written Notice of Final Action, shall be provided to the complainant within 90 days of the date on which the complaint was filed, that contains the following information:

- For each issue raised in the complaint, a statement of either the decision on the issue(s) and an explanation of the underlying reasons or a description of the way the parties resolved the issue(s).
- Notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with CRC within 30 days of the date on which the Notice of Final Action is received if the complainant is dissatisfied with the recipient's final action on the complaint.

Failure to Provide Notice of Final Action or Process Complaint

If, for any reason, WorkForce WV fails to provide a Notice of Final Action or completely process a complaint within 90 days from the filing date, a complainant (or their representative) may file a complaint with the Civil Rights Center. This complaint must be filed within 30 days of the expiration of the 90-day time limit.

(M) A description of the Local Board's policy and procedures with regard to aid, benefits, services, training, and employment, include a statement of assurance that you will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities unless providing the accommodation would cause undue hardship.

Details of the Region VI WDB strategies and policies for aid, benefits, services, training, and employment to our clients can be found in the following policies, submitted as attachments to this plan as follows:

- Attachment E – Guidance Letter 1-15 R-5 Priority of Service
- Attachment Q – Guidance Letter 2-15 Selective Service Registration Requirements
- Attachment L – Guidance Letter 3-15 R-10 On-the-Job Training
- Attachment B – Guidance Letter 7-15 R-5 Supportive Services
- Attachment R – Guidance Letter 11-16 R-2 Customized Training
- Attachment M – Guidance Letter 13-16 R-7 Transitional Jobs
- Attachment EE – Guidance Letter 14-16 R-4 Eligibility
- Attachment S – Guidance Letter 15-16 R-1 Service Delivery
- Attachment F – Guidance Letter 17-16 R-3 Self-sufficiency

The Region VI WDB is an equal opportunity program/employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The Region VI WDB assures that it will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities unless providing the accommodation would cause undue hardship.

The Region VI WDB staff and partners attend regular trainings on how to better serve individuals with disabilities. Consultation with agencies such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and the Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED) assist us in being able to meet requests by clients (both job seekers and employers) for accommodations.

(N) A description of how the Local Board will ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The description should include how the Local Board will provide reasonable accommodations regarding materials, technology, and physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities. The description should also include how the Local Board will provide staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities

The four (4) American Job Centers in Region VI WDB areas are located in state-owned facilities, which are certified compliant with ADA requirements per state guidelines.

Programmatically, all partners provide assurances of compliance with ADA requirements in the partner MOU (See **Attachment A**). The EEO tagline is included in informational materials produced by partners, the WDB, and training providers. All training providers, the WDB, and the American Job Centers complete a Self Evaluation for Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which are kept on file at the state offices. The WDB will provide reasonable accommodations to clients with disabilities as needed and with direction from such consulting agencies as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and the Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED).

The WDB is committed to ensuring that WIOA staff will receive training in addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Staff attend trainings offered through the state EO office when available, through online website courses, and other venues offering this type of training. In turn, the staff receiving the training will be required to cross train other staff so everyone can perform at a level necessary to meet the needs of clients with disabilities.

(O) A description of the Local Board's policy and procedures in place to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities, including individuals with visual or hearing impairments, are as effective as communications with others.

Assistive devices are available in the American Job Centers and the WV Relay 7-1-1 number is posted in the American Job Centers along with being included in informational materials. Sign language interpreters are available when needed. All four (4) American Job Centers are ADA compliant.

(P) A description of the steps the Local Board will take to meet the language needs of limited English-speaking individuals who seek services or information. The description should include how the Local Board proposes that information will be disseminated to limited-English speaking individuals.

The Region VI WDB adopted the WorkForce WV Language Assistance Plan for use in the American Job Centers. This plan outlines how those who need assistance can be identified and the resources available to meet those needs.

(See **Attachment T – WorkForce West Virginia Limited English Proficiency Plan**)

(Q) A description of the Local Board's procurement system, including a statement of assurance that the procedures conform to the standards in DOL regulations set forth in 2 CFR 200.

