

2026

# **Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board**

LOCAL PLAN

618-382-5024  
304 East Robinson St.  
PO Box 186  
Carmi, IL 62821

# **LOCAL COMPONENTS**

## CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs). LWIAs must incorporate key documents into the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system and the services that are provided by the workforce partners. LWIAs are required to provide information and analysis regarding the challenges and opportunities that are associated with the local operating system and policies.

The chart below includes the comprehensive one-stop and access point locations. There are no specialized workforce centers in LWIA 26.

LWIA	Type	Location	Services
26	Comprehensive One-Stop	Illinois WorkNet Center – 1700 College Avenue, Carmi Illinois 62821	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIOA Title 1 – Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Basic Services</li> <li>○ Individualized Services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Adult Education (Title II)</li> <li>• Career and Technical Education (Perkins / Continuing Technical Education)</li> <li>• Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)</li> <li>• IDES Job Matching (Title III (Wagner-Peyser))</li> <li>• IDHS Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV)</li> <li>• Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers</li> <li>• Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)</li> <li>• Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)</li> <li>• Veterans Job Counseling (IDES)</li> <li>• </li> </ul>
26	Access Point	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alexander County – Shawnee Development Council, office 2035 Washington Ave, Cairo, Illinois</li> <li>2. Edwards County – Wabash Area Development,</li> </ol>	<p>The following services are at all of the affiliate locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth)</li> <li>• Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)</li> <li>• Referrals to partner locations.</li> </ul>

LWIA	Type	Location	Services
		office 334 Industrial Drive Albion, Illinois	
		3. Hamilton & White County– Wabash Area Development, office 100 South Jackson Street, McLeansboro, Illinois	
		4. Hardin & Pope County - Shawnee Development Council, office 1509 North Main Street Rosiclare, Illinois	
		5. Johnson & Pulaski County – Shawnee Community College 8364 Shawnee College Road Ullin Illinois	
		6. Massac County - Shawnee Development Council, office 1 Superman Square, Metropolis, Illinois	
		7. Saline & Gallatin County - Wabash Area Development, office 14 Veterans Drive, Harrisburg Illinois	
		8. Union County - Shawnee Development Council, office 1000 North Main Street, Anna Illinois	
		9. Wabash County - Wabash Area Development, office 823 West 9 <sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Carmel	

LWIA	Type	Location	Services
		Illinois 10. Wayne County - Wabash Area Development, office 2004 West Delaware Street, Fairfield Illinois	

- A. Coordination of Planning Requirements: The plan will incorporate the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan. As part of this plan, the LWIA will complete a Service Integration Self-Assessment of its progress on service integration. A copy of the documentation associated with the self-assessment process will be submitted as an appendix to this plan. Additionally, this plan must include the following statements in this chapter:
1. *The Local Workforce Innovation Area (26) Memorandum of Understanding provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.*
  2. *The Local Workforce Innovation Area (26) Service Integration Self-Assessment Tool provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Illinois Service Integration Policy (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 13). The Service Integration Self-Assessment Tool, and any subsequent modifications, are incorporated by reference into this plan.*
- B. Provide a copy of the following local policies and agreements:
1. Chief Elected Official (CEO) Functions and Agreement Between Multiple Chief Elected Officials (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 2)
  2. Chief Elected Official Delegation of Authority and Acknowledgment of Financial Liability (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 3)
  3. Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) Certification and Recertification Requirements (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 5)
  4. One-Stop Operator Procurement (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 7)
  5. Career Planning (WIOA Policy Chapter 4, Section 2)
  6. General Follow-Up Services (WIOA Policy Chapter 4, Section 3)
  7. Selective Service Registration Requirements (WIOA Policy Chapter 5, Section 1.1)
  8. Youth Eligibility (WIOA Policy Chapter 5, Section 4)
  9. Service Priorities (WIOA Policy Chapter 5, Section 6)
  10. Veterans' Priority of Service Requirements (WIOA Policy Chapter 5, Section 7)
  11. Individual Training Accounts (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 2.1)

12. On-the-Job Training (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 2.2.1)
13. Incumbent Worker Training (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 2.2.3)
14. Work Experience (WEX) and Transitional Jobs (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 2.5)
15. Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility – Eligible Training Provider List (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 3)
16. Supportive Services (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 4)
17. Privacy and Security (Personally Identifiable Information) (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 2.2)
18. Property Control for Property Purchased with WIOA Funds (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 3.6)
19. Compliant and Grievance Procedures (Nondiscrimination) (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 5)

C. Describe how the use of technology and other alternative means of service delivery in the one-stop delivery system, including a description of:

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

The One-Stop Career Service Career system is committed to the creation and maintenance of a universal, seamless, holistic, quality customer driven workforce investment system. Each Service Center provides job seekers with career development, training, and employment opportunities to become economically self-sufficient and provides employers with the skilled workforce they require to effectively compete in the global economy.

- Customers (both employers and job seekers) are assisted by responsive and knowledgeable staff through a user-friendly quality driven service delivery system. All partners will assign adequate staff to facilitate customers through the identification, access, and use of services.
- Customers (both employers and job seekers) are aware of and can access services in a timely manner. Customers will learn about the services, understand the services available to them, and be directed to services immediately upon entering the One-Stop Career Service system.
- Job seeker customers receive services consistently, and in a coordinated way. Customers will be facilitated through an integrated, seamless process related to the various services/functions offered in order to reduce duplication, hand off referrals, and duplicate number of contacts. Employer customers will view the One-Stop Career Service System as a business resource. The business customer will be offered a broad range of services that address the needs of the business community.
- Customers (both employers and job seekers) access the services they need to successfully achieve their career or business goals. Customers will receive the most appropriate services along a continuum of services to meet their established short-term and long-term goals.
- Customers (both employers and job seekers) will receive quality services in a facility that is easily accessible, accommodating to all special needs customers, professional, and inviting.
- Customers (both employers and job seekers) can expect that services offered through the Illinois WorkNet Centers will be continuously improved and that their input for changes is welcome by the partner agencies. All staff and management team participate in, and contribute to, the evaluation of center services, as well as, the development and implementation of improvement measures.

