



WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)
4-YEAR LOCAL PLAN

Per PI 20 – 07 Change 1

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Approval Request Form

1. Region Number: 02 Region 7B Consortium

2. Plan Title(s): WIOA Regional Plan for Program Years 2020 – 2023

3. Policy Issuance Number: 20-07 Change 1

4. Plan Period: 07/01/20 - 06/30/24

The Chief Elected Official(s) and Workforce Development Board hereby request approval of this document. Please insert the printed name for each signature provided below.

Signature of Authorized Chief Elected Official

Date:

Printed Name: D. Jay O'Farrell

Signature of Authorized Chief Elected Official

Date:

Printed Name:

Signature of Authorized Chief Elected Official

Date:

Printed Name: Norman J. Fullmer

Michigan Works! Region 7B Consortium
Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA)
Four Year Local Action Plan

Introduction

The Michigan Works! Region 7B Consortium (Region 7B) is comprised of six Mid-Michigan counties: Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Iosco, Ogemaw and Roscommon. Region 7B is considered rural; however, it retains a diverse business and employment structure. Manufacturing sector, logistics, healthcare, retail trade, hospitality, avionics, agricultural and tourism provide the economic base for the region which encompasses approximately 3,086 square miles.

This Region 7B Four Year Local Action Plan prioritizes the following strategies that are intended to advance these key Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) principles. This Local sets forth a strategy to:

- Direct investments in economic, education, and workforce training programs to focus on providing relevant education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers;
- Apply demand/job-driven strategies in the one-stop system;
- Enable economic, education, and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training, and education programs; and
- Incorporate this Local Plan into applicable Regional Plans.

Labor Market Analysis

1. An analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions including:
 - The regional analysis prepared as part of the Regional Plan.

Region 7B is combined with Prosperity Region 3 therefore this Local Plan will include regional labor market information for the 14 counties located in the region, including the six counties of Region 7B. An analysis of the Region 3 labor markets and the local Region 7B labor markets has been conducted. The charts and graphics provide the most recent information available on population, earnings, income, employment trends and in-demand occupational areas.

Regional Labor Market Data and Economic Conditions

An updated and thorough analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions for the WIOA Planning Region.

- ***This shall include an analysis of existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of employers in those existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.***

In-Demand Industry Sectors

All industries in the 14-county region are displayed below in Table 1, comparing 2019 annual average (presented in the 2020 Regional Plan) to 2021, Q3. The industries with the highest volume and proportion of jobs are high-demand, although not all of those jobs offer family-sustaining wages. Almost all industries have maintained their ranking within the region between the two time periods – the table shows industries in order by the number employed. Only *Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting* (NAICS 11) switched places with *Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services* (NAICS 56). A significant change over the past two years is shown in total employment numbers, dropping from 83,030 in 2019 to 79,827 in 2021, a 4.0% decline. This change is not surprising given the plethora of jobs going unfilled across numerous industries.

TABLE 1: INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES (2019 ANN. -- 2021,Q3) WIOA REGION 3

NAICS	Industry	2019 (annual)			2021, Q3		
		Employed	% of Total	Avg Ann Wages	Employed	% of Total	Avg Ann Wages
44	Retail Trade	13,566	16.3%	\$28,090	13,192	16.5%	\$32,621
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	11,869	14.3%	\$40,652	11,099	13.9%	\$44,355
31	Manufacturing	9,433	11.4%	\$48,848	8,766	11.0%	\$57,324
72	Accommodation and Food Services	8,674	10.4%	\$16,819	7,820	9.8%	\$19,307
23	Construction	6,009	7.2%	\$43,393	6,129	7.7%	\$47,024
92	Public Administration	5,407	6.5%	\$38,907	5,227	6.5%	\$42,393
61	Educational Services	4,988	6.0%	\$38,675	4,627	5.8%	\$44,055
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,081	4.9%	\$23,462	4,173	5.2%	\$26,258

48	Transportation and Warehousing	3,216	3.9%	\$60,747	3,450	4.3%	\$70,462
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,664	3.2%	\$22,275	2,508	3.1%	\$24,878
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,479	3.0%	\$27,996	2,090	2.7%	\$31,981
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,121	2.6%	\$51,069	2,143	2.6%	\$54,453
52	Finance and Insurance	2,098	2.5%	\$55,585	2,024	2.5%	\$61,181
42	Wholesale Trade	1,937	2.3%	\$50,014	1,861	2.3%	\$53,946
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,401	1.7%	\$21,195	1,289	1.6%	\$21,993
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	970	1.2%	\$35,138	1,282	1.6%	\$34,033
51	Information	859	1.0%	\$32,656	794	1.0%	\$38,408
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	667	0.8%	\$67,001	590	0.7%	\$57,761
22	Utilities	307	0.4%	\$81,855	376	0.5%	\$82,015
99	Unclassified	162	0.2%	\$27,935	209	0.3%	\$35,542
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	120	0.1%	\$75,845	179	0.2%	\$88,965
	Total - All Industries	83,030		\$37,438	79,827		

Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2021Q1

With *Retail Trade* and *Accommodation and Food Services* residing in the top 5 of demand industries, it is clear that the economy of the region is heavily reliant on tourism. These two industries make up 26.3% (2021,Q3) of the total jobs. This is a slight decrease from 26.7% in 2019, reflected primarily in *Accommodation and Food Services*.

Expanding job opportunities in other industries would diversify the overall economy, making the region less susceptible to shifts in tourism-related activities. This is especially true during the era of COVID-19. With restricted travel, fear of visiting restaurants and hotels, and cancellation of festivals, the region's economic base is at great risk. In the past two years, this industry in particular has struggled with finding workers.

A recent study by Chmura indicates that half of the region's counties are predicted to fall above the average job loss in the United States (indicated by a vulnerability index score of 100) due to COVID-19. Table 2 (right) shows the vulnerability index score for each county in the region. It is important to note that a score of 100 is the anticipated average job loss across the US, so a score below 100 still indicates some job loss. This chart has been updated with the most recent data from Chmura, reflecting not only anticipated but actual impacts from the pandemic.

**TABLE 2: VULNERABILITY TO JOB LOSS
DUE TO COVID-19 (2021) – WIOA REGION
3**

County	Vulnerability Index
Cheboygan County	133.10
Oscoda County	109.39
Roscommon County	124.58
Iosco County	110.16
Otsego County	113.74
Ogemaw County	116.52
Clare County	106.07
Crawford County	97.96
Arenac County	87.72
Alpena County	93.6
Gladwin County	96.13
Alcona County	84.83
Presque Isle County	80.39
Montmorency County	79.63
Source: Chmura, 2021	

In addition to the anticipated job loss due to COVID-19, several industries are projected to decline in the short term. Table 3 below shows the same list of industries as Table 1, with a projected 1-year demand, updated for the mid-cycle plan to show 2021 – 2022 projections. Most industries are projected to either slightly decline or stay statistically the same.

TABLE 3: INDUSTRY DEMAND, 1-YEAR PROJECTION (2021-2022) – WIOA REGION 3

NAICS	Industry	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Growth	Ann % Growth
44	Retail Trade	1,562	774	977	-190	-1.4%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,097	514	532	51	0.5%
31	Manufacturing	864	336	575	-47	-0.5%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	1,388	562	708	118	1.5%
23	Construction	567	215	384	-32	-0.5%
92	Public Administration	451	203	275	-27	-0.5%
61	Educational Services	428	206	222	0	0.0%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	489	217	259	13	0.3%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	370	156	211	3	0.1%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	243	115	155	-27	-1.1%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	175	68	115	-8	-0.4%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	233	102	139	-7	-0.4%
52	Finance and Insurance	167	71	117	-21	-1.0%
42	Wholesale Trade	182	73	121	-13	-0.7%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	211	82	101	28	2.2%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	121	59	70	-9	-0.7%
51	Information	75	28	49	-1	-0.2%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	60	20	41	0	0.0%
22	Utilities	26	12	21	-7	-1.9%
99	Unclassified	23	10	14	0	-0.2%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	15	6	10	-1	-0.3%
	Total - All Industries	8,539	3,714	4,972	-147	-0.2%

Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2021Q3

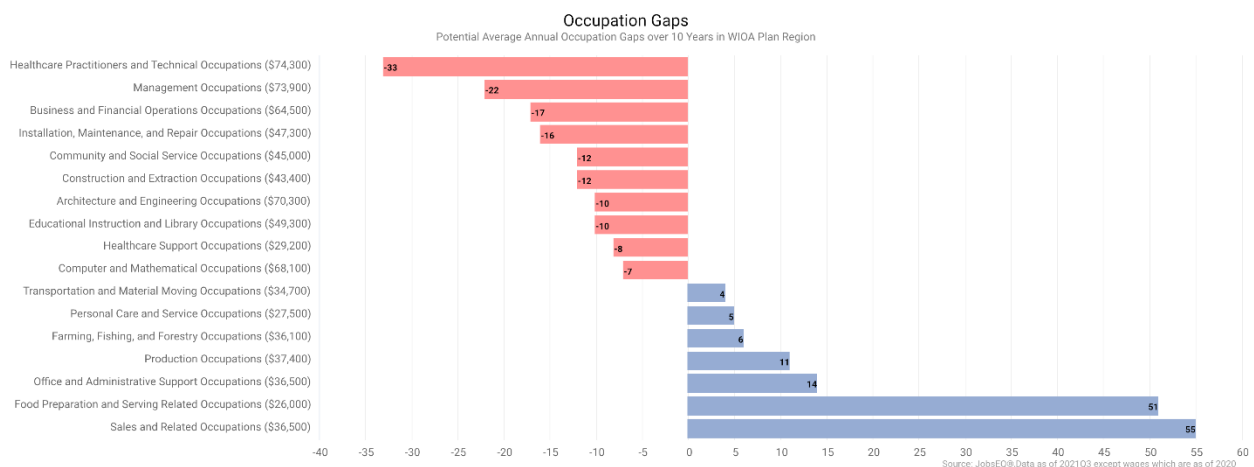
In-Demand Occupations

Despite the gloomy short-term predictions based on industry, there is hope when looking long-term at occupational growth. Figure 1 displays a list of occupations and the gaps, and therefore those most in-demand, projected over a 10-year period. Highest on the list are *Healthcare, Management, and Business and Financial Operations Occupations*. This is a change from two years ago when *Construction Occupations* and *Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations* had larger gaps than *Business and Financial Operations*. The surplus (although with minimal numbers) indicated for both *Transportation and Material Moving Occupations* and *Personal Care and Service Occupations* may be due to the high turnover in these careers, producing higher numbers of those who are trained, but still with high numbers of jobs going unfilled.

In addition, several occupations are emerging as potential growth occupations due to COVID-19, based on input from local employers. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Technical Support;
- Internet Service Installation, Support, and Repair Technicians;
- Health and Safety Officers;
- Industrial Hygienists and Environmental Sanitation Specialists; and
- Delivery Drivers.

FIGURE 1: OCCUPATION GAPS



Updated to 10-year period from 2021, Q3

- ***An assessment of what sectors/industries are considered mature but still important to the regional economy, current and in-demand, and which are considered emerging in the regional economy.***

Accommodation and Food Services is a mature industry due to the length of time it has served as a primary economic driver in the region. While many “staple” businesses have survived the emerging and growth stages of an industry cycle, there continue to be new businesses, as well as failures, in this volatile sector. However, the industry continues to provide a significant proportion of the region’s jobs. It is expected to continue to serve as an economic driver, although it is suffering now due to COVID-19. Partially due to the high volume of jobs, as well as the nature of those occupations, turnover is relatively high and thus there are typically numerous job openings. Prior to this global pandemic, most hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses had extreme difficulty filling their vacant positions. The impact of the pandemic on this industry has been severe, primarily due to lower interest among job seekers for these types of positions. At the same time, the population is eager to return to a level of normalcy that includes going out to eat, going on vacation, and frequenting the establishments in this sector. This puts tremendous pressure on these primarily small businesses to meet demand with limited staffing.

Forestry and Wood Products Manufacturing are complementary industries that are growing in the region. While they were emerging before, their growth took on new momentum upon the opening of ARAUCO Worldwide, a particle board manufacturing company located in Grayling. This company’s decision to locate in the region added hundreds of jobs, and spurred the growth of related companies that harvest and grade lumber, transport it to manufacturing facilities, and transform it into usable products.

It is difficult to predict which industries will not only survive the COVID-19 crisis but also emerge with new growth. Based on anecdotal information, the region believes that the following industries are positioned to grow in the aftermath of the crisis.

- *Transportation and Logistics*: This was already an in-demand industry, and is all the more so now with a significant increase in online purchases.
- *Information Technology*: As more work is conducted virtually, additional services will be needed to manage the equipment, infrastructure, security, and more.
- *Healthcare Equipment Manufacturing*: The disruption in the supply chain for Personal Protection Equipment early in the crisis revealed a weakness in relying on non-American suppliers. Therefore, more companies will likely pivot to this production and will continue to do so after the crisis subsides.
- Various types of *Manufacturing*, such as *Chemical* and *Transportation Equipment*: As new consumer needs arise, local companies will diversify and new manufacturing companies may start in order to meet the need.

- ***The knowledge and skills necessary to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs of in-demand industry sectors and occupations.***

The skill needs of employers within demand industries are determined through a combination of labor market data, job postings, and information directly from local businesses. Business solutions representatives within workforce programs (MWAs, MRS, Veterans Services) establish ongoing relationships with employers throughout the WIOA region, maintaining a high level of local intelligence regarding their needs.

Healthcare is a growth industry that will require workers across a wide range of skill levels. On the entry-level end of the range are Personal Care Aides (home health), Certified Nurse Aides, and Pharmacy Techs. These occupations typically require a high school diploma and some postsecondary training; the C.N.A. occupation requires state licensure. In the middle range are technicians, including Surgical and Radiologic Technologists, which require an associate's degree and state licensure. Highly skilled in-demand positions include Registered Nurses, requiring at least an associate's degree with more and more healthcare systems requiring a bachelor's degree. Skills that are necessary across most healthcare jobs include medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, first aid and CPR, and universal precautions.