The Region VI WDB procurement policy is listed at **Attachment K**.

The Region VI WDB assures that the WDB Procurement Policy conforms to the standards in DOL regulations set forth in 2 CFR 200.318, which states "that non-federal entities will reflect applicable state laws and regulation "whichconform to applicable

federal law.” All procurements utilizing state grant funding will follow West Virginia Code Section 5A-3-1 et seq., and the Code of State Rules Section 148-1-1 et.seq. The Purchasing Division Procedure Handbook can be found at:
<http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/Handbook/default.html>

The Region VI WDB assures that it will not use WIOA funds to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.

(R) *A description of any documentation to demonstrate that the acquisition, management, and disposition of property adhere to the Property Management Procedures taken from DOL regulations 2 CFR 200.*

Region VI WDB has the following policies in place addressing property management: Capitalization Policy Attachment U and Equipment Management Policy Attachment DD)

(S) *A description of any policies or procedures the Local Board adopted to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts in the exercise of their responsibilities, particularly those related to the awarding of contracts.*

Included in the procurement policy for the WDB is a provision for Conflict of Interest.

The Region VI WDB has adopted a stand-alone Conflict of Interest policy (See **Attachment V- Region VI Guidance Letter 12-16**). Each member of the Region VI WDB and LEO board is required to sign a Conflict of Interest disclaimer yearly. (See **Attachment W- Conflict of Interest Statement**)

(T) *A description of the Local Board or fiscal agent’s accounting procedures, including the procedures used in preparing reports to the State. In addition to the requirement that all financial transactions be conducted in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), the fiscal management system must include the following in the accounting procedures. This description must address how the fiscal system: tracks funding types, funding amounts, obligations, expenditures and assets; permits the tracking of program income, stand-in costs, and leveraged funds; is adequate to prepare financial reports required by the State.*

(See **Attachment X- Region VI Accounting Policies and Procedures**)

(U) *An identification of key staff who will be working with WIOA funds.*

Executive Director – Maria Larry

Fiscal Manager –Micki Cutlip

Third Party Accountant – Conley CPA Group (Jennifer Wade, CPA)

Program Director/EO Officer – Amy Hall

(V) A description of how the Local Board's (or fiscal agent's) financial system will permit tracing of funds to a level adequate to establish that funds have not been used in violation of WIOA standards or DOL regulations.

(See Attachment X- Region VI Accounting Policies and Procedures).

(W). Provide a brief description of the following: Fiscal reporting system• Obligation control system• ITA payment system• Chart of account system• Accounts payable system• Staff payroll system• Participant payroll system• Participant stipend payment system

(See Attachment X- Region VI Accounting Policies and Procedures).

(X) A description of the Local Board's (or fiscal agent's) cash management system, providing assurance that no excess cash will be kept on hand, and that procedures are in place to monitor cash.

The Region VI WDB assures that no excess cash will be kept on hand. Page 13 of Attachment X-Region VI Accounting Policies and Procedures states:

4. The Region VI Workforce Development Board Executive Director and Fiscal Manager are responsible for monitoring the daily activities and transactions of the third-party accountant, including daily monitoring of available cash on hand.

(See Attachment X- Region VI Accounting Policies and Procedures).

(See Attachment Y-State WorkForce Sub-Recipient Procedures for Requesting Cash)

(Y) A description of the Local Board's cost allocation procedures including: Identification of different cost pools; Procedures for distribution of staff costs between cost categories (Administrative cost, program cost and indirect cost; Procedures used for distribution of funds from each cost pool; Description of funds included in each cost pool; Description of cost allocation plans for American Job Centers.

(See Attachment Z - Region VI Cost Allocation Plan approved April 28, 2023)

The cost allocation plan for the American Job Center is explained in Attachment AA on page 9-#3 and part M, and page 13, part C.

