



# LAKE COUNTY WORKFORCE PLAN 2020-2024



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## Table Of Contents

Letter From The Lake County Workforce Development Board Chairwoman.....	1
Introduction .....	2
A. Lake County Workforce Development Board’s Strategic Vision And Goals.....	4
B. Lake County Workforce Development Board Equity Task Force .....	5
C. Lake County Data & Trends.....	7
Chapter 1 -3: Regional Plan Components .....	15
Chapter 4: Operating Systems & Policies – Local Component .....	16
A. Coordination Of Planning Requirements .....	16
B. Technology And Remote Access .....	23
C. Lake County Workforce Development System - Core Program Delivery.....	27
D. Coordination Strategies With State, Regional And Local Partners .....	39
E. Adult And Dislocated Worker Employment And Training Activities.....	51
F. Youth Employment And Training Activities.....	54
G. Priority Of Services Strategies And Policy .....	60
H. Training Activities And Policy .....	62
I. Wioa Title Ib Workforce Funds Policy .....	67
J. Equity Lens – Services And Policies .....	68
Chapter 5: Performance Goals And Evaluation – Local Component .....	69
A. Local Levels Of Negotiated Performance .....	69
B. Current And Planned Evaluation .....	70
C. Equity Lens - Performance Goals And Evaluation .....	72
D. Regional Service Strategies .....	72
Chapter 6: Technical Requirements And Assurances .....	73
A. Fiscal Management .....	73
B. Physical And Programmatic Accessibility .....	74
C. Plan Develop & Public Comment .....	75
D. Equity Lens – Administrative.....	76
Attachments .....	77

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## LETTER FROM THE LAKE COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD CHAIRWOMAN

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On behalf of the Lake County Workforce Development Board I am pleased to present the modified 2020-2024 Local Workforce Plan. The modifications to the Local Plan was approved to be published by the Lake County Workforce Development board for a 30-day comment on February 21, 2021. I want to thank the members of the Lake County workforce system for their hard work developing this plan and the rest of the Workforce Development Department staff and local partners. The document created through the efforts of all offers valuable insight into our workforce system as it is now and as it should be in the future.

The Lake County Workforce Board is a public entity which operates in the most effective manner when we leverage relationships and partner with stakeholders in the regional and local economy. This has been even more exemplified during the pandemic. To accomplish this, we work jointly with schools, colleges, local city and county governments, non-profits, and social service providers, as well as the business community, to bring people together and focus on our shared goals and economic needs. The Lake County Workforce Development Board includes many of these groups and is made up of dedicated individuals from both the public and private sectors who volunteer their time and expertise to help set the direction for how Workforce Solutions carries out its mission, vision, and purpose.

The 2020-2024 updated plan continues to support our commitment to a workforce system that addresses disparities and builds employer-led industry sector Career Pathways partnerships that align the skills of our workforce with careers that are in demand. The focus highlighted in the modifications documents the commitment the Board has made to respond to the implications of the pandemic and the plan to adapt now and moving forward. As part of the modifications, we have described in depth how a workforce equity lens is and will continue to be incorporated into the plan moving forward.

As stewards of taxpayer dollars, the Lake County Workforce Development Board must ensure that every investment in workforce development drives high-impact results. I look forward to your continued partnership and support, as the Lake County Workforce Development Board and our partners build a better future for Lake County's businesses and workers.

Sincerely,



Karen Stoneman, Chairwoman  
Lake County Workforce Development Board



Sandy Hart, Chairwoman  
Lake County Board

## Introduction

The Lake County Workforce Development Board is a workforce development leader in the County, Region and State. The Workforce Board has notably collaborated with key partners and stakeholders to lead out performance-driven and innovative strategies and initiatives developing, aligning, and integrating the region and local area's job-driven workforce development system. The Workforce Board has expanded upon the priority of services to best prepare a more inclusive workforce to meet the employer demands of today and industry talent needs of the future.

The Workforce Board has made a commitment to strengthen the workforce system through a concerted effort to align priorities with Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2019-03:

- Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies
  - The Workforce Board will continue to be an active partner in the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago and support regional initiatives including building upon the current incumbent working training program focusing on Transportation/Distribution/Logistics while exploring additional projects in regional industry sectors of manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology in the upcoming years.
  - The Workforce Board will take a lead role in fostering greater collaboration with Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago Integrated Regional Business Services Teams to coordinate regional career fairs and bring together specific sector employers to help lead future workforce efforts in these sectors.
  - The Workforce Board will direct workforce development, economic development, and education to work collaboratively as a workforce ecosystem will facilitate meetings/round tables with specific industry sector clusters to create partnerships to advance and align education and training needs.
  - The Workforce Board will invest in the workforce development, economic development and education working together as a workforce ecosystem to convene employers and other regional institutions (community colleges, economic development, etc....) to help lead regional sector partnerships.
- Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job
  - College of Lake County and Workforce Development will work with the regional apprenticeship navigators and intermediaries, along with interested partners to expand apprenticeships in Lake County and regionally.
  - Workforce development, economic development, and education will collaborate with high schools to expose more students to careers with Lake County employers, careers in the STEM field, and internship opportunities through innovative programming and employer connections.
  - The Workforce Board will sponsor a series of workshops pertaining to trends and challenges in today's workplace.
- Connect job seekers with employers
  - The Workforce Board will invest in Workforce Development leading out and coordinating with Job Center partners to execute strategies to transition dislocated workers and adult job seekers to their next job through short-term training and work-based learning opportunities.
  - The Workforce Board will direct Workforce Development and the College of Lake County to develop the most effective ways to inform on programs and education offered at CLC.
  - Workforce development, economic development, and education will continue to work together to better understand the challenges businesses face and connect them with partner organizations that can drive innovative workforce solutions aimed at accelerating business growth.
  - The Workforce Board will work with and invest in the One-Stop Operator to collaborate and lead the coordination with partners to develop and execute Service Integration action plans.
  - The Workforce Development Integrated Business Service teams will lead out business services through the Job Center and regionally to connect more dislocated workers, adults, and youth to hiring opportunities.

The Workforce Board aligns all strategies and programming with the overriding intent of WIOA to expand services provided to special populations, notably the disabled population, veterans, and the individuals with basic skills deficiencies. The Workforce Board, in collaboration with workforce system partners throughout Lake County, have renewed the commitment to further expand upon the priority of services to develop and deliver more inclusive employment and training programs in order to target the underserved in the underserved communities. The Lake County Workforce Development Board Four-Year WIOA Local Plan provides a framework to achieve this goal.

Guidance from the Illinois Department of Commerce provides the outline for development of the Four-Year Local Plan. State guidance emphasizes that the Local Plan sets forth the strategy to incorporate the goals, strategies, and priority industry sectors in the Regional WIOA Plan. Lake County is part of the Northeastern Economic Development Region 4 (NEEDR) comprised of the seven local workforce areas in northeast Illinois and the counties of Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kankakee, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will.

The Workforce Development Areas that comprise the Northeast Regional Planning Area engaged in a robust planning process modifying, updating, and developing the NEEDR WIOA Regional Plan. The planning process was led by the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago and facilitated by a hired national consultant Thomas P. Miller. The comprehensive planning process included the collection and analysis of regional demographic and labor market information. Completing a survey completed by workforce development systems partners and stakeholders. Included in the regional planning process was the work that has been done by the Workforce Partners including strategic planning, joint grant-funded initiatives, processes, and systems changes that have been made/elevated to a regional level.

The NEEDR has chosen to focus sector efforts on the following industries, with the understanding that information technology (IT) underlies all of these and is an important economic driver in its own right:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance (and Life Sciences)
- Manufacturing (with an emphasis on Advanced Manufacturing)
- Transportation and Warehousing

As outlined in Table 2, these sectors are critical to the NEEDR economy and are emerging or leading sectors. NEEDR has broadened its understanding of the Healthcare industry to include the broader Life Sciences industry, in keeping with the State Plan, and recognizing the value to the local economy of industry that bridge sectors such as pharmaceuticals, food manufacturing, environmental and ecological sciences, biotechnology, and more. Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA) in the NEEDR also focus on additional sectors as warranted by local conditions.

The economic impact these industries have in the NEEDR is considerable. Table 4 details the aggregate effect on jobs for the Region by industry.

**Table 4: NEEDR Annual Impact by Sector (Event Size = 100)<sup>1</sup>**

	Initial	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Healthcare Employment	100	21	10	77	108
Healthcare Earnings	\$6,349,727	\$1,374,685	\$692,030	\$4,480,519	\$12,906,962
IT Employment	100	96	44	268	508
IT Earnings	\$10,380,918	\$6,122,167	\$2,746,371	\$16,333,925	\$35,583,381
Manufacturing Employment	100	44	26	174	343
Manufacturing Earnings	\$9,329,589	\$3,480,034	\$1,745,429	\$10,440,649	\$24,995,701
Transportation & Warehousing Employment	100	37	14	101	252
Transportation & Warehousing Earnings	\$6,478,844	\$2,069,945	\$936,326	\$6,049,685	\$15,534,800

Source: Emsi 2020.1, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Bureau of Economic Analysis

<sup>1</sup> Initial: the initial change in jobs. To identify the impact of the industry, the 2-digit NAICS for each industry was converted into 6-digit NAICS, then the percentage of share of those jobs for the industry were entered in the “change in jobs” to reflect the percentage change of each job at the 6-digit NAICS.

Direct: the effect of new input purchases by the industries. This is the first round of impacts the industry has on the region.

Indirect: the ripple effect in further supply changes resulting from the direct change.

Induced: the impact of the new earnings, investments created by the initial, direct, and indirect changes.

The NEEDR Regional Plan is grounded in the following strategies:

Strategy 1: Strengthen relationships with local industry and enhance the ability to meet the needs of businesses

Strategy 2: Support employer-driven Regional sector initiatives

Strategy 3: Provide economic advancement for all populations through career pathways and a strong focus on work-based learning activities

Strategy 4: Expand service integration

Strategy 5: Promote improved data driven decision making

Strategy 6: Increase coordination between workforce development and economic development

Strategy 7: Strengthen linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and unemployment programs

The Regional Plan lays the foundation for the local plan Workforce Development Board undertook a process to develop a new Four-Year Local Plan. The local process mirrored the efforts of the regional effort by working collaboratively with workforce partners and stakeholders throughout Lake County to collect local demographic and labor market information; promote the engagement of local businesses, community groups, and individuals as the local plan was developed and ultimately to establish goals and strategies for implementation by the workforce system throughout Lake County. The Workforce Board hosted a community forum with job center partners and community-based organizations and gathered critical information and input regarding services and programs to underserved populations in underserved communities. The Workforce Board has been engaged in a strategic planning process with the Board members. The strategic planning process has been facilitated by a consultant to review current plan, progress reports, and identifying key strategies to carry forward into the next four years – ensuring the strategic plan and the local plan align. In addition to Board members, community leaders, community agencies, Job Center partners, and participants have been engaged in the strategic planning process and this information has been leveraged for the local plan development.

#### **A. Lake County Workforce Development Board's Strategic Vision and Goals**

The Lake County Workforce Development Board (the Workforce Board) has an ambitious Strategic Plan that was rooted in the strategy to Strengthen Lake County's position as a workforce development leader. The Board is updating its strategic plan and is prepared through Board committees and project-based task forces to drive innovative projects around connecting - growing - integrating.

#### **The Board's Strategic Plan expands upon the priorities of the Board:**

- Promote and advocate for services and resources to all areas of County (suburban and rural).
- Provide targeted industries with strategies and workforce development solutions to either attract or develop the skilled workers they need (e.g. address pain points).
- Ensure all Lake County residents have access to information on key industry sectors, careers, high growth jobs, education and training, and local openings. And information to back educated decisions on career pathways
- Maintain high performance standards for training providers and credentials.
- Develop and retain a committed, results driven workforce board membership.

#### **The Board's Strategic Plan identifies 4 key imperatives:**

1. Demand-led workforce solutions
  - Objective: Increase manufacturing and healthcare businesses involvement in creating workforce development solutions
  - Objective: Identify industry ambassadors
  - Objective: Collaborate with education and economic development to build solutions
2. Create a culture of equitable prosperity
  - Objective: Increase access to services for the underserved
  - Objective: Facilitate greater collaboration among and between workforce partners
3. Develop solutions through career pathways
  - Objective: Deploy framework, resources, and tools to the workforce system

- Objective: Invest in training towards the customer and employer's talent needs
4. The Workforce Development Board will become the workforce innovative leader
- Objective: Increase board engagement in regional, state, and national discussions
  - Objective: Emphasize continuous flexibility
  - Objective: Increase board engagement in meetings and activities

The State's requirements for developing regional and local plans, as outlined in the State of Illinois WIOA Regional & Local Plan Guide, provide a template for responses containing specific information. The remainder of this document contains information as prescribed in that guidance.