Manufacturing companies are in need of entry-level production workers, as well as Machine Operators and Programmers requiring training ranging from on-the-job training to an associate's degree. The manufacturing industry also needs mid-level skilled technicians with cross-training to address machine repair and operation, requiring knowledge in hydraulics, robotics, electrical, and more. In addition, Welders are needed with American Welding Society certification in multiple types of welding. Manufacturing companies are also more in need of highly skilled positions than ever before, such as various types of Engineers and Designers. These positions are very difficult to find in the labor pool within the region, so companies are often forced to recruit from outside. Talent attraction continues to be a challenge because of the lack of large cities and amenities.

The *Transportation and Warehousing* industry needs Long-Haul Truck Drivers; with increased use of online purchasing, this industry will require more workers with CDL certification as well as myriad endorsements. Also, more local retailers are providing delivery services, so regional transportation will likely grow in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Construction companies need workers with the ability to install HVAC and electrical, measure and cut accurately, frame and finish carpentry, and follow safety regulations. Although construction typically is seasonal, workers with cross-functional skill sets will be highly sought after to work on outside projects in the summer and indoor in the winter.

The *Retail Trade* and *Accommodation and Food Service* industries require workers with a high school diploma, unless hiring for management or skilled positions, such as Executive Chef. Highly skilled positions in food service typically require an industry certification and/or associate's degree in the culinary arts. Most of the employers in these industries need employees with good customer service skills.

Regardless of industry or occupation, all employers in the region cite the need for workplace literacy skills. Also referred to as “soft skills” but not to be diminished, these skills are truly critical to success on any job. Those most often required include attendance and punctuality, positive and professional attitude, respect for authority, and the ability and commitment to hard work.

An expansion of the list of employability skills is anticipated due to the impact of COVID-19. Many businesses discovered during the “Stay Home” period that virtual work was not only feasible, but may be preferable for some occupations. The skills needed for those who can and will continue to work from home include high levels of technology literacy so they can trouble-shoot on their own. Also, the ability to communicate effectively over video conferencing will be needed, although it has to be well-defined. The continued use of virtual work as the region emerges from the pandemic varies by employer and type of work. Its success continues to be contingent on broadband availability.

- ***The demographic characteristics of the current workforce and how the region's demographics are changing in terms of population, labor supply, and occupational demand.***

Demographic Characteristics

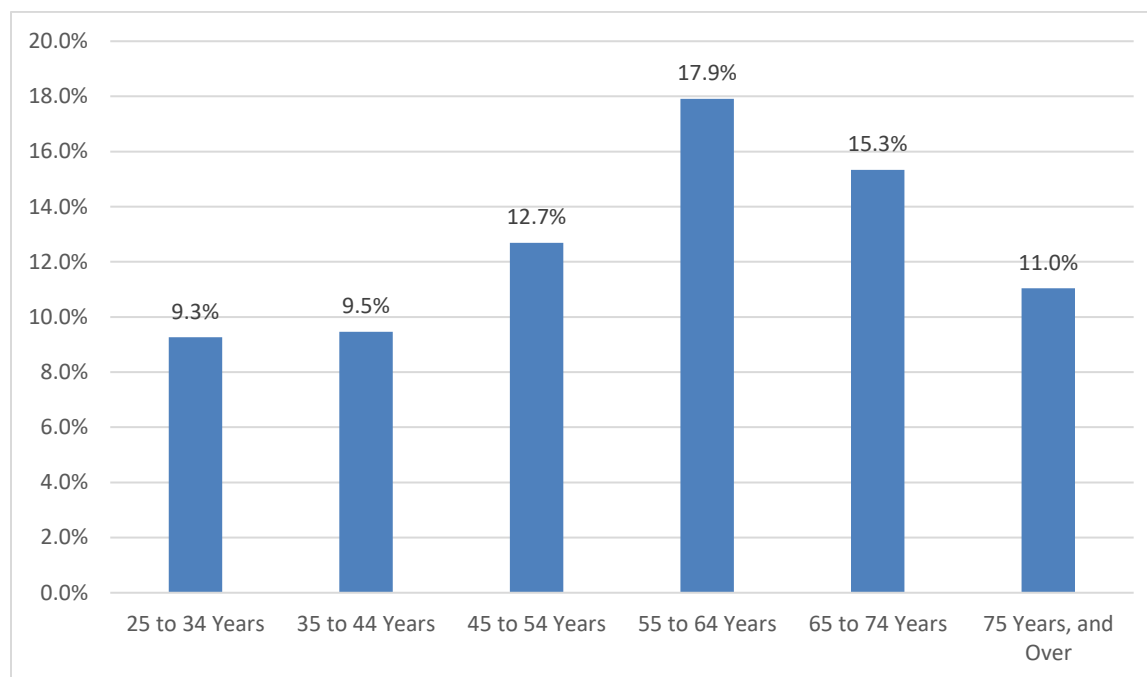
The 14-county WIOA region has a population of 273,846 people, as of 2019. It is split evenly between genders, at exactly 50% male and 50% female. In addition, the following demographics indicate the characteristics of the population:

Race: White	96.1%
Race: Black or African American	0.5%
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.8%
Race: Asian	0.5%
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
Race: Some Other Race	0.2%
Race: Two or More Races	1.9%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1.8%

[Source: JobsEQ®](#)

It is important to explore variations in the population by demographic group, as Figure 2 displays. This demonstrates a primary challenge within the region relating to its workforce: Over one-third of the working-age population is 55 or older. Employers continuously stress their concerns over pending retirements and the loss of institutional knowledge and experience.

FIGURE 2: POPULATION BY AGE RANGE, 2019



Source: JobsEQ, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates 2015-2019

In the region, approximately 0.9% of the population aged 5 years and older speak English less than very well, compared to 3.4% statewide. Disconnected youth (16-19 year-olds who are not in school, not high school graduates, and either unemployed or not in the labor force) are only 4.3% of the population.

Population Change

This regional plan originally presented population changes ranging from 2013 – 2019. However, since then, the 2020 Census results have been released, and therefore are used here for the mid-cycle update.

The 14-county region lost 2.2% of its population during the decade. Counties with the greatest declines were Alpena, Otsego, and Iosco. Only three counties saw increases, with Oscoda experiencing the highest increase at 2.7%. In comparison, Michigan's population grew by 1.3% and the country's population grew by 6.4%.

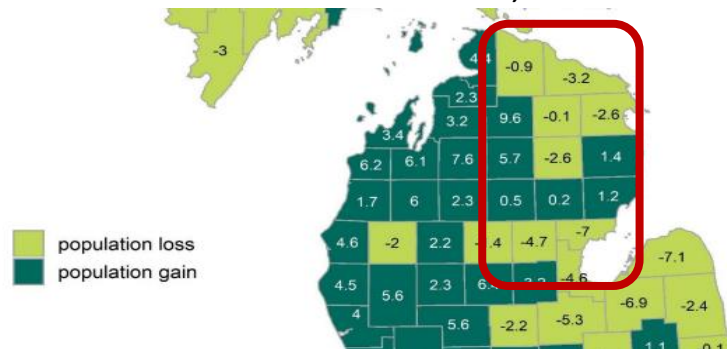
TABLE 4: POPULATION TRENDS, 2010-2020

AREA	2010	2020	2010–2020 NUMERIC CHANGE	2010– 2020 PERCENT CHANGE
Alcona	29,510	28,380	-1,130	-4.0%
Alpena	15,852	14,814	-1,038	-7.0%
Arenac	26,062	25,266	-796	-3.2%
Cheboygan	31,006	31,083	77	0.2%
Clare	14,055	14,116	61	0.4%
Crawford	25,735	25,500	-235	-0.9%
Gladwin	25,839	25,158	-681	-2.7%
Iosco	9,777	9,355	-422	-4.5%
Montmorency	21,605	21,079	-526	-2.5%
Ogemaw	8,601	8,241	-360	-4.4%
Oscoda	24,151	24,821	670	2.7%
Otsego	13,317	12,555	-762	-6.1%
Presque Isle	24,442	24,103	-339	-1.4%
Roscommon	10,879	10,448	-431	-4.1%
WIOA Planning Region	280,831	274,919	-5,912	-2.2%
Michigan	9,877,510	10,011,844	134,334	1.3%
United States	309,321,664	330,580,828	21,259,164	6.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Census, 2010 and 2020.

Looking ahead, the population is projected to decline slightly (-0.3%) between 2020 and 2030. However, individual county changes range from a high of 9.6% increase in Otsego to a low of 7% decrease in Arenac.

FIGURE 3: PROJECTED CHANGE IN POPULATION BY COUNTY, 2020 – 2030



Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives (BLMISI), Population

- **An analysis of the current workforce in the region, including employment and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.**

Labor Force Information

Table 5 displays labor force information by county, subtotaled by local area with data as of December 2019. The unemployment rate varies greatly by county. This area highest and lowest unemployment rate: Roscommon at 7.3% is the highest, while Gladwin is the lowest at 5.6%.

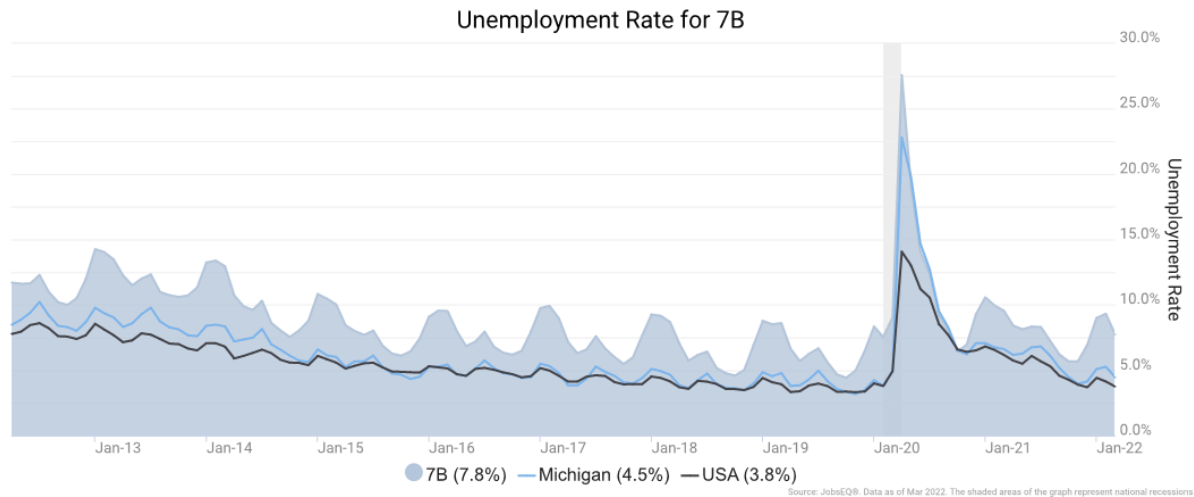
TABLE 5: LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (DEC. 2019) – WIOA REGION 7B

Area	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Arenac County, MI	5,816	5,417	399	6.86%
Clare County, MI	11,828	11,111	717	6.06%
Gladwin County, MI	9,943	9,386	557	5.60%
Iosco County, MI	9,888	9,283	605	6.12%
Ogemaw County, MI	7,979	7,429	550	6.89%
Roscommon County, MI	7,653	7,091	562	7.34%
Totals - Region 7B	53,107	49,717	3,390	6.38%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Annual Population Estimates

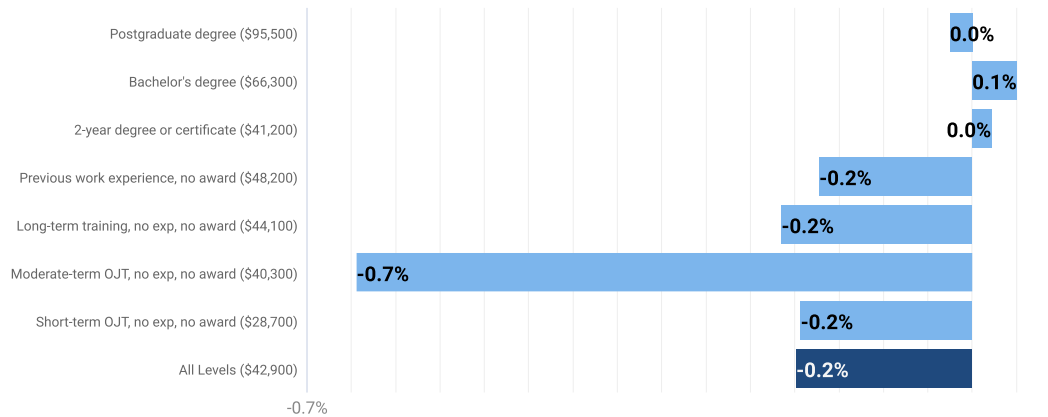
The unemployment rate for Region 7B was 7.8% as of March 2022. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 3.8%. One year earlier, in March 2021, the unemployment rate in Region 7B was 9.6%.