(Z) A description of the Local Board's (or fiscal agent's) procedure for collecting debts involving WIOA funds

Per page 3 of the Region VI Accounting Policies and Procedures:

Debt Collection

1. Region VI WDB receives most of the organizational funds/receivables through the State Auditor's Electronic System. However, a debt could occur as a result of a training provider refund when a student drops out of a training program. The Fiscal Manager monitors each withdrawal and subsequent refund as a result of the student not completing the program.
2. Each training provider is required to have a refund policy which is outlined in the attached Training Provider Refund Policy. When a student withdraws, the Fiscal Manager emails the school a withdrawal form to complete and send back. The withdrawal form requires the school to attest to the fact that a refund is either due or not due to Region VI WDB. In the event a refund is due, the Fiscal Manager maintains contact with the school regarding the refund until the funds have been received by Region 6 WDB. If the school fails to remit the refund after a period of thirty days, Region 6 reserves the right to suspend referring students to the school until the debt has been settled.
3. Once the refund check is received in the Region VI WDB office it will be handled in accordance with the section headed "Cash Receipts" of the Region VI Accounting Policies and Procedures.

(See **Attachment X – Region VI Accounting Policies and Procedures**)

REGIONAL PLAN GUIDANCE

Section 1: Regional Analysis

This section should provide an analysis of regional economic conditions that includes-

(A) Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and their employment needs:

Region VI is situated in North Central West Virginia, encompassing a thirteen-county area in the center of the state. The public sector is still the main feature of North Central WV's economic development with the presence of many higher education institutions, prisons and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Harrison County.

Healthcare services represent another cornerstone to the North Central Region VI economy with the presence of several hospitals and various other healthcare facilities, most notably WVU Medicine who is increasing their footprint in the area with the opening of WVU Children's Hospital in Monongalia County and Mon Health who has most recently opened several "micro" hospitals in Marion and Harrison counties.

Region VI is also home to three airports including the North Central WV Airport in Bridgeport which is currently implementing a \$70 million renovation and expansion project that is projected

to create more than 1,000 jobs and double the annual economic impact of the airport to \$2 Billion. The project includes a new terminal which is slated to open by late 2024.

Despite the downturn of the coal industry, Region VI continues to list several coal companies on the annual top 10 employer list, such as Arch Coal and Murray American Energy. Region VI is also geographically situated atop the Marcellus Shale field and has partnered with the Tri-State Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium made up of 27 counties spanning the states of West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Since 2017, TEAM has been working on preparing the region for a hiring surge expected in the next 5-10 years due to the construction of cracker plants in the tri-state region of OH, WV and PA, in addition to several ancillary occupations, including manufacturing. There are anticipated to be over 100,000 new jobs over the next ten years in this region related to the construction of the plants and the ancillary jobs.

Oil and Gas Extraction is making another emergence in the region, specifically for the use of producing Hydrogen. In 2023, the US DOL selected the Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub (ARCH2) for up to \$925 million in federal support that will bring a hydrogen hub to West Virginia. Early indications are that much of the hub activity will be in the Region VI area, particularly Monongalia County. The Hub is projected to create over 20,000 jobs with the majority of those in West Virginia.

In addition to the existing in-demand sectors, Region VI is experiencing a new wave of economic activity due to the high demand in IT/Cybersecurity occupations. Region VI's location along the I-79 corridor is advantageous in that it houses some of the state's biggest technology driven employers mostly located in the I-79 High Technology Park in Marion County and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Harrison County. One of the over 30 company tenants at the High Technology Park, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) facility just recently announced in 2023 a \$300 million infrastructure expansion at the park to launch its next series of GOES weather satellites and beefing up its cybersecurity program. The expansion is expected to triple NOAA's capacity to support high-performance computing systems like supercomputers. Jim Estep, president of the High-Tech Foundation states that the demand for qualified cybersecurity professionals is higher than the supply, leading to a shortage of those who actually perform cybersecurity work. Additionally, U.S. Rep. David McKinley has commented that North Central West Virginia is well-positioned to become a center for activity in the cybersecurity field because of the work that will be done in Fairmont for NOAA and the Dept of Commerce, especially with WVU, other universities and the presence of a variety of federal agencies nearby.