## **B. Lake County Workforce Development Board Equity Task Force**

The Lake County Workforce Development Board has a strong commitment and agenda for ensuring that economic prosperity reaches underserved communities and creates opportunities across the County for residents by working to remove barriers for the economically disadvantaged populations. In 2021 the Lake County Workforce created the Lake County Workforce Development Board's Equity Task Force. Membership includes Lake County Workforce Development Board members, business and community leaders, and Job Center partners. The Task Force assignment is to develop a framework of recommendations within Lake County's workforce network to establish goals and disrupt inequality for the populations served.

The Task Force is Co-Chaired by Workforce Board members Dr. Carlotta Roman, Director of Diversity at the Center for Automotive Diversity, Inclusion and Advancement and Emily Garrity, Customer Advocate with Origin8cares LLC. The Equity Task Force Action Plan was developed and is the driving force to embody a forward-looking workforce network where all can belong, contribute, and thrive.

The goals include:

### **Goal: Strengthen understanding of the interrelationship between diversity, inclusion, and equity through education and training.**

#### **Actions:**

- Sponsor workshops and forums to educate and promote discussion on topics that impact today's workforce system, such as the business case for diversity and inclusion, applying an equity lens in policy review and generational and cultural differences.
- Partner with organizations such as but not limited to NAWB and IWIB to integrate D&I education and training at the state and national level.
- Strengthen D&I and EEO knowledge, understanding, and awareness by making available tools and resources on the Job Centers of Lake County's web page.

### **Goal: Communicate the workforce system's diversity, inclusion, and equitable ideals.**

#### **Actions:**

- Develop and implement an ongoing, comprehensive D&I communications strategy.
- Evaluate current methods to communication (meetings, print, web, social media, etc...) to make sure they are embracing D&I.

### **Goal: Demonstrate leadership commitment and accountability to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce system culture.**

#### **Actions:**

- Encourage workforce system leaders to routinely discuss the importance of D&I as a core organizational strategy and provide consistent, visible leadership.
- Comply with applicable laws and rules related to EEO and diversity and train all employees regarding legal



requirements.

- Attempt to always create inclusive environments. One that values differences, gives everyone a voice and places importance on the whole system.
- Committed to being intentional about having crucial conversations to evaluate and develop programs to continually develop cultural competencies.

### **Goal: Use data collection and reporting to assist in assessing workforce system D&I efforts.**

#### **Actions:**

- Leverage both qualitative and quantitative metrics to manage D&I efforts, measure results, and refine strategies based on such data.

The Task Force believed that dialogue around diversity, equity, and inclusion is broad and growing and there is a need for common vocabulary to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Words often have different meanings; depending on lived experiences words might hold different meanings for different people. With that said, the Task Force created a list of agreed upon definitions to guide the efforts for the terms:

- **EQUITY** - The effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Consistently striving to meet individuals where they are, while providing them with support and access to services. Working to achieve equity acknowledges unequal starting places and the necessity to correct the imbalance.
- **DIVERSITY** - Understanding that everyone is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimension of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. A focused dedication on meeting the needs of everyone in our community, especially those who have been historically underserved.
- **INCLUSION** - A state of belonging, when persons of different backgrounds and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers and collaborators. Inclusion involves people being given the opportunity to grow and feel/know they belong. Diversity efforts alone do not create inclusive environments. Inclusion involves a sense of coming as you are and being accepted, rather than feeling the need to assimilate.
- **DISPARITIES** -Disparities identifies the social inequality and advantages that affect different ages, races, income levels, degrees, etc.... within the community. These can also be seen as a result of historic oppression, inequality of inheritance, or overall racism and prejudice, especially against minority groups.
- **ACCESS** - Freedom or ability to obtain or make use of something. Equal access in the workforce system means everyone receives fair treatment and access. When equity exists, people have equal access to opportunities.
- **EQUITY LENS** - A racial equity lens is the set of questions we ask ourselves throughout the decision-making process. The lens interrupts the impact of unintended consequences by taking into consideration the lived experiences and perspectives of the racially diverse communities we intend to serve.

### **I. Lake County Workforce Development Board Inclusive Leadership Institute (ILI)**

In 2021 the Lake County Workforce Development Board and Equity Task Force successfully hosted a series of extensive, in-depth diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training opportunities for board and committee members via a series of Inclusive Leadership Institute (ILI) workshops.

The DEI-focused training opportunities included a series of four workshops covering such critical objectives as examining fundamental concepts and theories that will help lay the foundation for creating an inclusive and equitable organizational culture, providing valuable knowledge and skills needed to effectively and respectfully communicate with people across diverse cultural backgrounds, challenging participants to think critically and deeply about some of the more difficult and complex topics that center around diversity and inclusion, and equipping workforce development professionals with the knowledge and awareness that will guide them in cultivating an anti-racist workplace that is inclusive of employees who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).



Participants who successfully completed all four equity workshops represented an important cross-section of Lake County's workforce development system from both the public and private sectors, including the Lake County Workforce Development Board, Lake County Workforce Development Department, Job Center of Lake County, College of Lake County, Highland Park District 113, Hispanic American Community Education and Services (HACES), Sysmex America, Inc., CR Search Inc., Fischer Paper Products, United Conveyor Corporation, Horizon Benefit Services, and Assured Healthcare Staffing.

### Lake County Workforce Development Board's Outreach and Communications Plan

In early 2021, The Lake County Workforce Development Board (WDB) hired a firm to develop and implement an Outreach and Communications Plan designed to support the strategic goals and action plans of the WDB Strategic Plan – including board member recruitment, improve engagement with community partners, and increase awareness of available services among job seekers and employers.

WDB has notably collaborated with key partners and stakeholders to lead performance driven and innovative strategies that develop, align, and integrate the region and local area's job-driven workforce development system. WDB has expanded upon the priority of services to best prepare a more inclusive workforce to meet the employer demands of today and industry talent needs of the future.

### C. Lake County Data & Trends

Lake County, IL, is a suburban area of 457 square miles located just north of Cook County, IL (including Chicago) and south of Kenosha County, WI. Lake County is situated in the northeastern corner of the U.S. state of Illinois, along the shores of Lake Michigan. As of the 2020 census, it has a population of 714,342, making it the third-most populous county in Illinois. Its county seat is Waukegan, the tenth-largest city in Illinois.

#### General Trends

The unemployment rate decreased over-the-year in all fourteen Illinois metropolitan areas in December of 2021 for the ninth consecutive month according to the data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES).

	Lake County	EDR#4	Illinois
Population	700,832	8,733,876	12,711,277
Unemployment Rate	3.50%	4.10%	4.20%

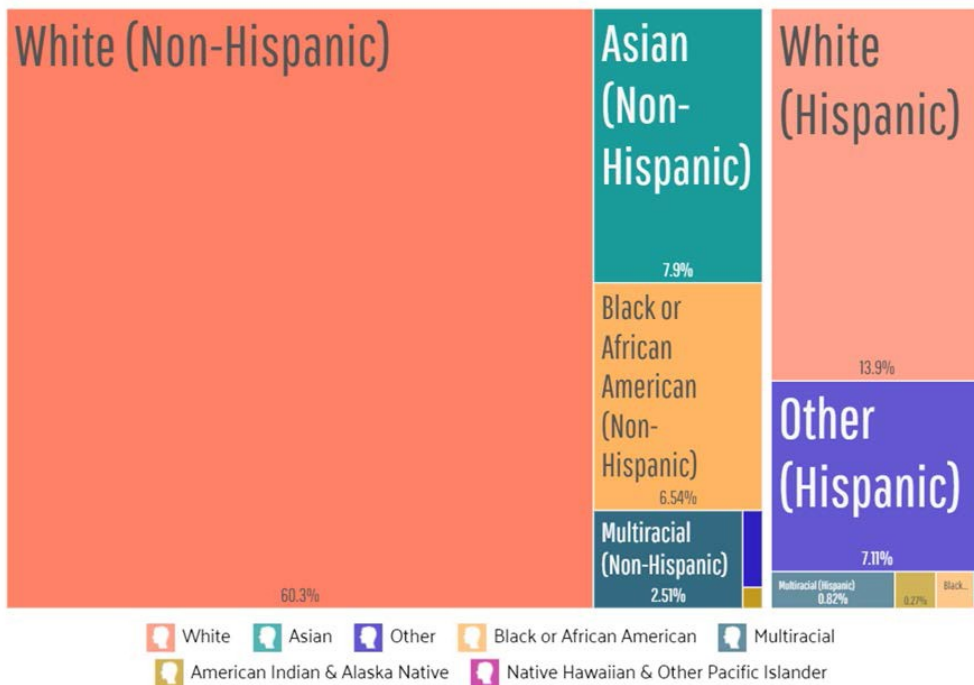
Lake County's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased to 3.7% in December 2021 from 6.5% in December 2020. The last time the December rate was equal to or lower was in 2019 when it was 3.5%.

	Dec-21	Nov-21	Dec-20	Change Over Month	Change Over Year
NORTHEAST REGION	4.5	4.7	8.5	-0.2	-4.0
ILLINOIS	4.3	4.5	7.9	-0.2	-3.6
LAKE COUNTY-KENOSHA COUNTY, IL-WI METROPOLITAN DIVISION	3.7	3.5	6.5	0.2	-2.8

Source: [press-release \(illinois.gov\)](https://press-release.illinois.gov).

#### Population Characteristics

In 2019, there were 4.33 times more White (Non-Hispanic) residents (420k people) in Lake County, IL than any other race or ethnicity. There were 97k White (Hispanic) and 55k Asian (Non-Hispanic) residents, the second and third most common ethnic groups. 22.4% of the people in Lake County, IL are Hispanic (156k people). The following chart shows the 7 races represented in Lake County, IL as a share of the total population.



Source: Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimate.

29.8% of Lake County, IL citizens are speakers of a non-English language, which is higher than the national average of 22%. In 2019, the most common non-English language spoken in Lake County, IL was Spanish. 18.5% of the overall population of Lake County, IL are native Spanish speakers. 1.44% speak Russian and 1.19% speak Polish, the next two most common languages.

Lake County, IL has more individuals at the retirement age than the state and less individuals entering the workforce.

	Lake County	EDR#4	Illinois
Millennials (age 20 - 34)	19%	21%	20%
Retiring Soon (55 and older)	29%	27%	25%
Racially Diverse Population	39%	48%	39%
Non-English Speakers	30%	30.50%	23.50%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017, Table S0101

## Educational Attainment

A larger percentage of Lake County has a high school diploma or higher compared to the region or the state and nearly half of the Lake County population has a bachelor's degree or higher.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, the number of high school graduates is expected to increase by 5% nation-wide by 2027. In comparison, the number of high school graduates in Illinois is expected to decrease by 2.7% during that same time period.

	Lake County	Illinois
Less than 9th Grade	5%	4%
9 - 12th Grade	4%	5%
HS Diploma or	21%	25%
Some College, No	18%	20%
Associate Degree	6%	8%
Bachelor's Degree	27%	22%
Graduate or Higher	19%	14%

## Industries

The largest industries in Lake County, IL are Professional and Business Services, Manufacturing, Government, Retail Trade, and Educational-Health Services. An overview of the top five industries in Lake County by number of jobs is below along with the employment percentage by industry from December 2019.

Industry	2019 Jobs	2018 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2016 - 2018)
Professional Services	74,400	71,800	3.60%
Manufacturing	63,500	62,400	1.80%
Government	52,800	52,700	0.20%
Retail Trade	51,800	51,700	0.20%
Education and Health Services	49,300	48,300	2.10%

## Highest Ranked Occupations in Lake County

Highest rank occupations are displayed for Lake County according to employment numbers, earnings, and projected job growth.