FIGURE 4: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE TRENDS, 2008 – 2019



Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Region 7B is projected to contract 0.2% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to contract 0.0% per year, those requiring a bachelor's degree are forecast to grow 0.1% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.0% per year.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Training Required for 7B



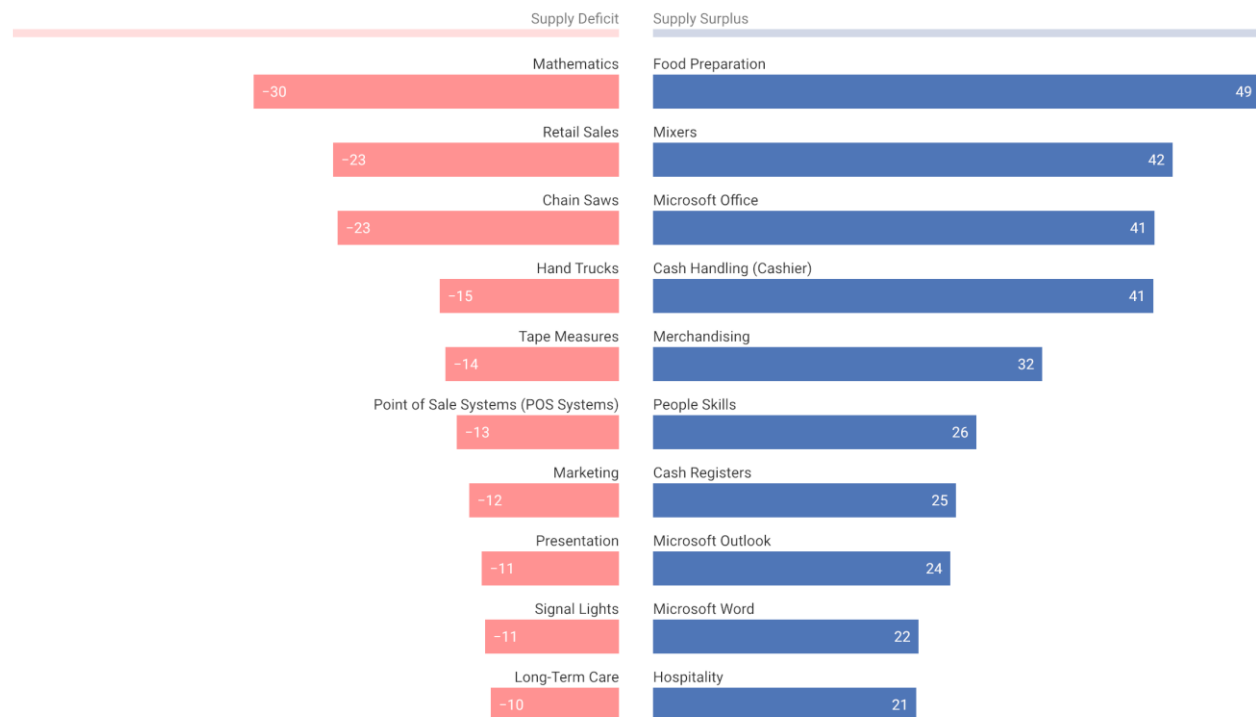
Employment by occupation data are estimates as of 2021Q4. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

Educational attainment is one indicator of skill level, but specific skill sets that match occupations within the region is another means of assessing the workforce. Figure 5 displays skill gaps identified for the region during 2019. Because the *Manufacturing* and *Retail Trade* and *Accommodation* industries are so prevalent in the region, several skills listed here reflect the needs of those industries.

FIGURE 5: SKILL GAPS

Skill Gaps

Total - All Occupations, 7B



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2021Q4; openings and candidate sample compiled in January 2021

INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

The proportion of individuals with a disability is slightly higher in the region than the state average, and is growing. This may be due to the increase in retirement-age individuals, who are more likely to experience a physical impairment that interferes with daily activity.

FIGURE 6: INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, 2016 – 2020

TABLE 27: INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN MICHIGAN BY COUNTY, 2016–2020	
COUNTY	2016–2020 ESTIMATE*
Arenac	2,852
Clare	6,870
Gladwin	5,242
Iosco	5,253
Ogemaw	4,854
Roscommon	6,218
Total	31,289

Required: WIOA Act, Section 108, (b), (1), (C)

Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

Source: Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives

Individuals on public assistance has changed over time as well. While the region remains higher than the state average, there has been a significant decrease in those receiving income or other types of assistance, such as childcare and food. There are a number of potential reasons for the change, including the implementation of lifetime limits, the existence of more jobs, and the slight increases in educational attainment displayed in Figure 6.

FIGURE 7: CHANGE IN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, 2019 – 2021

TABLE 29: ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RECIPIENTS IN MICHIGAN BY COUNTY, 2019–2021

COUNTY	2019	2021	2019–2021 PERCENT CHANGE
Arenac	444	514	15.8%
Clare	1,391	1,888	35.7%
Gladwin	730	882	20.8%
Iosco	1,142	1,552	35.9%
Ogemaw	800	1,037	29.6%
Roscommon	830	1,160	39.8%
Total	5,337	7,033	75.8%

Required: WIOA Act, Section 108, (b), (1), (C)

Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Note: This table reflects all FIP/FAP Assistance Recipients with a Work Requirement

* County office was closed and clients are serviced in adjoining counties.

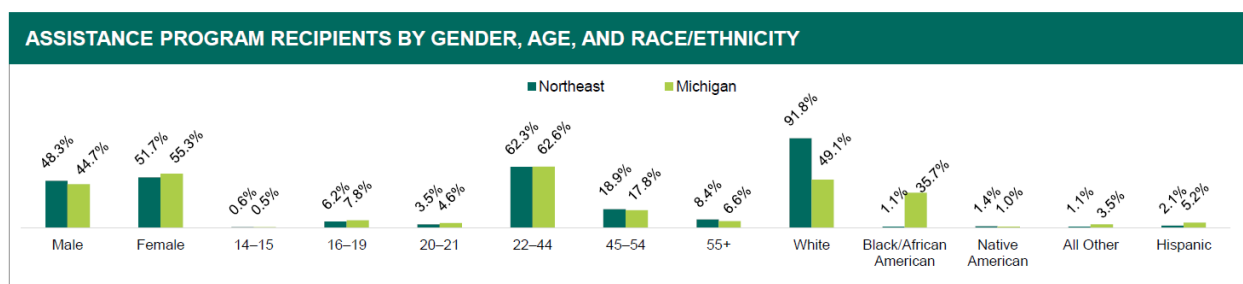
Source: Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives

In December 2021, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported just under 8,200 assistance program recipients in Northeast Michigan. This number has risen from the roughly 6,000 assistance program recipients in December 2019. (Table 29)

Males made up nearly 48 percent of all program recipients, slightly outpacing the statewide average.

FIGURE 8: POVERTY LEVELS 2019 – 2021

Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services



Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

- **An analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including available education and training opportunities. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region and the region's capacity to provide the workforce development activities necessary to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers in the region.**

AND

- **A discussion of geographic factors (inherent geographic advantages or disadvantages) that may impact the regional economy and the distribution of employers, population, and service providers within the region.**

The workforce development system in the region consists of multiple agencies and programs. Together, they form a network of services that prepare and maintain a skilled workforce to meet employer needs. The system consists of four domains of services:

- ***Education***, including CTE, general K-12, adult education (GED/HSE), and postsecondary certificate and degree programs, as well as combinations thereof such as dual enrollment and middle college.
 - *Providers* in this domain include all K-12 school systems; four ISDs; Iosco-RESA Adult Education; Alpena Community College; Kirtland Community College; North Central Michigan College; Mid-Michigan College; Industrial Arts Institute; Michigan Career and Technical Institute; and several private sector postsecondary training providers.
- ***Workforce Programs***, including career exploration and planning, case management, job search assistance, work-based training, funding for occupational training provided by the education sector, workplace readiness, training on self-advocacy, and connections to local employers. Specialized services are provided to opportunity youth, veterans, individuals and youth with disabilities, individuals on public assistance, offenders, migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW), and more. Programs include, but are not limited to: WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth; Employment Services including Veterans Services and MSFW; PATH/TANF; Vocational Rehabilitation; Trade Act (all acts); Young Professionals, The Network and Jobs for Michigan's Graduates.
 - *Providers* in this category include Michigan Works! Region 7B (Region 7B); and programs under the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity (LEO): Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Veterans Services, and Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker Program.

- **Supportive Services**, including public assistance for food, childcare, income, utilities, Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) and more; unemployment compensation; transportation services; food pantries; domestic violence shelters; and many other programs that assist individuals and employers to remove barriers to successful, long-term employment.
 - *Providers* in this domain include the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS); LEO-Unemployment Insurance Agency (LEO-UIA); Northeast Michigan Community Services Agency (NMCSA); local transit authorities; and more.
- **Business Services**, including economic development incentives and supports like site selection and growth; business planning and counseling; access to government contracting; training for new hires and incumbent workers; access to overlooked talent pools including veterans and those with disabilities; coaching on accommodations for individuals with disabilities; retention services to reduce turnover; and work-based training programs, such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and incumbent worker training.
 - *Providers* in this domain include economic development entities covering all counties; Small Business Development Center; and Procurement Technical Assistance Center; MRS; SafetyNetWorks (BRN administered by MW!NC); and The Network (BRN administered by Region 7B). In addition, providers in most other domains work closely with employers to better understand their needs and support their workforce, including both MWAs, Veterans Services, MRS, and CTE programs. All community colleges in the region have capacity to customize training programs for local employers.

Education and training activities are available for most in-demand industries and occupations. At the postsecondary level, the four community colleges, University Center, and private training providers offer the following programs for in-demand industries (this list is not all-inclusive):

<i>Healthcare</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Construction and Trades</i>	<i>Information and Professional</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Nurse Aide • Registered Nurse • Health Information Technology • Surgical Tech • Medical Assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing Technology • Mechatronics • CNC Machining • Automation and Robotics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welding • Automotive • HVAC • Concrete Technology • Utility Line Tech • Electrical Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Information Systems • Management • Computer Aided Design

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are offered by ISDs and/or local districts. The programs prepare students for most in-demand industries, and are designed to respond to the needs of industry within each community. Several programs offer industry-recognized credentials and/or college credit, some through early or middle college. Many of the programs listed above at the postsecondary level are also available through CTE programs; the programs work together to offer a career pathway with increasing skill levels and access to local employers.

The primary Adult Education program offered throughout the region is administered by losco-RESA. Adults can access services at any location to upgrade basic academic skills, improve computer and workplace literacy, and prepare for their GED, HiSET, or other high school equivalency exam.

The top 20 awards – certificates and credentials – earned during the 2019-2020 school year are presented in Table 6. (The Total listed at the top represents all awards and includes those beyond the top 20.) These indicate not only the availability and accessibility of programs matched to high-demand occupations, but also the region's ability to prepare a skilled workforce.

TABLE 6: TOP 20 AWARDS BY PROGRAM (2019-2020) – WIOA REGION 3

CIP Code	Title	Certificates and 2yr Awards	Total Awards
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	85	85
24.0101	Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	77	77
51.3801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	58	58
51.0907	Medical Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiation Therapist	25	25
11.0202	Computer Programming, Specific Applications	12	12
51.9999	Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences, Other	12	12
51.2308	Physical Therapy/Therapist	12	12
24.0199	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other	11	11
43.0107	Criminal Justice/Police Science	8	8
13.1210	Early Childhood Education and Teaching	8	8
50.0409	Graphic Design	7	7
47.0201	Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician	7	7
48.0508	Welding Technology/Welder	7	7
52.0401	Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General	6	6
43.0102	Corrections	4	4
52.0301	Accounting	3	3
15.1306	Mechanical Drafting and Mechanical Drafting CAD/CADD	3	3
11.0801	Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design	3	3
15.0000	Engineering Technologies/Technicians, General	2	2
	Total	350	350

- Source: JobsEQ®
- Data as of the 2019-2020 academic year, related occupation data as of 2021Q4 except wages which are as of 2020.
- Occupation demand data reflect annual average rates from the 10-year forecast.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The region identified several strengths and weaknesses within the workforce development system. The Regional Service Strategies section below uses these strengths to mitigate weaknesses and turn disadvantages into opportunity.

Strengths

- *Partnerships and Collaboration:* The region's service providers have a long history of strong partnerships, resulting in collaborative efforts that stretch limited resources.
- *Customer Service:* Because the region is largely rural, many of the providers serve as community hubs, enabling connections and access to resources that would otherwise be unavailable. As one WIOA partner stated during the regional planning process, "the community knows we care."
- *Resourcefulness:* With such small population numbers, formula-based funding for many programs is limited, and does not always provide adequate resources for the unique needs of rural residents. Therefore, partnerships have formed out of necessity, and have stayed strong in order to ensure that the most resources get directly to the customer.
- *Business Engagement:* Small businesses (2 to 9 employees) make up a vast majority of companies in the region, with at least 60% of the total of all establishments in all counties as of 2019.¹ These companies are eager to engage with workforce development programs, due to their limited capacity for human resources functions. Therefore, the collection of providers in the workforce network is well-connected with employers, maintaining a high level of local intelligence about business needs.
- *Strong Education System:* Despite the small size of most local districts, CTE programs, and postsecondary programs, educational outcomes are strong. All educational institutions are dedicated to providing the best education possible for local students, and connecting them to opportunities for continued education and local employment.

¹ YourEconomy.org

- *Co-Location*: While customers of the American Job Centers have meaningful access to all WIOA Required Partners through some means of technology and/or direct referral, many partners have chosen to co-locate within one or more AJCs, or utilize itinerant space. This includes Veterans Services, UIA, MRS, Offender Success, and Adult Education. Co-location strengthens partnerships because frontline staff become familiar with each other and the programs and services offered.

Weaknesses

Many of the weaknesses held by the workforce development system are due to the geography of the region. The population in Region 7B was 140,946 per American Community Survey data for 2015-2019.

Region 7B has a civilian labor force of 54,837 with a participation rate of 46.1%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in Region 7B, 13.6% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 33.5% in the nation.

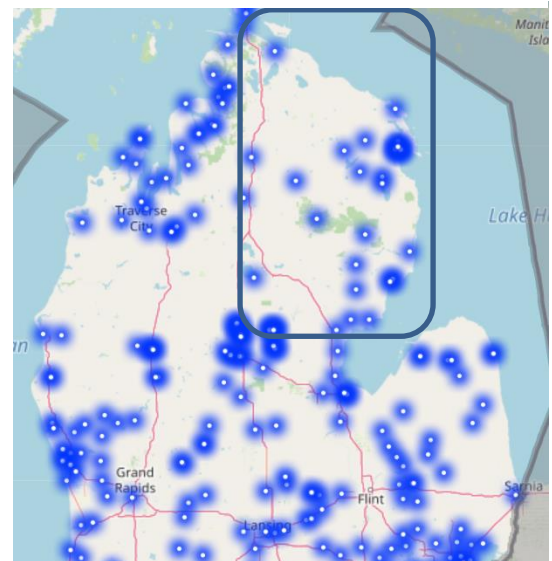
The median household income in Region 7B is \$42,103 and the median house value is \$99,320.

This causes several challenges to service delivery for all domains.

- *Educational opportunities* are constrained, despite the relatively large number of programs and providers, due to geography. For instance, CTE programs are delivered in a scattered site model, because there isn't enough capacity for a centralized location. Therefore, if a student lives too far from the program of their choice, they cannot attend because of the vast travel distance required.
- *Transportation options* are very limited. County-based transit authorities exist only in some counties, with limited service. The low population density does not support the full range of transportation services. Therefore, individuals typically use their own vehicles for transportation to and from work. If their income does not support a reliable vehicle and ongoing maintenance, their ability to report regularly and on time is greatly reduced.