(B) Demographic characteristics of the current workforce, including the education and literacy levels, with emphasis on youth, adults in transition, and individuals with disabilities. Describe how the local area's demographics are changing and the planning implications for the anticipated workforce of the future.

According to the North Central West Virginia Economic Outlook 2021-2025 published by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University, the North Central West Virginia regional population is younger and highly educated than the statewide norm, with the median age sitting at 38.4 years as opposed to the overall state median age of 42.9. The population with bachelor's degree or higher in the area is at 28.6% compared to the overall state percentage of 21.3%. These differences could be attributed to the location of West Virginia University situated in the center of North Central West Virginia.

In PY22 Region VI yielded the largest civilian labor force (188,000) among the seven workforce development regions of the state. Workforce participation rates exceeded the statewide averages here in North Central West Virginia, with Region VI being the second-highest labor force participation rate (56.4%) among the seven workforce development regions. In addition, workforce participation in North Central West Virginia tends to exceed the statewide averages. An example, Monongalia County has the highest rate of 60% either holding a job or actively seeking employment, according to the Economic Outlook of 2021-2025.

More information regarding the demographics of Region VI can be found in Section 1. Strategic Planning under sub-section

(C). Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;

General information regarding the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of Region VI can be found in Section 1. Strategic Planning under sub-section (B).

Emerging occupations in IT/Cybersecurity and Energy & Advanced Manufacturing require some emergent skill needs, including industry recognized credentials in CompTIA A+, Cisco Certified Network Associate-Security, Certified Network Defender, CompTIA Network +, Systems Security Certified Practitioner and STEM knowledge and skills as they relate to manufacturing.

(D) Analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment/unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skills levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment;

See information located in Section 1. Strategic planning under sub-sections (C) and (D).

(E) Analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services to address the identified education and skills needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region;

See information located in Section 1. Strategic planning under sub-section (D).

Section 2: Regional Sector Strategies

(A) Identify which in-demand industry sector(s) or occupation(s) the Local Boards in the region is/are serving and why.

The Region VI Executive Director has participated over the past 6 years and currently holds a position on the Executive Team of the Tri State Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium as co-chair of the Workforce and Economic Development Working Group. The TEAM Consortium partners share a regional vision of guaranteeing an adequate supply of properly skilled workers for the critical energy and advanced manufacturing sectors in the tri-state initiative which includes regional areas in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Additionally, the Executive Director has recently joined the Cybersecurity and Safety Workforce Development Initiative as a member of the advisory committee. This initiative strives to create a more vibrant economic future in an area that consists of counties located within two regional workforce development board areas including Region IV in the western section of West Virginia. The goal of the Cybersecurity and Safety Workforce Development initiative is to enhance job training and reemployment opportunities in IT by filling jobs in the high demand field of cybersecurity and attracting new sources of investment to address safety and security in the region.

Region VI continues to promote job training in the high demand field of Health Care. West Virginia's aging population will most likely increase the demand for reinforced healthcare services across the region. Region VI has become a hub for healthcare services across the state of West Virginia, primarily because of the numerous WVU Medicine facilities located in the region and the main facility in Morgantown. WVU Health system is comprised of 20 hospitals with multiple locations throughout Region VI, including the flagship hospital J.W. Ruby Memorial in Morgantown, United Hospital Center in Bridgeport, Fairmont Medical Center in Fairmont, Braxton County Memorial in Gassaway, and St. Joseph's Hospital in Buckhannon, WV. Additionally, the completion of the WVU Children's Hospital in Morgantown has enabled the region to provide critical care and research opportunities for pediatric medicine, adding to the growing need for healthcare professionals. Also, in addition to the flagship hospital located in Morgantown, Mon Health, formerly known as Monongalia General Hospital, has expanded its network to Kingwood with Preston Memorial Hospital and Weston's Stonewall Jackson Memorial hospital. Mon Health also opened its first "micro" hospital in December of 2021 in Whitehall, WV named the Mon Health Marion Neighborhood Hospital equipped with full-service emergency and laboratory services and 10 in-patient beds. In July of 2022 Mon Health was approved to add another "micro" hospital to the Region VI area of Bridgeport.