### Largest Occupations in Lake County

Occupation	2022 Jobs	2024 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2022-2024)	% Change	2020 Median Hourly Earnings
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	41,146	40,288	(858)	(2%)	\$19.87
Sales and Related Occupations	32,092	31,729	(363)	(1%)	\$17.13
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	30,893	30,954	60	0%	\$17.81
Production Occupations	30,318	30,150	(167)	(1%)	\$19.32
Management Occupations	29,218	29,215	(2)	(0%)	\$57.16
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	23,036	23,124	88	0%	\$34.50
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	21,561	21,656	94	0%	\$11.22
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	19,781	19,845	64	0%	\$26.64
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	15,538	15,539	1	0%	\$34.80
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	13,194	13,234	40	0%	\$26.73

Source: EMSI occupation employment data

### Highest Paying Occupations in Lake County

Occupation	2022 Jobs	2024 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2022-2024)	% Change	2020 Median Hourly Earnings
Management Occupations	29,218	29,215	(2)	(0%)	\$57.16
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	23,036	23,124	88	0%	\$34.50
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	15,538	15,539	1	0%	\$34.80
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	13,194	13,234	40	0%	\$26.73
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	11,656	11,807	152	1%	\$43.53
Construction and Extraction Occupations	9,819	9,605	(214)	(2%)	\$34.21
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	5,939	5,968	30	1%	\$41.06
Protective Service Occupations	5,704	5,587	(118)	(2%)	\$27.78
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	4,382	4,435	53	1%	\$34.49
Legal Occupations	1,951	1,977	27	1%	\$43.06

Source: EMSI occupation employment data

### Fastest Growing Occupations in Lake County

Occupation	2022 Jobs	2024 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2022-2024)	% Change	2020 Median Hourly Earnings
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	30,893	30,954	60	0%	\$17.81
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	23,036	23,124	88	0%	\$34.50
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	21,561	21,656	94	0%	\$11.22
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	19,781	19,845	64	0%	\$26.64
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	13,194	13,234	40	0%	\$26.73
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	11,656	11,807	152	1%	\$43.53
Healthcare Support Occupations	9,319	9,464	146	2%	\$15.54
Military-only occupations	7,754	7,788	34	0%	\$13.24
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	5,939	5,968	30	1%	\$41.06
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	4,382	4,435	53	1%	\$34.49

Source: EMSI occupation employment data

## Staffing Patterns by Key Industries

Staffing Patterns provide data supporting the occupations that staff an industry with data related to employment by industry, % change, median hourly earnings, and typical entry level education.

### Manufacturing Industry

Description	Employed in Industry (2020)	Employed in Industry (2022)	Employed in Industry (2024)	Change (2022 - 2024)	% Change (2022 - 2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry (2020)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	3,351	3,260	3,160	(100)	(3%)	6.4%	\$16.93	High school diploma or equivalent
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	2,261	2,213	2,151	(62)	(3%)	4.3%	\$20.09	High school diploma or equivalent
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	2,081	2,119	2,132	13	1%	4.0%	\$17.23	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1,817	1,860	1,884	24	1%	3.5%	\$33.89	High school diploma or equivalent
Machinists	1,707	1,716	1,722	6	0%	3.3%	\$20.96	High school diploma or equivalent
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,580	1,616	1,634	18	1%	3.0%	\$16.13	No formal educational credential
Molding, Core making, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1,415	1,473	1,497	24	2%	2.7%	\$18.63	High school diploma or equivalent
Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	1,167	1,164	1,152	(11)	(1%)	2.2%	\$19.29	High school diploma or equivalent
General and Operations Managers	1,165	1,178	1,184	5	0%	2.2%	\$55.74	Bachelor's degree
Industrial Engineers	1,067	1,111	1,143	32	3%	2.0%	\$45.81	Bachelor's degree

Source: EMSI staffing pattern data

### Transportation & Warehousing

Description	Employed in Industry (2020)	Employed in Industry (2022)	Employed in Industry (2024)	Change (2022 - 2024)	% Change (2022 - 2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry (2020)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,567	1,656	1,694	37	2%	20.3%	\$16.13	No formal educational credential
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,046	1,125	1,177	52	5%	13.6%	\$24.88	Postsecondary nondegree award
Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	703	714	742	28	4%	9.1%	\$17.11	High school diploma or equivalent
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	524	558	573	15	3%	6.8%	\$21.11	No formal educational credential
Light Truck Drivers	509	543	562	19	3%	6.6%	\$24.53	High school diploma or equivalent
Stockers and Order Fillers	440	468	481	13	3%	5.7%	\$15.57	High school diploma or equivalent
Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	303	289	284	(6)	(2%)	3.9%	\$21.00	High school diploma or equivalent
Packers and Packagers, Hand	272	287	292	5	2%	3.5%	\$16.02	No formal educational credential
Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	227	233	232	(1)	(1%)	2.9%	\$19.29	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	181	194	201	7	4%	2.4%	\$29.93	High school diploma or equivalent

Source: EMSI staffing pattern data

### Healthcare and Social Assistance

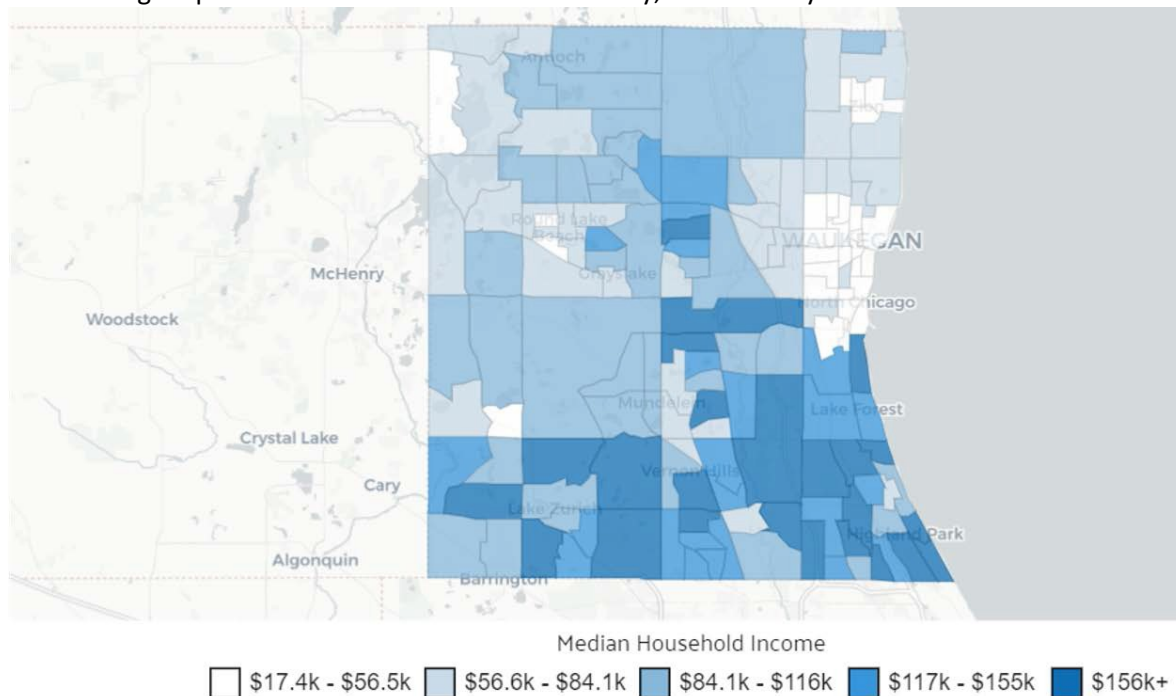
Description	Employed in Industry (2020)	Employed in Industry (2022)	Employed in Industry (2024)	Change (2022 - 2024)	% Change (2022 - 2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry (2020)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
Registered Nurses	4,094	4,072	4,058	(14)	(0%)	13.8%	\$36.64	Bachelor's degree
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,930	3,094	3,224	130	4%	9.9%	\$14.58	High school diploma or equivalent
Nursing Assistants	1,946	1,913	1,895	(19)	(1%)	6.6%	\$15.28	Postsecondary nondegree award
Receptionists and Information Clerks	806	782	767	(15)	(2%)	2.7%	\$15.62	High school diploma or equivalent
Medical Assistants	795	783	777	(6)	(1%)	2.7%	\$17.73	Postsecondary nondegree award
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	758	726	711	(15)	(2%)	2.6%	\$14.45	Associate degree
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	661	645	634	(11)	(2%)	2.2%	\$18.99	High school diploma or equivalent
Office Clerks, General	660	635	616	(19)	(3%)	2.2%	\$18.13	High school diploma or equivalent
Dental Assistants	641	615	600	(16)	(3%)	2.2%	\$21.73	Postsecondary nondegree award
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	608	600	596	(4)	(1%)	2.1%	\$28.72	Postsecondary nondegree award

Source: EMSI staffing pattern data

## Income/Poverty Levels

In 2019, the tract with the highest Median Household Income (Total) in Lake County, IL was Census Tract 8656 with a value of \$248,974. 7.93% of the population for whom poverty status is determined in Lake County, IL (54.3k out of 684k people) live below the poverty line, a number that is lower than the national average of 12.3%. The largest demographic living in poverty are Females 25 - 34, followed by Females 18 – 24, and then Females 35 - 44.

The following map shows all of the tracts in Lake County, IL colored by their Median Household Income (Total).



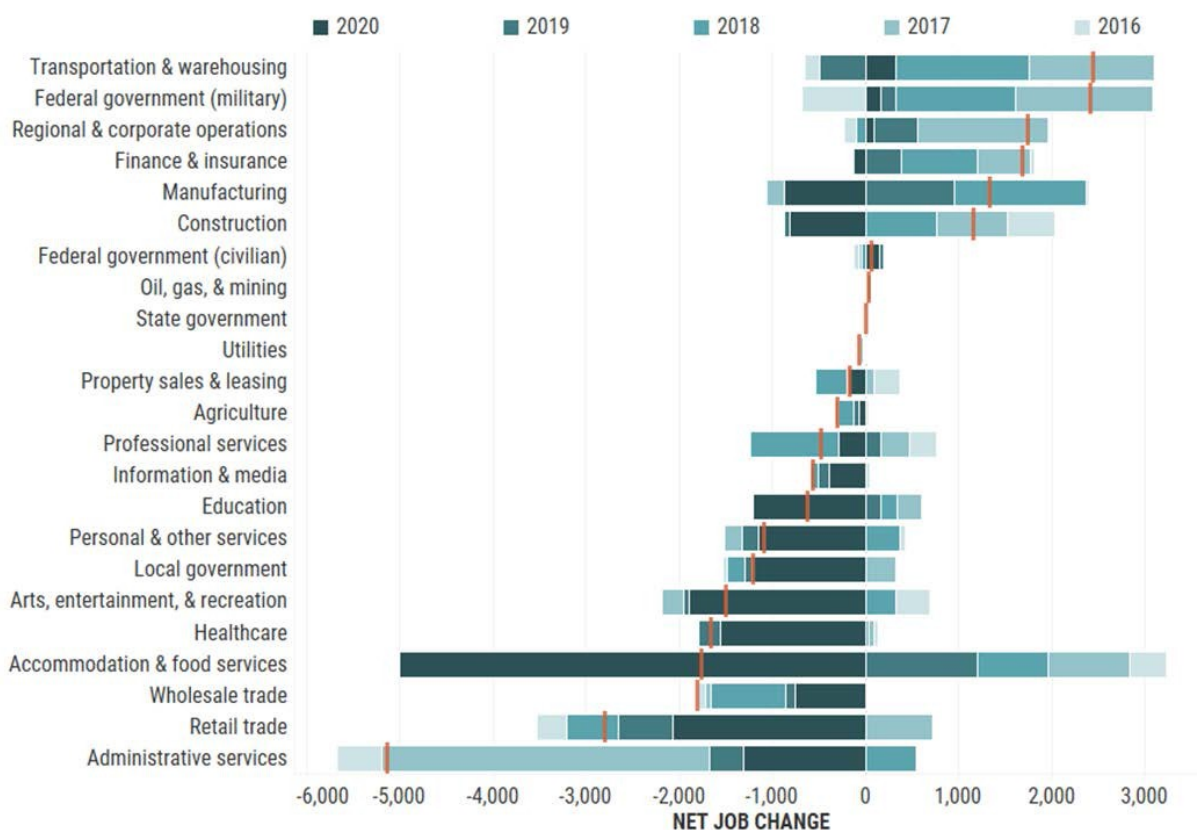
Source: [Lake County, IL | Data USA](#)

Median household income in Lake County, IL is a little over \$87,000. Males in Lake County, IL have an average income that is 1.33 times higher than the average income of females, which is \$55,889. The income inequality in Lake County, IL (measured using the Gini index) is 0.48, which is higher than the national average.

