

Local Workforce Development Area Name: West Kentucky Workforce Board

Region Name: West Region WPR

The responses received to questions addressed in each chapter, whether regional (R) or local (L). Answering regional questions necessitates the collaboration of LWDBs, CLEOs, and partners within the region to provide a unified regional response. The guidance for local and regional plans can be found here: [Guidance 21-007](#) released 1/1/2025. With the accompanying [Local and Regional Plans Toolkit](#) that provides statewide strategic objectives, programs, and initiatives that are referenced in the Combined WIOA State Plan.

Chapter 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

A. (R) Provide a description of the planning process undertaken to produce the regional plan, including a description of how all local areas were afforded the opportunity to participate in the regional planning process.

Together, Green River Workforce Development Board and the West Kentucky Workforce Board service areas comprise Kentucky's WWPR(WWPR). In partnership with the local elected officials, the boards have engaged in a collaborative process to develop this workforce plan. A timeline for the local and regional planning activities have been detailed in Figure 1: Project Timeline for Regional Plan on page 2.

To achieve a comprehensive view of regional opportunities and challenges, staff from both local boards met regularly to review labor market data, discuss the strategic elements, and coordinated planning efforts. A key component of the process was a stakeholder engagement discussion that occurred on February 14, 2025, where staff shared their findings from the economic analysis and gathered input on essential questions regarding high-demand sectors, perceived challenges within the workforce system, and board best practices to stakeholders. This meeting included local elected officials, partner agency staff, workforce board members, area employers, chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, economic development entities, and institutions of higher education.

To ensure transparency and public engagement, the Green River Workforce Development Board (GRWBD) and the West Kentucky Workforce Board (WKWB) Local Plans will be posted for a 30-day public comment period on our respective websites, beginning March 30, 2025:

- Green River Workforce Board: www.gradd.com
- West Kentucky Workforce Board: www.wkworkforce.work

This planning process ensured that the local workforce boards had an equal opportunity to participate, provide input, and contribute to the development of a workforce strategy that addresses the needs of the WWPR region. The final regional and local workforce plans will be submitted to the Kentucky Department of Workforce Investment by April 30, 2025. Any public comments received during the review period will be forwarded to the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet for consideration in the final plan.

Figure 1: Project Timeline for Regional Plan

A detailed timeline for the local and regional planning efforts completed by the Green River Workforce Board and West Kentucky Workforce Board.

Activity	Date	Notes
Staff Discussion	1/30/2025	Joint LWA Discussions / Planning
Staff Discussion	2/3/2025	Joint LWA Discussions / Planning
Staff Discussion	2/10/2025	Joint LWA Discussions / Planning
WWPR Planning Session	2/14/2025 @ 10 AM	Joint Planning with each LWA board & workforce partners
Staff Discussion	2/26/2025	Joint LWA Discussions / Planning
Staff Discussion to Finalize Draft	3/10/2025	Review for Updates
Presentation to LWBs	3/25/2025 3/27/2025	GRWDB Executive Council WKWB Board of Directors
Regional Plan Draft Release	No later than 4/1/2025	Plan Posted for Public Comment
Regional / Local Plan Submission	4/30/2025	Plans submitted to KY Education and Labor Cabinet

B. (R) Provide a regional analysis of the economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. This is in line with [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (A)] and [20 CFR 679.560 (a)].

The WWPR(WWPR) has a strong economy that includes a mix of established and emerging industries and that offer excellent employment opportunities. Our analysis includes existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, key occupations, and the employment needs of regional employers. The GRWDB and WKWB are organizations that collaborate with local elected officials to improve the workforce development system in the WWPR footprint. The GRWDB serves seven counties: Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster counties. The WKWB serves the following 17-counties: Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, Muhlenberg, Todd, and Trigg counties.

The 24-county area has a total population of 627,439 residents, that includes 36,615 Veterans. The WPR has a labor force participation rate of 54.3%, and a total of 369,630 individuals employed who are in the working age population (25-55 years old). Figure 2 details these statistics utilizing data from the Kentucky Center for Statistics.

Figure 2: Regional Demographic Profile

West (WPR) Overview

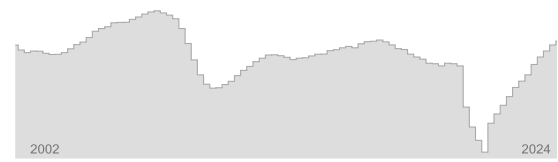
	Total Population 627,439
	Veteran Population 36,615
	Poverty Population 98,393
	Median Household Income N/A
	Workforce Participation Rate 54.3%
	Total Working Age Population 369,630
	Working Age No HS Diploma 10%
	Working Age Some College Plus 53%
	Working Age Associate Plus 30%

Source: KY Center for Statistics, Workforce Overview Report for KY Regions, Updated 11/2024

Employment is one of the broadest and most timely measures of a region's economy. Fluctuations in the number of jobs shed light on the health of an industry. A growing employment base creates more opportunities for regional residents and helps a region grow its population. Employment in the WWPR has certainly been affected by fluctuations driven by the housing market crash that led to the 2007 Great Recession and by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Four of Kentucky's oldest population counties in are located in the WWPR. Hickman, Lyon, Marshall, and Trigg counties have the highest percentage of people aged 65 and older in the Commonwealth. Despite this, comparing employment now to employment in 2002, the number remains steady despite an aging population and reduction in birth rates. According to JobsEQ, as of 2024Q2, total employment of the WWPR is 270,795 (based on a four-quarter moving average).

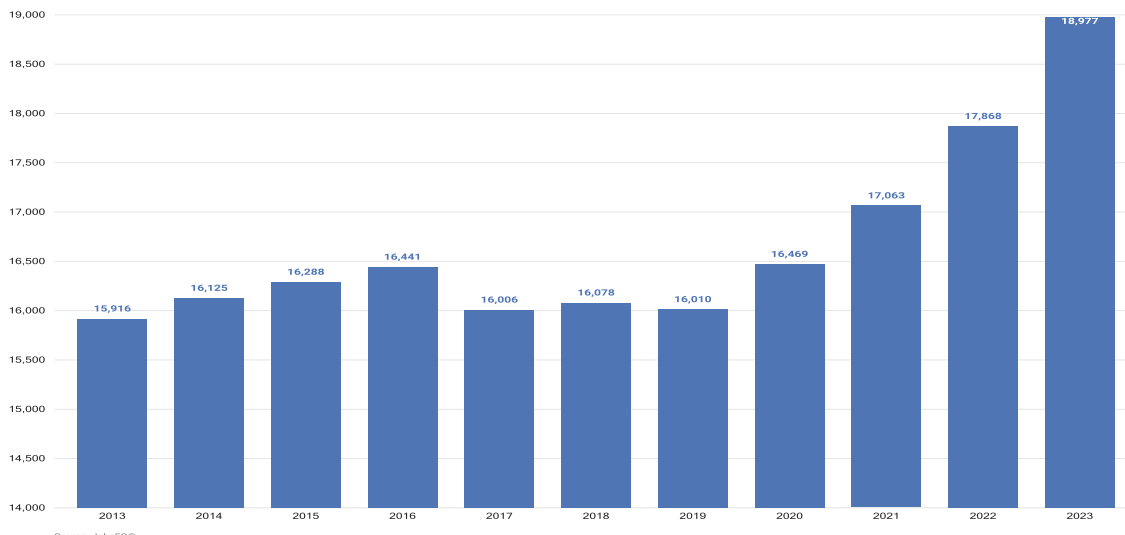
Figure 3: Employment Trends Since 2002-2024



Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report, Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2

In 2023, there were 18,977 industries establishments in the WWPR (per covered employment establishment counts), an increase from 15,916 establishments ten years earlier in 2013.

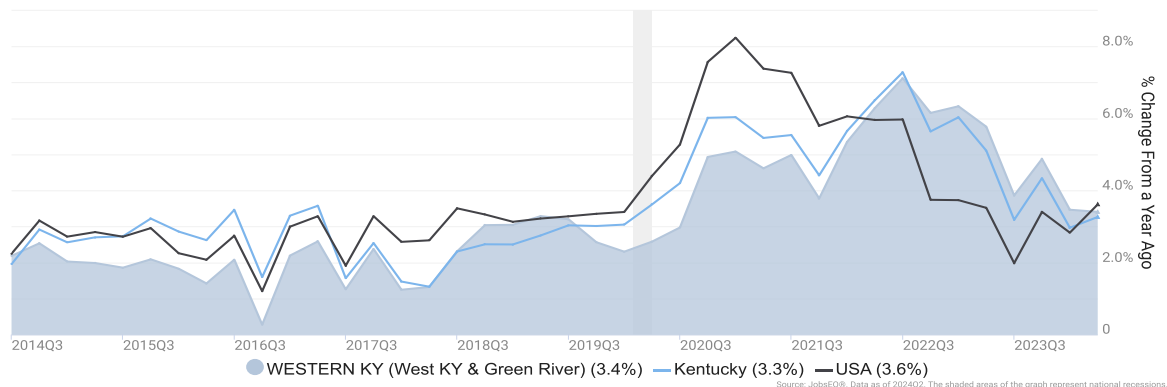
Figure 4: Establishments in West Workforce Planning Region



Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2

The average worker in the WWPR earned annual wages of \$51,985 as of 2024Q2. Average annual wages per worker increased 3.4% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$72,405 in the nation as of 2024Q2.

Figure 5: WWPR Average Annual Wage Trends

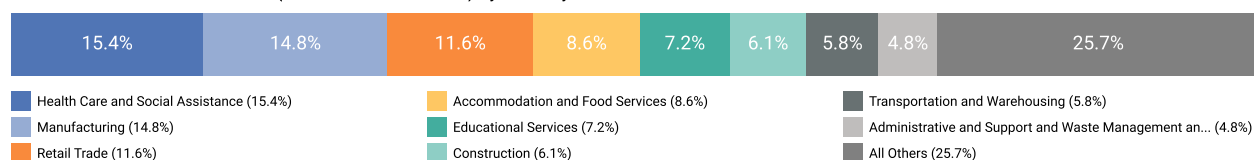


Source: Jobs EQ – Industry Spotlight Report Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2

Recently, the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) voted to revise Kentucky’s top five in-demand sectors to include: Healthcare, Manufacturing and Logistics, Construction, Education, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. While some of these sectors are also in-demand for the WWPR, not all are among the top sectors employing the region’s workers. Figure 6: Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors details the WWPR’s top nine sectors according to JobsEQ, an economic development dashboard produced by Chmura Economics & Analytics.

Figure 6: Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors

Total Workers for WESTERN KY (West KY & Green River) by Industry



*Source: JobsEQ, Economic Overview Report
Industry Snapshot for West Region WPR, 2024Q2*

The following narrative reviews the existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations for the WWPR that align with Kentucky’s new in-demand sectors. It also highlights the two unique in-demand sectors the region has selected, as well as the employment needs of employers. It is important to note that while Figure 3 reports the Retail sector 11.6% (31,467

workers) and Accommodation and Food Services sector at 8.6% (23,291 workers), as in-demand sectors for the WWPR, our stakeholders did not select them for inclusion as unique high-demand occupations for the region. It was felt that while the sectors offer multiple employment opportunities for those with barriers and a pathway to self-sufficiency without postsecondary degrees, median wages were below self-sufficiency and too many individuals did not have the opportunity to work full-time or receive benefits. Instead, the stakeholders chose to use high location quotients indicating which sectors have high concentrations of employment compared to the national average.

The best job growth over the last five years has occurred in the Construction (+2,289 jobs), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+1,577), and Transportation and Warehousing (+1,539) sectors. According to JobsEQ, the strongest forecast by number of jobs over the next five years will occur for Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and Construction.