In mid-2023, Region VI was invited to join the Tri-State Apprenticeship Consortium which is comprised of nine local workforce development boards from across the Ohio River Valley

region, spanning Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The consortium seeks to find ways to remove the barriers to getting employers involved in registered apprenticeship programs to make the benefits of this talent development strategy easier for employers and jobseekers in the region to access. One of the consortium's goals is to form industry committees with a focus on important interstate industries such as manufacturing, building and construction, Energy, Healthcare and IT.

(B) Describe the current status of regional collaboration in support of the sector/occupation and identify anticipated next steps and timelines for at least the first two years of plan implementation.

Energy and Advanced Manufacturing: The Tri-State Energy & Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (TEAM) is currently seeking additional funding to broaden the geographic footprint of the original partnership to add 18 new counties for a total service area of 45 counties where Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia intersect and in 2021 was awarded a new ARC grant, which will enable TEAM to hire 3 Pathways Project Managers (1 for each state) to connect with local partners and employers to spread the word about TEAM's initiatives. This past program year TEAM established clear career pathways by sharing curriculum and agreeing to transfer credits among partner institutions and across state lines. Using the US DOL pyramid graphic, TEAM developed and then evolved 13 comprehensive pathway stackable credential models to date. The next phase of this collaborative system-alignment work will shift workforce programs to a skills-based approach, with wide adoption of curriculum modules that can be combined to obtain certifications and degrees and making use of new website tools to connect people to relevant training and jobs. TEAMS website www.connect2team.org showcases TEAM's education and training partners and 47 occupational profiles in Energy and Advanced Manufacturing and is continually adding new content to offer "A window into the energy & advanced manufacturing landscape in the tri-state region". TEAM Executive committee meets monthly to discuss on-going activities and the full TEAM consortium meets quarterly. TEAM Consortium members include industry and business partners, economic development, workforce development and education & training partners, including higher education and K-12.

Additionally, in Program Year 2022, the TEAM Consortium began focusing on regional initiatives surrounding Hydrogen and Carbon Capturing Technology. In 2023, the US DOL selected the Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub (ARCH2) for up to \$925 million in federal support that will bring a hydrogen hub to West Virginia. Early indications are that much of the hub activity will be in the Region VI area, particularly Monongalia County. ARCH2 is projected to generate over 21,000 job opportunities, with over 18,000 positions in construction and more than 3,000 permanent jobs. Region VI will work closely with trade apprenticeships and the local Community and Technical

College to identify the need for necessary occupational training programs to meet the demand of essential workers.

Cybersecurity and Safety Workforce Development Initiative: The ARC Power Grant was awarded to Glenville State College who hosted a kickoff meeting in April 2022. The first part of the initiative is to develop cybersecurity training that will lead to certifications and national industry-recognized credentials for high quality, high paying, in-demand jobs. The cybersecurity certificate component will train 301 unduplicated individuals, leading to 524 certificates. The second component of the initiative will be creating a state-of-the-art simulation experience for professionals and trainees in cybercrimes and security. The collaboration of the initiative includes stakeholders, such as the Dept. of Military Affairs and Public Safety, workforce development boards from Region IV and VI, WV State Police, WV Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation, FBI, WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, private security sector employers, etc.

Additionally, the Region VI WDB Executive Director joined the I-79 Development Council whose vision is to promote the innovation economy and to stimulate growth in the industrial/business sectors of biometrics, biotechnology, aerospace, advanced energy technologies and information technology and to create new and expanded job opportunities for all residents along the I-79 corridor counties of Monongalia, Marion, Harrison and Lewis counties. The council seeks to explore future grant opportunities to fulfil their vision.