- *Lack of broadband internet service* is a significant challenge for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and students. With the onset of COVID-19, more and more virtual work is occurring, but lack of internet access is a prohibiting factor. Because the business model for broadband providers relies on volume to overcome the high costs of building the infrastructure, very few communities in the region meet the necessary critical mass. Figure 10 to the right displays availability of free wifi hotspots in various communities around the state, but WIOA Region 3 has large swaths where that service is not available. (Source: Connected Nation Michigan)

FIGURE 5: FREE WIFI HOTSPOT AVAILABILITY



- *The region's youth leave for bigger cities* and an exciting lifestyle with more people, amenities, activities, and opportunities.

In addition to the challenges presented by the geography and small cities, other weaknesses were identified during the planning process as follows:

- High ALICE population
- Limited higher wage job opportunities
- Demographics: more individuals are leaving the workforce than entering
- High housing costs in shoreline areas
- Lack of affordable, available childcare
- Lower educational attainment than the state average
- Lack of a strong, unified voice in Lansing

Capacity

Both the strengths and weaknesses shown above impact the capacity of the region to meet the needs of local employers, and to help those with barriers to employment. While services are excellent and well-connected to both employer and job seeker needs, the ability to deliver those services to all who could benefit is hindered. The Weaknesses section provided much detail regarding limitations due to geography, but another factor in diminished capacity is funding.

Additional funding would provide capacity to expand in underserved communities and assist more people with higher quality and targeted services. This is especially important for serving individuals with barriers to employment, as they require more individualized attention, longer-term relationships with staff, and more supportive services. Additional training dollars would prepare more workers for current and future demands, and support the higher costs of work-based training such as work experience and apprenticeships.

Additional capacity can be achieved through enhanced partnerships. Although the region is very strong in collaboration and relationships across all providers, there is always room for improvement. As you will see in the section below, several regional strategies leverage the collaborations existing in the region. Additional coordination will allow for a more streamlined experience for customers and more capacity to reach both job seekers and employers.

- **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 performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance as described in the WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency:**

The process of assessing and implementing strategic visions and goals to meet the employment needs of local employers and participants will be an ongoing effort.

Region 7B Workforce Development Board (WDB) members include Private Sector members in each county as well as representatives from community colleges, intermediate school district's, adult education, local economic development, organized labor, community-based organizations, vocational rehabilitation and Native Americans.

Region 7B staff have and continue, to work with the WDB to develop strategies to meet the needs of area businesses and customers.

This process has created an opportunity for collaborative planning across all programs. Additionally, on a multi-regional basis, interaction with the Career & Educational Advisory Councils (CEAC), Prosperity Region Initiative Collaborative, and other groups (STEM Initiative workgroups, CDCs, etc.) to effectively contribute to preparing an educated and skilled workforce for the Mid/Northeast Michigan Areas.

The Region 7B Board of Directors consist of one Local Elected Official (LEO) from each of our six counties. The Board of Directors is designated the grant recipient and administrative entity for the local workforce development system in the six counties and employs the staff of Region 7B. Adult Education and MRS have a representative on our local WDB and participated in the survey that was sent to all core partners. Core partners are invited to attend monthly staff meetings and twice a year core partners are requested to attend a Collaborative meeting. Staff attend monthly meetings with the human services collaborative and Continuum of Care, which allows them to connect with partner agencies outside the walls of the One-Stop with specific regard to the Board's vision and goals for serving those with barriers to employment, it is planned that a more detailed process of collaborative service networking will be employed.

This will include:

- Joint partner organization work preparation/placement planning for identified client-customers
- Increased blending of service resources as appropriate
- Reviews of targeted client-customer progress
- Regular sharing of case notes

Mission

Region 7B strives to meet the needs of our employers and job seekers through a demand driven system to foster economic growth and prosperity. Connecting Employers, Resources and Talent.

Vision

To meet the needs of our area for Employment, Economic Development, Education, and Entrepreneurship in order to enhance the quality of life for our employers and residents.

Goals

- Develop One-Stop Service/ American Job Centers that are demand-driven meeting the needs of both employers and job seekers;
- Preserve and create jobs while building and supporting a skilled workforce;
- Improve the quality and quantity of the existing, potential, and future workforce in the region;
- To help existing and dislocated workers acclimate to new work options and career paths;
- Prepare incumbent workers for advanced positions and to fill pending retirement vacancies;

- Continue to develop and refine innovative service delivery strategies for the region which include growing and strengthening all economic development services in the region;
- Continue to contribute to the development of entrepreneurs to identify market challenges and opportunities; and
- Continue to collaborate with training providers and secondary and post-secondary educators to augment opportunities for the job seeker to obtain the academic and work skill proficiencies required by local employers.
- Continue to develop and work with core partners in addressing individuals with barriers to employment.

Local performance goals for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation as described in the WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A) are listed below, will be updated when received and negotiated with the State:

Baseline Measures Levels

- WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
 - Measurable Skills Gain
 - Median Earnings (Youth Only)
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
- WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy
 - Employment Second Quarter After Exit
 - Employment Fourth Quarter After Exit
 - Median Earnings
 - Credential Attainment Rate
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
- WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
(Note – Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skills Gain do not apply to Wagner-Peyser)
- WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation

Michigan Works! Region 7B Consortium

Performance Measure	Program Year 2022	Program Year 2023
Adult		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	81.5%	81.5%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	76.0%	76.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,900	\$6,900
Credential Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	76.0%	76.0%
Measureable Skill Gains	50.6%	50.6%
Dislocated Worker		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	81.0%	81.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	80.0%	80.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,600	\$7,600
Credential Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	84.0%	84.0%
Measureable Skill Gains	58.1%	58.1%
Youth		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	77.0%	77.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	75.0%	75.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,968	\$3,968
Credential Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	76.8%	76.8%
Measureable Skill Gains	37.0%	37.0%
Wagner Peyser		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	68.9%	68.9%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	66.0%	66.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,880	\$5,880

- **A description of the local board's strategy to align local resources, required partners, and entities that carry-out core programs to achieve the strategic vision and goals.**

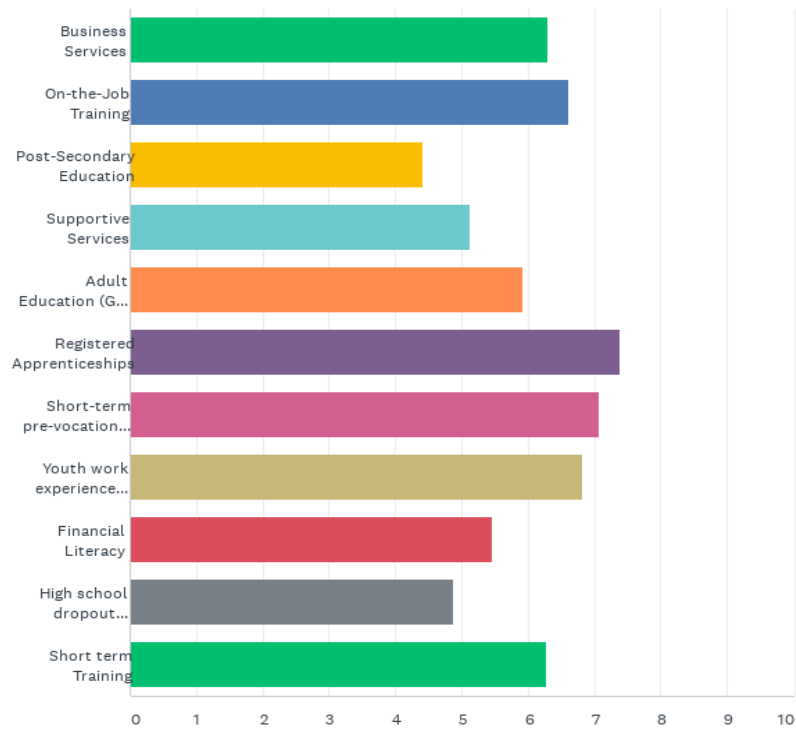
As background information, the Region 7B WDB members include Private Sector members in each county as well as representatives from community colleges, intermediate school districts, adult education, local economic development, organized labor, community-based organizations, and vocational rehabilitation.

The WDB is authorized by the State of Michigan to oversee components of the Michigan Works! System, including the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA) programs (adult, youth and dislocated worker programs), Partnership, Accountability, Training and Hope (PATH), Wagner-Peyser Employment programs, Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), etc. Region 7B also works with partner agencies to ensure core programs are delivered, which include, but are not limited to: Veteran Services, Disabled American Veterans, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, The Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Salvation Army, United Way, Bay Arenac Women's Services, Adult Education Providers, Alternative Education Providers, AARP, Offender Success, Recovery Independence Safety and Empowerment (RISE), Vocational and Community Education Providers, MSU Extension Offices, Listening Ear, Women's Aid, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, AuSable Valley Community Mental Health, Central Michigan Community Mental Health, Little Traverse Bay Odawa Indian Tribe, NEMCSA, Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Small Business Development Centers, and Northern Transformation Corporation (NTC).

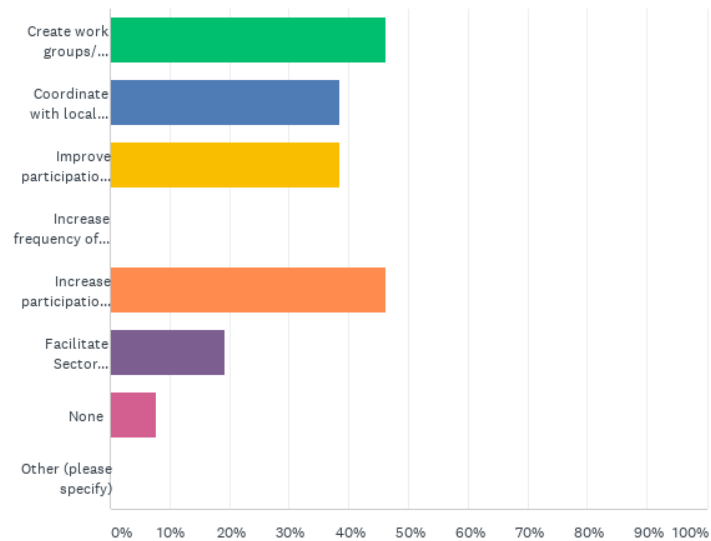
The LEOs focus their direction on financial matters of the programs. The WDB strives to successfully manage a demand driven and user friendly workforce system, investing workforce funding to recruit, prepare, and train workers with the skills needed to support existing industry and attract new industry to the region because developing and maintaining a skilled workforce is one of the top priorities for achieving and sustaining a globally competitive economy.

Region 7B conducted a survey to help determine the goals and strategies in providing services to job seekers and employers, as well as invited stakeholders to participate in a regional planning focus group.

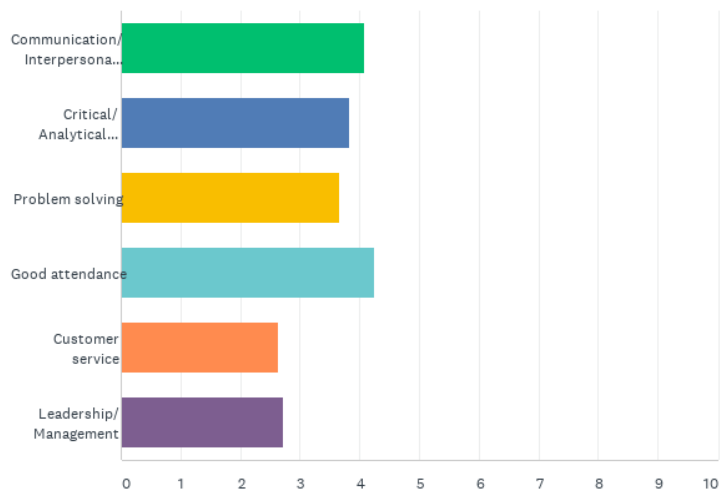
When surveyed about what Michigan Works! Region 7B should focus on for improvement or growing in the next four years, Registered Apprenticeships and short-term pre-vocations skills (soft skills) were the top choices, followed closely by youth work experience, as indicated by the chart below:



The WDB, LEOs, partner agencies, and staff that completed the survey indicated that Region 7B should continue to focus on ensuring that businesses are involved in regional planning efforts, ensuring that input is sought, specifically through subgroups, to reach out to those eligible for services and increase participation of in-demand sector in regional strategies. Those surveyed felt it important to improve participation of business sector in regional planning efforts.



The survey participants felt that the most significant soft skills missing among workers were good attendance, communication and interpersonal skills, problem solving, and analytical/ problem solving skills.



Marketing and advertising were included in several comments regarding ways to improve and educate those about services.

Region 7B has incorporated these survey results in the goals and strategies below:

Goals:

- Develop One Stop/ American Job Centers that are demand-driven meeting the needs of both employers and job seekers;
- Preserve and create jobs while building and supporting a skilled workforce;
- Improve the quality and quantity of the existing, potential, and future workforce in the region;
- Help existing and dislocated workers acclimate to new work options and career paths;
- Prepare incumbent workers for advanced positions and to fill pending retirement vacancies;
- Continue to develop and refine innovative service delivery strategies for the region which include growing and strengthening all economic development services in the region;
- Create a marketing strategy to educate the community about Michigan Works! Region 7B services and
- Continue to collaborate with training providers and secondary and post-secondary educators to augment opportunities for the job seeker to obtain the academic and work skill proficiencies required by local employers.

Strategies:

- Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Programs;
- On The Job Training (OJT) Programs;
- Customized Training Programs;
- Classroom Training;
- Transitional Employment;
- Apprenticeships;
- Work Experience;
- Industry and Sector Strategies;
- MiCareerPathways Initiative;
- Business Services;
- Career Exploration events and
- Job Readiness Training.

Based on the expansive six county geographic area covered via Region 7B, the strategy to effectively align resources, partner services and core programs to achieve the Boards vision and goals includes the following:

- Create a strategic marketing plan;
- Continue to work with Northeast Michigan Works! to create a model for career pathways through the pilot project MiCareerPathways
- Continue to work at educating and securing apprentices, and
- Incorporate soft skill mentoring in all programs.