## Employment Trends

Over the past two decades, Lake County's employment trends have been less volatile than some of the peer counties. Although its growth may have been slower, with lower peaks and less dramatic downturns, this pacing has largely worked to the County's advantage. Underlying this relative stability are several noteworthy sectoral trends that may be lost in the numbers. First, the manufacturing sector is Lake County's largest employer, and that job base has been remarkably stable over the past two decades, even as US manufacturing suffered through multiple shocks. Second, US employment in the transportation and warehousing sector has boomed since the Great Recession, but growth in Lake County in the past five years has outperformed even the national trend. Third, regional and corporate operations have experienced impressive growth in Lake County. Fourth, the military's prominence as a leading employer in the county has waned in the past 20 years, with non-civilian US Department of Defense employment down by nearly 40% since 2001. Finally, Lake County has experienced unusually lackluster growth in professional services firms. This sector is of particular importance to this plan. Professional services are a good fit for affluent suburban counties, as evidenced by many of Lake County's benchmark peers. These firms also bring in their wake a more dynamic economy with significant technology spin-off opportunities.

NET EMPLOYMENT CHANGE FOR SELECTED PERIOD BY SECTOR: LAKE COUNTY, 2016-2020



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Emsi 2021.2 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc. Note: Red bars indicate the total net change for the period.

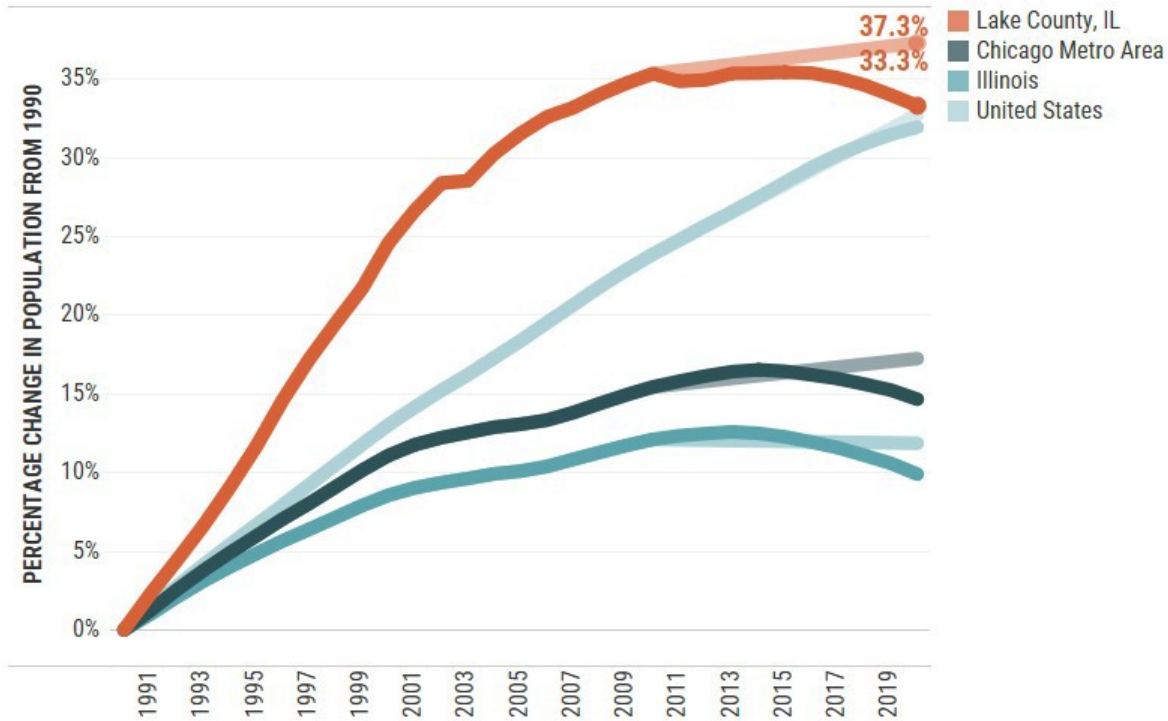


## Population Flattening

While US population growth has slowed, Lake County’s population has seen virtually no increase. Population estimations for 2020 suggest that Lake County’s natural increase in population—the excess of birth certificates over death certificates—was less than a quarter of its 2001 peak. Domestic outmigration tipped from positive to negative in 2003. Since the Great Recession, Lake County’s overall population has barely budged, increasing only by 1.5% since the last census compared to a 7% national growth rate. While economic prosperity can continue with a declining population (as in wealthy tourist communities) it more often results in declining living standards and disinvestment.

### POPULATION TREND COMPARISONS

POPULATION ESTIMATES (DARKER LINE) COMPARED WITH 2020 CENSUS REDISTRICTING POPULATION COUNTS (LIGHTER LINE)



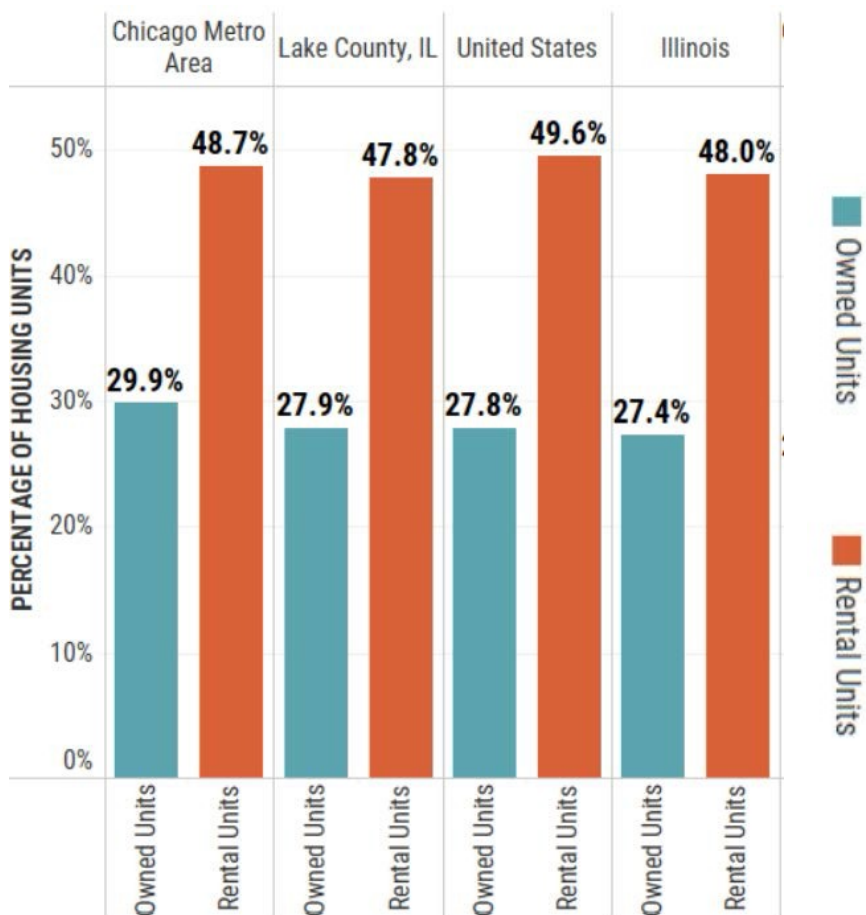
Source: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program and 2020 Census Redistricting; Moody's Analytics; TIP Strategies, Inc.



## Household Stability

Of all the County's housing units, 68% are occupied by their owners compared to just 56% nationally. Those occupants are more likely to be partnered households (64% in Lake County versus 55% nationally) and more likely to have a four-year degree (45% in Lake County versus 32% in the US overall). Unsurprisingly, this combination of coupled households and high education boosts earning power. Lake County's median household income exceeds the US average by 42% (\$89,400 versus \$62,800). Lake County's median home price also exceeds the US median, but by a much lower 22%. Housing affordability may elude the peer benchmark counties of the East and West coasts, but for Lake County's affluent residents, affordability lies within reach. However, despite this relative affordability, nearly half (47.8%) of renter-occupied units are spending more than 30% of their income on housing expenses. When compared to owner-occupied units, this falls to only 28% (27.9%) of occupants, again drawing attention to income disparities across the county.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY, 2019 SHARE OF HOUSING UNITS WHOSE OCCUPANTS SPEND MORE THAN 30 PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME ON HOUSING EXPENSES (I.E., RENT OR MORTGAGE PAYMENTS)



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.

## Chapter 1 -3: Regional Plan Components

**Northeast Economic Development Region #4 Regional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan**

<http://workforcepartnersmetrochicago.org/regional-workforce-development-plan/>

## Chapter 4: Operating Systems & Policies – Local Component

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating system and policies developed and overseen by the Lake County Workforce Development Board. This chapter includes an overview of governance documents that describe the one-stop system – led out by the Job Center of Lake County One Stop Operator and partners.

### A. Coordination of Planning Requirements

The Workforce Board has aligned the WIOA required compliance documents including the Regional and Local WIOA Plans, the Job Center of Lake County MOU, the Job Center Partner Action Plan, and the One-Stop certification. In addition, the Workforce Board has aligned its own strategic plan with the Local Plan. To that end, the Workforce Board has incorporated key elements of the Job Center Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan into the Local Plan.

The Job Center of Lake County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 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 Job Center MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities of the One-Stop Center Partners, including the four Core Partners of Workforce Development Department, Illinois Department of Employment Security, College of Lake County and Department of Rehabilitation Services; in addition to the roles of the One-Stop Operator. It is understood by all partners to the MOU that the development and implementation of a successful One-Stop System will require time, planning, mutual trust and cooperation of all partners acting as a team, in good faith. The Job Center partners continue to implement and improve various aspects of the shared vision to ensure collaboration among education, workforce, economic development, and required partners as program participants have access to services and programs to successfully move along a chosen career pathway, leading to high paying jobs in growing sectors of the economy that offer long-term opportunities for stable employment. The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan. The following sections align with the Job Center MOU:

- The Job Center of Lake County
- The Job Center of Lake County Partners
- The Job Center Referral Process
- MOU Data Sharing
- MOU Cost Sharing Agreement
- MOU Governance
- One-Stop Operator

### II. The Job Center of Lake County

The Job Center of Lake County partners share a vision for the local one-stop delivery system to promote business driven talent solutions through integrated resources and partnerships to enhance the economic vitality of Lake County and maintain a culture of equity and inclusivity in serving priority populations.

The Job Center partners have made it a priority to focus the coordination of services around continuous improvement efforts to address and reduce overlapping services, create efficiencies in serving the job seekers and businesses, and increasing the career services delivered at the Job Center and throughout the system among the partners. The Job Center partners have all signed onto a well-versed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing carefully planned and coordinated services among and across all federally funded workforce development programs to achieve a level of integrated service delivery.

The Job Center of Lake County partners, led by the One-Stop Operator, deliver programs and services based on its overall intent to provide free help to job seekers and businesses. The partners have successfully been able to deliver a seamless set of services including:

- Resource rooms with free internet and resume writing tools
- Free access to fax and copy machines for employment and training related communications and materials
- Employment plan development
- Job training services
- Job search assistance
- Career counseling
- Practice interviewing
- Skills testing
- Labor market and employer information as related to careers, jobs, and training
- Employment workshops
- Access to Supportive services (which can include information about SNAP, financial assistance, Medicaid, training services, child-care, emergency funds, and other benefits)
- Hiring events and business service information
- Accessibility and special accommodations for people with disabilities
- Referrals to community resources and other agencies, and more
- Access to Illinois workNet website
- Access to Illinois Job Link
- Unemployment insurance information
- Current job vacancies
- Professional magazines, articles, resume books, and various newspapers
- Orientation sessions
- Calendar of activities including workshops
- Access to onsite interviewing by hiring employers
- Access to partner and community-based organization programs through direct connection or linkage
- Lake County Careers Website Expansion
- Virtual Workshops and Information Session
- Job Center of Lake County Mobile Job Center
- Job Center of Lake County Reopening Plan

The Lake County Workforce Development Board in partnership with the Lake County CEO has identified and certified the Job Center of Lake County as the one comprehensive American Job Center to serve the local workforce development area. The Job Center of Lake County located at 1 N. Genesee Street, Waukegan – on the campus of the College of Lake County Lakeshore Campus. The Job Center is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; and is easily accessible by auto and public transportation (bus and train).