Health Care and Social Assistance

In the WWPR, Health Care and Social Assistance is the dominant industry. Driven by an aging population and an increase for medical services, the healthcare sector employs 15.4% of the regions total workforce (41,664 workers) with an average annual wage of \$57,789. Employers emphasize the need for more trained nurses and support staff, particularly in rural areas. Soft skills, patient care experience, and specialized certifications are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Registered Nurses (RNs)
- Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)
- Medical Technologists
- Home Health Aides

Manufacturing and Logistics

The manufacturing sector remains one of the region's largest employers, particularly in automotive, aerospace, food production, and machinery. The WWPR has secured a significant share of Kentucky's \$10 billion investment in EV battery production and auto parts manufacturing. This sector is driving demand for skilled labor, particularly in engineering, automation, and production roles. The sector employs 14.8% (40,039 workers). Manufacturers seek employees with technical skills, industry certifications (such as OSHA and CNC programming), and experience in automated systems and robotics. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Industrial Maintenance Technicians
- CNC Machinists
- Welders
- Production Operators

The WWPR is within 65% of the nation's major transportation routes, population, personal income, and manufacturing business establishments – making our region a transportation multimodal hub (rail, river, road, and air). There are 15,627 transportation workers with an average annual wage of \$63,880 residing in the region. Employers seek candidates with

commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), supply chain management experience, and familiarity with logistics software. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Commercial Truck Drivers (CDL-A)
- Warehouse and Logistics Coordinators
- Forklift Operators
- Deckhand

Construction

The Construction industry is a major driver of economic growth, but the jobs are often filled by out-of-area workers as contractors and trade unions move workers from project to project. Fueled by ongoing infrastructure projects, commercial developments, and residential housing demands, the sector employs 6.1% of the region's total workforce (16,611 workers) with an average annual wage of \$61,453. The industry faces labor shortages in both skilled and specialized trades.

Employers emphasize the need for more skilled tradespeople and project managers. Hands-on experience, safety certifications, and technical expertise in modern construction methods are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Carpenters
- Electricians
- Heavy Equipment Operators
- Construction Managers

Education

In the WWPR, the education sector is experiencing significant labor shortages, driven by the increasing rate of retirements among teachers and school staff, as well as pursuit of careers away from the classroom. As veteran educators leave the workforce, schools districts struggle to replace them, leading to higher student-to-teacher ratios, increased workloads for remaining staff, and potential declines in education quality. the sector employs 7.2% of the region's total workforce (19,477 workers) with an average annual wage of \$42,125. Employers emphasize the need for more qualified teachers, particularly in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), special education, and early childhood education. They also value state certifications, classroom management experience, and strong interpersonal skills to foster student engagement and learning. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Elementary and Secondary Teachers
- Middle School Teachers Teachers
- Bus Drivers
- Teacher Assistants

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

In the WWPR, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services is a rapidly growing industry but not among the region's top sectors. Driven by advancements in technology, increased demand for specialized expertise, and business expansion, the sector employs 3.4% of the region's total workforce (9,279 workers) with an average annual wage of \$70,191. Employers emphasize the need for more skilled professionals in engineering, IT, and business consulting, particularly in high-tech and research-driven fields. Analytical skills, technical certifications, and industry

experience are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Accountants and Auditors
- General and Operations Managers
- Civil Engineers
- Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks

WWPR Unique In-Demand Sectors

- **Agriculture** is a foundational industry, supporting both local economies and global food supply chains. The sector has a Location Quotient 2.39, one of the highest among our industry clusters, with average annual wages of \$54,561. Driven by advancements in agricultural technology, increasing demand for sustainable farming practices, and the need for food production, the sector employs 2.6% of the region's total workforce (7,024 workers). Employers emphasize the need for more skilled farmworkers, agronomists, and equipment operators, particularly in rural areas. Hands-on experience, knowledge of modern farming techniques, and certifications in agribusiness management are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Agricultural Technicians
- Heavy Equipment Operators
- Food Scientists and Agronomists
- Livestock and Crop Farmworkers

- **Energy** is a key industry driving economic growth and infrastructure development. Fueled by increasing demand for renewable energy, fuel manufacturing, advancements in extraction technologies, and grid modernization, and enriched uranium stocks. The WWPR's highest average wages per worker are within Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$101,039) class. Employers emphasize the need for more skilled technicians, engineers, and equipment operators, particularly in emerging renewable energy fields. Technical expertise, safety certifications, and experience in energy systems are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
- Power Plant Operators
- Renewable Energy Technicians
- Pipeline and Utility Workers

C. (R) Provide an analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data and information on labor market trends and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)] and [CFR 679.560(a)]

The WWPR is experiencing steady employment growth, particularly in manufacturing, healthcare, and infrastructure development. However, addressing labor shortages, skills mismatches, and employment barriers will be crucial for sustaining economic momentum. Expanding workforce training, improving job accessibility, and supporting key industries will ensure continued growth and prosperity in the region.

As of the second quarter of 2024, total employment in the WWPR reached 270,795, reflecting a 1.8% increase over the previous year, based on a four-quarter moving average, according to JobsEQ. This growth is driven by industry expansion, particularly in advanced manufacturing and electric vehicle (EV) battery production. The region's labor market is evolving rapidly in response to economic trends and workforce demands. The unemployment rate for the WWPR was 5.2% as of November 2024, which was higher than the national rate of 4.0%. One year earlier, in November 2023, WWPR unemployment rate was 4.0%. (See Figure 8 for WWPR Unemployment Data from KYSTATS.)

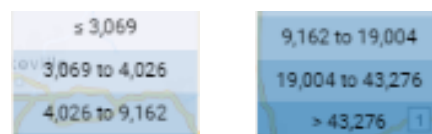
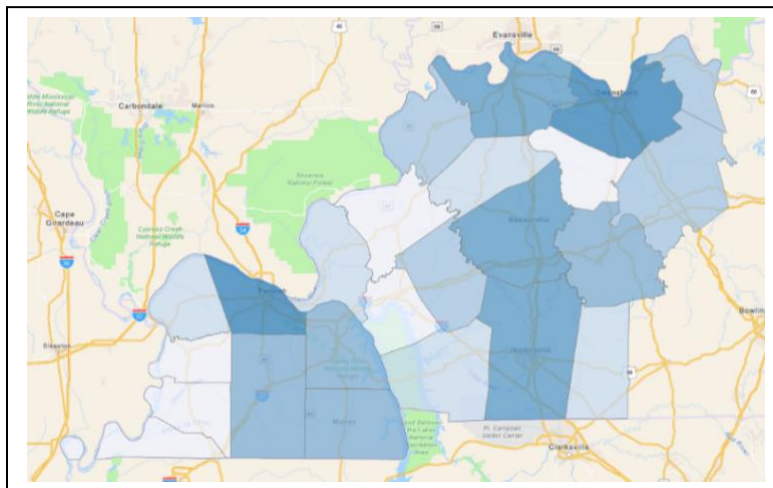
The labor force participation rate in Kentucky has historically lagged behind the national average. According to KYSTATS, the December 2024 Local Area Unemployment Statistics report published 1/29/2025 shows that the Kentucky's unemployment rate stood at **5.1%**, slightly above the national average of **3.8%**. In the WWPR, labor shortages in key industries—such as education, healthcare, and technical trades—are contributing to hiring challenges, despite overall job growth.

The four counties with the largest employment in the WWPR are outlined below. Each contains a city with at least 25,000 residents, located along major highways and interstates. These counties feature hospitals and medical centers that serve as major employers and provide access to advanced healthcare. Additionally, each has a Kentucky Community & Technical College, with Murray State University operating regional campuses in Christian, Henderson, and McCracken counties, while Western Kentucky University has a regional campus in Daviess County.

- Daviess County (GRWDB area) has the largest employment in the 24-county WWPR, with key sectors in manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade. The median household income is \$65,323, and 11.9% of families live below the poverty line (U.S. Census).
- McCracken County (WKWB area) ranks second in employment, with key sectors in manufacturing, healthcare, education, and retail. The median household income is \$62,385, and 10.9% of families live below the poverty line (U.S. Census).
- Christian County (WKWB area) has the third-largest employment, heavily influenced by Fort Campbell Army Post, which provides military and civilian job opportunities. Key sectors include manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade. The median household income is \$48,000, with 12.1% of families living below the poverty line (U.S. Census).
- Henderson County (GRWDB area) ranks fourth in employment, with key industries in education, healthcare and social services, manufacturing, and retail trade. The median household income is \$52,000, and 9.7% of families live below the poverty line (U.S. Census).

Figure 7: Employment Trends by County

County	Empl
Daviess County, KY	49,543
McCracken County, KY	43,277
Christian County, KY	33,623
Henderson County, KY	20,274
Hopkins County, KY	19,004
Calloway County, KY	17,012
Graves County, KY	13,335
Marshall County, KY	13,321
Muhlenberg County, KY	9,162
Ohio County, KY	8,295
All Others	43,948



Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report
Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2

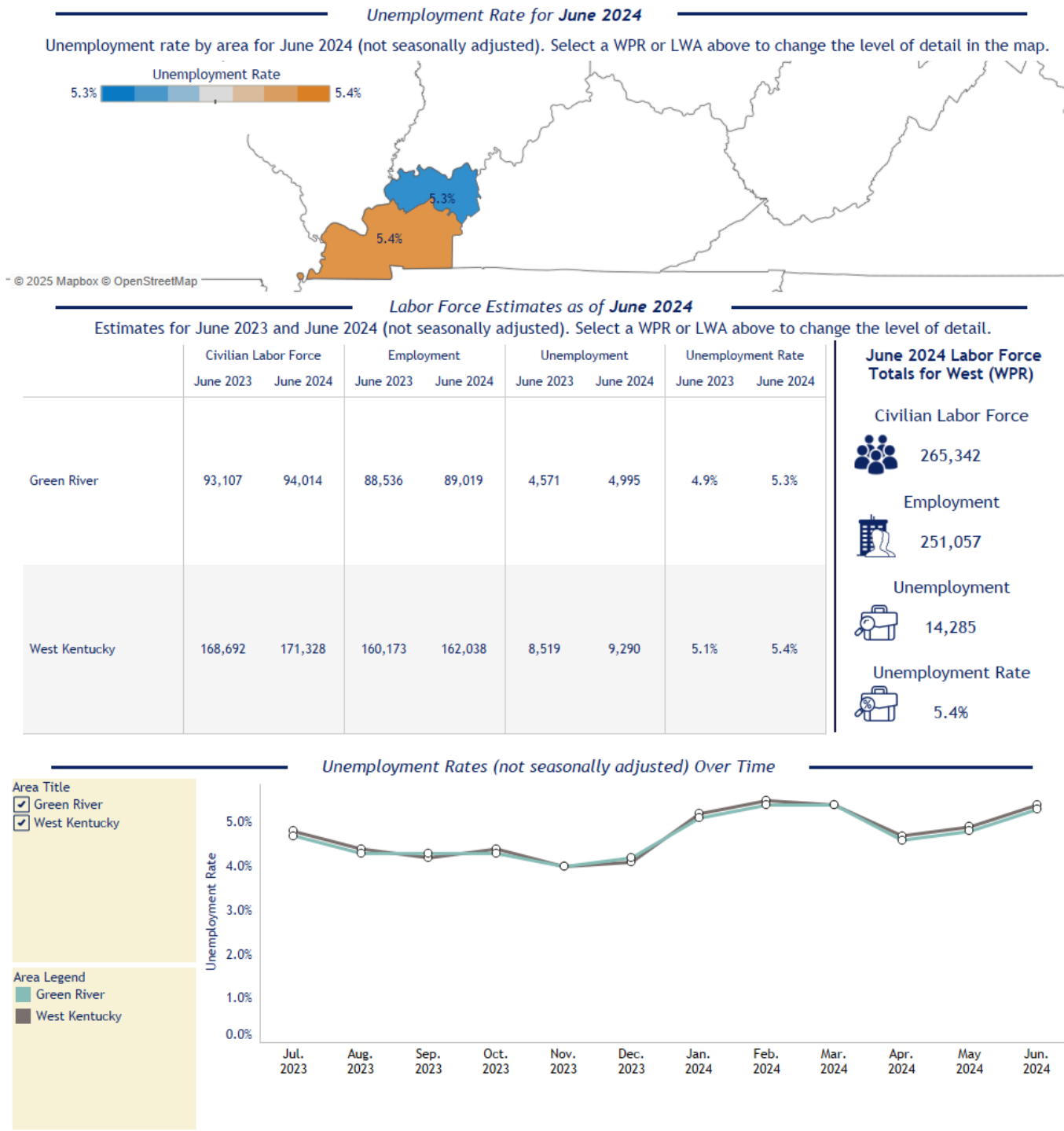
The WWPR is predominantly rural, which presents unique challenges related to employment accessibility, workforce mobility, and economic development. According to the US Census On the Map, a total of 221,198 WWPR residents are employed. A total of 176,137 (79.6%) residents live in work in the 24-county area. A total of 54,959 residents must leave the WWP for employment and the area only attracts 45,061 non-residents into the area for employment, meaning the area has a net job flow of -9,898 jobs. Addressing these challenges will be key to strengthening the regional workforce, supporting economic development, and ensuring long-term sustainability in West Kentucky. Below are the demographics of the WWPR residents who are commuting outside the 24-county region:

Figure 8: Outflow Worker Demographics

Outflow Worker Ages		Outflow Worker Wages	
Workers Aged 29 or younger	27.8%	Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	18.7%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	51.3%	Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	31.5%
Workers Aged 55 or older	20.9%	Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	49.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), Inflow/Outflow Analysis <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov>, Printed March 12, 2025

Figure 9: WWPR Unemployment Data



Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics
Workforce Overview Report for Kentucky Regions (WORKR)
Updated November 2024

While the unemployment rate for the WWPR was 5.2% as of November 2024, only 711 Unemployment Insurance Claims were filed, as shown by Figure 9: Unemployment Insurance Overview for West Region WPR.