2. The programs that are included in the Region 7B system, including One Stop/ American Job Center partners:

Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA) programs (adult, youth and dislocated worker programs), Wagner Peyser Employment programs, Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation, Partnership, Accountability, Training and Hope (PATH), Veteran Services, Disabled American Veterans, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, The Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Salvation Army, United Way, Women's Aid Services, Adult Education Providers, Alternative Education Providers, Experience Works, Offender Success, Vocational and Community Education Providers, MSU Extension Offices, and NTC.

The Region 7B Workforce System has been assembled to provide a number of core programs and services. Region 7B's initial core priority is to train and employ disadvantaged populations, returning veterans, displaced workers, the unemployed and underemployed, or those seeking to upgrade skills to ensure greater job security to remain competitive in a global economy.

Region 7B staff will continue to develop a flexible and dynamic demand driven system of workforce development which prepares people for jobs that encourage self-sufficiency, lifelong learning, and work readiness.

Region 7B will work with training providers and area employers to develop curriculum that helps students acquire the skills and aptitudes relevant to today's workplace.

Services will be offered through an efficient one-stop service delivery, which unifies numerous training, education and employment programs into single, customer-friendly, stream-lined system in each of the six counties.

- **A description of the local board's strategy to work with entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to provide service alignment (including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006):**

Region 7B recognizes how partners of education, workforce development, and economic development continue to develop, strengthen and influence each other. The area is united and partners with community colleges, universities, Regional Educational Service District/Intermediate School District (ISD), economic development corporations, non-profits, chambers and others to influence workforce and economy.

These partners have influence on Region 7B programs and services, aligning them to meet customer needs. Members of the WDB serve on the CEAC and report to the WDB.

The CEAC serve in advisory capacity to the WDB on all educational issues. All partnerships will appropriately expand via WIOA priorities. The CEAC and WDB review the in-demand occupation list annually. The Business Solution Professionals, Career Advisor and Management have regular contact through joint meetings with the CTE Directors; STEM meetings and the Region 3 and 5 Strategic Team meetings, and execution of the MiCareerQuest Middle Michigan event. Members of the Business Services Staff also serve on the CTE advisory committees.

Additionally, it is the Board's strategy to heighten its focus on available CTE trainings in Region 7B. Region 7B worked with Clare/ Gladwin RESD and the Beaverton School District to secure Marshall Plan funds for Career Navigators in Clare and Gladwin counties that are employed by Region 7B. These Career Navigators work directly with CTE students and help with career readiness and connecting them with employers. Current opportunities in the manufacturing, healthcare and avionics fields will be assessed to build even more advanced options based on direct input from area employers.

This action will create improved service alignment among core and other workforce programs and encourage CTE training partners to consider innovative course initiatives by blending company needs.

3. Local Board/Core Services

- **Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment:**

A continuing priority of the Region 7B WDB has been to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Region 7B makes it a priority to find ways to reach those with barriers to employment, including the use of technology. Additionally, the Boards encourage and work with applicable workforce service providers to redesign and re-engineer traditional programs to better meet the needs of eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Finally, Region 7B staff are empowered to pursue alternative service plans for enrollees in an ongoing effort to expand overall services access.

- **Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs:**

The Region 7B Boards support the increasing value of facilitating the development of career pathways for all client-customers and co-enrollment in core programs (as appropriate).

Region 7B staff are trained as Global Career Facilitators and will offer the opportunity for core partners to join in this training; new hires each enter into our USDOL Registered Apprenticeship that leads to becoming a journeyman as a Workforce Development Specialist. This will ensure that no matter the point of entry for participants, they will receive the same exceptional level of service to help them find their own Career Pathway. Region 7B also provides communication avenues for the Business Solutions staff, training providers, career counselors, etc. to discuss training needs identified by Sector Partnerships through video and conference calling technology, face to face meetings, and through other committees and workgroups in our region.

Region 7B is working with Northeast Michigan Works! to create career pathways through sector partnerships that show career pathways for the in-demand sectors in Region 3. This demonstration project, MiCareerPathways, will start with the manufacturing sector and allow career counselors to use these as tools to help participants make better career decisions.

Region 7B is also partnering with Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! to continue to provide hands-on career exploration to students through the MiCareerQuest Middle Michigan annual event. This career exploration event is unlike any other as it brings employers from both Michigan Works! regions together under one roof for students to experience careers from the experts, those that work in the careers themselves.

Through the use of available technology and partnerships with area community colleges and ISDs, some career pathways outlines and examples are readily available. This information coupled with various instances of career counseling ensures the Board's supplemental support and service facilitation.

Finally, it is a standard Region 7B practice to achieve the maximum effectiveness and efficiency of all workforce development funds. As a result, co-enrollment of client-customers is a standard employed Agency practice/priority. Likewise, co-enrollment facilitates the expanded range of service opportunities for eligible clients.

Each staff member is cross-trained in the programs operated within the One-Stop which allows for Region 7B to best serve participants by connecting them with the most effective program to ensure success, often times leading to co-enrollment. The local Region 7B leadership Boards continue to support this cost-effectiveness practice.

- **Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable):**

Entities carrying out core programs will improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable and stackable) by expanding their partnerships.

The Region 7B Boards support developing credential generating activities with business associations, educational entities, private training institutions and other industry groups throughout Michigan, utilizing the Business Solutions Professional (BSP) model. The BSP's also utilize Sector Partnerships, including the Manufacturing Associations and Northern Apprenticeship Alliance within our region, to help determine training needs. It is planned that this methodology can be developed to bring these opportunities "closer-to-home" via technology and relocated expertise. We provide access to video conferencing software and hardware, as well as conference calling, and help to coordinate space.

Core partners, as well as other community partners (Employers, COG meetings, Community Action Agency, State Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.), have the opportunity to have access to this technology that they often do not have access to within their own business/ agency. Region 7B will also seek additional funding, when necessitated, to help meet the needs of the participant and businesses, which may include DWG funding, Summer Young Professional funding, and seeking alternative funding sources (foundation grants, federal grants, etc.). Region 7B has been successful with securing additional funding for employers with specific training needs. An example of this is the pre-apprenticeship program at Kalitta Air to provide education for individuals that did not have the work experience to enter into the apprenticeship; Going Pro Apprenticeship Readiness Grant has over 24 applicants and with the completions of the MAICA grant allowed for over 40 apprentices to start their career.

Finally, availability and access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential will be improved via a research and recruiting initiative facilitated by the Region 7B BSP Team. The Region 7B BSP team will continue to research notable post-secondary credential opportunities utilized within the State. Results will be cooperatively considered by all partners and Board to pursue appropriate credential attainment enhancements in the Region.

4. Business Development Strategies/Services

- **Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs:**

Region 7B works jointly with employers, educational institutions, and other agencies to ensure that skills attained by trainees as a result of participation in employment and training programs are consistent with the requirements of employers for workforce success. Region 7B utilizes the BSP program design; each county has a BSP that is the connection point between the employer and workforce development, ensuring that the employer's voice is heard.

Region 7B staff will continue to increase the role of private employers in the planning, development and evaluations of WIOA-funded education and employment training programs. Employers help to direct IWT, Customized Training, and OJT under this demand driven system. BSPs are a critical component of gathering the Employer feedback to ensure that the demand driven system is working. BSPs gather feedback through a variety of methods, including but not limited to surveys, face to face meetings, training reviews, etc. This feedback is incorporated into the continuous improvement process at a local level through Management.

BSPs also report to the WDB on a regular basis to ensure that the feedback from Employers is not only heard by Management, but also the local boards.

The WDB has worked with employers to offer a more flexible OJT reimbursement rate, up to 75%, based on factors approved in WIOA regulations, 680.730. When the employer meets one of the following factors, as addressed in the local policy approved by WDB:

- The participant has barriers to employment (as outlined in WIOA Section 3(24))
- The business is a small business, defined as less than 50 employees
- The participant will receive a credential in conjunction with the OJT- unless waived by the State or USDOL (07-01-16- Credential Requirement is waived)
- The participant meets definition of basic skills deficient or has not worked 90 consecutive days in the last six months.

Factors considered in determining reimbursement rate are documented on OSMIS as a case note.

The Sector partnerships, including business associations such as manufacturing and healthcare, as well as workforce development board members; the BSPs bring feedback to management; presentations to the WDB which includes education and other core partners. Employers are surveyed periodically to gauge needs of the businesses. The MiCareerPathways project will present many opportunities for employers to participate in sector partnerships and significantly impact how careers are viewed and marketed to job seekers.

Another resource for employers, created as a retention strategy, is The Network, a Business Resource Network. The Network is a business solution to an economic problem. This solution focuses on three areas:

- **RETENTION**
Employees who are struggling with life issues, often struggle at work. Talent Specialists work on-site, weekly and one-on-one to help remove barriers to employment so employees can focus and stay at their jobs.
- **TALENT**
Talent Specialists work as a support to Human Resources to tailor training programs, improve skills, and to build a strong workforce.
- **CONNECTION**
The Network partners with other organizations, resources, and area businesses to create opportunities, increase growth, and build stability for workers, employers, and the local community.

The Network is a fee for service program, supported by workforce dollars.

- **Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.**

The Region 7B Business Services Team (BST) serves as the ongoing direct channel between One-Stop/American Job Center staff, job seekers and businesses.

The BST offers assistance in creating job orders, provides information about tax incentives for hiring and Labor Market Information (LMI), offers employer seminars, interviewing facilities and access to career exploration events. The BST develops long term relationships with businesses for employee recruitment, retention and training and offers follow-up with the employer to ensure that their needs have been met. The BST also takes an active role in the business community by attending Chamber of Commerce meetings, serving on Economic Development Boards, Business and Professional Associations, etc. The Network, a Business Resource Network, is a resource for businesses to bring a certified Life Coach to their business to work with employees to reduce barriers and improve retention, while creating opportunities for advancement.

Also, Region 7B has adopted the Michigan Industry Cluster Approach (MICA) in order to actively pursue industry sectors where, as a region, it had a distinct competitive advantage. Using the cluster-based economic development strategy, Region 7B targets those involved in the general manufacturing (targeting plastics, manufacturing, machine building, and research and development) and agriculture industries. One of the most critical challenges facing the manufacturing industry, in general, is the need for both highly skilled and semi-skilled workers for automotive related and plastics manufacturing.

- **Improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development.**

A unique partnership practice in the six-county Region 7B area, nationally recognized by AARP, is the blending of funding for business services and county economic development organization activities.

Region 7B is the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) in five of the six counties. In Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Ogemaw, and Roscommon Counties our BST is dually branded in workforce and economic development tasks. Through NTC, a 501c(3) organization, county economic development dollars are passed from the county to NTC and then onto Region 7B. This way all business services are managed under one roof for seamless project coordination, development and delivery.

The BST has all the tools, awareness and facilitation to be in-the-know for current business and economic issues.

This partnership endorsed and promoted by the Boards has greatly improved the coordination between workforce development and economic development programs and services.

The benefits of the blended-services approach have been increased recognition of in-demand occupation needs, greater staff efficiencies, and improved information sharing between Region 7B Boards, EDC councils, community collaborative, etc. The BST also meets regularly with the Business Development Manager (BDM) from Michigan Economic and Development Corporation and joins the BDM on retention visits.

- **Strengthen linkages between the one stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.**

In the public forum, the operational distance between employment services and unemployment insurance programs is very narrow. As a result, Region 7B has adopted an ongoing collaborative strategy and service approach to ease the unemployment insurance challenges sometimes encountered by businesses and employees. To strengthen linkages between the One-Stop/ American Job Centers and the unemployment insurance programs, appropriate paper and online documents are readily available at all locations. Additionally, information on the location and contact numbers for unemployment insurance Resolution Centers is also available.

Each Resource Room is staffed with at least one Employment Services Specialist to help provide one-on-one assistance for customers in each of our six counties and other service center staff are cross-trained to be able to aid in employment services. Each service center has a telephone line that allows for individuals utilizing employment services priority when contacting the Unemployment Insurance Agency.

The Employment Services Specialists is trained to provide staff assisted services, such as Labor Market Information, job referrals, referral to WIOA services, etc. to help individuals applying or receiving unemployment benefits access the services they need to help them achieve success. The service center staff are also trained to provide Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) services to those that are referred.

5. A description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

As was identified and explained in an earlier Plan section, the Region 7B Boards have a long history of uniquely blending local and regional economic development and workforce development efforts/activities. A unique partnership practice in the six-county Region 7B region is the blending of business services and county economic development organization activities. Region 7B is the EDC in five of the six counties. In Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Ogemaw and Roscommon Counties, our Business Service Team is dually branded in workforce and economic development tasks. Through NTC, a 501c(3) organization, county economic development dollars are passed from the county to NTC and then onto Region 7B. This way all business services are managed under one roof for seamless project coordination, development and delivery.

The BST has all the tools, awareness and facilitation to be in-the-know for current business and economic issues. This partnership endorsed and promoted by the Boards has greatly improved the coordination between workforce development and economic development programs and services. The benefits of the blended-services approach have been increased recognition of in-demand occupation needs, greater staff efficiencies, and improved information sharing between Region 7B Boards, EDC councils, community collaborative, etc. The BST also meets regularly with the Business Development Manager (BDM) from Michigan Economic and Development Corporation and joins the BDM on retention visits.

Shared staffing is a principle method of promoting the expanded region, plus through the use of advanced interactive computer communication technologies, Region 7B has the capacity to host multi-county, multi-agency and multi-business collaborative sessions. Lastly, the promotion and incidence of joint economic/workforce development organizational meetings to strategize on an expanded scale have been prioritized at all leadership levels.

Entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services are two specialty areas cooperatively addressed. Community colleges that service the Mid-Michigan region have prioritized these career-building areas as have the Region 7B Boards. Formalized course training possibilities, curricula, and credit-driven options have/are being considered.

Several of the Michigan Works! Offices in the Region 7B area have SBDC resources for those seeking information to start their own businesses. The BST is also available for interested individuals to meet with and will be provided an appropriate referral to resources available to ensure success. In addition area ISDs and individual high schools have embraced entrepreneurship and/or microenterprise instruction.

6. A Description of the One-Stop Delivery System

- **How the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and job seekers.**

As was described earlier in this Plan, the Region 7B Boards have and will continue the use of advanced interactive computer communication technologies to ensure maximum one-stop service delivery reach.