The Workforce Board has not certified any additional affiliate or specialized workforce centers in Lake County. The Workforce Board does support service delivery throughout the county at various sites in order to serve a greater number of customers effectively and efficiently with minimal challenges – specifically serving a greater number of underserved customers in underserved communities. The Workforce Board reserves it right to further research and explore the need for affiliate or specialized workforce centers based on the need of workforce development customers.

### **Lake County Careers Website Expansion**

The Lake County Careers website was created and implemented in early-2019. There have been modifications needed for the Lake County Careers platform during the pandemic, with the major change being the addition of the Virtual Information Session (VIS) that is now housed on the website. The VIS was created as an online alternative to the onsite WIOA information sessions that were conducted at the Job Center and served as the primary intake method for the Job Center's WIOA-funded programming and services prior to the start of the pandemic.

Hosting the VIS online also has the added benefit of exposing interested applicants to the various other Career Pathways tools, resources, and events that are contained and discussed on the platform.

### **Virtual Workshops and Information Session (VIS)**

Lake County Workforce Development Board

Lake County Workforce Plan – Updated March 2022

The Job Center of Lake County closed in response to COVID-19 in March 2020 and the Job Center team members promptly responded and developed and deployed virtual services and programs. The Job Center has maintained all workshops in a virtual environment and will monitor the protocols going forward to begin offering workshops in person and hybrid when possible.

- The creation of customized online workshops to address the special challenges of COVID-19. In 2021, 43 workshops and events offered by the Job Center of Lake County with a total of 670 attendees. Topics include:
  - Accelerate Your Job Search
  - Your Personal Brand & Resume
  - Mastering the Virtual Interview
  - Maximize Job Search Resources & Virtual Hiring Events
  - Careers in Cybersecurity
  - Careers in the FBI
  - Industry Snapshot: Healthcare
  - Industry Snapshot: Manufacturing
  - Industry Snapshot: IT
  - Virtual Job Expo
  - A Positive Mindset for Successful Job Search
- The creation and implementation of a Virtual Information Session (VIS). The VIS provides jobseekers with the same information and benefits that were provided during the on-site information and orientation session. The VIS has created greater access to a greater number of individuals – being able to view the session anytime and on any device and complete an online application.
  - In 2021, 1,163 Virtual Information Sessions were viewed, and applications collected report that over 50% of the attendees reside in Lake County’s most underserved communities.

#### **Job Center of Lake County Mobile Job Center**

Workforce Development conducted a community needs survey to gauge community-support for mobile Job Center activities and services, with attention to the communities of Zion and North Chicago.

To increase services to job seekers and provide more accessibility and equity in delivery of employment and training services, Workforce Development (LCWD) is implementing a mobile and remote job center concept – Workforce Development team members will bring a pod of laptops and video conferencing devices into underserved communities. This mobile job center will allow community members to connect with services within their communities without having to travel to the Job Center in Waukegan. The smart video conferencing devices will enhance interaction with employers and job seekers. This technology will allow for better connection with employers to provide access to a broader audience with virtual job fairs and hiring events as well as a much-needed way to provide skills training and job search workshops to additional communities and community groups.

#### **Job Center of Lake County Reopening Plan**

In response to the COVID-19 Public Health Declaration, the Job Center of Lake County closed its doors to in-person visits in March of 2020 and reopened by appointment only in September 2020. The Job Center has followed the guidelines of the Lake County Health Department in terms of safety and health protocols. These guidelines are now part of the Job Center of Lake County’s best practices. The safety of the Job Center of Lake County’s customers and staff is top priority.

The Job Center welcomed back partners to be onsite and/or co-located in June of 2021.

In July of 2021 the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity issued guidance for a safe return to work and reopening plan for all American Job Centers in the state of Illinois. The Job Center complied and responded to the check list associated with reopening protocols. The protocols remain active and the Job Center adhere to the three (3) minimum criteria for staying open to the public in any capacity:

1. Ensure adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for customers and staff;

2. Ensure safety of staff and customers through ongoing assessments of security needs; and
3. Establish an agreed-upon process for making decisions on a practical reopening plan.

### III. Job Center Partners

The Job Center of Lake County offers career services and programs to adults, dislocated workers, youth, employers, and other community members through the coordinated efforts of the core and required workforce system partners.

Partners to the MOU include: WIOA Title I – Lake County Workforce Development; WIOA Title II – College of Lake County and APC Partners; WIOA Title III – IDES; WIOA Title IV – DHS VR; Veterans Services – IDES; TAA – Workforce Development; Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers – IDES, Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) – National Able Network; TANF DHS; YouthBuild – Youth Conservation Corps and YouthBuild Lake County; HUD – Waukegan Housing Authority and Lake County Housing Authority; CSBG – Community Action Partnership.

### IV. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Core Partners:

- **Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth)** – Workforce Development is a key community player in the areas of career services, business services, and education/ training required for implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is committed to providing and coordinating services on-site at the Job Center of Lake County and through-out the system. Workforce Development has an ongoing commitment to deliver all career services on-site at the Job Center of Lake County as well as community locations based on the customer needs. Workforce staff are physically located at the Job Center delivering career services including eligibility, outreach, intake and orientation; initial skills assessment, labor exchange services, referral and coordination; information on supportive services and assistance with establishing eligibility for financial assistance; as well as development of an individual employment plan; individual career coaching and planning; access to internships and work experience opportunities.
- **Title II - Adult Basic Education** has 30 locations in Lake County (18 affiliated with CLC, 12 with Highland Park High School and 10 with Mundelein High School). There are other locations within the County that assist individuals with this subject matter but for the purposes of WIOA Title II, these are the locations observed. The CLC Adult Education staff also provides program information and services at the Job Center of Lake County.
- **Title III - Wagner-Peyser** services and programming are offered by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). IDES is co-located at the Job Center of Lake County represented by two Wagner-Peyser staff as well as a business service representative on site weekly Two additional IDES staff provide programs and services specifically for veterans.
- **Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation** through the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has one office in Lake County and eight (8) contractors who provide employment and training services to DRS clients in Lake County and additional contractors in the surrounding suburbs. DRS representative is onsite in the Job Center weekly, meeting with customers as well as assisting with workshops and employer hiring events.

In addition to the locations of the above core partner services, Lake County has a wide variety of service providers and organizations that provide educational and employment related services and services to special populations.

The Job Center partners have developed the Integrated Services Action Plan around this vision of collaboration. The Workforce Board's strategic plan has a stated objective to facilitate greater collaboration among and between workforce partners and stakeholders. The Workforce Board Operation's Committee drives the agenda and work tasks associated with the Job Center MOU and program collaboration model.

### V. Job Center Referral Process

It is the One-Stop Operator's role and responsibility to coordinate referrals among partners. The One-Stop Operator has worked with the Job Center partners to establish a referral mechanism utilizing a paper referral form. The paper referral captures and work collaboratively to phase in new tools and technology. The Job Center has a referral process already in place that utilizes a direct manual referral mechanism that includes at a minimum, the agency name and phone number.

With respect to referrals on the employer/business side, implementation of a CRM application has been customized and

implemented with key partners. Salesforce has been functional among workforce development, economic development, and the community college to house information on employer contacts and services and has proven effective in sharing information and coordinating delivery of programs and services to employers.

Reports of discussions within the Governor's Interagency Work Group indicate that technology improvements and sharing of data sources will further enable greater coordination of referrals between the partners. The Workforce Board is keenly interested in participating in development of a new system that will enable a more effective and efficient method for completing referrals on a timely basis and tracking trends and corresponding data to improve upon services.

## **VI. ServicePoint Referral Network**

The Job Center of Lake County has belonged to the ServicePoint referral system since 2017. Lake County uses ServicePoint as its Homeless Management Information System. In 2021, the Job Center of Lake County received and responded to 135 referrals through ServicePoint with the majority coming from PADS Lake County, a community-based organization provided resources and shelter to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or housing crisis. Job Center referrals accounted for 12% of all referrals sent through ServicePoint in 2020. Catholic Charities, YWCA Lake County, and Community Partners for Affordable Housing also received a high number of referrals for emergency or rental assistance and housing relief. The Job Center of Lake County has maintained a relationship with all three of these organizations for more than a decade and shares resources from these organizations on social media and in the Job Center.

## **VII. MOU Data Sharing**

The Job Center partners are committed to pursuing alignment and integration of participant and performance data across programs with the goal of providing effective and efficient services that lead to customer employment and retention. All partners to this MOU agree to share data to the fullest extent possible through agreements and practices that allow each program to comply with the state and federal laws governing it to protect personally identifiable information while working toward greater integration of services across programs. As part of the agreed upon referral process, partners agree to comply with federal and state laws governing protection of personally identifiable information (PII).

The Job Center partners do not have an integrated data system and will explore options along with waiting for guidance from the State of Illinois Department of Innovation Technology. Until an agreed-upon data system solution is implemented the partners agree to pursue other means of securely sharing information relevant to improved outcomes for customers and businesses. The One-Stop Operator continues to work with the Workforce Board and partners to identify the most immediate and effective way to share information on shared customers.

## **VIII. MOU Cost Sharing Agreement**

The Workforce Development Board leads the annual MOU cost sharing agreement negotiations with each of the MOU partners. The local board, chief elected official and required partners have successfully reached a consensus on the negotiated shared costs the agreed contributions demonstrate fair and equitable service delivery and integration within the comprehensive one-stop and across the system.

Lake County is the lease holder of the Job Center space in Waukegan, Illinois and Lake County Workforce Development Department budgets all infrastructure related expenses to the WIOA Formula Grant and pays all expenses related to the Job Center. Workforce Development maintains a general ledger of Job Center infrastructure expenses and as agreed upon by the partners, completes a reconciliation process twice a year and invoices the partners. The Job Center partners have agreed to contribute a proportionate share of infrastructure costs based upon the agreed upon allocation methodology of FTEs – the time staff member(s) delivering the services on-site in the Job Center, delivering the services at a partner site, or supporting the direct linkage to services through technology. All partner programs agreed to an FTE of no less than .25FTE.

The expenses associated with the One-Stop Operator is paid by Workforce Development WIOA Formula grant at 100%. A partner consortium has been selected as the One-Stop Operator through a competitive procurement process. These One-Stop Operator budget is a percentage of current Workforce Development staff that perform the functions of the One-Stop Operator on-site at the Job Center; therefore, Workforce Development will continue to contribute 100% to this cost.



Lake County Workforce Development is responsible for reporting the costs and reconciliation to the required partners and Workforce Board on a bi-annual basis.

## **IX. MOU Governance**

The governance of the MOU is overseen by the Workforce Development Board. Job Center partners have all agreed to standard business practices in the governance of the MOU to ensure compliance in the negotiation and execution of the MOU for career services and programs delivery and the MOU cost sharing agreement. The Job Center partners communicate with the Workforce Board regarding all requested MOU changes and amendments and follow a defined process. A Workforce Board member serves as a neutral facilitator in addressing requests, resolving issues, and communicating to the Workforce Board.

## **X. One Stop Operator**

The One-Stop Operator for the Job Center of Lake County is a partner consortium of the Lake County Workforce Development Department, Illinois Department of Employment Security, and the College of Lake County. The Workforce Board worked with the Lake County Purchasing Division to complete the One-Stop Operator procurement process in 2017 and a One-Stop Operator agreement was approved for the term July 2017-June 2021. The Workforce Board Procurement Policy references compliance to WIOA and bidding out the One-Stop Operator every four years. The Workforce Board is prepared to complete a One-Stop Operator procurement process in 2021.

The function and scope of work of the One-Stop Operator is to coordinate partner activities and services. The One-Stop Operator will:

- Coordinate activities, programs, and services at the Job Center of Lake County between all Job Center partners and services providers.
- Coordinate tracking tools and process between partners.
- Maintain the Job Center of Lake County website/webpage content and ensure integrity of published information from partners and active linkages.
- Regularly convene the Job Center of Lake County Partners to:
  - Learn about programs, services, trends, and customers through periodic cross training sessions
  - Develop tools, technology, and mechanisms to communicate to and across all partners pertinent information.
  - Work with partners to assess customer needs as part of the continuous improvement process for the Job Center of Lake County
  - Collect customer feedback and work with partners to address issues as part of the continuous improvement process for the Job Center
  - Periodically review Job Center services and center accessibility
  - Assure Job Center materials are up-to-date and available for resource room staff and customers and maintain adequate inventories
  - Report and coordinate maintenance needs with Job Center staff and property owner/manager
  - Assist partners responding to economic needs of the local area as specified in the local and regional plans, as well as report outcome to the Board
  - Assist partners in identifying to recruit and match businesses with the skilled workers
- Serve as a member of the Workforce Development Board Operations Committee
- Develop and deliver a quarterly report to the Workforce Board regarding activities, outcomes and partner collaborations and continuous improvement efforts.