Figure 10: Unemployment Insurance Overview for WWPR



Total Initial Claims is any notice of unemployment filed (1) to request a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation or (2) to begin a second or subsequent period of eligibility within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Total Weeks Claimed is the number of weeks of benefits claimed, including weeks for which a waiting period or fixed disqualification period is being served.

Average Benefit Payment is benefits paid for total unemployment divided by weeks compensated for total unemployment.

Program Exhaustees is the number of claimants drawing the final payment of their original entitlement for a given program.

Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics

Workforce Overview Report for Kentucky Regions (WORKR)

Updated November 2024

The WWPR workforce is well-equipped to support key industries, but continued investment in education, skills training, and workforce accessibility remains essential to adapting to a changing job market. Each in-demand sector, including the unique industries of the WWPR region, requires a combination of academic qualifications, technical training, and work-based learning opportunities.

According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, 35.1% of workers have at least a high school diploma or GED. KYSTATS data (Figure 1, page 2) reports that only 10% of the WWPR workforce lacks a high school diploma or GED. Additionally, 53% of the working-age population has attended some college, while 30% hold an associate degree, reflecting a strong foundation for workforce development and upskilling initiatives.

During the February 14th stakeholder engagement discussion, participants reinforced concerns previously raised during Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) local visits while drafting

the newly adopted state plan. Key barriers preventing individuals from entering and remaining in the workforce include limited access to workforce training programs, inadequate public transportation (especially in rural areas), and the availability and affordability of child care for working parents. Addressing these challenges requires solutions beyond the scope of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding, necessitating broader policy and community-driven initiatives.

D. (R) Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training in the region. This will include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of workforce *development activities and the capacity to provide workforce development activities 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.*

Note: Per WIOA Sec. 108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of the issuance of this guidance).

Education and Training Partners in West Region WPR

Adult Education Centers located in the WWPR:

- Henderson Community College serves Henderson county residents.
- Hopkinsville Community College serves Caldwell, Christian, Todd, and Trigg county residents.
- Madisonville Community College serves Hopkins and Muhlenberg county residents.
- Owensboro Community & Technical College services Daviess, Hancock, McLean, and Ohio county residents.
- West Kentucky Community & Technical College serves, Carlisle, Graves, and McCracken county residents.
- West Kentucky Educational Cooperative services Ballard, Calloway, Crittenden, Fulton, Hickman, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, Union, and Webster county residents.

Career & Technical Centers located in the WWPR:

- Ballard County Career & Technical Center
- Caldwell County Area Technology Center (serving Caldwell, Livingston,
- Four Rivers Career Academy (ATC serving Fulton County, Fulton Ind. and Hickman County High Schools)
- Hancock County Center and Annex
- Mayfield-Graves County Area Technology Center (serving Carlisle County, Graves County, and Mayfield Ind. High Schools)
- Murray-Calloway County Area Technology Center

KCTCS Campuses located in the WWPR:

- Henderson Community College

- Hopkinsville Community College
- Madisonville Community College
- Owensboro Community & Technical College
- West Kentucky Community & Technical College

Postsecondary Institutions located in the WWPR (or located adjacent counties):

- Austin Peay State University
- Brescia College
- Kentucky Wesleyan College
- Murray State University (with regional campus' in Henderson, Hopkinsville, Madisonville, Paducah, and a campus at Fort Campbell)
- Western Kentucky University – Owensboro Campus
- University of Louisville – Owensboro Healthcare Campus
- University of Kentucky – Pigman College of Engineering, Paducah Campus

Stand Alone Training Facilities located in the WWPR:

- 1-60 Driving Academy
- Driver Resource Center
- KenTenn Emergency Management
- MedCertify

The GRWDB and the WKWB play a critical role in providing workforce development activities to meet the needs of the regional workforce, including individuals facing barriers to employment. Our capacity to serve is built upon federal and state funding, partnerships with employers and educational institutions, and targeted programs designed to address skills gaps and workforce challenges. During the February 14th Stakeholder Engagement discussions, local elected officials, workforce board members, agency and community partners highlighted the following activities as best practices.

- **Rapid Response Services and Regional Coordination**

The WWPR has a long history of managing workforce dislocations, leading to the development of two well-established and experienced Rapid Response teams, each led by local-area coordinators. These teams are overseen by either the GRWDB or the WKWB, depending on the location of the impacted employer.

Upon notification of a workforce reduction, the appropriate workforce board contacts the employer, assesses their specific needs, and develops a customized Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) service plan. This plan includes a timeline for service delivery and ensures coordination with other agencies to prevent duplication of efforts.

Once the plan is established, the local area coordinator informs workforce board leadership, team members, and regional partners, including WWPR officials, economic development professionals, and workforce organizations. When layoffs affect employees, who commute across multiple workforce areas, the Rapid Response teams collaborate on joint events, ensuring seamless service delivery for both employers and workers.

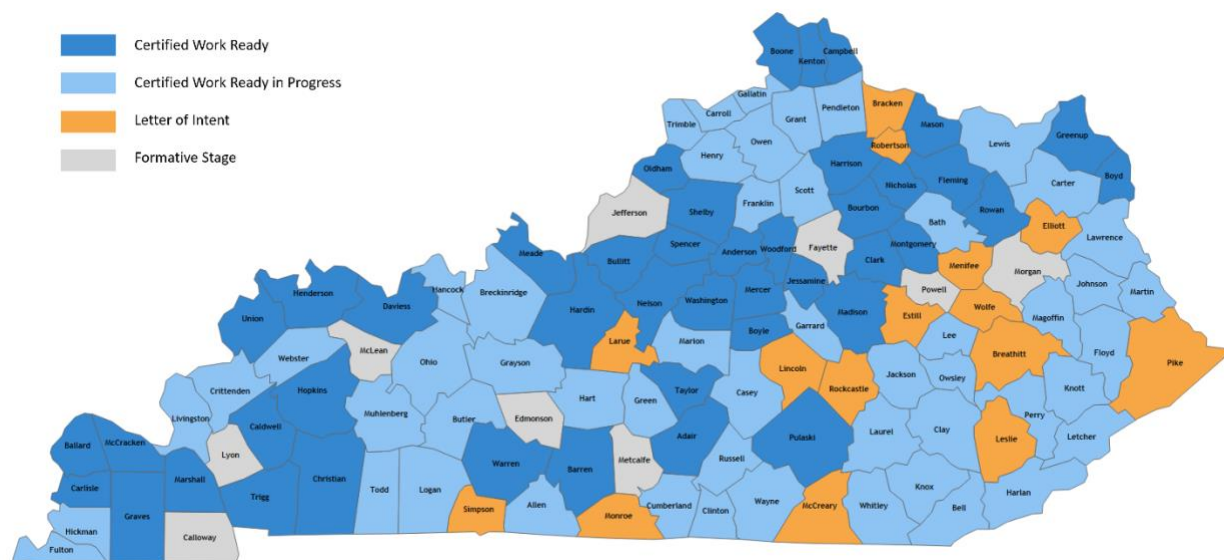
- **Strong Support for Individuals Facing Barriers to Employment**

The GRWDB and the WKWB are committed to ensuring access to employment opportunities by providing comprehensive support services for individuals facing barriers to employment. These barriers may include lack of education, limited access to transportation, childcare challenges, disabilities, long-term unemployment, or involvement with the justice system. The key to access is through strong community partnerships that breaks down employment barrier and expands opportunities for all individuals to participate in the workforce. The goal is not just to connect job seekers with employment but to ensure long-term career success and economic stability for individuals and their families. Stakeholders found value in the services offered to justice involved individuals, transitioning service members, the underemployed, and disconnected youth.

- **Work Ready Communities**

Over the past several years, the majority of WWPR counties have actively pursued certification through the Kentucky Work Ready Communities program. This initiative, led by county fiscal courts, enables communities to evaluate their workforce strengths and follow a structured process to earn Work Ready or Work Ready in Progress certification. As of this publication, 12 counties in the WWPR have achieved Work Ready certification, while 10 additional counties have been designated as Work Ready in Progress. These designations reflect the region's commitment to strengthening workforce readiness through education, skills development, and employer engagement.

Figure 11: Work Ready Status by Kentucky County



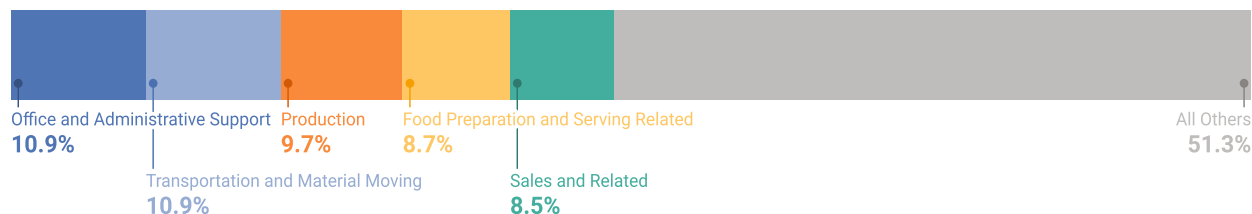
Source: Certified County Map, Effective January 1, 2021
www/workready.ky.gov

E. (L) Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)] and [20 CFR 679.560(a)]

The GRWDB and the WKWB continuously assess the knowledge and skills necessary to meet employer demands across the local economy's in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Given the evolving labor market, the region must align education, training, and workforce development initiatives to ensure job seekers are equipped with the competency's employers require.

Utilizing the JobsEQ Industry Spotlight Report for the WWPR, the following occupational groups have been identified as the region's top employment sectors. Across the 24-county area, 270,795 individuals are currently employed, with an average annual wage of \$51,985, which remains well below the national average of \$72,405.

Figure 12: Top Occupational Groups for WWPR



*Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report
Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2*

Over the past 10 years, employment has increased by 3.3%, highlighting the success of economic development efforts in attracting new industries and supporting the expansion of existing businesses. The diverse mix of occupations within the region underscores both the ability to sustain key industries and the flexibility to adapt to future workforce demands.

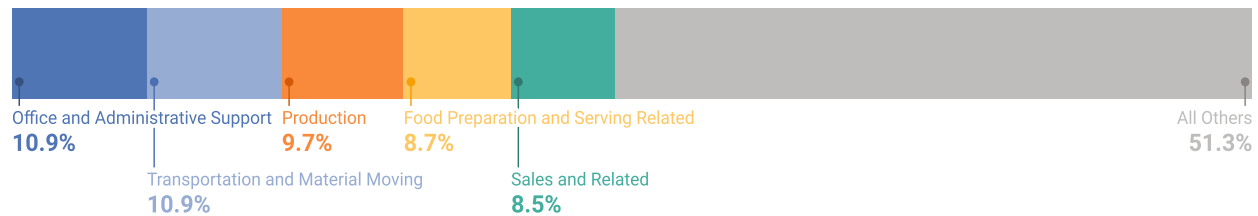
The knowledge and skills required by WWPR employers span a wide range of competencies, from customer service and administrative skills to highly specialized technical expertise and skilled trades. A comprehensive analysis of employment requirements shows that the mix of occupations points to the ability of a region to support an industry and its flexibility to adapt to future demand. Here is what we've learned from reviewing the data, stakeholder discussions, and employer input:

- Demand for skilled trades, healthcare professionals, and manufacturing workers remains high.