Additionally, in partnership with local and Regional workforce development partners, appropriate client-customer service delivery linkages will be facilitated to build the reliable accessible “closer-to-home” service opportunities.

Use of interactive webcast technologies has been a major step in cross-regional communications and information exchange. Additionally the use of transportable computer equipment has enabled Region 7B staff to establish partial one-stop services at any facility that retains internet connectivity. These capacities will continue to be enhanced and expanded based on available funding and State system support.

- **How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the One-Stop delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.**

We embrace a Job Hunting on the Road philosophy which brings Michigan Works services to locations other than the One-Stop / American Job Center. Some examples of this include: Job Readiness Training at community colleges, K-12 schools and local jails, mobile resource room and services on site with employers, virtual workshops, and virtual interviews. Region 7B will continue to provide these Job Hunting on the Road services in the future to allow for easier access to Michigan Works!

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

Region 7B implements mechanisms to ensure compliance with all notification, complaint handling, and file documentation requirements established by the State and follows the State's uniform procedures in the event a complaint of discrimination, seeking review and resolution under these procedures, is filed with the agency.

Region 7B does not discriminate in employment or in provision of services based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetics, sexual orientation, pregnancy, familial status, veteran status, height, weight, arrest without conviction, political affiliation or belief, or any other characteristic or activity protected by Federal or State laws and regulations; and against any beneficiary of programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), on the basis of the beneficiary's citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or his or her participation in any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

All sub-recipients in the Region 7B delivery network, as a condition to the award of financial assistance, must articulate a comparable Equal Opportunity (EO) policy commitment and are expected to create a service culture that continuously promotes access, equity and respect for the differing customs, abilities and beliefs of the communities we serve.

Regularly review policies and procedures with staff during staff meetings, regarding ADA compliance, i.e. automatic doors, restrooms and workstations. When needed interpreters are provided as well as assistance with paperwork completion. Staff are encouraged to participate in training provided by the Michigan Works! Association as well as other venues. Region 7B will also consult with MRS regarding compliance with Americans with Disability Act (ADA) for the service centers and program accessibility.

Additionally, Region 7B leadership will ensure that ADA compliance issues are a standard agenda item for quarterly staff meetings. This will include information on accessibility trainings locally, regionally and in the State. Also as appropriate, online tutorials regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of program, services, technology and related materials will be made available to Region 7B staff and partners. Collaborative online training will be conducted through utilization of the Agency's video conferencing technology.

- **A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.**

Region 7B and one stop partners coordinate a variety of workforce development resources to create a seamless, customer-friendly system that addresses the needs of employers and job seekers by offering education, job training, human service and other workforce development services to residents of this region. The partners have agreed to support the Michigan Works! system and have committed program resources to its success.

As previously indicated our partners include:

- Veteran Services provide services to veterans and contribute funding for infrastructure costs to be co-located;
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services provide services to persons with disabilities and contribute funding for infrastructure costs to be co-located;
- Mid Michigan Community Action Agency provide services to the community and contribute funding for infrastructure costs to be co-located;
- Bay Arenac Women's Services provide services to the community and contribute funding for infrastructure costs to be co-located;
- RISE provides services to the community and contributes funding for infrastructure costs to be co-located;
- Adult Education and Alternative Education Providers provide services to youth and adult learners and contribute funding for infrastructure costs to be co-located;
- Michigan Department of Corrections (Offender Success) provide services to parolees and contribute funding for infrastructure costs to be co-located;

- Additional partners providing services in the One-Stop/ American Job Center include The Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Salvation Army, Experience Works, Vocational and Community Education Providers, MSU Extension Offices, and NTC.

They will assist in the promotion and marketing of the system through their individual programs, and work toward providing excellent customer service, including participating in measurements of customer satisfaction and performance.

7. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

The area is positioned well to provide a variety of adult and dislocated worker services to meet the needs of employers and job seekers. The following services are available, under WIOA Sections 134(c)(2), which include the referral and coordination of services, as appropriate:

- Determination of eligibility to receive assistance for employment training services;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation regarding the information and other services available;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- Job search, placement assistance, and career counseling where appropriate;
- Employment statistics information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas (including job vacancy listings by market area, information on job skills necessary to obtain vacancy jobs, and information related to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations);
- Performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services;
- Information regarding how the local area is performing in relation to performance measures and performance information regarding the local One-Stop delivery system in the local area;
- Information relating to the availability of supportive services (e.g., child care, transportation) and referrals to supportive services;
- Information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for welfare-to-work, and financial aid for programs;
- Use of resource rooms;
- Group instructional sessions (e.g., resume writing);
- Referrals to employment opportunities;
- Internet access to job information and training services; and

- Individual job development, job clubs, and screened referrals when accomplished through the use of self-service and informational activities.
- On-the-Job Training (OJT): OJT operates as a hire-first, job-specific training program, with training provided directly by local employers.

The employer/trainer receives partial reimbursement of the wages paid to the participant during a negotiated training period. Training periods are based on the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Standard Vocational Preparation time, adjusted downward to reflect the trainee's entry-level skills and experience. Public employers may serve as OJT employer/trainers in a ratio not to exceed the local ratio of public to private employers. Because OJT is a hire-first, employer-delivered training program, it is responsive to the immediate hiring needs of local employers and to the occupational goals of local job seekers. Training is on an individualized basis and can, therefore, respond to the market hiring needs of small businesses, and can be targeted to occupations, which promise sustained employment opportunity, at wage rates, which contribute to family self-sufficiency. By providing training subsidies, OJT assists local businesses to hire and train new employees from the local labor pool and encourages labor force replacement and expansion. OJT is a multi-occupational program, responding to the immediate hiring needs of local employers.

- Classroom Training (Occupational): Occupational classroom training programs teach participants specific vocational skills designed to prepare them for immediate post-program employment. Local high schools, intermediate school districts, vocational institutes, community colleges or four-year institutions deliver all occupational classroom training.

All occupational classroom-training programs may use the TABE competencies and other available career aptitude tests for participants and job placement services. Occupational classroom training programs may be conducted entirely in the classroom or may include a combination of classroom activities and on-the-job vocational training. Occupational classroom training programs provide participants with prerequisite entry-level skills for higher level occupations and can provide the support services necessary to assist individuals to overcome secondary barriers to employment.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) will be used for training services in Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. This will allow a participant to choose among qualified training providers. Customers will be able to utilize ITAs based upon funding availability and the individual assessments conducted.

- Registered Apprenticeships - Registered Apprenticeships provide employers that have job opportunities, requiring high-skill levels to connect with qualified job seekers who have potential to obtain the required high-skill levels.
- Entrepreneurial Training - Entrepreneurial skills training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business. Such training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship. Such skills include, but are not limited to, the ability to: take initiative; creatively seek out and identify business opportunities; develop budgets and forecast resource needs; understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.
- Incumbent Worker Training – designed to ensure that employees of a company are able to gain the skills necessary to retain employment or avert a layoff, and must increase both the participant's and company's competitiveness. An ideal incumbent worker training is one where a participant acquires new skills allowing the participant to move into a higher skilled and higher paid job within the company, thus allowing the company to hire a jobseeker to backfill the incumbent worker's position.

Incumbent worker training is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (including a group of employers in partnership with other entities) to retain a skilled workforce, or to avert the need to lay off employees by assisting the worker in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment.

- Customized Training: Customized training is designed to meet the specific requirements of an employer or group of employers with the commitment that the employer(s) hire the participant(s) upon successful completion of the training. For employed individuals to qualify for customized training, the employee must not be earning a self-sufficient wage or wages comparable to higher or higher than wages from a previous employment. The local WDB defines this as this as any wage that is less than a previous job, within the last five years, or if the wage of the employee is not comparable to the average wage listed for that occupation on O*Net.

The training for current employees must incorporate new technologies, processes or procedures, skills upgrades, workplace literacy, or other training that may result in the employee being able to advance in the career pathway; it must also lead to an increase in wage.

- Follow-Up Services: Follow-up services will 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. While follow-up services will be made available, not all of the adults and dislocated workers who are registered and placed into unsubsidized employment will need or want such services.

The following are available under career services, as well as training services if combined with other training activities:

- Adult Education and Literacy Activities –programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training.
- Job Readiness Training - provides, through classroom lecture and role play, the development of the same set of skills and understanding to be acquired through work experience. It is generally offered as pre-vocational world-of-work skills that may include showing up on time, and workplace attitudes and behaviors.

Job readiness training usually does not include an associated work component, but it may.

- Transitional Jobs – a way for adults and dislocated workers with barriers to employment, who are experiencing chronic unemployment or have an inconsistent work history, to develop a work history and basic skills essential to keeping a job. Transition jobs are time-limited, subsidized employment in the public, private or nonprofit sectors. Comprehensive career and supportive services will be made available to transitional jobs participant. Transitional jobs can be effective solutions for individuals to gain the necessary work experience that they would otherwise not be able to get through training or an OJT. The goal is to establish a work history for the individual, demonstrate work success and develop skills that lead to entry into unsubsidized employment. There is no expectation that the individual will continue their employment with the employer after the work experience is complete.

Assessment of Region 7B adult and dislocated worker workforce development activities and services will be an ongoing continuous improvement function. On at least a quarterly basis the following actions will be initiated:

- Assessment of activity/service performance based on participant development notes and/or outcome data.
- Review of participant follow-up data to assess impact and value of applicable activities.
- Service provider/partner continuous improvement sessions to assess service type and availability.
- Placement of continuous improvement activities on Board agendas to ensure timely assessment is completed.

Region 7B will ensure that these actions and improvements are in line with the Region 3 regional plan.

8. A description of the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in 20 CFR Section 681.460 are to be made available within that framework.

The area is positioned well to provide a variety of youth services, including individuals with disabilities. A broad range of issues that can have an impact on the success of young adults in the labor market will be considered prior to assessing what employment related opportunities are available and how effective they will be in meeting the needs of local youth. 1) Efforts will be made to broaden young adult employment and training focus throughout our six county region to incorporate a young adult development perspective. 2) Linkages will be established with employers and other organizations serving young adults within our communities. 3) Input will be sought from the local employers to determine what skills are in demand, what jobs are available, what career fields are expanding, and what types of training programs will best meet local needs, which may include input from the CEAC. 4) Emphasis will be placed on providing a menu of educational options, work-based learning, leadership development, linkages with employers, positive peer group value development, support services, and follow-up program services. 5) A work experience component (coupled with education and/or training) will allow area young adults to build appropriate work habits before being placed in unsubsidized jobs. Work experience will not be a stand-alone service but a service integrated with other year-round services. 6) Summer programs may offer opportunities to link academic and occupational learning, and provide other elements and strategies as appropriate to serve the individual economic needs and career goals of the participants. 7) Local young adult employment and training policies and practices will be developed as needed to ensure continuity of services in Region 7B.

WIOA funds will be utilized to enhance and complement State, Region and other partner initiatives for eligible young people. It is be the goal of Region 7B, along with community partners, to provide the following program elements:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
- Alternative secondary school offerings;
- Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
- Occupational skills training;
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include such activities as positive social behavior and soft skills, decision-making, team work and other activities;
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation;
- Follow-up services;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual young adults;
- Financial literacy education;
- Entrepreneurial skills training;
- Labor market and employment information; and
- Prepare for and transition into post-secondary education and training.

Region 7B helps youth create a person-centered Individual Service Strategy (ISS) to meet their needs, including needs that arise due to disabilities. Region 7B works closely with partners to ensure that Individual Education Plans, Michigan Rehabilitation employment plans, etc. are part of the ISS for individuals with disabilities. Region 7B also ensures that reasonable accommodations are provided to ensure success in employment and training, such as interpreters, job coaches, etc. The ISS is a living document that is updated as changes occur.

9. **Local definition of Part B of Basic Skills Deficiency, which reads “a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.”:**

Part B. Who is a youth or adult, the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

Basic Skills Deficient Local Definition: 681.290

1. An individual that is enrolled in remedial courses in post-secondary education

-or-

2. Has a social, mental or physical impairment as documented by a physician or other qualified service provider

-or-

3. Lacks the short-term pre-vocational skills (i.e. the learning skills, communication skills, or computer literacy skills) an individual needs to prepare for unsubsidized employment or training, as documented by and in his/her comprehensive assessment

-or-

4. On the Job Training ONLY- if an individual possesses 50% or less of the skills required to do the job as indicated by the training outline.

10. **Description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities.**

Assessment of the type and availability of youth services will be conducted in a manner consistent to the assessment of adult and dislocated worker activities. Comprehensive assessment can include interviews, observation, career assessments and inventories (O*Net, CareerScope).

Assessment of Region 7B youth workforce development activities and services will be an ongoing continuous improvement function. On at least a quarterly basis the following actions will be initiated:

- Assessment of activity/service performance based on participant development notes and/or outcome data.
- Review of participant follow-up data to assess impact and value of applicable activities.
- Service provider/partner continuous improvement sessions to assess service type and availability.
- Placement of continuous improvement activities on Board agendas to ensure timely assessment is completed.

Successful models for assisting youth with disabilities in Region 7B are effectively blended into the Agency/Adult Education partnership service process. Examples include:

- Customized tutoring to better target individual development
- Modified credit recovery processes to allow additional opportunity for advancement
- Young Professionals Program
- More frequent collaborative case management with MRS, Adult Education service providers and Michigan Works! staff to maintain maximum use of personnel and financial resources.

Definitions of Youth that require additional assistance is defined as the following:

ISY: Individual who Require Additional Assistance to enter or complete an education program or to secure or hold employment: (if no other barrier applies, only 5% of enrollments can use this barrier)

- Have repeated at least one secondary grade level or are one year over age for their grade;
- Have a core grade point average of less than 1.5;
- For each year of secondary education, are at least two semester credits behind the rate required to graduate from high school;
- Are emancipated youth;
- Have aged out of foster care;
- Are previous dropouts, have been suspended five or more times, or have been expelled;
- Have court/agency referrals mandating school attendance;
- Are deemed at risk of dropping out of school by a school official;

- Have experienced recent traumatic events, are victims of abuse, or reside in an abusive environment as documented by a school official or other qualified professional;
- Have serious emotional, medical, or psychological problems as documented by a qualified professional;
- Have never had a job;
- Have been fired from a job within the 12 months prior to application
- Have never held a full-time job for more than 13 consecutive weeks (full-time is a minimum of 32 hours of employment per week)
- Have not worked for 90 consecutive days in the last six months
- Have been referred to or are being treated by an agency for a substance abuse related problem.