The Lake County Workforce Development Board is prepared to complete a One-Stop Operator procurement process in 2022. The request for proposal for 2022 Scope of Work will focus on the One-Stop Operator leading out the coordination of the Lake County One-Stop Service Integration Action Plan. The One Stop Operator is responsible to the Workforce Board's Operation Committee to report progress and outputs in a Quarterly One Stop Report.

## **XI. The Job Center of Lake County Service Integration Action Planning**

The Job Center of Lake County partners in collaboration with the Workforce Board developed a service integration plan. The

agreed upon Service Integration Action Plan provides a description of how Job Center 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 Action Plan and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) defines service integration as a combination of strategies to align and simplify access to one-stop center services and supports for employers, job seekers, and system customers with the goal of providing the best experience possible. Service integration may occur across entities delivering specific services or programs, across time as customer needs change, or both.

Seven service integration functions identified by the IWIB and outlined in its service integration policy (DCEO WIOA POLICY 18-WIOA-1.13) are the focus of Illinois' local one-stop delivery system. Each workforce board was responsible for assessing the level of service integration in seven functional areas and 15 associated goals for each one-stop center it oversees and agree on the priority actions needed to move the needle on the most strategically important service integration goals. A self-assessment guide has been developed to help local workforce boards implement the policy.

The Job Center partners were invited to complete the service integration self-assessment guide for their respective agency by assessing levels of service integration and identifying areas of interest for focused efforts toward improved levels of service integration. Each participating partner conducted the service integration self-assessment to identify where their agency fell on the continuum in working as a partner in the Job Center for each of the goals. The Job Center partners completed the assessments and were invited to come together for a planned facilitated discussion.

The participating partners met to share assessments, identify agreed upon priorities, and begin action planning.

Based on the results of the collective assessments and the partners agreed to focus on two functions and related goals:

- Center Staff – Communication is consistent, comprehensive and timely
- Job Seeker and Business services – All one-stop services delivered by function; Business services delivered by function; Timely and Coordinated Access for Customers

The Workforce Board and the One-Stop Operator are working to develop the project plans to execute the agreed-upon action plans for each goal, setting priorities with the partners and defining the metrics – collectively identifying what success would look like. The Workforce Board Operations Committee will oversee the progress of the action plans.

The partners have agreed to the following:

1. Communication is consistent, comprehensive, and timely.
  - Explore and implement technology tools that will be utilized to promote and share partner and program information.
    - Real-time communications shared with/across/between partners. Partner engaged at the onset. Partners will report that a successful process is in place that ensures all staff are regularly informed of changes/updates/trends in service design, program policies and services to customers.
2. Timely and coordinated access for customers.
  - Identify and implement a common electronic referral system to be used by partners.
  - Design a shared process to gather feedback from all customers.
    - Referral process improvements. Increased job center customer traffic from partners.
    - Increased shared customers among partners.
    - Partner engaged at the onset.
    - Shared system to track customers.
    - Customers – job seekers, workers, businesses – describe their access to services as timely

and coordinated whether on-site, through technology, at a partner site, and other appropriate accessible community services.

3. Services delivered by functions.
  - Develop a standard format to chart out all partner services, customers, and customer flow.
  - Create a functional organizational structure and customer flow.
  - Identify shared functions by partner.
  - Cross trainings continue and archived.
    - Increase career services delivered jointly. Each partner owns their program services and activities.
    - Shared measurements and goals. Shared ways to track customers and outcomes.
    - Core agencies create a functional organizational structure to share information, data, and resources to achieve common goals and mutually agreed upon outcomes.
4. Services delivered by functions – Business Services. Prioritize and engage in the following activities and tactics in order to Increased customer satisfaction – business and job seeker. Increased business engagement. Unified business engagement practices. More partners engaged at the onset of developing and implementing strategies.
  - Expand current business service team – capacity and partners.
  - Expand Business U Training.
  - Explore shared database.
  - Expand on-site hiring and job fairs throughout the County.

## **B. Technology and Remote Access**

The Workforce Board is committed to pursuing alignment and integration of participant and performance data across programs with the goal of providing effective and efficient services delivered onsite in the Job Center as well as in remote areas throughout Lake County.

In conjunction with the One-Stop-Operator, the Workforce Board Operation's Committee has been working with the Job Center partners to best understand the most immediate and effective way to implement and transition to an integrated technology-enable intake and case management system for programs carried out under WIOA.

The Job Center partners have identified throughout the facilitated discussions the need for an integrated customer management system that would add value to the services being delivered, not a system that would be duplicative in nature and not used effectively by all partners. The Job Center partners have recognized the need to have a shared system but has also recognized the challenges with multiple agencies – both locally and statewide being able to utilize the same tool with the multiple data-share agreements, critical information to be gathered, and the maintaining of personal identification information.

The Workforce Board has not made the investment in an integrated customer management data system that would enable a common intake and case management information system across Job Center partners and the programs.

The Job Center partner integrated services action plan does prioritize technology and will be formulating a plan to research tools and systems with a projected go-live date of January 2021. The Workforce Board is willing to make the investment and include the cost for licensing in the MOU cost sharing agreement. The Workforce Board would assign the management of the system and tools to the one-stop operator. It is imperative that the tool collects data on workforce development system participants and identifies shared customers around shared performance measures. Unique information for specific partner programs and protected information will be captured by each partner in the partner's unique system.

The Workforce Board and local representatives of Job Center partner agencies continue to look to the Governor's Interagency Work Group for guidance and direction on this WIOA topic going forward. The Workforce Board does not want to invest in a system that may be duplicative or obsolete if the Governor's Interagency Work Group choose/invest in an integrated system at a state-wide level.

In regard to business services, the Workforce Board has invested in the local Business Services Team utilizing Salesforce as the database to capture business and employer data. In partnership with Lake County Partners, Lake County's public/private economic development organization and the College of Lake County, the Workforce Development business service team utilizes Salesforce as the customer relationship management tool for employer information, contact information, notes tied to services and activities delivered, as well as alignment with job placement metrics. Salesforce is the tool that will be customized to include employer customer satisfaction measures once established. Workforce Development will lead the information management and data entry for the local business services team.

## **XII. Lake County Workforce Development System - Access to services in remote areas and with technology**

The Workforce Board recognizes the need to expand service strategies beyond the walls of the Job Center in Waukegan in order to deliver equitable services and programs throughout Lake County and in underserved communities. The Workforce Board supports the One-Stop Operator and Job Center partners in providing access to services in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means. The One-Stop Operator and Job Center partners have identified the following promising practices that enables individuals and employers to have access to services:

- a. Job Center of Lake County Website
- b. College of Lake County Campuses
- c. Libraries
- d. Community based workshops and services
- e. Cable channels
- f. Newsletters
- g. Lake County Careers Website
- h. LinkedIn Learning
- i. DocuSign
- j. COURSERA / Google Scholarship
- k. Utilization of Meeting Platforms: ZOOM, MS Teams, etc...

## **XIII. Job Center of Lake County Website**

The One-Stop Operator manages the website for the Job Center [www.lakecountyjobcenter.com](http://www.lakecountyjobcenter.com). The website provides information and connections to all the Job Center partners and partners' programs. The Job Center partners provide information and program activities to keep the website up to date and relevant with the most current calendar of events, programs, and contact information. The website is an opportunity for individuals in remote areas to find assistance with career services, calendar of workshops, publications, videos, and contact information. The website is customized to be a highly mobile-optimized site, ideally responsive for desktop, laptop, phones, or tablets.

## **XIV. College of Lake County Campuses**

To best serve customers, Adult Basic Education (ABE) customers, and College of Lake County (CLC) students, the College of Lake County and the Workforce Board recognize the need for a workforce development presence at the College of Lake County, Grayslake Campus. The College of Lake County has dedicated an office within the main college campus for Workforce Development to serve customers in the farthest western part of the county, provide an immediate service to participants attending CLC classes, and encourage a direct referral with CLC ABE students at the Grayslake campus. In addition, classroom space is made available to host groups of job seekers to attend WIOA and Job Center Partner Orientation and information sessions.

In March of 2020 the College of Lake County closed its campuses to students, staff, and partners. CLC quickly pivoted to offer classes and services virtually during the pandemic and has since delivered classes and services in person, virtually and hybrid.

## **XV. Libraries**

The Job Center has a long-standing partnership with the library system throughout Lake County. Recognizing the need to bring services, workshops, and information into all areas of the county, the Job Center partners have delivered career services at the following libraries in 2019. Through this partnership, the Job Center is able to serve a greater number of

individuals in these communities as well as increase access to services to individuals with limited mobility.

- Antioch
- Cook Memorial (Libertyville)
- Fremont (Mundelein)
- Lake Villa District (Lindenhurst)
- North Chicago
- Waukegan
- Round Lake
- Vernon Area (Lincolnshire)
- Warren Newport (Gurnee)
- Zion Benton

#### **XVI. Community based workshops and services**

Job Center partners continue to reach out to a network of relationships in remote areas to assist individuals in accessing services in an ongoing effort to serve the underserved in underserved communities as well as leverage high performing services from a vast network of organizations and providers. The Job Center participants in job fairs and events throughout the county and region including the following remote locations: Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, Zion Leisure Center, North Chicago Firehouse, and Magee Middle School, Round Lake.

#### **XVII. Cable Channels**

Similarly, both CLC and Lake County have cable channels that can be used to provide information on Workforce Development programs and services. Effort will be undertaken to facilitate access to other Job Center Partners so that information on their services can be provided through the County's cable channel. Discussions will also be undertaken to gain similar access to the CLC cable channel, as well as municipal community access channels throughout the County.

#### **XVIII. Newsletters**

Lake County Government has regular newsletters distributed by County Board members and Workforce Development information, events, and services are often included in these newsletters that are emailed to constituents.

#### **XIX. Lake County Careers Website**

The LakeCountyCareers.com Website and the Hiring Event Platform was launched in 2018 to better promote and capture candidates for career expos, job fairs and employers' hiring events. The intent of this website is to promote access to a greater number of job seekers, young adults and high school students to increase candidate attendance at events, build a candidate-pipeline, and gain valuable data-driven insights to increase ROI over time. The LakeCountyCareers.com website is put together through a collaboration of Lake County Workforce Development, the Job Center of Lake County, College of Lake County, Lake County Partners, and the Lake County High Schools Tech Campus.

LakeCountyCareers.com Website provides visitors with:

- Information on upcoming events including hiring events capturing both candidate and employer registration data.
- A career resource section that highlights current Workforce Development grant funded programs including:
  - Work, Earn, & Learn
  - Workforce Essential Skills Training
  - ConstructionWorks
  - Career Crossroads
- Updated Industry and Occupation Pathways section, highlighting the key industry sectors identified by the Workforce Board and high priority occupations for each industry:
  - Health Services
  - Professional Services
  - Manufacturing and Trades
  - Transportation and Logistics

The website is customized to be a highly mobile-optimized site, ideally responsive for desktop, laptop, phones, or tablets.

The website is designed with back-end reporting for both candidate and employer data and includes candidate and employer confirmation emails upon registration and candidate reminder emails and texts prior to the event.

## **XX. LinkedIn Learning**

LinkedIn regardless Learning launched in the Spring of 2020 to deliver skills training to participants and staff. The courses offered are data-driven and intended to build the professional and soft skills of the participant. The training provided is for every job title and for all professional levels. The platform allows all individuals the same level of access to the library of courses of their background. The Workforce Development Department program utilizes the training courses within LinkedIn Learning to help participants boost their job skills and enhance their professional profiles. Continuous and on-demand training and education are crucial in these ever-changing times. The website is highly mobile-optimized and can be accessed by desktop, laptop, phone, or tablet.

## **XXI. DocuSign**

DocuSign was purchased in the Fall of 2020 to provide participants and staff with an easy and secure way to sign and receive documents necessary throughout the eligibility screening process and their training. The team can upload required documents and send them to the participant or Job Center partners to sign. The platform has allowed participants and staff the ability to be remote when completing the eligibility and enrollment process. The website is mobile-optimized and can be accessed by desktop, laptop, phone, or tablet.