- Workforce adaptability is essential, with a focus on technological proficiency, problem-solving, and industry certifications.
- Soft skills, including communication, teamwork, and leadership, are increasingly valued across all sectors.
- Advanced training and micro-credentialing programs play a critical role in bridging skill gaps and supporting workforce readiness.

By continuously evaluating regional workforce needs and aligning training programs with employer demand, the GRWDB and WKWB are committed to fostering a highly skilled, competitive workforce that supports long-term economic growth and prosperity.

Figure 13: Top Staffing Patterns for WWPR



*Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report
Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2*

Chapter 2: Strategic Vision and Goals – West Kentucky Workforce WKWB

A. (L) Describe the local WKWB’s strategic vision and goals aimed at fostering regional economic growth and self-sufficiency. Explain plans to prepare an educated and skilled workforce, especially for youth and individuals facing barriers to employment. As applicable, include a description of any plans to generate a new strategic vision and goals in the coming year and indicate the timeframe for such activities to occur. To the extent possible, strengthen goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The West Kentucky Workforce WKWB (WKWB) is dedicated to fostering regional economic growth and self-sufficiency by developing a skilled, adaptable workforce. Our strategic vision is centered on aligning workforce development initiatives with the needs of local industries, ensuring that businesses have access to a qualified talent pipeline and that job seekers—including those facing barriers to employment—can secure sustainable careers.

In December 2024, the WKWB launched a strategic planning and goal alignment initiative to better integrate with the Kentucky Workforce Innovation WKWB (KWIB) 2024-2027 WIOA State Plan, published on August 20, 2024. This effort ensures alignment with the state’s four core workforce goals and regional planning action items, strengthening our ability to address the evolving needs of both employers and job seekers.

The workforce landscape has undergone significant disruptions since our last local plan, beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic and the supply chain challenges and Great Resignation that followed. These things have reshaped labor markets and altered employment trends, and while economic development organizations are successfully landing record-breaking industrial development, job seekers now face relentless inflation, childcare shortages, limited transportation, and affordable housing challenges. Meanwhile, employers are struggling to recruit and retain skilled talent in an environment of accelerated automation, digital transformation, and rising labor and material costs.

In response to these challenges, WKWB remains committed to developing adaptive workforce strategies that equip businesses and job seekers with the skills and resources needed to navigate a rapid and ever-changing economy.

The WKWB recognizes its vital role in developing a skilled and educated workforce. However, WIOA funding restrictions often limit access to only a narrow segment of individuals in need of new or upgraded skills. To maximize impact, the WKWB strategically allocates resources to implement the most effective and efficient service delivery methods. To fully leverage the potential workforce—including youth and individuals facing employment barriers—the system must remain adaptive and inclusive, especially as workforce demand continues to exceed labor supply.

As with previous local plans, our vision remains flexible, evolving with shifting employment trends and the changing needs of both employers and job seekers. In response to fluctuating economic conditions, we continuously refine our service delivery strategies to enhance program efficiency and accelerate workforce reintegration, particularly for those facing employment challenges.

We have aligned our local goals with the Kentucky Workforce Innovation WKWB's (KWIB) 2024-2027 State Plan to ensure consistency with statewide workforce priorities. At the same time, we are maintaining our proven strategies, as they support long-term regional economic growth and self-sufficiency initiatives. By continuing to train individuals for in-demand sectors, we are strengthening a skilled talent pipeline that meets the needs of our rural and diverse economy. Through collaborative workforce solutions at both regional and state levels, we remain committed to fostering sustainable growth and expanding economic opportunities for all.

The 2024-2027 WKWB vision and goals are provided as follows:

Vision: To create a seamless, integrated system of high-quality employment, training, and workforce development services that empower both businesses and individuals. Through collaborative partnerships and strategically aligned service sites, we strive to drive economic growth and ensure a skilled, adaptable workforce for the region.

Goal #1: Employer Engagement.

The WKWB is committed to enhancing employer engagement and providing businesses with effective channels for reaching qualified job seekers. To this end, the Business Services staff and the Business Services Teams (BST) at our Kentucky Career Center locations in Hopkinsville and Paducah, collaborate on ensuring employers have access to the necessary tools and resources to successfully recruit and fill open positions.

- **Employer Talent Recruitment Support:** BST staff work closely with employers to identify workforce challenges and provide tailored recruitment solutions to meet their hiring needs, and support the process of promoting their job opportunities. One of the strength's that was identified at the February 14th stakeholder discussion was how the WKWB has partnered with its local Kentucky Career Centers to offer regular job fairs. These job fairs have eliminated access barriers to hundreds of job seekers struggling to find employment.
- **Collaborative Workforce Partnerships:** BST staff collaborate with local workforce partners, community organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and economic development professionals to raise awareness of job openings and ensure that employer recruitment needs are met.

Goal #2: Education Attainment

The WKWB plays a critical role in enhancing educational attainment by providing funding and resources to support individuals in acquiring the skills and credentials needed for sustainable employment. WIOA focuses on improving access to education and training, particularly youth and individuals facing barriers to employment, to help them succeed in the evolving job market.

- **Enhance Partnerships Across Educational Levels:** WKWB staff collaborate with P-12 schools, including career and technical education, adult education programs, and post-secondary institutions to ensure a seamless educational pathway for individuals, equipping them with both foundational and advanced skills that meet the demands of the future workforce.
- **Align Training Programs with Industry Needs:** Through its BST staff, the WKWB regularly engages with local businesses and industries to identify skills gaps and ensure that training programs are aligned with current and future labor market demands, particularly in high-growth sectors.

Goal #3: Workforce Participation

Increase the workforce participation by identifying employment opportunities and removing barriers to targeted populations. According to Kentucky Center for Statistics, the Workforce Participation Rate for the WKWB's 17-county service area is 54.3%.

- **Promote Employment Accessibility:** The WKWB is committed to breaking down barriers to employment by collaborating with community organizations and service providers. Our goal is to create accessible programs that address the unique needs of youth and individuals with disabilities, Veterans, justice-involved individuals, and other disadvantaged groups, ensuring they have equal access to job opportunities. Through these efforts, WKWB is dedicated to fostering an environment where equal access to job opportunities, regardless of their background or challenges, have access to meaningful employment opportunities.
 - **Expungement Events:** WKWB actively participates in expungement events across its 17-county area to assist individuals with prior convictions in removing legal barriers that prevent them from re-entering the workforce. WKWB staff are apart of such groups like the West Kentucky Reentry Council who works to reintegrate justice-involved individuals into the community. Through advocacy, economic support, and access to local resources, the council helps connect this population with employment and training opportunities.
 - **Right Choice Program:** WKWB leads this initiative, which provides non-custodial parents with the support and resources needed to enhance their employment opportunities, enabling them to meet their financial responsibilities to their children.
 - **Veteran Employment Support:** The WKWB assists veterans and eligible spouses in gaining access to high quality jobs and careers. Staff assist businesses hire and retain skilled workers. When veterans or transitioning service members and eligible spouses seek services at local career centers, they receive priority of service.

- **Foster Employer Education and Engagement:** Educate employers in the benefits of hiring individuals from diverse and underserved backgrounds and help them create inclusive hiring practices, such as offering flexible hours or remote work options, to accommodate a wider range of workers.
- **Identify and Expand Targeted Employment Opportunities:** By working with local employers, the WKWB will continue to identify job openings in high-demand sectors and ensure these opportunities are accessible to underrepresented populations, including those with barriers to employment.

Goal #4: Resource Alignment

The WKWB is committed to strategically allocating WIOA and other workforce resources to maximize impact and improve the return on investment. By leveraging data-driven decision-making, we continuously refine our strategies to enhance workforce development efforts across in our area. Our focus is on implementing the most effective initiatives that address current labor market needs, drive economic growth, and create sustainable employment opportunities. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Leverage real-time labor market data, performance metrics, and participant feedback to identify the most effective workforce development initiatives and ensure resources are allocated to programs with the highest impact.

- **Continuous Program Evaluation and Improvement:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of WIOA programs and other workforce development initiatives, using data to refine strategies and improve service delivery to both employers and job seekers.
- **Strategic Resource Allocation:** Prioritize investments in programs and services that demonstrate clear outcomes in job placement, retention, and skill acquisition, ensuring resources are directed toward high-impact activities that align with regional workforce needs.
- **Collaboration and Best Practices Sharing:** Foster collaboration across workforce development partners, ensuring data-driven insights and best practices are shared to enhance program performance to maximize the impact of workforce investments across Kentucky.

B. (L) Describe how the local WKWB’s vision and goals relate to the Commonwealth’s goals, initiatives and priorities as outlined in the WIOA State Plan.

The WKWB has strategically aligned its vision and goals with the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s workforce development priorities outlined in the 2024-2027 WIOA State Plan. By integrating local workforce strategies with the KWIB initiatives, WKWB fosters a cohesive and effective approach to economic growth, workforce participation, and skills development.

WKWB plays a pivotal role in workforce policy development and partnership coordination, supporting economic development across the region. Its vision is to create a skilled and competitive workforce through a comprehensive, demand-driven system that aligns with the evolving needs of employers and job seekers. To achieve this, WKWB:

- Bridges the gap between employers in business, industry, and the public sector with job seekers to ensure workforce needs are met.
- Develops and promotes strategies that encourage individuals to pursue education, enhance their skills, and access career advancement opportunities.
- Supports the creation of new training programs tailored to the regional economy's workforce demands.
- Conducts oversight and analysis of workforce programs through Kentucky Career Centers to ensure continuous improvement.

As Kentucky strengthens the alignment between education, workforce development, and economic growth, WKWB remains focused on both business and job seekers, ensuring that services are tailored to their needs. Despite fluctuating resources, evolving federal policies, and economic uncertainties, the WKWB remains steadfast in leading workforce development efforts across the region. WKWB actively engages with state leadership, agency partners, and regional stakeholders in order to leverage funding, expand initiatives, and develop innovative solutions that support both employers and job seekers.

C. (L) Describe how the local WKWB's vision and goals take into account an analysis of the strategies in working partnership with the other entities that carry out the core programs, and the required partners in the alignment of resources.

As stated throughout this chapter, the WKWB actively collaborates with core program entities and required partners to ensure the effective alignment of resources and the successful implementation of workforce strategies. Through continuous analysis of available data, labor market trends, employer needs, and workforce supply/demand, WKWB refines its vision, goals, and strategic initiatives to maintain relevance and impact.

WKWB remains committed to aligning its strategies with state and federal workforce plans, including the KWIB 2024-2027 State Plan and regional economic development efforts. Regular updates to local and regional workforce plans ensure that WKWB's approach remains responsive to the evolving needs of businesses and job seekers. WKWB works in close coordination with core program entities overseen by the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, which includes:

- Wagner-Peyser Act employment services
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) services
- Registered Apprenticeship programs
- WIOA Title I programs

In addition, the WKWB maintains active representation on KWIB committees, ensuring a strong connection between local needs and statewide workforce policies.

By supporting and integrating KWIB's statewide priorities into local and regional workforce strategies, WKWB ensures a cohesive, data-driven, and adaptable workforce system. Through cross-agency collaboration and continuous program evaluation, WKWB remains dedicated to:

- Expanding workforce access and participation
- Enhancing employer-driven training and career pathways
- Strengthening regional economic development through workforce readiness
- Aligning resources across multiple agencies for efficiency and effectiveness

WKWB will continue to refine and adapt its workforce strategies to meet the evolving demands of Kentucky's labor market, ensuring that both businesses and job seekers are equipped with the tools and opportunities needed for sustained success.

Chapter 3: Alignment of Local and Regional Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

A. (L) Describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment in order to provide services. Include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b)(1)(E); H. R. 803—442.1. This should also include a descriptive overview of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker, Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another.

Note: The six core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Skills U the Kentucky Adult Education and Literacy program, Wagner-Peyser Programs and Vocational Rehabilitation. The elected partner plan programs are: Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers, Jobs for Veterans State Grants and Unemployment Insurance.