OSY: A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment (if no other barrier applies, only 5% of enrollments can use this barrier).

- Have repeated at least one secondary grade level or are one year over age for their grade;
- Have a core grade point average of less than 1.5;
- For each year of secondary education, are at least two semester credits behind the rate required to graduate from high school;
- Are emancipated youth;
- Have aged out of foster care;
- Are previous dropouts, have been suspended five or more times, or have been expelled;
- Have court/agency referrals mandating school attendance;
- Are deemed at risk of dropping out of school by a school official;
- Have experienced recent traumatic events, are victims of abuse, or reside in an abusive environment as documented by a school official or other qualified professional;
- Have serious emotional, medical, or psychological problems as documented by a qualified professional;
- Have never had a job;

- Have been fired from a job within the 12 months prior to application
- Have never held a full-time job for more than 13 consecutive weeks (full-time is a minimum of 32 hours of employment per week)
- Have not worked for 90 consecutive days in the last six months
- Have been referred to or are being treated by an agency for a substance abuse related problem.

11. Information regarding any waivers being utilized by the local area, in accordance with any Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity-Workforce Development (LEO-WD) communicated guidelines or requirements regarding the use of the waiver(s).

Region 7B reserves the right to use any waiver approved for the State; currently utilizing the waiver for the 75% OSY spending requirement. The waiver grants that the State can spend 50% of funding on OSY and 50% on ISY.

12. Description of how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

The Region 7B Boards recognize that quality education is an essential factor in achieving a qualified workforce, thereby leading to sustainable economic development. It is verified that the fastest-growing and highest-paying jobs require some post-secondary education.

Region 7B is a partner with three community colleges (Alpena Community, Kirtland Community and Mid-Michigan College) that provide an array of educational courses and takes an active role in the CEAC, which includes representatives from K-12 and ISDs. Both Kirtland and Mid-Michigan College have a MTEC that have private sector employers on their boards, helping to drive curriculum development to meet the needs of local employers. All are in agreement that the most significant industries in the area are the manufacturing sector, logistics, healthcare, retail trade, hospitality, avionics, agricultural and tourism. We also are within commuting distance from Delta, Northwood University, Central Michigan University, Alma College, Saginaw Valley State University, etc.

Core partners serve as members on the WDB that meet quarterly; Adult Education is directly provided in four of our service centers. Region 7B through an unique partnership with IRESA and Clare Pioneer to provide Alternative Education in four of our service centers. Each service center in Region 7B is Pearson Vue certified as a GED Testing site for our clients, as well as a WorkKeys testing site; this reduces the chances of duplication of services and streamlines funding and staffing. Region 7B employs the Career Navigators, through the Marshall Plan, and work to coordinate career services to K-12 with Clare/ Gladwin RESD to avoid duplication of services and to provide expertise. Coordination with the secondary schools to provide Mock interview; talent tours; career fair/business expo/career day; Reality Stores; MiCareerQuest; National Apprenticeship Week Events; Employment Skills workshops and Fast Track in the Post-Secondary providers.

The Region 7B Board will ensure relevant coordination between secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities.

13. **A determination of whether 7B has elected to provide supportive services and needs related payments. The MWAs that elect to provide supportive services to participants during program enrollment must describe the procedure to provide supportive services. The procedure will include the conditions, amounts, duration, and documentation requirements for the provision of supportive services.**

Region 7B staff shall adhere to the limitations established for the provision of supportive services per funding source and/or documented in the local supportive service policy. Any supportive service provided to remove a barrier(s) to enable an individual to participate in program activities including job acquisition and retention shall be documented in the One-Stop Management Information System or OSMIS in the Supportive Service area (where available).

Case notes shall be used to document supportive services that are reasonable and necessary for the individual to complete training and/or to obtain/retain permanent employment. Under no circumstance may a supportive service be provided if the supportive service is readily available in a timely manner from another source.

Case notes shall be used to document the actual dollar amount and funding source of the supportive service in cases where the OSMIS does not provide for the separate recording of supportive services.

Any combination of funding may be used, as appropriate and allowable. However, a single funding source limitation may not be exceeded with the aggregate of multiple funding sources.

The Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Director and Executive Director, or other designated employee, of Region 7B may grant waivers to specific supportive services limitations and/or prohibitions. The Administrative Office may add supportive services in the event the provision of a service has been overlooked in the formation of this policy if the supportive service is necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities.

Region 7B will not provide Needs-Related Payments (NRPs). If Region 7B applies for a United States Department of Labor National Emergency Grant which mandates NRPs, a policy will be developed at that time and this policy issuance will be modified.

Acceptable accounting procedures including procurement requirements shall be used in the provision of supportive services.

Need for support services are documented in the participant's case notes, as well as in the Individual Employment Plan or ISS, and supportive service screen, with supporting documentation in the participant's file with the support service request.

Fines and Penalties

Region 7B will not utilize WIOA funds to pay any fines or penalties, such as those associated with a driver's license reinstatement and License Plate renewal or late fees. Also, WIOA funding will not be utilized to pay any fees associated with enrolling a child in daycare. All of the previous Supportive Services may be provided to WIOA participants at any time during their enrollment in WIOA.

14. A description of how the local board will coordinate the WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.

Region 7B will coordinate availability of local resources with the 2-1-1 system in each of the counties. The Region 7B has elected to provide support services, but not Needs Related Payments. However, the provision of Needs Related Payments will be considered when appropriate based on funding and state policy. Details describing the procedure to provide supportive services are provided in a chart format and are organized to respond appropriately to Section X and XI Plan requirements.

15. A description of the local per participant funding cap, if applicable.

Region 7B has a \$10,000 funding cap for ITA; this may be exceeded with Executive Director approval. However, every effort will be made to maximize workforce development funds and services to ensure any duplication of services is avoided. This effort will be enhanced via client co-enrollment, regular joint client information sharing and effective use of enrollment/services data available online.

16. Description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the One-Stop delivery system.

As the sole provider of core services; staff regularly review the Work Instruction and Process Maps created through LEAN office training to ensure the continuous improvement of services to clients. Finally, the Region 7B Board is supporting the following plan actions, assurances and strategies to maximize coordination improve service delivery and avoid duplication:

- Continue the use of video conferencing technology to improve Regional communication
- Utilize CEAC membership contacts to consider shared source cost options
- Solicit additional partnerships with other community-based organizations, educational entities, religious organizations and development agencies to add-value to available services
- Seek additional funding opportunities, as appropriate
- Organization of a strategic/action/master plan initiative during this Program Year.

17. A description of how the local area is planning to deliver employment services in accordance with the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, as amended by Title III of the WIOA. This description shall include:

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- Information regarding whether Region 7B is providing employment services directly in the local area or if service providers are being used. If service providers are being used, please include the name of the provider, the type of entity, and whether or not the provider is a merit-based organization. For type of entity, please choose from the following: state governmental agency, local unit of government, special purpose unit of government, school district, intermediate school district, public community college, public university, or other.

Region 7B provides all Wagner- Peyser services directly and we do not contract services at this time.

- A description of how Wagner-Peyser funded services will be provided at no cost to employers and job seekers.

Region 7B provides all services at no cost to employers and job seekers.

- An explanation of how labor exchange services will be provided using the three tiers of services: self-services, facilitated services, and staff-assisted services.

Self- Services: Basic customer job search on computers and/or newspaper listings, obtaining paper resources

Facilitated Services: Workshops, assistance with copying/faxing

Staff- Assisted Services: Assistance with inputting information, career guidance/counseling, assistance filing for UI benefits/registering for work

- A description of the manner in which career services are being delivered.
 - Job search assistance.
 - Assessments.
 - Job referrals.
 - Placement of job seekers.
 - Re-employment services to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants.
 - Registering UI claimants for work.
 - Delivery of the UI Work Test.
 - Recruitment services for employers.
 - Labor Market Information.

- A listing of how many staff at each site will be available to provide services.

All staff have the ability to Wagner Peyser services. Region 7B has process maps and work instructions that outline the process of delivery of services.

- A description of how the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Work Test will be administered. This description must include an explanation of how the registration of UI claimants will be conducted and how reporting claimant non-compliance with the “able, available, and seeking work” requirements will be managed.

At a minimum, claimants put their profile on the PMTC, but are encouraged to do an entire resume. Assistance is offered to help with the process. ES staff assist with job postings if needed. Once a profile/resume is on the PMTC, ES staff input the information the MIS system that it was completed, along with case noting. It can also be noted if the claimant is “ready, willing and able to work”. Claimant is provided job leads, if applicable. If the claimant is non-compliant with the requirements, it is case noted and reported to management, who will ensure it is reported accurately.

- A description of how the Reemployment Service Eligibility Assessment requirements will be administered.

Region 7B staff are trained to provide a comprehensive orientation to Michigan Works! services. A courtesy call/email is sent to claimants to remind them to schedule their first appointment. Claimants contact local offices and schedule an appointment. A first appointment focuses on Michigan Works services, claimant job search, and resume.

A second appointment is encouraged to provide more in-depth information to enhance employability skills. Claimants are also provided the opportunity for work based training and classroom training to enhance career opportunities.

- An explanation of how the MWA will participate in a system for clearing labor between the states by accepting and processing interstate and intrastate job orders as a component of the National Labor Exchange System.

Region 7B participates in accepting and processing interstate and intrastate job orders as requested by posting them on the Pure Michigan Talent Connect and advertising them in our Resource Room and media outlets, when appropriate.

- An explanation of how the MWA will ensure veterans will be provided access to the same employment services received by the general population. This explanation must include a description of the screening process the MWA uses to refer eligible veterans to Veteran Career Advisors for case management services and how priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses will be applied in the delivery of Wagner-Peyser funded services.

Veterans are provided the same access to services that the general population has access to and more. Customers are greeted at upon entry into the service center and fact finding begins. Customers are asked to complete a Program Interest Form, which specifically asks if customers are veterans. A veteran self identifies or indicates he/she is a Veteran or spouse of a Veteran. Staff explain Core Services and Veteran's Preference to the Veteran (include PMTC 24 hour hold, training monies, etc.), aid the Veteran in completing resume, job search, etc. as needed. Staff also make appropriate referrals to outside resources as needed.

Staff offer for the Veteran to fill out a Military Service Questionnaire (3 different forms: 1. Current Active Duty, 2. Spouse or Family of a US Veteran or Service Member, OR 3. Military Service) form to see if the Veteran is eligible for services from the VCA Specialist, beyond Core Services offered through Employment Services. Region 7B staff review the Military Service Questionnaire to see if Veteran is qualified for VCA Services. If a Veteran is qualified the Military Service Questionnaire is provided to VCA.

- An assurance that Migrant and Seasonal Workers (MSWs) will have equitable access to and receive the full range of employment services that are provided to non-MSW customers.

Region 7B ensures access for MSWs.

- An explanation of the services and staffing the MWA will use to ensure that MSWs will be provided access to the same employment services, benefits, protections, counseling, testing, and job and training referral services received by the general population. This explanation shall include a description of the referral process to MSWs or other appropriate MWA staff.

MSWs receive the same services as any customer that utilizes services in Region 7B service centers. MSWs are often identified in the Resource Room and are referred to Career Advisor to determine eligibility and suitability for WIOA programs that they require for workforce development services.

- A description of any other planned services or activities for which Wagner-Peyser funds will be utilized.

There are no other services planned at this time for Wagner- Peyser services.

18. **Description of any navigators being utilized in the local area to provide targeted support and resources to specific groups of individuals with barriers to employment.**

At this time, Region 7B does not utilize navigators.

19. **Description of how the local board will coordinate the WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under the WIOA Title II. This description shall include how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with the WIOA Sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and the WIOA Section 232.**

The Region 7B Boards and staff have a strong history of blending adult education and literacy activities with workforce development services; an example of this is the partnership is the co-location of the Alternative and Adult Education in the Michigan Works! One Stop/ American Job Center in partnership with Iosco RESA. Another example of such partnership is with Clare Pioneer and Bay Arenac ISD with the co-location of Adult Education services within the Michigan Works! One Stop/ American Job Center.

The WDB will review action will ensure the availability and support of basic services in the area of adult education and literacy. This review will be conducted by the Executive Steering Committee of the Workforce Board; applications will be rated and reviewed to ensure that the plans support and address the workforce needs of the region. Reviews will be discussed at the meeting and any concerns addressed with the applicants, if necessary.

20. **Copies of executed cooperative agreements or MOUs which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in the WIOA Section 107(d)(11) between the local board or other local entities described in the WIOA Section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the local office of designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under Title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (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 as cooperation, collaboration and coordination.**

Region 7B has complied with the Policy Issuance for MOUs.

21. **A description of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds (Grant Recipient).**

In accordance with WIOA and State of Michigan directives Region 7B is the fiscal recipient for the six county Michigan Works! area.

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22. **A description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.**

When applicable, Region 7B will competitively procure sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities. The competitive process involves developing a request for proposal, publically advertising the availability, evaluating the proposal, awarding services, and developing a contract to provide services.

All competitive procurement complies with the most recent WD Policy Issuance regarding procurement.

23. **The local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official(s) 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 the WIOA Title I Subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.**

Local Boards are not required to provide or negotiate performance levels for those measures designated by USDOL as baseline measures as described in Section II.

24. **A description of the actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State board.**

- Effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria the local board will implement to assess their one-stop centers.

The Region 7B Boards will utilize the following effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria to assess the Region 7B Service Centers:

- A quarterly survey-study of each Service Center focusing on:
 - Review and analysis of enrollee follow-up data;
 - Interviews with current and exiting client-customers;
 - Inclusion of a specific continuous improvement business item on Region 7B Board agenda;
 - Board members are encouraged and given opportunities to attend training and professional development to stay abreast of the most current workforce trends, including evidence based practices;
 - Comparison of performance data from comparable Michigan Works! Agencies.
- A review of employer contacts, services requested and resulting satisfaction.
- A description of how the local board will allocate one-stop center infrastructure funds.