## **XXII. COURSERA / Google Scholarship**

Google Scholarships with Coursera launched in the Summer of 2021 to deliver job-ready skills to participants to launch them in a career by equipping them with a Google Professional Certificate in areas of focus, including IT Support, Data Analytics, and Project Management. The scholarships were awarded by the National Association Workforce Boards and the intended target participants in vulnerable populations. The platform offers flexible, on-demand learning, taught by Google professionals, self-paced, and at no cost to the participant. The website is highly mobile-optimized and can be accessed by desktop, laptop, phone, or tablet.

## **XXIII. Utilization of Meeting Platforms: ZOOM, MS Teams, etc....**

Zoom and Microsoft Team have been utilized as meeting platforms and have been the primary delivery method of public workshops, staff training, and staff meetings. Due to the pandemic, many services were moved online, including workshops, events, and trainings. The staff has utilized platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to meet participants as a group or in one-on-one meetings. The platforms are easy to use and convenient for both staff and participants. The platforms are highly mobile-optimized and can be accessed by desktop, laptop, phone, or tablet.

### C. Lake County Workforce Development System - Core Program Delivery

The Workforce Board has made a commitment through its strategic plan to prioritize services to individuals with barriers to employment and has been guiding programs and services to be inclusive in serving the communities and customizing and making available programs to underserved individuals in underserved communities. The Workforce Board recognizes the importance of accessibility of programs and services to all eligible individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment. To that end, the Workforce Board works with and encourages its workforce partners to establish new opportunities to serve workforce customers. The Board's Operation's Committee is specifically responsible for working with workforce system partners to develop new accessibility strategies and opportunities.

The following promising practices have expanded access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment:

- 5 Steps to Your Next Job
- Revive Lake County
- ConstructionWorks
- SNAP to Success
- Work, Earn, & Learn
- Workforce Essential Skills Training
- Workforce Equity Initiative Grant
- Wildly Important Event
- Ready to Work - Legal Services
- Williams Consent Decree Drop-In Center
- DOL YouthBuild Programs

Partner programs, organizations, communities served, and job seekers that come from an array of communities are strategically engaged through the Workforce Development equity lens by:

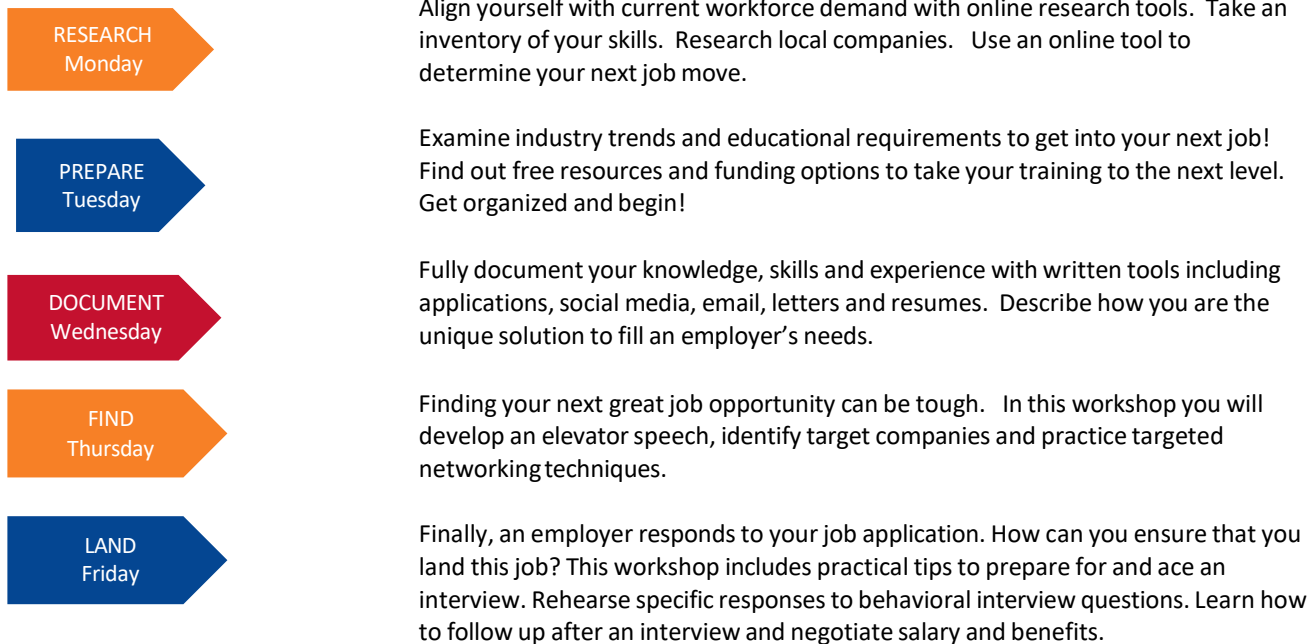
- Embedding services within underserved communities
- Utilization of Census Data to engage and attract students and job seekers that may have barriers
- Conduct and create workshops for age specific groups
- Apply and secure grants to address gender, class, and race inequities
- Monthly review of EO Demographic data as it pertains to trainees and job seekers served to ensure equity is being applied within WIOA services
- Leverage community partners that have access to diverse job seekers, families, institutions, and state resources to market services accordingly
- Branding displays diversity and equity
- WDB Board Equity Task force and diverse make up of board members provides oversight of programming areas to ensure an equity lens is applied or that there is representation from all demographic groups along with a priority of service expectation
- Engage schools that may have subpar graduation rates and infuse workforce programming to ensure resources are made available
- Programs allow for pathways and onboarding ramps to ensure equitable access
- Policies that support and address equity that ultimately increases engagement amongst priority populations
- Supply resources that typically are not available or affordable amongst different demographic groups



## The equity statement applies to all programs below

### 5 Steps to Your Next Job

Workforce Development developed and with Job Center partners delivers the award winning “5 Steps to Your Next Job” job readiness program. This monthly, 5-day interactive workshop has participants hearing from a team of career specialists regarding the latest job trends, viewing videos and websites designed to help participants plan their next career move, deliver access to dynamic companies and job opportunities – including hearing directly from business leaders, learn how to make skills and accomplishments ‘real’ to an employer an polish networking and interview skills. The workshop takes participants through the 5 Steps of Research - Prepare - Document - Find - Land.



5 Steps to Your Next Job has been migrated to an online, self-directed program. Workforce Development compliments it with an ongoing series of core Zoom workshops that include elements of 5 Steps.

### XXIV. Revive Lake County

Workforce Development has developed and executed the Revive Lake County (Revive) - an innovative solution to provide formerly incarcerated individuals with the essential skills needed in today’s economy to ensure successful re-entry into the workforce. Revive has demonstrated success in benefiting individuals, businesses, and society at large and will be delivered in this program. Revive is a five-week program that encompasses workforce development elements, financial management, and building a network of resources to address the needs of the participant. The program includes a curriculum organized in five distinct modules. Each module is designed to instill foundational workplace values and behaviors that are critical to obtaining and keeping a job, including: career awareness, employability skills, communication pointers, and transferable skills. The program concludes with a capstone presentation prepared by each participant and presented at to partners, participant supporters, and local business leaders. The participants summarize new skills, individual goals, and a plan for success.

Revive Lake County was converted into a virtual model delivered via Zoom meetings with the participants during the pandemic. Given the virtual components that have been added, the option now exists for a hybrid program delivery model to be used in future offerings when Revive cohorts are reestablished. Some program changes and enhancements include:

- Implementing a virtual program delivery model with modified curriculum.
- Reducing the number of participants in a cohort to support CDC guidelines.
- Leveraging community groups that are subject matter experts within this space to conduct elements of Revive.

## XXV. ConstructionWorks

ConstructionWorks Powered by the Illinois Tollway is a project developed in partnership with the Chicago Cook Partnership and the Illinois Tollway; and Workforce Development is a subcontractor delivering the project in Lake County. ConstructionWorks connects people of color, women, and other groups of historically under-represented workers to careers in the skilled trades. Accessible in locations throughout the Northeast Economic Development Region, ConstructionWorks programming provides participants with support services including access to a barrier reduction fund and training to prepare for employment and apprenticeship application processes. This program provides access to lucrative career pathways for WIOA participants who are interested in the skilled trades.

Through the Job Center website, ConstructionWorks continues to be supported and Workforce Development continues to collaborate with apprenticeship programs, employers with construction employment opportunities, along with unions and non-union entities to connect with applicants and talent.

## XXVI. SNAP To Success

Workforce Development has partnered with National Able Network and the Illinois Department of Human Services to make available the SNAP to Success program through the Job Center. The SNAP to assists SNAP participants find employment, advance in their careers, and achieve self-sufficiency. National Able Network is the contractor to IDHS and works with the Job Center to recruit SNAP recipients into the employment and training program, provide occupational training in IT leading to several industry credentials and job search and job search training (e.g., job clubs, resume workshops), work placements (on-the-job training, apprenticeships), job retention services and referral to additional education – basic education, ESL, vocational education when assessed as appropriate. WD will continue to be a collaborative partner in the Job Center, working with National Able and DHS to deliver the program, assist participants to transition to their next job and where appropriate co-enroll in WIOA funded activities.

Snap to Success has been moved to a virtual program and continues to serve SNAP participants. The Job Center continues to market the program and refer customers to the online orientations

## XXVII. Work Earn & Learn

Workforce Development developed the Work, Earn, & Learn program to provide an opportunity to Lake County residents who are interested in a career pathway. Participants enroll in a career pathway program developed in cooperation with an industry partner. The industry partner provides a paid work-experience for the participant while delivering training and classroom training, leading to an industry credential with skills training reinforced from industry professionals.

<u>Work</u>	<u>Earn</u>	<u>Learn</u>
Lake County Employer serves as industry worksite  Participant employed full-time as an intern in a work experience	Employer provides training participant earns an industry recognized credential  Participant earns a wage for work experience	Industry professionals deliver training through competency-based modules  Participants gain skills through worksite rotations

Workforce Development partnered with the Lake County Division of Transportation to deliver the WEL program. Participants were enrolled in a paid work-experience at the Division of Transportation where they received training from industry professionals leading to industry recognized credentials including: Flagger, OSHA, Forklift, CDL, CPR, and First Aid. Throughout the work-experience participants rotated through multiple worksites: road maintenance; the parts room; the sign shop. Upon completion of the program, participants transitioned into full-time employment with employers hiring for the newly trained skills; including a seasonal job at the Division of Transportation. Workforce Development developed the WEL program as a program model that can be easily replicated with other industries and employers as well as additional cohorts at the same employment site.

The Work Earn and Learn program continues to be offered as a cohort on-demand to meet employers' needs. The pandemic effected the delivery of this program and adaptations have been made to pull elements of the WEL program into the WIOA Work Experience/paid internship program model. Lake County responded with the following solutions as a response to the pandemic:

- Continue the Work Experience model that has elements of WEL embedded within it.
- Conduct virtual meetings within the 3rd quarter with employers and worksites to discuss how the WEL Program can work within a virtual setting or within a cohort model
- Market the program throughout Rapid Response events/presentations, which would allow laid-off workers to continue to earn a valuable wage while learning from industry experts.

In addition, the Work Earn and Learn program is illustrated/supported through the US Department of Defense Skills Bridge program for Lake County government.

## **XXVIII. Workforce Essential Skills Training**

Workforce Development has developed and implemented the Workforce Essential Skills Training (WEST) program geared towards young adults ages 18-24. The WEST program delivers career readiness and soft skills training in a five-day structured program that runs in cohorts throughout the year. WEST is delivered at the Job Center and at partnering youth serving agencies in Lake County.



“Bring Your ‘A’ Game” is the foundation for the WEST program which also encompasses additional work-readiness components to prepare participants for internship, work-experience, and employment opportunities. The WEST program includes a career exploration component comprised of labor market information, career pathway resources, industry data tools, career interest assessments, & employer interaction. The program engages employers to meet and talk with the participants as the participants practice their job search and networking skills. Workforce Development has made it a requirement that all young adults interested in pursuing post-secondary education and training through an approved Individual Training Account and/or work-based training, must complete the WEST program as a pre-requisite.

This requirement has proven to be beneficial in preparing, selecting, enrolling, and completing training. Based on the success of the WEST program model, the Workforce Board has included WEST program components into the WIOA Youth Request for Proposal program design.