- Customers (both employers and job seekers) can expect that the Illinois WorkNet Centers are well managed and supported by the One-Stop Career Service Operator(s), Workforce Development Board, and remaining partners. There exists regular, meaningful communication between all involved entities to identify and achieve quality performance indicators and required outcomes.
2. How the local area is using multiple methods to provide orientations for customers, including but not limited to, virtual and asynchronous orientations.

On-demand access is provided for programs, services and through online, real-time technologies at all comprehensive one-stop locations. This includes the LWIA 26 comprehensive one-stop and its affiliate sites, Illinois WorkNet Web Portal System, and Illinois JobLink. Services to individuals with disabilities and veterans are also available on-demand through in-person assistance and accommodations for technology and materials.

3. How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system through the use of technology and other means, such as online meeting software and mobile workforce centers. (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii)).

The Local Workforce Board will facilitate access by ensuring outreach and communications across regional partners that fosters access to broadband Internet access, wherever possible. However, due to the rural nature and topography of our fourteen counties that access is simply not available in all areas. The Local Workforce Board acknowledges that online access and communications are integral to plan implementation. Citizens of all ages need equal access to online information and services that connects to in-person services through the Local Area. To aid this access, computers with internet access are available at all of the Title 1 county offices, the local community colleges, as well as most community public libraries.

- D. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the WIOA State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of the following (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)):

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

Title 1b staff work closely with their partners to expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services. Illinois Department of Employment Securities is a valued partner in providing access to employment. For example, through referrals participants are provided with one-on-one assistance with resumes and job search skills. Title 1, as well as other partner agencies provide supportive services, such as transportation assistance or child care, on an as needed basis. LWIA #26 contracts with Community Action Plan Agencies to provide the Title 1B WIOA and Trade direct client services. This unique structure allows participants direct access to other non-traditional assistance such as energy assistance, Head Start, weatherization, rent assistance, food pantries and other essential services. Our local community colleges play a significant role as well, for example Southeastern Illinois College has a CTE Support Specialist that works with Perkins-eligible

students to assist with career exploration, resume writing, job search and job shadowing . In addition, the Adult Education providers offer transition personnel to aid the student in continued activities. The partners within the fourteen county area meet on a quarterly bases and are familiar with the services offered by each partner agency. Referrals are made for services not provided at a particular partner to give that holistic support for the success of the individuals.

2. Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their State of Illinois High School Diploma and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credentials and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations;

All of the Adult Education and Literacy providers funded by ICCB in Illinois are scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training programs across the state. Many programs are still in the development or redevelopment stage, as sector-specific initiatives are more challenging in our rural region. Geographic, economic, connectivity, availability of supportive services, and low enrollments are some of the barriers being addressed. Bridge programming exists in Healthcare, Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics, IT, and Hospitality that also seeks to integrate education and training through the use of contextualized curriculum, provision of supportive services, and career development services. The emphasis on partnerships in WIOA legislation allows for braided funding opportunities that did not previously exist. Community college, workforce, agency, and industry partnerships are deepening exponentially as work is being focused and partners are taking on more clearly defined roles allowing each to do what they do best. The sharing of knowledge, resources, and best-practices that is occurring in the area is moving the work forward.

Local Adult Education programs have implemented both Google IT ICAPS, as well as an ICAPS in Entrepreneurship, Welding and Early Childhood. These programs allow students to earn their High School Equivalency and improve basic skills while earning an industry recognized credential. Staff work with students upon entry to create a Career Portfolio. These students all have access to a Career Pathway Bridge, regardless of their educational functioning level at entry. The Career Pathway Bridge allows students access to the knowledge and skills necessary for success in their chosen field and to begin their preparation regardless of where they enter the Career Pathway system. If they need basic skills preparation, or need to complete a secondary credential to be eligible for their postsecondary education or career training, they are able to gain those skills in the context of their chosen field.

3. How the core programs in the local area will leverage their business services to provide more holistic support to employers;

The MOU outlines the use of a Business Services Team made up of frontline core partner programs. The BST collaborates and updates members on services available and upcoming events within all the required partner agencies. This collaboration provides a more holistic support to employers within our area.

4. Increasing the awareness of the services the workforce development system offers to both individuals and employers in the local area;

Outreach and presentations are at the forefront of our approach. Every opportunity to



present this information is utilized. This includes career fairs at both secondary and postsecondary institutions, places of incarceration, employment seminars, all county board meetings, employer round tables, and presentations to individual businesses. None of the efforts involved are just one core partner, but are a collaborative effort to increasing the awareness of core partners. As we have in the past, core partners are committed to working together to promote all of our services and make are communities more aware of opportunities.

5. Determining the most effective marketing methods and messages for informing college and university students about Prior Learning Assessments;

Colleges use a variety of marketing methods based on their target market. Generally the individual is directed to the Institution's web-page or catalogue, which contains the latest information regarding Prior Learning Assessments, specifically what type are used or accepted at that particular Institution. Decisions regarding the specifics of marketing are at the desegregation of the Institution.

6. How targeted marketing will be used to reach various segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations, as well as younger jobseekers that do not yet have a plan for a post-high school career;

We complete individual packets for different segments of the labor force. This includes flyers about all WIOA services. We also work closely with IDES and utilize the UI profile list to send out flyers regarding WIOA opportunities. Employment 101 on Illinois WorkNet is also utilized for youth career exploration.

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

Currently the Adult Education programs in our area offer Career Bridge courses. These courses support the development of soft skills, life skills, and job skills to help learners obtain employment. These programs are also working towards developing their online curricula to streamline guided pathways. We use the relationships that have been developed from years of necessity to aid in the co-enrollment between core programs. The needs of the individuals are considered by the enrolling partner and then referrals made to other core partners for potential co-enrollment. The referrals do not stop with the core partners or the boundaries of our fourteen counties, other non-WIOA community resources, as well as resources in neighboring regions and states are also utilized.