The WKWB is a non-profit, 401 (c)(3) organization and incorporated entity responding to training needs, economic development efforts, and workforce development programs throughout the western Kentucky region. The Board is responsible for bringing the partners together to develop the local plan/regional plan. The WKWB oversees the Kentucky Career Center (KCC), also known as the One Stop Career Center System in the local area, in conjunction with local elected officials. The WKWB has undergone extensive strategic planning, surveyed employers, education, sector groups, and convened focus groups to determine what services they want and need. It is important that the Board carefully examine the area, data, and its vision, implement services and strategies to be in line with those discoveries, and examine the investment, programs, and corresponding policies. The WKWB will also determine if a change is necessary for high demand sectors and training priorities as new data is released by the Kentucky Center for Statistics, Census, or another agency.

In western Kentucky, the workforce system partners include the following:

- WIOA Title I programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers, Trade, and Youth,
- Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act - Career and Technical Education and Postsecondary Vocational Education-Provided through KCTCS and other postsecondary education institutions,
- Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation,
- Title II Adult Education — Kentucky Office of Adult Education,
- Kentucky Department of Workforce Development, Kentucky Career Development Office (CDO) representing these required partners: Jobs for Kentucky Veterans, Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser Act and Trade/TAA,
- Title V - Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP),
- Muhlenberg Job Corps,

- KTAP, TANF and SNAP, Kentucky Department for Community Based Services,
- National Farmworkers Program,
- Jobs for Kentucky V
- Audubon Area Community Services - Kentucky Works,
- Senior Employment Services - Goodwill,
- “Right Choice” Program,
- Commission of Native American Affairs,
- Community Services Block Grant Programs including “Fresh Start”,
- Re-Entry Councils and Second Chance Programs,
- As well as, Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO), businesses, the WKWB, Direct Service Provider (DSP), One Stop Operator (OSO), Business Service Teams, Chambers of Commerce, schools, Work Ready Community Committees, economic development, U.S. Army Transition Assistance Program, Northern Middle Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board, Girls & Boys Clubs, Industrial Manager Groups, SHRM, FAME, and other community agencies.

Other required duties of the WKWB include:

- Convening, brokering, and leveraging system stakeholders to develop the local plan. The WKWB is trying to identify non-federal expertise/resources to support workforce development activities.
- Convening and engaging employers in concert with other entities to promote business representation on the board, support utilization of the business services workforce group system and engage in workforce investment activities, meet business needs, support economic growth, and develop/implement proven/promising strategies to meet the skill needs and expand employment and career advancement in in-demand industry sectors or occupations.
- Leading implementation of career pathways with secondary and postsecondary education.
- Leading efforts to identify, promote and disseminate proven/promising strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers and jobseekers including individuals with barriers to employment.
- Developing strategies to use technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, and workers and jobseekers. □ Conducting program oversight for the career center system.
- Negotiating/reaching agreement on regional/local performance with CLEOs and the Governor. □ Selecting one-stop operators, providers of youth activities, eligible providers of training services and providers of career services (DSP).
- Coordinating activities with education and training providers, including adult education and literacy, Carl Perkins and the Rehabilitation Act.
- Developing a budget for the local board consistent with the local plan and the duties of the local Board, subject to the joint approval of the chief elected officials and the WKWB.
- Assessing annually the physical and programmatic accessibility of KCC in the local area.

The Pennyrile Area Development District is the sub-recipient/fiscal agent for the WKWB and the Purchase Area Development District is the Direct Services Provider (DSP). The staff hired under the Direct Services contracts provide the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services through the career centers. The Purchase Area Development District is currently the One Stop Operator (OSO).

Key stakeholders in the region include the WKWB, WIOA required core partners, WIOA recommended partner agencies, other KCC partners, business leadership, chambers, economic development, and local elected officials. The WKWB has worked with our partners, cooperated and collaborated through consortium agreements and memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to operate and manage the Career Centers. Financial arrangements negotiated for KCC infrastructure and resource sharing are developed, and the infrastructure funding agreements finalized as a part of the MOU. As the KCC and its activities transition with WIOA and employer needs evolve, the WKWB will continue to build relationships. By further reducing siloes, barriers to service, and avoiding duplication, the centers can provide superior services to all customers.

B. (L) Describe how the LWDB, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable and stackable). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

We continue to lean on technology after COVID. Technology has reduced some barriers for individuals with disabilities as processes have changed due to technology. Individuals can often complete processes without being in person within our offices. This will assist individuals with childcare issues or single parents as they are able to work remotely. As previously mentioned, the WKWB works with core partners, KCC Partners, OSO, DSP, and other community agencies to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for all eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. With agency collaboration and leveraging resources by core programs and partners, we are able to individualize solutions more easily. This communication and coordination of resources is key in maximizing customer service delivery and efficiency. KCC services and workshop offerings are shared among the agencies. Available offerings and funding are reviewed to ensure customers are receiving the most up to date information and appropriately allocated to help the most-in-need individuals overcome barriers and refer them to the workforce quickly. Efficient service, co-enrollment, and partnership allow agencies to maximize resources and serve more individuals. The KCC staff will review current LMI data and available jobs with customers to encourage development of high demand career pathways, including short-term and long-term career planning with stackable credentials. Examples of common educational program and credentials that are required for high demand occupations in this area include: AAS in Advanced Integrated Technology (Electrical Maintenance Techs, Utility Tech, Operator), AAS in Health Science Technology (Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Certified Medical Technician (CMT), Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)), and Class A CDL (OTR Truck Driver, Lineman

Apprentice). Individuals seeking services are co-enrolled, as appropriate, in core programs. The benefit to co-enrollment and common performance is that there is greater communication among partners and less duplication of efforts. When adults and dislocated workers are co-enrolled, they receive more information about educational opportunities, wrap-around services, and are able to access multiple KCC activities. This approach encourages individuals to move toward long-term success by completing a postsecondary credential or industry-recognized certification. Co-enrollment also allows partners to leverage resources, while also providing a more comprehensive service delivery strategy that meets the demands of the most in need customers with several barriers to employment.

The focus on sectors, high demand jobs, and career pathways aligns education, career and technical education, training providers, and workforce development programs. It allows the KCC to meet the skill requirements of employers in high-demand occupations, while offering students, job seekers and workers the skill needs to succeed in available jobs. The KCC Business Service Teams (BST), in partnership with the state team from the Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services (OEAS), work closely to meet the needs of employers. It is the BST's responsibility to speak to businesses on the ground, to determine the skills that are necessary to obtain jobs and the skills necessary for employees to maintain employment. Many of these skills include simply showing up for work and being willing to learn; these soft skills are consistently discussed at employer site visits and local SHRM meetings. Soft skills preparation is often handled through workshops. In addition to soft skills, most high demand jobs in this area require a high school diploma or equivalent, basic knowledge of math and science, the ability to physically lift material and maneuver equipment, and computer/IT skills. Specific certifications are required depending on the position itself. KCC BST works with employers and education providers to facilitate development of high demand short-term career pathways and apprenticeships for customers to select (such as the FAME or apprenticeship program) as an alternative to traditional classroom training. Our area has active FAME chapters through Hopkinsville Community College and West Kentucky Community and Technical College. The goal is to link academic credits and credentials with a seamless system of career exploration, preparation and skill upgrades, and to provide multiple entry and exit points spanning secondary, postsecondary, adult and workplace education.

The National Dislocated Worker Grant funds support two primary initiatives: Disaster Recovery and Employment Recovery.

Disaster Recovery:

These funds are used to establish temporary employment opportunities that assist with cleanup and recovery efforts in communities affected by emergencies or major disasters declared eligible for federal assistance by FEMA. Beyond immediate relief, Disaster Recovery investments help communities bounce back from the impacts of disasters—including public health crises—and build a workforce that is better prepared for future challenges.

Employment Recovery:

This initiative is a vital tool for jump-starting economic and employment recovery following closures, mass layoffs, or significant job losses. Employment Recovery funds provide critical career services, training, and support resources to facilitate reemployment. They also focus on

strategic improvements in job quality and address the distinct needs of historically marginalized individuals and communities impacted by job disruptions.

Services offered range from short-term training in high-demand fields and temporary humanitarian relief employment to a broad array of personalized support services. This comprehensive approach not only aids local job seekers but also ensures that employers have access to a qualified pipeline of workers.

We have received funding for the NDWG QUEST Grant to serve customers in On-the-Job Training Contracts.

The WKWB works closely with its partners to improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate, portable certification, or stackable credential) as noted in WIOA. To better understand the occupations in local high demand sectors, individuals are provided LMI data and counseled by KCC Career Coaches. The LMI data regarding available opportunities allows them to make an informed decision regarding their occupational path and a better understanding of future trainings available, based on their short and long-term career goals. KCC Career Coaches will encourage their customers to look at job descriptions for the positions they are interested in applying to, to make sure they have the skills and certifications required for the job. KCC Career Coaches engage with their customers in multiple areas, including discussions on certifications needed to obtain the desired job, wage rates, available job openings, and future employment trends.

C. (L) Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies and services that are and will be used to:

Include the implementation of incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, use of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A) and (B), and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

1. Meet needs and facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies;

The WKWB utilizes the local KCC BST for outreach, as well as meeting the needs of local and regional employers. The BST staff review LMI data, assisting the Board in making informed decisions regarding which sectors should be targeted. Whether through SHRM groups or plant managers meetings, local economic development, or Chambers of Commerce, the BST strives to be where the businesses are doing business, to facilitate and engage employers. The WKWB, in cooperation with KCC partners, value employer interaction and are constantly gathering data on the needs of the employers and sectors. LMI helps the local area see the big employment picture, but local employers sharing their day-to-day needs help the KCC target needed skills to enhance our local communities and build a stronger regional workforce. It is critical to include all levels of employers, from small employers to large high-demand industries. The WKWB engages their

business members, economic development groups, regional employers, OEAS staff, and Chambers for direction and input, whether in focus groups, workforce surveys, wage surveys, or training/skill analysis. Hiring events, job fairs, KCC events, training and workshop planning are based on employer recommendations, as well as customer feedback. Employer input is necessary for job seekers to choose a stable career or occupation.

2. Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;

The WKWB local area has worked for years to align and streamline services in the region, while building and strengthening services for businesses. Under the guidance of a business led focused board, BST staff members spend time in the community reaching out to employers. The strategies have been developed to best meet the needs of employers and are revised as necessary. The area continues to analyze the regional needs and identify potential strategies to best serve the specific workforce or sector needs of the region. The WKWB will continue to refine sector strategies as the needs of the labor market change, based on new data.

One of the needs identified was businesses and companies wanting to conduct hiring events at the Hopkinsville and Paducah Career Centers. It was determined to have weekly events at each center featuring up to four or five companies. Job seekers would meet with the representatives from the companies where they would accept resumes or applications and if the company is interested in conducting an interview, a private room is available.

3. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs;

The WKWB has developed a strong partnership and working relationship with every economic development agency in each of our 17 counties. The BST is composed of KCC and workforce partners, including economic development professionals. BST membership includes staff from the WKWB, CDO, KCTCS, National Farmworker's Program, regional and community economic development groups, Adult Education, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). The BST regularly communicate to discuss individual employer needs, sector needs, or community economic development needs. Staff are often asked to present information to prospects, at local economic development leadership's request. BST staff is requested to attend/present at local hiring events, job fairs, program offerings, Work Ready Community Meetings, workforce and community activities, Chamber of Commerce events and committees, and SHRM/PIMA support. The WKWB utilizes their strong relationship with economic development, core partners, and chamber memberships when reaching out to others in our region.

4. Strengthen linkages between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance programs; and

Historically, the WKWB and the Kentucky CDO are strong partners in the KCC system.

Staff communicate by phone, email, and virtual platforms in order to best assist customers and make necessary referrals. WIOA DSP staff share outcomes following training programs, such as on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship, youth, incumbent worker or customized training programs with CDO and KCC Partner staff. BST staff are represented by multiple agencies, including CDO. These collaborative partnerships allow a flow of information for co-enrolled participants and efficient referrals across agencies.

5. Increase competitive, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has been an integral partner in providing career center services to individuals with disabilities. Career center staff work with OVR staff to provide support for appropriate occupational support (if necessary) to prepare the individual for competitive and integrated employment opportunities, appropriately aligned with the customer's interests, strengths, and abilities. Many customers are able to find employment with career services alone. However, if a customer needs additional assistance or special services, OVR is consulted for testing, counseling, and recommendations (e.g., OJT hours and appropriate worksite accommodations) for co-enrolled participants. OVR Blind services staff also have a presence in the regions' KCCs as needed, to better coordinate services for participants.