Healthcare: In recognition of the statewide shortage of LPN/RN's, Region 6 instituted a pilot program in June of 2022 to fund this critical "in demand" occupation at a higher tuition reimbursement rate than other occupational training programs in the region, in order to encourage WIOA eligible participants to choose the nursing pathway. During Program Year 2022, Region 6 increased the number of WIOA ITA's for nursing programs by 29% from the previous year. During the quarterly meeting in June 2023, the Region VI Workforce Development Board approved the higher tuition rate for another year in hopes of increasing the percentage of nursing students even more in program year 2024. Region VI also encourages career pathway training in Healthcare – example: Certified Nursing Assistant → Medical Assistant → Licensed Practical Nurse → Registered Nurse.

Aerospace and Aviation: The Region VI Workforce Development Board provides ongoing support and services to the Aerospace sector in NCWV. Having an established partnership with both the local and State economic development agencies, as well as The Mid-Atlantic Aerospace Complex (MAAC), we can stay up to date on the needs and challenges of the industry. We continually promote open positions and training opportunities within the Aerospace industry. The Region VI Workforce Development Board meets regularly with the Aerospace companies in our service region providing

guidance and information on the WIOA program as well as services available through partner agencies.

Section 3: Regional Service Strategies

(A) Identify and describe which populations and/or service strategies and/or services will be developed on a regional basis.

Many of the grants and initiatives mentioned in the regional plan guidance focus on those individuals located in the coal impacted areas of Appalachia and those with significant barriers to employment, including youth, re-entry individuals and those recovering from opioid addiction. The various partners within the Region VI area are seeking funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) such as the initiatives of Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE). The Executive Director continues to collaborate with any of our local partners and their initiative by offering technical guidance, partnership, and letters of support for grant proposals. Moreover, WV continues to have the lowest Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in the United States and increasing the labor force participation rates and reducing the unemployment rate is a major concern, not only across the state but in the Region VI area as well.

Section 4: Coordination with Regional Economic Development Organizations

(A) Identify regional economic development services and providers in the region and describe how the Local Board(s) will coordinate services with these services and providers.

The Region VI Executive Director attends several economic development board meetings and conferences throughout the regional area on a yearly basis. The Region VI Workforce Development Board is a member of the Morgantown Partnership which sponsors its' own jobs board. WIOA and AJC Partner information is shared with many of the economic development organizations across the regional area and state economic development staff are active members of the Region VI Business Service Team. In August of 2022, Region VI WDB hired a "Community Outreach Coordinator". This position has been integral to connecting partners and resources, supporting AJC's efforts in the region, and generating employer referrals. During the past program year, the Community Outreach Coordinator has presented at various chamber meetings, economic development meetings and rotary meetings throughout the region. She makes every effort to engage both new and current partners, organizations that support employers and businesses that might not be aware of the available funding and programs for hiring and training throughout our 13-county region and she leads the Region VI Business Service Team.

Section 5: Coordination of Transportation and/or Other Support Services, as Appropriate

(A) Describe whether transportation or other support services need to be coordinated across the region based on the regional analysis, and if so which services and how.

Region VI Workforce Development Board has established a Community Resource Sheet for each county in the thirteen-county region that lists many of the available support services and/or wrap-around services located within the respective county and surrounding communities. This Community Resource Sheet is available for all those who request additional support services to successfully complete a training program. In addition, transportation assistance is available to WIOA eligible participants who are able to prove a need in order to attend a training program.

Section 6: Regional Cost Arrangements, as Appropriate

(A) Describe the cost arrangement in the region for costs associated with items 1 through 5 above, which may include the pooling of administrative costs.

Most of the costs associated with the regional planning initiatives described above are administrative costs, such as the Executive Director's travel, meeting costs, etc. which is an allowable function under the administrative cost category. Costs associated with direct training would only be available to those who are made eligible and registered with WIOA. The activities associated with the various regional grants are funded through the specific grant deliverables.

Section 7: Regional Performance Negotiation

NA