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

Local Adult Education programs within our area, have implemented both Google IT ICAPS, as well as an ICAPS in Entrepreneurship, Welding and Early Childhood. These programs allow students to earn their High School Equivalency and improve basic skills while earning

an industry recognized credential. Staff work with students upon entry to create a Career Portfolio. These students all have access to a Career Pathway Bridge, regardless of their educational functioning level at entry. The Career Pathway Bridge allows student access to the knowledge and skills necessary for success in their chosen field and to begin their preparation regardless of where they enter the Career Pathway system. If they need basic skills preparation, or need to complete a secondary credential to be eligible for their postsecondary education or career training, they are able to gain those skills in the context of their chosen field.

- E. Describe how local strategies will be coordinated with state (including the Illinois' WIOA State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of the following:

One of our greatest assets in our area is the staff's commitment within each of the core partners to not just serving our participants, but also aiding them in finding solutions to the barriers they face. We are fortunate to have a highly supportive relationship within the core partners group crafted by years of trust and support, along with necessity. This relationship allows the system to benefit from what each partner offers, rather than putting each partner in a silo- the goal is to highlight the strengths of each partner and the fact that close collaboration allows for customers and partners to benefit from what is available in not only the area, but the region.

In LWIA #26 we enhance services and avoid duplication of activities by encouraging and facilitating continuous open communication. We do with cross training, not only by staff housed at the One-stop, but with front line staff at each core partner. The One-Stop Operator hosts a quarterly partners meeting and a quarterly business service team meeting which focus on changes in programs and resources ensuring all agencies are aware of options for the communities we serve. All of the core partner agencies are involved in a variety of other interagency efforts, such as the Adult Education's Area Planning Council, that meet regularly. On an annual basis, all partners are asked to evaluate the One-Stop Operator. During this evaluation, partners are given the opportunity to ensure services are valued and enhanced.

1. Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I (§ 679.560(b)(6)).
  - Basic Services - Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs; Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system; Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English; Labor exchange services, including - (i) Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including - (A) Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA); and (B) Provision of information on nontraditional employment; and (ii) Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services other than those traditionally offered through the one-stop delivery system; Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services

within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs; Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including - (i) Job vacancy listings in labor market areas; (ii) Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and (iii) Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs. Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers; Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's one-stop delivery system; Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under SNAP; assistance through the earned income tax credit; and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program; Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, by which the one-stop must provide meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation. (i) "Meaningful assistance" means:

- (A) Providing assistance on-site using staff who are well trained in unemployment compensation claims filing and the rights and responsibilities of claimants; or
- (B) Providing assistance by phone or via other technology, as long as the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time. (ii) The costs associated in providing this assistance may be paid for by the State's unemployment insurance program, or the WIOA adult or dislocated worker programs, or some combination thereof; and Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.

- Individualized Services - Services, if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment; Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include - (i) Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and (ii) 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 participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, the eligible training providers; group counseling; individualized counseling; 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 (as described in § 680.170); Workforce preparation activities; Financial literacy services as described in sec. 129(b)(2)(D) of WIOA; Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

2. Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Local Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Sec. 232 (§ 679.560(b)(12)).

Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board, Inc. Executive Director attends the Area Planning Council meetings at each of the three Community Colleges - Illinois Eastern Community College, Southeastern Illinois College and Shawnee Community College - within LWIA #26. Local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Sec. 232 (§ 679.560(b)(12)) are reviewed by the Executive Director and a report presented to the Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board.

In partnership with Illinois Department of Employment Securities, Employment Services Team, Adult Education and Title I, Southern 14 LWIB hosted a series of employment workshops. These informal workshops were held at the libraries in our communities and gave individuals the opportunity to get one-on-one assistance with job searches, resume, cover letters as well as information on continuing their education or obtaining their GED. In our rural area, public transportation is very limited if even offered so bringing this service to our smaller communities provided access that some would not have otherwise had. Additionally, IDES and Title I provided employment workshops targeted directly to completers, or near completers, in the GED program.

We are fortunate to have an alternative high school serving students in our southern-most counties. Title I works closely with the staff and teachers to provide work-based training to those enrolled students.

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

Wagner-Peyser - Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) serves all 14 counties in LWIA #26 and provides outreach, intake, orientation, labor exchange services, program coordination and referral, labor market information, performance information for the local area, information and referral on supportive services.

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

Vocational Rehabilitation - Referrals to the local Department of Human Services/Vocational Rehabilitation offices who help people with disabilities find and keep jobs. DHS-ORS staff talks to people about their employment needs and helps them find a job or helps with employability skills. They also make sure that people have the supports services they need to stay on the job. DHS-ORS offers specialized VR services for people who are:

- Blind or Visually Impaired
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Hispanic or Latino with disabilities
- They also offer the following programs to persons with disabilities:
- Transition and STEP programs for high school students.
- Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program (helps people who receive SSDI/SSI benefits understand how working will affect their benefits).

Supported Employment Program (SEP) (serves eligible people with significant disabilities who want to go to work and need on-going support services to succeed on the job)

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

Shawnee Community College administers an Alternative High School program providing an innovative path toward diploma completion. Students earn credits in a nontraditional setting which emphasizes attendance, academic achievement, and positive attitudes. Classes for high school credit are offered to students who have dropped out of high school and wish to earn a high school diploma. WIOA Title 1B providers work closely with the Alternate High School program to provide eligible participants with work-based learning opportunities, as well as the opportunity to further their education.

The CEO (entrepreneurship) program seeks to prepare youth to be responsible enterprising individuals who contribute to the economic and sustainable development communities. We have programs in Saline, White, Wayne, Wabash, and Edwards high schools. Additionally, Co-op work programs are available most of our county high schools which allow high school seniors the ability to take classes in the morning, and work in the afternoon/evening. One of our more rural counties, Pope County, reported eight students are taking advantage of the work skills programs this year.

Over 52 employers are coming to Harrisburg High School to make Saline County Juniors and Seniors aware of the job opportunities within our communities. Gallatin county high school junior and seniors will be participating in a Job Search Clinic where they will learn about job search, resume writing and mock interviews. WIOA Title 1 has partnered with IDES and DHS to present both of these events.

All of the students completing the Electrical Distribution and Automotive programs at Frontier Community College participated in a mock interview. Students were interviewed by employers in their field of study. The employers gave feedback to the student on ways to improve their interviewing skills. LWIA #26 plans to expand this to the other CTE programs at Frontier, as well as those at Shawnee Community College.