D. (L)(R) Describe local and regional efforts to support and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

(L) Entrepreneurs and small business owners are the catalyst to economic growth in the region. The WKWB is involved in multiple partnerships to encourage small businesses in the region, including the Kentucky Small Business Development Center, which has a relationship with the Murray State University Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development, GroWest, Mission Vision Partners, local community business incubators, and economic development efforts. Whether making referrals, providing contact information, sponsoring or participating in regional entrepreneurial events, the WKWB is committed to small business growth and economic development initiatives.

WKWB staff put together packets with a listing of local and state assistance available to assist local entrepreneurs. This information packet is available at regional Rapid Response sessions and in the KCC. There is also collaboration with those local economic groups, which have special entrepreneurial programs. Entrepreneurial activities are also available through each of the competitively procured youth contractors, as one of the 14 youth program elements.

Paducah Economic Development has a strong entrepreneurial effort entitled “Entre Paducah”. It was founded as a means to help entrepreneurs gain the access to services that will allow their ideas and dreams to become both tangible and successful. Entre Paducah connects entrepreneurs and small business owners with organizations in the region that provide a beneficial service to them. Paducah is also home to Sprocket, an Innovation Lab that’s mission is to connect entrepreneurs to resources that help them start and grow companies. They also specialize in growing talent for local tech enabled companies and startups. In August 2020, Sprocket formally launched and announced their partnership with Codefi. In Cape Girardeau, Codefi honed a strategy that mixes culture building with investment, workforce training, and programming that resulted in the creation of 50 startups, 180 jobs, and \$30 million investment in that community. Codefi began that same programming in the Paducah region. In October 2020, Sprocket hosted Entrepreneur Roundtables at the Paducah Chamber of Commerce. Sixty-two 32 Paducah entrepreneurs, business owners, and community leaders met the founders of four tech companies who relocated to Cape Girardeau in 2020 through a program called 1ST\$50K. Paducah will launch its own 1ST\$50K in 2021. A West Kentucky Innovation Challenge, funded in part by a Small Business Development Grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will award up to \$200,000 in innovation development service grants to turn tech-based business ideas into reality. Innovators living in the following counties will be eligible for these funds: McCracken, Livingston, Ballard, Hickman, Fulton, and Carlisle.

Hopkins County also has a robust entrepreneurial presence. In Madisonville, there is co-working space called the Innovation Station, where members can rent space and collaborate with other business owners. This space is also the office headquarters for Madisonville-Hopkins County Economic Development. There are multiple entrepreneurial themed events held at the Innovation Station, including Entrepreneurial Happy Hours, which is a speed-networking event for local business owners. Madisonville-Hopkins County Economic Development also created a community space of makers, crafters and inventors in Madisonville called Kentucky Movers and

Makers; this is where entrepreneurs, business owners, or anyone interested can go to utilize special tools and equipment such as 3D printing, engraving, welding, woodworking, to enhance their business or for use on a special project. It is a community geared toward makers, crafters, and inventors. Two community classes or trainings are held on-site at the Maker Space each week.

In 2020, the well-known 1 Million Cups program was rebranded and became known as Innovate + Caffeinate. In our region, the Hopkins County Chapter and the Murray-Calloway County Chapter joined forces and provided these sessions. The GroWest initiative represents a rejuvenated and refocused approach to building vibrant clusters of innovation across West Kentucky and growing the overall economy. It was launched to build partnerships among universities, companies, entrepreneurs, accelerators and incubators, and other public and private entities. Support organizations for GroWest are located in Paducah, Madisonville, and Murray. These include, but are not limited to, Sprocket in Paducah, Kentucky Innovation Station & Movers and Makers in Madisonville, the Murray State University Center for Computer and Information Technology and the Murray State University Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development. This initiative seeks to create support and expand the ecosystem for tech-based firms.

E. (L) Describe the type and availability of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The WKWB serves WIOA eligible youth ages 16-24 (including youth with disabilities) through the KCC, contracted youth providers, self-service activities, school systems, Ft. Campbell partnerships, partner referrals, local agencies, Community and regional colleges. Core and workforce partner agencies under WIOA, as well as local agencies, help provide needed youth elements and referrals for service. Youth, based on their individual needs and interests, are served at the KCC or referred to the contracted youth providers for services. Outreach, eligibility, assessment and intake are performed through a joint effort among WIOA Direct Services staff, procured youth contractors and the KCC staff to best serve the youth population and meet individual needs of the youth.

Youth program activities are awarded via a competitive procurement, review and negotiation process. The WKWB will follow the fiscal agent's procurement policy (including federal and state guidance) in competitively securing youth services within the 17 counties of the western Kentucky region. The WKWB contracts with the competitively procured entities to provide youth services as described in the scope of work. Youth served shall meet the WIOA criteria as specified in the Act. A minimum of 75% of the funds will be allocated to program activities serving out-of-school youth. The local area encourages work-based learning (WBL) and targets at least 20% of funding for work experience and other WBL activities, with contractors asked to place at least 40% of contracted participants in WBL. By providing WBL experiences with private and public sector businesses, the youth will gain valuable experience and workplace essential skills that are crucial to obtaining and retaining unsubsidized employment in the future. The WKWB youth policies and procedures align with the state policy and target services aligned to achieve performance goals and benefit the youth participants.

The youth contracts each detail how that contractor will provide services, the offerings available, and how each of the 14 program elements themselves, through a referral or a partnership will be provided. All youth contractors must make all 14 elements available as a part of their programs and describe in their RFP (contract scope of work) how they will provide each element and the available services, if selected to serve youth. Contractors are encouraged to partner with existing local, state, or national entities that can provide program element(s) at no cost to the LWDB. The 14 program elements represent a variety of services to be provided based on the individual's objective assessment and ISS and all must be made available to each individual. Some services may overlap across multiple program elements. The 14 elements are:

- Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, Dropout Prevention Services
- Alternative Secondary School Services or Recovery Services
- Work Experiences- Work Based learning to include work experience, internship, on the job training, job shadowing, summer employment, or pre-apprenticeship
- Occupational Skills Training
- Education Offered Concurrently With Workforce Preparation and Training for a Specific Occupation
- Leadership Development Opportunities
- Supportive Services
- Adult Mentoring
- Follow-Up Services
- Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
- Financial Literacy Activities
- Entrepreneurial Skills Training
- Services That Provide Labor Market Information
- Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities

Any referral for the youth to receive an element from another source, such as OVR, will include the contractor following up with the youth and agency, to assure the youth received all the services intended, and were successful with that referral. Services and referrals, as well as partner services, will assure youth obtain assistance overcoming any barriers to employment.

F. (L) Describe how the LWDB coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and to avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The WKWB works closely with local education providers and the WKWB Youth Committee to align services and make appropriate referrals. Boards of Education, Murray State University, and the three area Community Colleges are a part of WKWB meetings and share updates with staff and KCC. The WKWB works closely with all secondary, post-secondary education programs/activities, Career and Technical Education, area technology centers, adult education, and community projects to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services ensuring that we take full advantage of all funds.

The WKWB BST staff participate in the KY FAME, Apprenticeship, and Career Pathway Projects, encouraging the KCC to make referrals to the programs. These efforts focus on creating effective pathways to credentials for entry-level adults, in order to earn the credentials needed to get a family sustaining job, and reform how education is delivered to adults. By integrating basic skills education with technical training, while providing wraparound services that include instructional and career supports for adult learners, more low skilled adults can re-enter the workforce at family sustaining wages. The WKWB is actively engaged with programs in Christian County, as well as efforts to increase occupational skill levels for young adults in the River counties. The partnerships with local industries and the colleges have been invaluable in opening up new training opportunities in the area. Economic development groups often lead partnerships with local industries for their skill needs.

While engaging in “Work Ready” Community projects with local counties, workforce and BST staff are involved in initiatives to raise educational completion levels and assist adults in returning to school. The WKWB also works with the Kentucky Career and Technical Education initiative to identify high demand sectors as well as refinement/alignment of the program offerings to current sector needs in the area technology centers. Todd County Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center opened to bring occupational training closer to home for rural residents.

Workforce staff are kept “in the loop” regarding the creation of new programs by KCTCS, and these relationships encourage secondary and post-secondary providers to make cross-referrals to the KCC. Madisonville Community College has expanded their program offerings to include short-term training options such as Lineman, CDL Class A, and Welding, which have been popular options for students in our area. In March 2021, MCC announced the launch of an aviation training program, the first of its kind in the KCTCS system. This was created in partnership with Madisonville-Hopkins County Economic Development and the City of Madisonville. The helicopter flight training program is housed at the Madisonville Regional airport; fixed wing training will be offered at the Muhlenberg County Airport. As students advance through the program, they will be able to earn academic certificates and ratings from the Federal Aviation Administration for private pilot, instrument pilot, commercial pilot and as certified flight instructors for both fixed wing and helicopters.

WKWB BST staff are also asked to participate in educational events, a reality store for middle school students and Career Day events at local middle and high schools. Staff often present to local Chambers, service groups, and local education partners regarding workforce topics such as career preparation, where to find jobs, employment barriers, and the importance of soft skills.

G. (R) Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area including facilitating childcare, transportation and other appropriate supportive services for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The West Region has determined it is not feasible to coordinate supportive services at this time, due to the difference in the funding levels and policies for each local area. The region has shared

information regarding available resources for supportive services to widen the options for individual customers.

H. (L) Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local One-Stop Delivery System, maximizing coordination of services provided by DWI merit staff and the LWDBs contracted service providers to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The WKWB, OSO, and DSP will continue to partner with core WIOA partners, DWI merit staff, and local partners in order to provide quality services in the area career centers. This area has built strong relationships among partners over the years to overcome the lessening resources, while still maintaining quality service in serving our customers. Communication is the key to avoiding duplication and efficiently serving our joint customers. By working together, reducing duplication, and coordinating efforts across all partnering agencies, customers receive the quality services they have come to expect. The WKWB supports and is involved with the state and KWIB initiatives as a western Kentucky Career Center team effort with our core and career center partners. The WKWB in coordination with DWI merit staff and partners from core programs provides joint training for career center staff on Trade, Rapid Response, KEE Suite, Business Services, Salesforce/KIBES, new initiatives, new policies, case management practices, and KCC services.

- WIOA training focuses on the identified sectors and current LMI. In addition to providing individualized career services, training service and follow-up, WIOA staff focuses on providing comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of workers, which may include the following:
 - diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools for career goal identification,
 - in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals,
 - development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of information about the eligible training providers (as described in proposed § 680.180),
 - group counseling and individual counseling, including career planning,
 - short-term, pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training,
 - internships and work experiences that are linked to careers,
 - workforce preparation activities,
 - financial literacy services,
 - virtual career exploration tools
 - English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

I. (L) Describe how the local board will collaborate with SkillsU, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11) and WIOA Sec. 232. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)] This will

include a discussion of how the Local WDB will carry out the review of local applications 36 submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA sec. 107(d)(11) (A) and (B) (i) and WIOA sec.232. Adult Education and Literacy grant review training and process oversight to be provided by the Kentucky Office of Adult Education.

WIOA identifies Adult Education and Literacy as one of the core partners in the career center system. Adult Education continues to be an invaluable partner in the region, assisting with career center customers, as well as state and local initiatives. Adult Education has been an onsite partner in several career centers over the years. The coordination between WKWB and Adult Education on projects and assistance provided to customers has changed many lives. Additional coordination can only magnify that assistance and increase performance. The local area looks forward to additional dialogue, planning, and implementation of additional strategies. Adult Education feels this planning must start at the state level, since they design the proposal process for service providers.

The WKWB is given online access to review and comment on the proposals. Our focus is on applications being consistent with the local plan, initiatives and performance rates. In the review of the proposal we look for provider(s) who can align with/promote KCC services and sectors in the plan.

J. (L) Please describe the direction given by the Governor and the local WDB to the One-Stop Operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services that will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individual who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134 (c)(3)(E).

The CDO Priority of Service policy requires that at least 50% of all adults served in career and training services are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and/or individuals who are basic skills deficient. This priority assists low income, under-employed adults in gaining the skills needed to obtain employment, return to work or advance their career, and opens new entry level positions for youth. The WKWB had implemented Adult income thresholds prior to WIOA, so the policy falls in line with current efforts. The KCC partners and state staff discussed how to assure all partners had data entered for co-enrollees, not referred to WIOA, to reflect their income status.