Based on the results of maintaining a continuous improvement process, the Region 7B Boards will appropriately allocate One-Stop/ American Job Center infrastructure funds to match the needs of client-customers both job seekers and employers. This action should ensure the most effective and efficient use of all workforce development funds. Infrastructure costs are allocated using our cost allocation plan approved by the WDA.

Detailed information regarding the Region 7B cost allocation plan for infrastructure funds include the following factors:

- Number of eligible versus non-eligible visiting the Centers;
- Space required for co-located partners providing onsite services;
- Needs for additional and/or specialized equipment or technology to ensure appropriate services;
- Incidence of special needs client-customers visiting one-stop Service Centers.

Each program will be charged directly for costs incurred that benefit only that program. These may include, but are not limited to: staff time, equipment, client-related support services and training costs.

In addition, each program will be charged a share of costs that benefit the program indirectly.

Cost categories include administration, training, core, intensive, career services, basic services, incumbent worker services, support services, car purchases, public transportation, auto related, and information technology/computerization and other as needed.

- **A description of the roles and contributions of one-stop partners, including cost allocation.**

A spreadsheet is developed after the end of each month to determine the percentage of pooled costs to charge each grant or other provided services. Region 7B calculates the respective percentages by using the distribution of Region 7B direct staff wages, such as providing space for GED programs, specific building square footage will be used to determine appropriate costs.

As was described earlier in the Local Plan document, Region 7B will utilize a Memorandum of Understanding process to organize the roles and contributions of Service Center partners including cost allocation. When core partners utilize space in our service centers the Memorandum of Understanding is used to determine use value vs. the service value to determine a dollar value.

Based on the long-term positive relationships maintained with service partners and the limitations on service availability based on the rural nature of the Region 7B area, little cost allocation processing will be required.

However, applicable cost allocation factors such as office space required, number of client-customers served, and time on-site are used to appropriate costs.

Specific planned roles and contributions of one-stop partners include but are not limited to the following:

- General assistance in greeting and guiding customers to the appropriate service location/person.
- Participation in developing and distributing marketing materials in the Region.
- Contribution to co-facilitation of workforce development services to appropriate customers as needed.
- Provision of customer service data to ensure in-demand activities are available and duplication of services is eliminated.
- Partner in the development and delivery of special service events such as job fairs, business luncheons, resume workshops, etc.

25. A description of how training services outlined in WIOA Section 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including:

- If contracts for training services will be used.
- Coordination between training service contracts and individual training accounts.

Historically, Region 7B has not utilized contracts for training services. However, if needed this option will be considered for training services and coordinated with the ITA process.

- 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.

ITAs will be used for training services when appropriate. This will allow a participant to choose among qualified training providers. Customers will be able to utilize ITAs based upon funding availability and the individual assessments conducted. In the event training is requested that is not included on the ITA list, staff may submit a request for funding to the Region 7B Executive Director. After evaluating the request, the Executive Director will determine whether or not it is a demand occupation and make determinations as to whether or not to fund. Individuals may use the ITA account to access training services from any ITA eligible training provider on the statewide eligible training provider list.

Michigan Works! Service Center staff may inform and facilitate career decisions; however, the ultimate decision shall rest with the customer.

To qualify, participants may be required to take a skills assessment test administered by Region 7B. The range of services that an ITA can pay for will be training costs, books, fees and Region 7B WDB approved supportive services.

26. **A description of the process used by the local board, consistent with Section III, to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into development of the Local Plan, particularly for representative of businesses, labor organizations and education.**

Region 7B's stakeholders participated in the regional focus group that provided input to the regional WIOA plan. Region 7B also conducted a survey to help determine the goals and strategies in providing services to job seekers and employers.

The WDB, LEOs, partner agencies, and staff that completed the survey indicated that Region 7B should continue to focus on ensuring that businesses are involved in regional planning efforts, ensuring that input is sought, specifically through subgroups, to reach out to those eligible for services and increase participation of in-demand sector in regional strategies. Those surveyed felt it important to improve participation of business sector in regional planning efforts. The survey participants felt that the most significant soft skills missing among workers were good attendance, communication and interpersonal skills, problem solving, and analytical/ problem solving skills.

Marketing and advertising were included in several comments regarding ways to improve and educate those about services.

The proposed Plan was published on 6/13/2022 made available for review and comment by members of the local board and members of the public including representatives of business and labor organizations through such means as our website, local news media, and by contacting our office until 7/12/2022. No comments were received.

The local board made information about the Plan available to the public on a regular basis through open meetings as well. Region 7B posts on social media and are available for public comment and review via our website at www.michworks4u.org documents page or by contacting our office.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), availability of the final Local Plan will include reference to accommodations or special request of the plan in alternate formats, such as large print, audiotape, etc. In addition, public meeting concerning the Plan will comply with physical access requirements of the ADA.

Persons wishing to comment must do so in writing to:

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402 N. First St.
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27. A description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under the WIOA and by one-stop partners.

In light of the rural nature of Region 7B's six county structure, incorporating an effective and efficient technologically-based system to manage the collection of client-customer information and data is important for programs carried out under the WIOA and by One-Stop/ American Job Center partners. Region 7B utilizes the internet based WDA One-Stop Management Information System (OSMIS), an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management system. Region 7B receives training and monitors data entry for accuracy on a regular basis.

Region 7B utilizes Salesforce, a computer-based database to track, monitor, and analyze service center traffic, service utilization, business services and activities. Salesforce allows Region 7B to use one system for both job seeker services, business services, and business resource network services. The system aids in our continuous improvement efforts to streamline services.

Use of interactive webcast technologies is essential in cross-regional communications and information exchange. Additionally the use of transportable computer equipment has enabled Region 7B staff to establish partial one-stop services at any facility that retains internet connectivity.

These capacities will continue to be enhanced and expanded based on available funding and State system support.

28. **A description of the local priority of service requirements.**

- a) **First**, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
- b) **Second**, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds, which are low income, receiving public assistance or basic skills deficient (defined below).
- c) **Third**, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- d) **Fourth**, as a priority population established by the Workforce Development Board, Underemployed Individuals as defined in the WIOA manual:
 - 1. Individuals employed less than full-time (35 hours or less per week) who are seeking full-time employment.
 - or-
 - 2. Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training.
 - or-
 - 3. Individuals who are employed, but whose current job's earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job's earnings from their previous employment, which equals less than 70 percent of the individual's wage received from their most recent job earnings.
- e) **Last**, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA with approval from management.

Priority Groups are:

Veterans and Eligible Spouses
Recipients of Public Assistance
Low Income individuals (Lower Living Standard Income Level)
Individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient
Underemployed Individuals (Locally Defined)

Basic Skills Deficient Definition:

Who is a youth that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th (8.9) grade level on a generally accepted standardized test (which ONLY includes the following: Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) or Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)).

-or-

Who is a youth or adult, the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

Basic Skills Deficient Local Definition: 681.290

An adult that meets Basic Skills Deficient Criterion A

-or-

An individual that is enrolled in remedial courses in post-secondary education

-or-

Has a social, mental or physical impairment as documented by a physician or other qualified service provider

-or-

Lacks the short-term pre-vocational skills (i.e. the learning skills, communication skills, or computer literacy skills) an individual needs to

prepare for unsubsidized employment or training, as documented by and in his/her comprehensive assessment

-or-

On the Job Training ONLY- if an individual possesses 50% or less of the skills required to do the job as indicated by the training outline.

29. A description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.

Region 7B works closely with the State Rapid Response representatives, which includes notification of closures, coordination of services, and processing WARN and SUB WARN notices, and TAA submissions. The Rapid Response Team (RRT), as described in the attached policy, is responsible for working in collaboration with the State Rapid Response Representatives, including Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) Representatives. Region 7B will utilize the BSP model to provide layoff aversion activities, including incumbent worker training, employee orientations,

Joint Adjustment Committees, regional hiring events, succession planning referrals, asset mapping, etc.

30. Rapid Response Policies and Procedures

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA requires a Rapid Response process describing how Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion will be administered and coordinated with the State. This process sponsors activities to prevent closures and assist dislocated workers in obtaining re-employment as soon as possible after a job loss.

Business Solutions approach

Each county in the Region 7B Consortium service area has a BSP that is tasked with building ongoing relationships with employers to enhance the Region 7B demand driven model. This includes regular contact with employers, whether through direct contact, memberships on associations and councils, industry meetings, retention visits in conjunction with MEDC, etc. This approach provides for open communication to help avert layoffs and allows for the earliest intervention.

Layoff Aversion Strategies

As a standard practice, BSP's are well versed and trained in layoff aversion strategies. Layoff Aversion strategies and activities are designed to prevent, or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs. This is a comprehensive approach that is customized to specific needs, quickly deployable, and coordinated with partners as necessary. Some of these strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Incumbent Worker Training is designed to ensure that employees of a company are able to gain the skills necessary to retain employment or avert a layoff, and must increase both the participant's and a company's competitiveness. An ideal incumbent worker training is one where a participant acquires new skills allowing the participant to move into a higher skilled and higher paid job within the company, this allowing the company to hire a jobseeker to backfill the incumbent worker's position. Incumbent worker training is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer, including a group of employers in partnership with other entities, to retain a skilled workforce, or to avert the need to lay off employees by assisting the workers in obtaining the skill necessary to retain employment.
- MWA will have the ability to use up to 20% of combined total of adult and dislocated worker allotments for incumbent worker training. (WIOA sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i))
- Succession planning is often needed to help business owners find a way to allow a business to thrive after they have decided to leave. The Business Services Team has been trained in Employer Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) as a way to provide help to businesses that may be struggling with this situation.
- Customized Training allows an employer or group of employers to have a training that meets the unique needs of the job seeker and employer(s). This type of training can be used to hire new employees that presently lack the skills needed by the employer in a shorter turnaround time than traditional training.

- Economic Development is interwoven into the Business Services model at Michigan Works! Region 7B; four of the six BSP's are also directors of economic development in their county, while the remaining two are board members of the economic development groups. Every BSP attends retention calls with MEDC, strengthening the linkage between local workforce and economic development and State economic development, bringing more resources to businesses.

Other services that may be provided, as needed, are: asset mapping, providing assistance to employers in managing reductions in force, assisting in prefeasibility studies to determine if a company's operations may be sustained through a buy-out or other means, engage in proactive measures to identify opportunities for potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses, etc.

Rapid Response System

Region 7B will coordinate Rapid Response activities with the state to address potential or local events. Region 7B will utilize the state Layoff Aversion Guide to help guide activities in the Rapid Response system. When the BSP or any other staff member, either through direct communication or observation is made aware of a closure or significant layoff they will email the Rapid Response contact (Chief Operating Officer) so that a WARN or SubWARN can be completed.

- WARN: The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) generally requires that a company employing 50 or more people trigger a WARN notices to be filed with TIA. This notice is provided to the affected employees, any union representing them, the appropriate unit of local government, Michigan Works 7B Consortium, and the State.
- SubWARN: Smaller employers, although not required, are also encouraged to notify complete a SubWARN notice. These are notices that help provide the State with a more complete picture of the economic and business climate.

Rapid Response Activities

The Rapid Response Process requires employer cooperation. It is through the Team's relationship with their businesses and partners, Service Center personnel seeing

unusual numbers of customers coming in from a particular business (an early warning network) and/or notification from the state that employer contact begins.

Once a Rapid Response Team (BSP, Service Center Staff, Rapid Response contact, and other appropriate partners) has been formed it is essential that all of its focus be directed towards the displaced workers. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Secure an accurate listing of the soon to be displaced workers (along with addresses, phone numbers, exit dates, years employed, etc).
2. Deliver quality services to affected employees before a layoff occurs, whenever possible.
3. Customize the services offered to meet the needs of the situation and the workers.
4. Prepare affected workers for transition from current employers to new opportunities.
5. Make the education and training effective for the individual (utilizing the appropriate evaluation and counseling techniques), with consideration of OJT, vocational and degree opportunities.
6. Conduct a Dislocated Worker Survey (hard copies available from TIA)
7. Assist with filing of Trade Adjustment Act, if applicable.

This process begins with administrative staff receiving a WARN Report from TIA and/or a SUB WARN Report. Once the WARN or SUB WARN Report has been received, the RRT will:

- Have immediate and on-site contact with the employer, affected workers or their representatives and local community to discuss and create a strategy to address:
 1. The employer's layoff plans and schedule;
 2. The background, probable assistance needs and reemployment prospects of the affected workers; and
 3. Resources available to meet the short and long-term assistance needs of affected workers'
- The provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs
- The assessment of other necessary services and resources needed, including workshops and classes, use of worker transition centers, regional hiring events

- Determination of the need for application of National Dislocated Worker grants

There are additional tools that are available to enhance the Rapid Response activities that, when appropriate, will be used. These include, but are not limited to:

Joint Adjustment Committee (JAC)

The RRT will, if needed, help organize a JAC, comprised of administrative staff, to help conduct the meetings and provide support staff, Service Center Staff, to provide information on services available, Unions, Displaced Workers, and the RRT. This will occur by mutual consent of the company (and union, if present) where at least 50 workers are being laid off and there is at least 60 days subsequent to the Rapid Response meeting before layoffs are completed that a JAC may be established with TIA support. Meetings will be scheduled the displaced workers will be requested to complete a Needs Survey. After this information is compiled, the team will be able to determine if customized training sessions, seminars or workshops need to be developed.

State Adjustment Grant (SAG)

SAGs, may be used for statewide Rapid Response activities to provide additional assistance to local areas that experience mass layoffs, plant closings, or other events that precipitate increases in the number of individuals seeking dislocated worker services.

Activities funded by these grants must be consistent with the WIOA Dislocated Worker (DW) guidelines and the MICA Guidelines. SAGs are to support significant dislocation events with temporary time-limited funding.

Region 7B will apply for additional Dislocated Worker funds when possible. Circumstances in which we would apply may include, but not be limited to lack DW funds, unemployment rate and multiple or a large business closing.

National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG)

NDWGs are discretionary funding awarded by the Secretary of Labor to serve dislocated workers and other eligible individuals affected by major economic dislocations, emergencies or disasters.

In necessary circumstances employment-related service needs will be sought in coordination with state for application of funds.

Rapid Response Contacts

SAG AND NDWG Rapid Response Activities and JAC

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