Southeastern Illinois College is hosting a virtual job fair this spring. Employers will work with a vendor to create an individual web page for the event. The site will be live on the day of the event and each employer will be available to chat with job seekers. After that the web pages will be available to view for 30 days. This is a new approach for our area and we are excited to see the results.

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

We have been able to establish and maintain a highly supportive relationship amongst the partners and local community leaders, allowing the system to benefit from what each partner offers, rather than

putting each partner in a silo- the goal was to highlight the strengths of each partner and the fact that close collaboration allows for customers and partners to benefit from what is available in the region. The Local Board will continue to use these unique relationship to support the strategies included in Illinois' 2024 – 2027 WIOA State Plan.

The LWIA #26 board works closely with training providers assessing the needs of the business in our area to ensure curriculum of the career and technical programs, as well as students completing those programs continue to meet the industry needs. Additionally, Board Staff are involved in the Perkins advisory meeting, as well as the Adult Education Area Planning Council and receive periodic updates on the number of students, program interests, etc... These reports are presented to the Board to ensure that each member is kept aware of the Perkins and Adult Education program and its goals.

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

Supportive services will be provided only to individuals who are participating in career or training services, including work-based training and are unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services. LWIA #26 provides supportive services such as transportation and child care assistance, as well as other items necessary to enable individuals to participate in WIOA Title I activities. Other supportive services may include but are not limited to vehicle insurance and repairs, clothing and shoes, payment of medical services (such as physicals or shots when related to training or employment), eye glasses and dental procedures, linkages to community services, housing and utility assistance can be provided to eligible individuals who cannot afford to pay for such services to participate in authorized WIOA activities. All requests for services must be substantiated and must further the employment goal for that participant and will be determined on an individual basis.

Local Policy #6 – Supportive Services is included in the appendix.

- F. Describe how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:

LWIA 26 may provide the following training activities adult and dislocated worker employment:

- occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- on-the-job training;
- incumbent worker training in accordance with subsection (d)(4);
- programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- training programs operated by the private sector;
- skill upgrading and retraining;
- entrepreneurial training;
- transitional jobs in accordance with subsection (d)(5);
- job readiness training provided in combination with services described in any of clauses (i) through (viii);

- adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services described in any of clauses (i) through (vii); and customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

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

Annually, the LWIA 26 Board offers a request for proposal for organizations to provide the direct client services. The 50% minimum direct training expenditure rate is a condition of the contract and monitored on a monthly bases to ensure that each provider is on track to meet this requirement.

The local area encourages the use of work-based learning by working closely with our service providers as well as IDES Business Services staff to recruit potential employers. At the present time the area does not have a specific goal, but work sites are closely monitored by service provider and board staff for not only the progress of the participant, but also the current and future needs of the employer.

Training services available to adults and dislocated workers may include:

- (i) occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- (ii) on-the-job training;
- (iii) incumbent worker training in accordance with subsection (d)(4);
- (iv) programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- (v) training programs operated by the private sector;
- (vi) skill upgrading and retraining;
- (vii) entrepreneurial training;
- (viii) transitional jobs in accordance with subsection (d)(5);
- (ix) job readiness training provided in combination with services described in any of clauses (i) through (viii);
- (x) adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services described in any of clauses (i) through (vii); and customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

In the region, our citizens are fortunate to have access to a variety of career and technical programs that results in an industry recognized credential and ultimately a career in a demand occupation through our local community colleges. Nursing continues to be a popular program of study for our adults and dislocated workers. Once the program is completed and licensure obtained the individual has several opportunities close to their residence. Truck driving (CDL) is also a popular program of study as it allows the individual to obtain a industry recognized credential in a relative short amount of time, with many employment opportunities.

Local Policy No. 7 - Local ITA Policies and Local Policy No. 8 - Training Services Provider Requirements are included in the Appendix.

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

The Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board and its service provider entities uses the most current Department of Commerce policies/notices and its attachments in order to ensure an effective, planned and coordinated response to plant closings and mass layoffs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

We continue to work closely with our partners to identify those individuals who have been dislocated and utilize the UI Profile reports available on IWDS to reach out with information and options available.

G. Describe how the local area will provide youth activities including:

In LWIA #26, the needs of local youth, including low income youth and those youth determined to be deficient in basic literacy skills, school dropouts, homeless or foster, pregnant or parenting and offenders are a combination of those elements identified and required by WIOA regulations. These youth will continue to require additional supportive services including but not limited to: child care, health care, transportation and programmatically required specialty items such as uniforms and/or tools. These youth rarely achieve the skills necessary to become gainfully employed and self-sufficient for a variety of reasons. School dropouts often are stuck in a go-nowhere job and rarely do they achieve the skills necessary to advance in the labor market. Those deficient in basic literacy skills are not prepared for the projected job openings that are going to exist in the local area. Those characterized as homeless, runaway, or foster children, offenders, and pregnant or parenting teens, have a lack of a stable environment and parenting responsibilities overshadowing the importance of an education which in most cases develops into serious problems relating to one's work ethic. Individual needs within this grouping will be determined through a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of each youth registrant.

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

In order to support the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participants, LWIA #26 will provide eligible area youth with:

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include—
  - Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;



- Pre-apprenticeship programs;
  - Internships and job shadowing; and
  - On-the-job training opportunities;
  - Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123;
  - Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
  - Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;
  - Supportive services;
  - Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
  - Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
  - Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
  - Financial literacy education;
  - Entrepreneurial skills training;
  - Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
  - Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
2. A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.

As a part of the annual budgeting process, LWIA #26 budgets 75% of the allocated funding to the out of school youth category and 25% of allocated funding to the in-school youth category. A minimum of 20% of those funds budgeted in both youth categories are budgeted for paid work-based learning. Expenditure levels are monitored monthly to ensure that these goals are being met. In most of our rural community's traditional starter jobs are very limited so service providers work closely with perspective employers as well as the local high schools to identify work sites and youth to participate in the work-based learning.

3. The design framework for youth programs in the local area, including how the 14 program elements will be made available within that framework (§ 681.460).

Service providers will deliver or make accessible tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements

for a secondary school diploma.