K. (L) Please describe how the Kentucky Career Centers are implementing an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by One-Stop Partners.

The WKWB and KCC are using an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system (KEE Suite, and Salesforce/KIBES) to track and share communication and service levels of common participants and employers. This system allows staff to serve individuals as they arrive and quickly see what services have been provided. Customers are able to receive services from wherever they are, and with Facetime and Zoom, customers can get their questions answered by subject matter experts at any location in the local area without having to travel to a specific location or KCC. Websites have been upgraded, social media used to share

hiring events and job fairs, and the case management system allows customers to do job search and receive services on their phones.

Chapter 4: Program Design and Evaluation

A. (L) Describe the One-Stop Delivery System in the local area including:

1. The local board's efforts to collaborate with employers, to provide continuous improvement of business services and to operate a "Job-driven" delivery system.

The WKWB is committed to continuous improvement of its business services and to operate a sector focused "job driven" career center system. Through active communication with employers and involvement in Society of Human Resource Manager (SHRM), Pennyrile Industrial Manager's Association (PIMA), Chambers, economic development and Work Ready Communities. The Business Services Team (BST) is aware of the needs of employers and strives to be even more responsive. Through monthly BST meetings, webinars, conference calls, regional trainings and planning discussions among partners, the WKWB continues its collaboration with employers and core partners to develop stronger employer relationships. As the Board strengthens its sector-based partnerships, and job driven efforts based on business feedback and the regions' planning process, creative solutions to meet workforce needs are developed and implemented to assist employers.

2. The local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers services, including contracted services providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The WKWB will strictly adhere to the WIOA eligible training provider's requirements and the State's policy on eligibility of training providers. The WKWB understands that providers will have a system of reporting their performance so an appropriate review of their performance can be available to staff and customers selecting a training provider. The local area may remove providers that do not meet local performance goals. High demand sectors, corresponding occupations and job openings are required for training selections. Contracted training providers have been selected through the review process in which a statement of need with supporting documentation is required to address employment/ occupational needs in the area. Reporting, reviewing, and monitoring of the contracted providers is ongoing. Prior year performance is submitted in the state system for the year prior before any consideration of future funding is made. The state implemented a revised eligible training provider's application and process that is in place under WIOA. The WKWB complies with this online process and utilizes the state system to assure that accredited providers who meet required performance are the ones on the ETPL.

3. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the OneStop Delivery System in remote areas, using technology and other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

Since COVID-19 restrictions, customers have been able to complete eligibility criteria and appointments regarding training with a Career Coach over the phone, which has increased the

amount of job seekers we have been able to serve, in addition to providing a quick turnaround for eligibility completion and training approvals. It has also made it possible to deliver services more economically and efficiently, as it has greatly reduced unnecessary staff travel between centers. Each Career Coach has been provided a cell phone specifically for work calls, where job seekers can contact them regarding services. The career center's website, the state's website, phone, and social media availability allows access from remote areas. We also continue to utilize newspaper, TV, radio interviews, and social media to release information about events, job fairs, services and job openings in our area. In the event of recent closures and layoffs, the WKWB has offered Rapid Response services for job seekers virtually and in-person, providing all of the necessary information regarding registration in WIOA, UI benefits, and supportive services with the help of our partners through Zoom or a similar virtual platform.

4. How entities within the One-Stop Delivery System, including One-Stop Operators and One-Stop Partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. Also, include how the LWDB will providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

At the time of the review of the application for certification as a Kentucky Career Center, each submitting center was required to submit supporting documentation of their compliance with Section 188 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. The reviews were completed by OVR, citing their recommendations for improvement or upgrade to existing state facilities. These reports are on file with the Department for Workforce Investment and/or the Kentucky CDO. In each application, it was noted that the assistive technology previously provided by OVR for the resource room was obsolete. It was stated OVR would look into appropriate repairs or replacements with staff training on how to use and provide appropriate customer assistance. To date, the Cabinet has not addressed these issues.

5. Provide a description of the process used by the local board, consistent with subsection (d), to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the Local Plan, prior to submission of this plan. Local Areas are expected to provide accessible meetings for individuals with disabilities in this public hearing component.

The WKWB has made available all applicable WIOA employment activities, career services, and training services. The career center staff offer services to clients based upon assessments. For employment activities, the Board has identified, at a minimum, the following: direct referral to jobs, co-enrollment, career assessment, individual employment planning, LMI data, workshops, or referrals for outside services/to agencies with specific services. Currently, our local market is brimming with job opportunities; however, it is often difficult finding employees with the necessary skill set. In order to close that skill level gap, available training includes:

individualized occupational training (ITA), on-the-job training (OJT), incumbent workers training, transitional jobs, customized training, KY Fame, apprenticeships, work experience, and other alternative work-based learning and training services as training options for customers. Additionally, many employers are citing problems with “soft skills,” such as attendance, poor attitude, and lack of communication. The WKWB is encouraging KCC Career Coaches to counsel with the local job seekers. The WKWB will continue to promote and highlight work-based learning opportunities under WIOA guidance.

B. (L) Describe the local board’s assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(7)]

C. (L) Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580].

The WKWB continues to follow the state policy on the implementation of Rapid Response services and activities. All Rapid Response activities are conducted by local staff with the understanding that state staff is available for assistance. The WKWB has an experienced and established local Rapid Response Team to oversee and carry out Rapid Response activities in the region. The local area first coordinates available services with the impacted employer and then subsequently notifies local team members and local leadership of the plan to respond to the layoff notification. Staff developed and follow a local Rapid Response plan and determine the needs and services of the company and the employees for the session. All staff are emailed the response plan and necessary timeframes. Local officials and local economic development professionals are contacted regarding the event.

Rapid Response activities for employers are conducted on a virtual platform or in person, with partnering agencies participating and providing all of the necessary information to the affected workers. The local area documents all activities, assures procedures are followed, and data is entered in the system as required. The state Rapid Response team is notified of all layoffs in the region and is the recipient of all original WARN notifications.

D. (L) Provide a description and analysis of youth workforce activities including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. Describe strategies the LWDA will use for increasing the WIOA minimum Out-of-School Youth expenditure rate to 75 percent. Provide information on types of work-based learning activities planned for youth. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

As detailed in Chapter 3, part E, the WKWB serves WIOA eligible youth ages 16-24 (including youth with disabilities) through the career center system, contracted youth providers, self-service activities, school systems, Ft. Campbell partnerships, partner referrals, local agencies and regional colleges. The WKWB serves more out-of-school youth at 75%. Prior to WIOA, the funding priority determined by the Workforce Board was already over 60% for out-of-school

youth obligations. Youth served shall meet the WIOA criteria as specified in the Act, Regulations and guidance. A minimum of 75% of the funds is allocated to program activities serving out-of-school youth. The local area encourages work-based learning and targets at least 20% of funding for work experience and other work-based learning activities. Youth contractors have pledged to do additional work-based learning through paid work experience (up to 500 hours each), internship (up to \$5,000 each) and job shadowing (up to 80 hours). The local area is working with regional business leaders to stimulate interest in on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeship programs, and other out of school youth services. The local area is assisting the local colleges with KYFAME programs.

The required 14 Program elements are made available, as a part of all contracted programs selected to serve youth. Any referral processes for the youth will include follow-up with the referral to assure the youth receives all the services intended. Services and referrals, as well as partner services, will assure youth have the opportunity to be successful by helping them overcome any barriers to employment.

E. (L) Describe local board actions to become and remain a high-performing local board, consistent with the factors developed by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB).

The WKWB submitted original base-line documentation in the initial year Kentucky organized its program under the KWIB's initiative. The WKWB consistently performs its duties to remain in line with the criteria developed by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board. The WKWB is committed to excellence in its local/regional role as the convener and broker for workforce development in the region. This local area has consistently met and exceeded USDOL performance having never failed any performance standard- a benchmark not achieved by several of the local areas with this designation. The WKWB will still strive for continued performance and a high return on its investments plus Board leadership initiatives. Kentucky's High Performing Board process was organized under WIA but the continuation of the certification process lapsed as of June 30, 2015, so it is was not a valid process at the time of the plan. The Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) Dashboard is an interactive tool designed to display near real-time workforce information for Kentucky's 10 LWDA's. The dashboard features an interactive map that illustrates LWDA performance and rankings establishing a foundation for understanding strengths as well as challenges facing LWDA's throughout the commonwealth.

F. (L) Describe how training services will be provided in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G), the process and criteria for issuing individual training accounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)] This should include how contracts will be coordinated with the use of Individual Training Account's and how the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs.

All adult, dislocated worker and/or out-of-school youth that seek services from WIOA, through the KCC system, will have access to individualized career services and training services depending on their individual needs and assessments. There is no sequence of services mandated under the federal statute.

WIOA Career services may include at a minimum the following:

- Determination of program eligibility;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation regarding services available;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes (including skills gaps) and supportive service needs; □ Labor exchange services;
- Job search and placement assistance and in appropriate cases, career counseling;
- Provision of information on high demand industry sectors and occupations;
- Provision of information on non-traditional employment;
- Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, such as providing information and referral to specialized business services not traditionally offered through the one-stop system;
- Provision of referrals to and coordination with activities with other programs and services within the one-stop system and/or other workforce development programs;
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible training providers of training services, youth providers, career and technical education providers, adult education providers, and providers of vocational rehabilitation services;
- Provision of information in formats that are usable by and understandable by customers regarding local area and one-stop performance;
- Provision of information in formats that are usable by and understandable by customers relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance;
- Referral for supportive services or assistance, as appropriate;
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment assistance;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial assistance;
- Services, if determined appropriate, in order for an individual to obtain/retain employment, consisting of the following:
 - Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skills levels;
 - Diagnostic testing;
 - In-depth interview and evaluation to identify employment barriers and goals;
 - Development of an individualized employment plan;
 - Group counseling;
 - Individual counseling;
 - Career planning;
 - Short term prevocational services;
 - Internships and work experience linked to careers;
 - Workforce preparation activities;
 - Financial literacy services;
 - Out-of-area job search assistance and/or relocation assistance;
 - English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs
 - Follow up services for up to 12 months.

Training services may be used to provide services to eligible adults, dislocated workers and out-of-school youth, who meet the following after an interview, evaluation/assessment and career planning have been determined then the following may be indicated:

- Be unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to a higher wage from previous employment;
- Need training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages compare to or higher than wages from employment;
- Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.
- Select programs of training services directly linked to employment in the local area, planning region or another area to which he/she is willing to commute or relocate;
- Are unable to obtain or require additional grant assistance;
- Are determined eligible in accordance with the priority system;
- Maximize customer choice in selection of an eligible provider.

Training services under WIOA may include the following:

- Occupational skills training, including non-traditional;
- On-The-Job training;
- Incumbent worker;
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction;
- Training programs operated by the private sector;
- Skill upgrading and retraining;
- Entrepreneurial training;
- Transitional jobs;
- Job Readiness;
- Adult Education and Literacy activities; and
- Customized training.

Individual training accounts (ITA) will be utilized for occupational skills training services as determined in WKWB policy. WIOA Direct Service Provider (DSP) staff complete the assessments, determination of training need, and detail the six training criteria in state case management system. Staff document the need for training and submits the request for approval. The training approval tab in KEE Suite is completed and is approved/denied by designated DSP administrative staff. An obligation for training services is also developed. Currently, the Board has established a limit of \$15,000 for the training costs, waivable only by the WKWB Director, based upon the individual case. Budgeting information is captured for two (2) years (for planning purposes only) depending upon the training term. The training agreement identifies roles and responsibilities of each party.

Chapter 5: Compliance/Performance/Administrative Cost

(Responses below should focus on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements.)

A. (R) Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and Workforce Investment's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. Also, include other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration and coordination. WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14).

The MOU delineates the efforts and services provided by all partner agencies and describes how services will be made available through the KCC.

B. (R) Describe the establishment of the administrative cost arrangement including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate for the region.

The West Region has determined that it is not appropriate to consider pooling administrative costs at this time. Arrangements for pooling funds to pay for WIOA administrative activities have not been developed. The state system, Workforce On-Line Reporting for Kentucky (WORK) System, tracks all system costs by agency and by grant. We have not experienced a deficient in administrative cost as yet.