Service providers will provide summer employment opportunities for local youth through our Work Experience Program by working with local municipalities and businesses. Service providers will provide business outreach strategies with a clear intent to work with local businesses and employers to establish meaningful relationships to enhance work-based learning activities for the participants.

Service providers will provide participants with state-approved training leading to an industry recognized credential. The youth participant can partner with a local training provider of their choice.

Service providers will assess and document the participant for the need of support services and provide them on an as needed basis.

Service providers will assess the participant by using the TABE and Career Scope assessment tests.

Service providers will provide LMI data for the LWIA 26 district for high demand occupational industries.

Service providers will authorize Individual Training Accounts in accordance with the Workforce Development Investment Board high priority occupational list.

Service providers will provide activities that expose the participants to jobs, industries and employers in LWIA 26. These activities, as defined by WIOA, include but are not limited to job application preparation, resume writing, mock interviewing. Participants will also complete the Employment 101 activity on Illinois Worknet website.

Apprenticeships are available with the training programs when needed.

Service providers will provide participants with follow-up services. All participants will provide 12 months of meaningful, two-way communication during follow-up services.

Activities that help youth prepare for postsecondary education and training include the Illinois Worknet Job Finder, Youth Guide, Resume Builder, and Virtual Job Fair.

H. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment and training<sup>6</sup> as outlined in Illinois' WIOA State Plan:

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

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<sup>6</sup> The term "individual with barrier to employment" means one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, single parents, including pregnant single women, long-term unemployed individuals, and such other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment (WIOA Sec. 3(24)). individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E) (§ 679.560(b)(21)).

LWIA #26 local policy number 9a addressed the priority of service to low income and basic skills

deficient individuals. All Title I staff have been trained by State DCEO staff in priority of service and routinely review the State and Local Plans to ensure compliance.

As described in TEGL 10-09 and 03-15, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as are outlined in WIOA Policies on Eligibility in Chapter 4 - Adult Eligibility, the Local Workforce Investment Board will establish priority of service based on guidelines listed below.

Low Income – Participants of the adult program must receive priority for individualized career services and training services funded with WIOA Adult funds;

- a) Participant receives or received in the past six months, or is a member of a family that receives or received in the past six months, assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food Nutrition Act of 2008 or
- b) Is in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of; 1) poverty line, or 2) Seventy percent of the lower living standards income level or
- c) Individual with a disability whose own income does not exceed the 1) poverty line, or 2) Seventy percent of the lower living standards income level, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.

Basic Skills Deficient – Basic skills deficient is defined in WIOA sec 3(5) as:

- a) An individual who has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, or
- b) An individual who is unable to communicate or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or
- c) An individual who lacks a secondary education diploma.

2. Provide information on local programs, policies and procedures to address and mitigate barriers to employment and training.

As well as the above-mentioned policy (Local Policy 17) Southern 14 also has a youth barrier policy which states:

The Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board, for the purposes of Youth eligibility, will define *'faces serious barriers to employment'* as a youth with:

- a. Minimal / Poor or No Work History
  - Minimal / poor work history will be defined as: *'A non-seasonal job that lasted less than 3 months, or was fired from or quit more than two jobs'*.
- b. Truancy or excessive absence from school as documented by the school.
- c. Member of a single-parent household
- d. Public assistance recipients
- e. Court-involved youth or at-risk youth
- f. Disabled individual aged 14-24 years old
- g. Test scores below completed grade level
- h. Have repeated at least one secondary grade level or are one year over age for their grade
- i. Have a core grade point average of less than 1.5
- j. Are emancipated youth
- k. Have been suspended 3 or more times or have been expelled
- l. Are deemed at risk of dropping out of school by a school official

- m. Have been referred to or are being treated by an agency for a substance abuse related problem
- n. Have experienced recent traumatic events are victims of abuse or reside in an abusive environment as documented by a school official or other qualified professional
- o. Have parent(s) who are or have been incarcerated or institutionalized.

Local policy 9a referenced in Chapter 4, H, 1 – describes the priority of service, which is an integral part of the procedure to address and mitigate barriers to employment and training. Additionally, Title I offers paid work-based training to assist individuals with a barrier to entering employment.

3. How the local workforce areas will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:

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

LWIA #26 relies on the data collected and maintained by the Illinois Department of Employment Securities, as well as data collected and maintained by Illinois Community College Board, as well as Illinois Post-Secondary Profile.

Data that includes disaggregation by race, gender and populations in continuously used when planning and applying for additional funding opportunities. Recently, data points that included communities with a low percentage of sixteen to twenty four year olds not participating in the workforce were used to lead the focus for a grant. This data was further drilled down to race, gender and education level to access the greatest need.

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

Many of our local community college partners provide opportunities for our youth to explore careers. For example, Southeastern Illinois College hosts Career Exploration Camps for 6th – 8th graders in the summer – introducing students to careers like diesel tech, welding, criminal justice and nursing. Last fall, SIC offered a Saturday STEM camp and this summer they are offering a wide variety of options at their College for Kids. Through their community education, Shawnee Community College offers E-sports camps, exposing youth to computer gaming and design, It's Alive that focus on biology topics and Healthy Kids that focuses on nutrition. Illinois Eastern Community College offers Science Explorer to kids from 1st through 7th grade where the students perform various science experiments or STEM challenge, as well as Camp CSI and Jr. Paleontologists.

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

In LWIA #26 we structure our paid work-based learning to provide mentoring opportunities. Each supervisor is tasked with providing mentoring to their work-based participant and the career managers monitor the mentoring progress as part of their other monitoring of the

worksite. We have found that small municipalities and not-for-profit worksites provide the best atmosphere of mentoring.

- d. Ensuring workforce services are strategically located in relation to the populations in most need.

Due to the rural nature of our area, LWIA #26 partners with the area's Community Action Plan (CAP) Agencies, who have county offices in most of our 14 counties to provide access to workforce services and partner referrals. Although, competitively bid each year, the CAP agencies have been awarded the service provider contracts for the past several years.

4. Describe any efforts in the local area to support immigrants and migrants through appropriate and allowable workforce services.

IDES provides staff assisted services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers including job development, career guidance, and referral to training and supportive services. Wagner-Peyser staff will assist with the intake process by assessing the client's needs, assisting with UI claims, and registering with Illinois Job Link in order for the client to immediately begin searching for work. Staff will also provide Labor Market Information to educate clients on the current employment outlook and determine if further training will be necessary to enhance employment opportunities. Clients may be directed to work-readiness workshops or referred to partner agencies and/or supportive services, depending on the needs of the client.

MSFW staff provide the following basic career services: outreach, intake, orientation; labor exchange services including job search and placement assistance; referral & coordination with other programs; workforce and labor market information and statistics; information on the availability of supportive services, and information and meaningful assistance with UI claims. MSFW staff provide the following individualized career services: development of an individual employment plan; career planning; short-term pre-vocational services, and workforce preparation activities.

5. Describe efforts in the local area to support SNAP program recipients.

Illinois Department of Human Services serves all 14 counties in LWIA #26. The Division of Family & Community Services (FCS) has local offices across the state. These offices are known as Family Community Resource Centers (FCRCs), and they provide many types of services and information. FCS improves the health and well-being of families and individuals through partnerships and services that build community competence. We work with our customers, providers, and advocates to achieve high standards of service. While SNAP, WIC, cash assistance, and medical programs are the most well-known services, there are many other programs and services offered through the division.

Locations in LWIA #26 DHS-TANF services include:

DHS Family Community Resource Center in Pulaski County-422 South Blance Street, Mounds, IL 62964. Phone: 618-745-9411;

DHS Family Community Resource Center in Massac County, 2301 Metropolis Street, Metropolis, IL

62960 Phone: 618-524-2631.

DHS Family Community Resource Center in Saline County - 320 Raymond Street, Harrisburg, IL 62946. Phone: 618-253-7161

Services available at the Center during regular business hours using technology. Customers will be provided a dedicated phone number for the service provider and access to a One-Stop Center phone line to contact the provider. The provider will contact the customer within 24 hours for services.

6. Describe plans in the local area to coordinate services with recipients of Workforce Pell Grants beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

In LWIA #26 our service providers have the participant's school apply Pell Grants first (Shawnee Development utilizes all and Wabash Area Development utilizes the first \$1,500) and then WIOA will pay the rest of the remaining tuition. Additionally, the Workforce Pell Grant benefits are twofold. First, the students benefit by getting financial support that was not previously available to them which in turn allows more individuals to benefit from these programs. Second, states and businesses within them will benefit from a more skilled applicant pool. The bill calls for awards to be made starting on July 1, 2026, for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The application process and initial eligibility requirements are the same as the traditional Pell Grant. The student must...

- file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- not have already received a bachelor's degree;
- be otherwise eligible to receive Title IV aid generally and eligible for Pell Grant specifically based on the FAFSA results; and
- be eligibly enrolled.

The last bullet is the crucial difference since Workforce Pell Grant is only available to students enrolled in programs that meet the following criteria:

- be at least 150 clock hours of instruction (or credit hour equivalent) but less than 600 clock hours;
- must be a minimum of eight weeks long but less than 15 weeks long; and
- has been offering instruction for at least one year.

Southern 14 which is authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will need to determine the following:

- The program provides education aligned with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors;
- Meets the hiring requirements of potential in-demand industry or sector employers; and
- Satisfies any applicable educational prerequisite for professional licensure or certification in the state or states in which the program is offered.

And in addition to the Southern 14 review, a recognized accreditor must determine that the program...

- Leads to a recognized postsecondary credential that provides academic credit that can be applied towards one or more certificate or degree programs\*. \*Programs that prepare students for

occupations where there is only one recognized postsecondary credential do not have to meet this requirement.

- Leads to a recognized postsecondary credential that is recognized by more than one employer.
- Provides information on the institution's website about the recognized postsecondary credential provided by the program, including any third-party endorsements of the credential, the occupations the credential prepares a student for, and the competencies achieved to earn the credential.
- Provides a written disclosure to and confirmation of receipt of the disclosure from prospective students.
- Ensures students will have access to transcripts for the completed coursework without a fee.
- Has been offering instruction for not less than one year before an accreditor determines eligibility.

I. Describe how the local area will utilize a customer-centered approach to its service delivery model, including the following:

1. How a customer-centered or human-centered approach will be used over the course of this plan to improve local service delivery methods<sup>1</sup>.

Our service providers implement a human-centered approach with our WIOA participants. That is to use the principles of human-centered design to produce positive results and training that enhances the lives of our participants and their families. The human-centered approach is based on four principals:

- Understand and Address the Core Problems- Solve the fundamental, underlying issues. We can help participants by assisting them with learning a trade that is in demand in our local area using the LMI, or Labor Market Information. Using the Career Scope assessment tool, WE can put this information together and come up with a plan that fits each individual's interests and strengths.
- Be People-Centered- People-centered means starting with the needs and abilities of people. It means considering all the people who are involved, taking account of the history, culture, beliefs, and environment of the community, and working with what they have.
- Use an Activity-Centered Systems Approach- With a focus on the support of activities within the training programs, Participants get a hands-on approach to learning. Whether it is learning new welding techniques, driving a semi for the first time in a CDL course, or experience clinicals in the nursing programs. There are often tensions, conflicts, and differing perspectives among the multiple participants. Potential solutions must be developed with the assistance of career planners and the WIOA Program.
- Use Rapid Iterations of Prototyping and Testing- Finding out what works and what doesn't within the WIOA program. Trying new suggestions and techniques for innovation and improvement and keeping those that work and are beneficial to us and the participants.

2. Any efforts to provide services to customers in the spaces where they commonly visit (i.e.,

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<sup>1</sup> There are multiple online resources describing how to incorporate human-centered/customer-centered design into your work. One recommended article for reading is available here: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-human-centered-design>

using a bus or other mobile solution to provide services outside of the one-stop center or having a local workforce area representative available at a public library at set times).

The local area will work with partner agencies and organizations to meet clients in spaces that are accessible to them for example, using the local community college extension centers or other spaces that are close in proximity to our clients. For clients with the digital literacy skills to participate in services online, we will strive to offer opportunities at-a-distance if it best serves the needs of the clients.