C. (R) Describe the establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate on and reach an agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region.

Each local area will continue to negotiate performance goals with the state and will remain ultimately responsible for ensuring performance meets or exceeds the agreed upon goals. Certainly, each of the local areas can learn from one another regarding strategies and efforts to meet or exceed its own local standards. Once the state is able to fix the system issues, it could be advantageous for the regions to continue to train and strategize together.

D. (L) Identify the local grant recipient of Title 1 responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

The Pennyrile Area Development District has been awarded the contract as the fiscal agent/local grant sub recipient under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by the West Kentucky Workforce Development Board and the chief local officials. The state policy allows for the designation of the fiscal agent in this manner.

E. (L) Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes, as well as the process for sole-sourcing, used for procuring goods and services within the local area. This includes but is not limited to the process used to award funds to a one-stop operator and other sub-recipients/

contractors of WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker and youth services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

Guidance within the Uniform Administrative Requirement at 2 CFR 200, Office of Budget and Management Circulars (OMB) and the Kentucky Revised Statute, KRS-45A, is being utilized in the contracting and procurement processes. Under normal procurement activity, the local workforce development board will develop a request for proposals and procurement outline utilizing the above references as cited. The request for proposal letters, application packets and proposal guidance shall be made available to potential providers. The fiscal agent/sub recipient shall maintain a list of potential service providers for the local workforce area from institutions or groups requesting to be maintained on the potential service provider list. The outreach from our technology use and distributing the request touches public agencies, private vendors, and coordinating agencies. With the adaptation of procurement announcements on websites, we experience more immediate access and a broader potential distribution than just a mailings list

The WKWB will maintain its accountability and the transparency actions already incorporated in the current processes. The fiscal agent/sub recipient, Pennyriple Area Development District (PADD), is a subdivision of local government as identified in the Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS). Procurement processes of the Pennyriple ADD will allow it to contract with other state related agencies such as community colleges, state universities, school boards, etc., without competitive procurement when expedient, and allowable. In all cases noted above, the principles of high demand occupations and industry needs, adherence to training provider listings, review of budgeting and cost analysis, and oversight principles would be applicable in the award of funds. Transparency shall be a principle applied to all funding awards regardless of funding source or method of award.

The WKWB and its program review committee through its normal proposal selection process, under the procurement policies, directives, regulations and the WKWB procurement process outline, shall accomplish the selection of service providers. This process includes the application of the WKWB's established restrictions and review for programs as outlined in the request for proposals. The WKWB Executive Committee may also function with the same authority as the full WKWB in making procurement decisions or in the selection of service providers when the action would expedite procurement.

The request for proposals informs the potential service provider that the application narrative must adhere to the identified target groups, occupational needs, performance criteria, and program policy shall be identified and noted in the request for proposals. The program selection criteria shall be issued to the service provider as an adherence guideline in the request for proposals. The WKWB, through its subgroups or committees, may impose specific policies or priorities providing the proposal applicants have been provided the opportunity to conform to any newly applied law, policy or procedure after proposal receipt.

The Purchase Area Development District has been awarded the contract as the Direct Services Provider (DSP) of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by the West Kentucky Workforce Development Board and the local officials through June 30, 2025. The contract was awarded through a

competitive procurement process by the direction and approval of the Department of Workforce Investment. The Purchase Area Development District was also awarded the contract as the One Stop Operator (OSO) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by the West Kentucky Workforce Development Board and the local officials thru June 30, 2025. The contract was awarded through a competitive procurement process per the direction and approval of the Department of Workforce Investment.

Selection of any service providers shall be updated as soon as the decision is made based on the demonstrated effectiveness of the agency or organization in delivering comparable services on the basis of meeting performance goals, cost, and quality of service and identified need. Programs with past results examples are as follows:

- relating to performance criteria, and
- years of program experience, shall be required to provide information to the WKWB, its review committee and any subgroup(s) consulted for funding consideration as to the demonstrated effectiveness of past program efforts.

The staff shall prepare a recommendation to the Board for consideration after proposal review. The WKWB, or the Executive Committee, may also review and evaluate, and/or terminate any existing program regarding the conditions of selection for continued funding under criteria outlined in the request for proposals. Criteria that may be considered by the WKWB to be utilized in the selection of service providers shall be referenced in the request for proposals and are potentially as follows:

- No occupational skills training program proposal shall be entered into by any participant unless the levels of skills in the program are approved by the WDB.
- Acceptable proposals must demonstrate a reasonable and justified expectation of reaching USDOL performance criteria, as may be negotiated by the Governor with the local WDB and the local officials.
- Service providers shall demonstrate ability of the agency to delivery comparable or related services at a reasonable cost while meeting performance goals and providing quality training.
- Targeted or special populations served by a proposed training program must be consistent with the targeted groups identified by the local WDB.
- Priority consideration will be given to proposals demonstrating services at a competitive training cost per participant.
- Assurance must be given by the applicant of adequate fiscal and program management capabilities.
- Funds cannot be used to duplicate facilities or services already provided by coordinating agencies available in the local area from federal, state, or local sources unless it is demonstrated that an alternate would be more effective or more likely to achieve the performance criteria and/or requirements of the Act.

- If applicable, a review of the past performance of an applicant's programs under previous federal/state employment and training programs will be considered but will not cause these programs to have preference over one without prior experience.
- Consideration shall be given to the unemployment rate of the proposal's area to be served as compared to the other local or state unemployment figures.
- Coordination and linkage plans must be addressed by the program applicant with special consideration given to referral to support services as deemed appropriate.

Documented review activities are referenced in the request for proposals. The request for proposals shall target multi-staff rating sheets with aggregate scores provided to the WKWB review committee. Allowability of cost is reviewed per applicant, on a per person basis by the application of reasonable, necessary, and allocable cost principles to the projected proposal budgets. Price comparisons are given with cost analysis performed by the staff as well. Existing programs are reviewed by the WKWB with specific comments in any problem areas of performance, filled slots, expenditures, or operations.

All information on existing programs is passed along to the review group. This procurement process promotes a full and open competition by publicly announcing all requests for proposals processes and encouraging competition with specified requirements for review as outlined in the request for proposals guide/WIOA law. The procurement process as briefly outlined within the Guide accompanying the request for proposals application packet notes the following:

- A clear and concise description of information to be provided in the response.
- Required documents to be submitted and reviewed prior to proposal review.
- Background information requirements on the agency as it may relate to administrative ability and expertise in the area.
- Outline of the LWDA's review process plus examples of some of the review forms relating to competitive cost/price areas.
- Conflict of interest and nepotism definitions and review policies within the LWDA.

The WKWB has a written Conflict of Interest Policy regarding the actions of the WKWB membership during the proposal review process. The local WKWB staff also adheres to specific guidelines during the request for proposal process as outlined in the WKWB policies. For example, once the request for proposal is issued, staff shall no longer discuss possible project collaboration and funding scenarios except during a specified negotiation session in which a minimum of two staff participate with the potential provider after the review of the proposal. The fiscal agent/sub recipient has a "Code of Ethical Conduct" which includes specific statements relating to the staff's actions during any procurement process. Review teams are also being requested to sign a conflict/confidentiality statement prior to review activity.

The WKWB shall adhere to the appropriate method of procurement as outlined in the Act and Final Regulations depending on the service or item being procured and its purchase price. Due to the WKWB encompassing a rural area with limited providers competing for services, proposal

requests may be issued but some may result in being non-competitive based on the response or lack thereof. Non-competition may exist due to the fact that only one local entity in a county or area to be served may be interested in providing services in the rural areas. In such instances, established documentation of provider ability, past experience, and technical evaluations of the proposals are utilized. Historical procurement response numbers are available for reference. The procurement policies of the fiscal agent/sub recipient allow contracts with state agencies without competitive procurement processes, but the reasonableness of cost is reviewed in a noncompetitive process. Small purchase procedures, as outlined in the procurement policy or state price contract items, are most often used for items purchased by the local WDB, the fiscal agent or its subcontractors.

A required budget is available from each potential provider for analysis. Under performance-based contracting, any profit arising from the program operation will be outlined and noted by line item in the budget for staff review and comparison. The local WDB may limit profit to a maximum of ten percent (10%) with approved amounts normally below this limitation and based upon the local reasonableness tests. Units of local governments shall only be paid under a cost reimbursement basis for services as noted under the regulations and in the contract. The required line-item budget submitted with the proposal provides for a detailed review for staff to ensure that charges shall be made in accordance with the allowable cost category and limitations as outlined in the Act and Regulations. Only those contracted, reasonable, allocable and allowable costs may be charged under the contract/subcontract.

The local WKWB shall maintain a reliable oversight system. Each contracted service provider receives a technical assistance visit within the first 45 to 90 days of operation, with a full monitoring visit occurring later in the contract period. This may be omitted if the entity has been a previous service provider. Desktop reviews and on-site monitoring consider contracted training expectations including enrollment levels, training activity, performance, and expenditures among other requirements as noted in the subcontract or regulations. Specific contract provisions are included to meet the required contract elements as outlined in the Law, Final Regulations or guidance. The basis of payment is also included in the contract and previously outlined in the proposal request. Contract administration issues are outlined not only in the contract language but also in the local WKWB's "Forms and Procedures Manual" of which all training subcontractors receive a copy. The results of this oversight system allow the local WKWB to modify contract amounts based on expenditure levels and participant service levels. Corrective action on serious contract issues or violations can result in contract modifications or terminations.

Contract provisions shall be included by the local WDB to ensure that the procured service, method of payment, duration of contract, and compliance with the specific WIOA law and regulations. Assurances of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity are also required items. The grievance protest procedures regarding a procurement decision by the WKWB are outlined in proposal guidelines. The policy states that any grievance or complaint relating to the procurement process shall be addressed in writing to the WKWB Program Review Committee Chairman who shall then address the issue with the full Review Committee. There is a two-week response time for the complaint to be acknowledged by the complaining party. No complaint

shall be addressed to the full local WDB unless it is the choice of the Program Review Committee or the Executive Committee to do so.

Extensive records and documentation shall be maintained on each potential provider submitting a proposal for review. An original proposal and each successive proposal submitted after negotiations, or upon discussion with the review committee, are maintained. Notes are maintained by staff relating to requested revisions, negotiation discussions, and reviews of submitted materials. All of these items become a part of the procurement file. Extensive material is also printed as a part of the review committee packet to show the evolution of the proposals and any issues reviewed by staff. The local WDB has the responsibility of ascertaining the legal contracting availability/status of potential providers. The local WDB obtains and maintains completed forms from all potential providers regarding their status pertaining to federal contracting requirements.

F. (L) Describe the indicators currently used or intended by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers the one-stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

Note: This description may include when, how and by whom the indicators are being employed and if the measured performance and effectiveness are used in a continuous improvement process.

The fiscal agent/sub recipient is the Pennyrile Area Development District. The Fiscal Agent is monitored and audited annually with the work papers reviewed by the state auditor. There are annual audits, state monitoring by various state agencies, local desktop reviews, sub-contractor monitoring and continuous oversight of the programs to ensure the required program activity and scope of work are fulfilled by the fiscal agent, DSP and OSO. Contracted entities are monitored a minimum of annually to ensure appropriate service. The measures for Youth program contractors are negotiated and tracked quarterly and annually, as available, to determine contractor effectiveness. The LWDB staff randomly reviews participant files and performs quarterly file reviews to make sure the DSP staff are following local policy.

The WKWB met or exceeded all federal measures under WIOA. The WKWB, DSP, OSO and CDO have joint trainings with the local KCC staff and partners to review performance measures, outcomes, and how KEE Suite and Salesforce/KIBES data entry affects the center and is reflected in state reports.

We the undersigned attest that this submittal is the Regional and Local Plan for our Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) and certify that this plan has been prepared as required and is in accordance with the applicable Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan Guidance.

Local Workforce Development Board GREEN RIVER BOARD CHAIR	Chief Local Elected Official GREEN RIVER
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Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Local Workforce Development Board WEST KENTUCKY BOARD CHAIR
Name:
Title:
Signature:
Date:

Chief Local Elected Official WEST KENTUCKY – Pennyryle Counties	Chief Local Elected Official WEST KENTUCKY – Purchase Counties
Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

See additional page if more than one Chief Local Elected Official or Local Elected Official signature is required.