LWIA 26 and its service providers provide a One Stop service and a representative within the LWIA 26 district. Participants can attain program information and have the use of a public computer. Within the LWIA 26 district is the Rides Mass Transit system which travels to all locations in the area.

3. Any efforts to review and update the referral process, including creating a universal referral process, utilizing an electronic referral management system, expansion of referral pathways, etc. If there are obstacles to updating the local area's referral process, describe them here.

The One-Stop Operator, LWIA #26, and Partners will conduct meetings to coordinate the daily activities of the services delivery system and implement the approved policies and directives. Referral coordination is a primary mechanism of coordinating services. The central principle of the referral system is to provide integrated and seamless delivery of services to both job seekers and employers. The One-Stop Operator will ensure that all staff follows referral policies and coordinates referrals with partners.

Initial assessments will be completed with customers by the staff of the One-Stop Center (an Illinois WorkNet Center) and or partners. Appropriate staff will, in consultation with the customer, determine which of the required partners will provide the career or training services that will best meet the needs of the customer. If specified that another partner can better serve a customer's needs, a referral is to made to the appropriate partner. Customers will be able to learn about the services provided by partners through Illinois WorkNet. This One-Stop virtual portal offers a broad array of information about services to both job seekers and employers and through the center staff. Although a common intake/referral form has been adopted, each partner will use the method of referral required by their agency's program. They will be responsible for reporting the number of referrals and tracking of services provided to their customers quarterly to the Local Workforce Board. The primary principle of the referral system is to provide integrated and seamless delivery of services to both job seekers and employers.

- The partners agree to familiarize themselves with the requirements for participation in each of the required partner's programs.
- To the extent possible, the partners agree to develop materials summarizing their program requirements and to make this accessible to all partners in the comprehensive One-Stop Center.
- To the extent possible, the partners agree to develop and utilize common intake forms until the final rules and regulations have been released.
- The partners agree to refer clients eligible for each other's services to one another for assistance.
- The partners agree to evaluate ways to improve the referral process, including the use of customer satisfaction surveys.
- The partners commit to robust and ongoing communication required for an effective referral



process.

- The partners commit to actively follow up on the results of referrals to assure that the resources of the partners are leveraged at an optimal level.

J. Describe training activities in the local area, including the following:

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

Not all educational experiences available to WIOA participants are classified as training services or occur under conditions similar to those outlined in the Training Options. Work Experience can be used by the customer to successfully complete their training goals. Work experience is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period and may be paid or unpaid. Work experience differs from OJT and IWT training in that there is no hiring occurring prior to or agreement to hire following the learning experience. Work experience is considered an intensive service under WIOA.

2. How local areas will provide training and professional development opportunities to staff regarding access, trauma-informed care, and other topics concerning a customer-centered approach to service delivery.

Southern 14 hosts an annual retreat that covers the topics outlined such as access, trauma-informed care, fraud, abuse, and waste, adult education, Narcan training, resumes, and AI in the workplace. Providers as well as board staff are encouraged to participate in WIOA Wednesday Webinars.

3. How training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (§ 679.560(b)(18));

The Individual Training Account (ITA) is established for eligible Adult and Dislocated Worker individuals to finance training services. The law provides several exceptions when contracts may be used instead of ITAs, as outlined below:

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  - a. When the services provided are on-the-job training (OJT) or customized training;
  - b. When the Board determines that there are an insufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs; or
  - c. When the Board determines that there is a training services program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the area by a community-based organization (CBO) or another private organization to serve special participant populations that face multiple barriers to employment.

4. How the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers; and

The local board uses RFP's to solicit proposals from interested organizations to operate a year-round Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The program will prepare and equip eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers with the necessary skills to meet the current and upcoming workforce needs of employers in our business communities. Communities to be served will be Alexander, Edwards, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne and White Counties in Southern Illinois.

5. How the local area tracks non-enrolling basic services provided to reportable individuals.

Each core program uses their own tracking system, which do not necessarily communicate well with each other, to report their non-enrolling basic services. Title I and the One-Stop Operator utilize the State's IWDS system to record the services provided by their staff. This information is presented to the LWIB Board.

Services must be made available and, at a minimum, must include the following services, as consistent with allowable program activities and federal cost principles:

Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the Adult Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs; Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system; Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English; Labor exchange services, including - (i) Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including - (A) Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA); and (B) Provision of information on nontraditional employment; and (ii) Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services other than those traditionally offered through the one-stop delivery system; Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the One-Stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs; Provision of workforce and labor-market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including - (i) Job vacancy listings in labor market areas; (ii) Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and (iii) Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs. Provision of information of performance, and program cost on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers; Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's One-Stop delivery system. Information provided, in usable, understandable formats and languages, referring to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under SNAP; assistance through the

earned income tax credit; and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program; Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, by which the One-Stop must provide meaningful support to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation. (i) “Meaningful assistance” means:

(A)Assisting on-site using staff who are well-trained in unemployment compensation claims filing and the rights and responsibilities of claimants; or (B) Assisting by phone or via other technology, as long as the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time. (ii) The costs associated with delivering this assistance may be paid for by the State’s unemployment insurance program, or the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs, or some combination thereof, and assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.

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

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

To ensure funds are expended in accordance with policy and to advantageously serve the population of our local area, funds are reviewed continually and decisions are based on need at time of review.

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

In the PY26 Allocated Budget Dislocated Worker funds were budgeted for this activity, additionally the area was awarded a 1E grant to serve additional Incumbent Worker Projects.

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

Historically, we have not used WIOA funds for transitional jobs, but Adult funds were budgeted for this activity in the PY26 Allocated Funding budget.

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

Historically, we have not used WIOA funds for pay for performance contracts. At present the LWIB Board has no plans to enter into any pay for performance contracts so transfers have not been needed.

- L. Describe how responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility are or will be incorporated in the operating systems and policies as part of the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs).

In LWIA #26, we are committed to being inclusive. All Local Workforce Board meetings as well as all Local Workforce Committee meetings are held in accessible facilities and offered with a remote option utilizing platforms that meet the accessibility requirements. Likewise, all materials and discussions are in an accessible format (i.e., large print, Braille, interpreter, etc.) for all members, as well as visitors, as needed or indicated. Our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) contains language that ensures that our One-Stop system, including the One Stop Operator complies with WIOA section 188 and the applicable provisions of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

In an effort to be more responsive to workforce inclusivity the Local Board will continue to closely look at data provided by the Census Bureau, as well as the data of the individuals we serve to ensure that our services are being offered equitably.

## CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)). LWIAs are required to provide information and analysis regarding the challenges and opportunities that are associated with performance goals and evaluation.

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

1. WIOA Performance Measures

- LWIA 26 will ensure continuous improvement by closely monitoring the performance measures previously negotiated with the state.
- Last negotiated performance goals is included in the appendix.

2. Additional State Performance Measures

- LWIA #26 has no additional State Performance Measures.

B. Describe how the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the Local Board and program administrators as appropriate.

1. What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?

LWIA #26 will expand the work-based learning strategies in both youth and adult, especially in high poverty communities within our area. In our small rural communities, the lack of businesses results in a lack of traditional “starter” jobs. Offering paid work-based learning opportunities allow those improvised individuals with little or no experience the opportunity to gain experience and place them in a more marketable position for their future.

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

LWIA #26 has no plans to curtail or eliminate any existing service delivery strategies at this time but will continue to monitor the status and make corrections as needed.

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

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

In LWIA 26, we rely on the data collected from our local community colleges, Adult Educations providers, and the Illinois Department of Employment Securities. The National

Coalition for Literacy has fact sheets on Return on Investment. <https://national-coalition-literacy.org/research/return-on-investment/>

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

In LWIA 26, we strive to enhance the partnerships with other agencies who share our goal of removing those barriers as a way to help residents overcome barriers cost-effectively. These collaborative approaches allow us to braid our funding; thus, all shouldering the cost of supportive services. For example, our partnership with our local Adult Education, providers help fill the need for workers. Especially in an area where there is a higher-than-the-national average number of adults in Southern Illinois who still lack a High School credential and Childcare Resource and Referral helps with the cost of necessary child care.

- C. Describe how a lens of responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility are or will be incorporated in the analysis of performance goals and implementation of evaluation activities.

In an effort to be more responsive to workforce inclusivity the Local Board will continue to closely look at data provided by the Census Bureau, as well as the data of the individuals we serve to ensure that our services are being offered with inclusiveness. Also, where allowable, the Board will utilize this information when negotiating the annual performance goals with the State.

## CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES

This chapter includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv)). LWIAs are required to provide information and analysis regarding the challenges and opportunities that are associated with meeting the administrative requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.

### A. Fiscal Management

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

Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board has been Identified as the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i).

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

A copy of Local Policy #3, Procurement Policy of Customer Services, as well as the Procurement procedure section from the Fiscal Procedure Manual that outlines and defines *the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities* (§ 679.560(b)(15)).

### B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

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

LWIA 26 has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with its local mandated partners to ensure that the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA Sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) This includes the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The One-Stop center, as well as each of the access points, is physically monitored annually by the LWIA#26 Compliance Monitor any instance of non-compliance are reported to the One-Stop Operator, or the Service Provider in the case of the access points, with a plan to correct the issue. Additionally, the Department of Commerce and Employment Opportunity monitor for compliance. As an example of staying in compliance, at the last State review of the Center it was determined that the threshold at the main entrance was too high to accommodate. Within thirty days the One-Stop Operator had corrected the issue to the monitor's satisfaction.

The Center is equipped with the required equipment, including a dedicated computer with a large screen monitor, table top magnifier, large print keyboard, Dragon Speak with Headset software and zoom text. The Compliance Monitor, as well as the One-Stop Operator, see that it is in working order. We also have the TABE test available in large print, Braille and audio. When necessary the Center uses Proprio for its interpreters and 711 for TTY services.

The Compliance Monitor updates Service Provider, as well as One-Stop Operator Staff with new or updated information as needed. As part of the service integration project the One-Stop partners plan to host front line staff training which will include accessibility.

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

A copy of the PY25 (July 1, 2025 thru June 30, 2026) MOU for the One-Stop System is included in the appendix. Negotiations are not yet completed for PY26.

#### C. Plan Development and Public Comment

1. Describe the process used by the Local Board to provide a public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations (§ 679.560(b)(19)).

LWIA 26, in cooperation with LWIA 25, placed print advertisements in local newspapers covering the entire region. A team made up of individual representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations developed the plan and an employer survey was sent to a variety of manufacturing employers for their direct input on the plan. The LWIA 25 and 26 Certificate Of Publication – Public Notice on the Establishment of Regional Plan for EDR 8 is included with the Appendix.

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

No public comments have been received.

3. Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.

Local plan modifications are taken to the full Board for approval and then forwarded to the 14 county Chief Elected Officials for their approval before submission.

LWIA #26 Appendix all can be found on the Southern 14 Website [sol4lwib.com](http://sol4lwib.com)

Local Policy No.3 - Procurement of Customer Services



Fiscal Procedure Manual - Procurement procedure section  
Local Policy No. 6 – Supportive Services  
Local Policy No. 7 - Local ITA Policies  
Local Policy No. 8 - Training Services Provider  
Local Policy No.16 - WIOA Training Options

- D. Describe how responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility are or will be incorporated in meeting the administrative requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.

In an effort to be more responsive to workforce inclusivity the Local Board will continue to closely look at data provided by the Census Bureau, as well as the data of the individuals we serve to ensure that our services are being offered with inclusivity. Additionally, the Local Board will use the competitive procurement process to award sub grantees when needed and will incorporate an equity lens into the procurement of Title 1 services. Respondent's will be asked to address equity in both jobseeker and employer engagement activities for future requests for proposals.

The map of Illinois is divided into 10 numbered regions, each containing several counties. The regions are:

- Region 1-Central** (orange): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 2-East Central** (pink): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 3-North Central** (green): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 4-Northeast** (light green): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 5-Northern Stateline** (light orange): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 6-Northwest** (light blue): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 7-Southeastern** (yellow): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 8-Southern** (dark blue): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 9-Southwestern** (purple): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.
- Region 10-West Central** (light blue): Adams, Brown, Cass, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, Menard, Morgan, Peoria, Pike, Rock Island, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Tazewell, Vermilion, Woodford.