The pandemic has affected onsite administration of the WEST program due to the in-person aspects and nature of cohort participation. As a response to the pandemic Workforce Development has adapted the delivery of WEST by delivering portions of the WEST curriculum and program elements virtually and in partnership with WIOA contractors in the community. The “Bring Your ‘A’ Game” curriculum package, a major aspect of WEST, is now delivered virtually as “Bring Your ‘A’ Game Anywhere”.

## **XXIX. Workforce Equity Initiative Grant**

College of Lake County has received a grant from the Illinois Community College Board – Workforce Equity Initiative Grant. The purpose of this grant is to create, support, or expand short-term workforce (credit and/or noncredit) training opportunities in high-need communities focused on specific sectors with identified workforce gaps. The grant will serve residents throughout Lake County, with special emphasis on North Chicago, Round Lake, Waukegan, and Zion. Grant funds will cover all tuition and fees, course materials, textbooks, industry exam fees, and a scholarship to assist with living expenses such as childcare, housing, and transportation. The funding allows eligible students to earn a certificate in one of nine programs:

- Administrative management technology
- Auto collision repair
- Forklift operator
- Heating and air conditioning (HVAC) engineering technology
- Truck driving
- Certified nursing assistant
- Dental assistant
- Healthcare office assistant
- Phlebotomy

The overall goal is to accelerate the time for the targeted population to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training programs that lead to employment in high skilled, high wage, and in-demand occupations. Workforce Development and the Job Center have partnered with College of Lake County on this exciting initiative to assist with employment and connection to employers/businesses after completion of the credential aligned with regional workforce gaps provides a full-time job paying at least 30% above the regional living wage or is on a pathway to a family sustaining wage (See: [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)).

Workforce Development will provide career services to students; oversee job readiness tasks in preparation for an employment search and job placement; support Grant students in employment preparation by offering related curriculum such as 5 Steps to Your Job and The West Program; connect students to employer partners with full time employment opportunities in their related programs; and introduce CLC and employer partners to work-based learning opportunities and to support job placement and retention.

The Workforce Equity Initiative Grant is still active, and Workforce Development works with the College of Lake County to engage students in career and employment information on industry data, skills development, and additional training opportunities. Students are also referred to Workforce Development for work experience and employment opportunities. The pandemic has slowed down engagement with students and referrals, but there continues to be active communication amongst partners. Workforce Development and the College of Lake County are working towards a more effective virtual student engagement and program service model. Due to the number of students choosing not to pursue the program due to the pandemic, the grant has been extended through March 2022.

### **XXX. Wildly Important Event**

The Illinois Department of Human Services hosts a Wildly Important Event quarterly at the Job Center. In partnership with Workforce Development and Catholic Charities, IDHS invites TANF recipients to participate in a workshop focused job search tips, work-place essential skills training, and financial literacy. IDHS provides customized assistance on resume writing and job search tips; Job Center partners deliver an information session on all the services available through the Job Center; Workforce Development delivers a Positivity Works session (curriculum based on Bring Your 'A' Game) and Catholic Charities provide a budgeting workshop. The collaboration has proven to be beneficial to the customers attending and is repeated quarterly with an ongoing list of up to 50 TANF customers invited by IDHS.

The pandemic effected the delivery of this event with in-person group sessions having been halted. The Job Center and DHS will revisit this event and a delivery structure in the future.

### **XXXI. Ready to Work – Legal Services**

Prairie State Legal Services is an organization that offers free legal services for low income persons and those age 60 and over who have serious civil legal problems and need legal help to solve them. Prairie State received a grant to work with the Job Center and be on-site in the Job Center several times a month to help individuals that have legal barriers to employment. Prairie State is available to work with walk-ins and referrals from partner organization and services are free of charge. Prairie State has addressed certain drivers' license suspensions so job seekers can legally drive to a job; assisted with applying for healthcare waivers, expunging improper DCFS indications, reinstating professional licenses, addressing housing instability, resolving issues of domestic violence, modifying parenting time to address work hours, overcoming certain debt issues, and more. In addition to providing on-site intakes, Prairie State is also available to present legal education presentations for Job Center partner staff and/or clients - presentations that cover topics such as criminal records relief, domestic violence, common issues for older adults.

Ready to Work is available and delivered virtually by Prairie State and in collaboration with Job Center and community partners.

### **XXXII. Williams Consent Decree Drop-In Centers**

The Williams Consent Decree enables qualifying individuals with mental illness to be moved from state-funded facilities into communities where they can live independently with professional support. The overall goal of the program is to move consumers from state-funded facilities into permanent supportive housing where they will have independence and

support. To meet this goal, consumers receive transition coordination, support to continue their education or to get a job, as well as coaching from peers who have lived through similar experiences. The Lake County Health Department has two consumer run drop-in centers in Waukegan and Zion. The centers are designed to provide a nonclinical environment for individuals to socialize, receive support from their peers and access computers. The supervised building spaces include a computer room and a seating area with a large screen television. Workforce Development delivers career services on-site to the consumers. Career services focus on resume writing, interviewing skills, workplace skills and information on local employers hiring as well as assisting in developing component of an employment and education plan when appropriate.

The pandemic effected the delivery of onsite services at these Centers. Workforce Development provides virtual services, email and phone communication to individual referrals received.

### **XXXIII. DOL YouthBuild Programs**

YouthBuild programs are authorized under DOL's Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act serving low income and underserved young people. YouthBuild programs provide secondary education completion, career pathways training, and transitional services to college, job placement, and ongoing follow-up for success.

YouthBuild Lake County serves underserved young adults in North Chicago offering education, GED attainment and high school diploma completion, counseling, leadership development, career pathway opportunities in Construction, Healthcare, Transportation Distribution and Logistics and Utilities. YouthBuild Lake County is a partner in the Job Center of Lake County and part of the youth serving network.

Youth Conservation Corp serves underserved young adults who have dropped out of high school and have additional challenges such as low-income, homelessness, disability. YouthBuild is the core program providing education and GED completion along with construction training and career and life skills training. In addition, YCC has a summer program providing conservation work experience and environmental education to high school and college students interested in preserving the Lake County's wetlands, prairies, and woodlands. This program is a public/private partnership between YCC and the Lake County Forest Preserve.

DOL YouthBuild Programs operate in their facilities adhering to their pandemic safety protocols. Partnership engagement with the Job Center continues and Workforce Development accepts individual customer referrals.

### **XXXIV. Lake County Workforce Development System – Education and Training Programs**

The Workforce Board partners with the College of Lake County, the high schools in Lake County and higher education institutions to support, market, fund, and assist in scaling up the following models and methods.

- Integrated Education and Training Models
- Dual Credit Programs
- Prior Learning Assessments
- Targeted Marketing Strategies
- Career Pathways
- Additional activities leading to post-secondary credentials

### **XXXV. College of Lake County Integrated Education and Training models**

The Integrated Career & Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), is the implementation of the IET (Integrated Education and Training) model in Illinois. ICAPS provides an integrated pathway in Career and Technical Education (CTE) for college credit and program certificate opportunities for Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) students that lack basic skills. The model provides career pathway/employment opportunities for students while enabling their transition into additional postsecondary certificate/degree programs.

The College of Lake County offers the Step-Up program for adult education students to prepare them for college and a career. It also helps students to have access to college, succeed in college, and find a job in their field of study. ABE students begin in the Bridge to Careers program to language, math, and computer skills with a focus on a career field. Current programs include: Healthcare, Manufacturing, Early Childhood Education, Administrative Management and

Technology, and Computer Information Technology.

After the Bridge program students can enroll in the Step Up to the Integrated Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) program, ICAPS are certificate program in career and technical education fields. Current programs include: Certified Nurse Assisting, Healthcare Office Assistance, Phlebotomy Technician, Automotive Technology, HVAC/Refrigeration Engineering Technology, Administrative Management and Technology, and Computer Information Technology.

College of Lake County works with the Workforce Board and Workforce Development to review the same labor market data sets, employer hiring data, and local wage data to develop ICAPS programs aligned with the current workforce needs. College of Lake County works with the Workforce Ecosystem to identify employers that would interview and hire individuals successfully completing the ICAPS program. College of Lake County presents this information to the Workforce Board for the Board's endorsement of the proposed ICAPS program – as a program that is part of an overall career pathway in key industry sectors and leading to in-demand occupations.

Workforce Development and College of Lake County Adult Basic Education worked together to address a local employer's talent need. A local human service provider was challenged with finding personal care aid workers. Workforce Development, College of Lake County and ABE collaborated to develop a Personal Care Aide short-term training program. An ICAPS program was approved, offered through the College of Lake County Workforce and Professional Development Institute and Adult Basic Ed instructor was in the classroom. WIOA eligible students were recruited for the training and received grant funding through an Individual Training Account (ITS) to pay for tuition. Upon successful training completion, a paid work-experience was made available with the employer. The collaboration between the partners and employers is a promising practice that can be replicated with additional high demand occupations to address the needs of employers.

#### **XXXVI. College of Lake County Integrated Education and Training models**

College of Lake County Integrated Education and Training is still be offered and have been part of integration meetings. Service delivery and the curriculum is now being offered virtually due to the pandemic.

#### **XXXVII. College of Lake County Dual Credit Programs**

The College of Lake County Dual Credit program allows high school students to enroll in college-level courses and earn college credit at no cost. Students take classes either at their own high school or at the Lake County High Schools Technology Campus in Grayslake. High school students enrolled in dual credit courses are officially registered at CLC. High school students benefit from enrolling in Dual Credit courses by shortening the amount of time required to complete a college degree by developing a college transcript while in high school – saving both time and money. All dual credit courses are the same as the classes offered by CLC; following the same syllabus and are taught by qualified instructors who are approved by CLC. In addition, dual credit students are held to the same standards of achievement as students on campus.

Career and Technical Education certificate and degree programs, such as graphic arts technology, nurse assisting, welding, automotive and many more. The partners work together to make connections for the students to continue with additional education, connection to employers, development of internships aligned with education and career interests and ongoing professional development and awareness between CTE, CLC, and workforce development professionals. Workforce Development has a network of programs and services to work directly with high school students that have completed dual credit career and technical education certificate programs if they need assistance and supports to transition into post-secondary education and/or employment.

Career Expos take place annually and are conducted in partnership with the Lake County High Schools Tech Campus and Workforce Development. These career expos have been conducted in-person at the Tech Campus and were able to be held virtually during the pandemic. Workforce Development updated the Lake County Careers website to accommodate the virtual expo with the following enhancements:

- Created a landing page and virtual registration tools.
- Link Tech Campus information through the website
- Push information out to the Tech Campus
- Through data share agreements, connect registrant data with local employers and Workforce Development

services.

**XXXVIII. Higher Education Prior Learning Assessments**

Prior Learning Assessment is a term used to describe learning gained outside a traditional academic environment and is the evaluation and assessment of an individual's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. Prior Learning credit can be awarded for college-level learning students have already acquired from work, training, and life experiences. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process through which formal, non-formal and informal learning are measured, mediated for recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system or workplace. The Workforce Board is interested in having this conversation with the College of Lake County and the Lake County University Center to identify the opportunities to build processes around prior learning assessment. In particular, the Workforce Board is interested in bringing greater awareness of the process into the job center and across partners and agencies serving veterans, dislocated workers, and career changers. Council for Adult Experiential Learning is nationally recognized for the work they have done and published regarding prior learning assessments; the Workforce Board is interested in working with CAEL to establish and advance goals around prior learning with the workforce development system.

**XXXIX. Workforce Development System Targeted Marketing Strategies**

The Workforce Board along with partners of the Job Center and workforce development system have identified promising practices around targeted marketing strategies for both customer bases - the individual and the employer - to bring greater awareness of high wage/high demand occupations in key industry sectors:

- Workforce Development works with partners to source resumes to employers of potential candidates. When sourcing resumes it goes beyond previous work experience to a combination of transferable skills, interest inventory completed by the potential candidate as well as the candidate's interest in exploring new careers and industries.
- Workforce Development has a well-established work-experience program for WIOA eligible participants. Work-experience programs and trainings help participants bridge the gap in skills and allows the participant an opportunity to learn skills in new occupations and industries.
- 5 Steps to Your Next Job is a workshop delivered by the Job Center partners. The workshop provides job seekers of all skill levels, at any point a time in their career, useful information on how they can look beyond their resume and experience when seeking their next job and/or career. The tools focus on RESEARCH - PREPARE - DOCUMENT - FIND - LAND. This workshop is delivered monthly and throughout the county.
- Workforce Development has delivered a series of presentations to high school students about jobs, careers, and industry sectors in Lake County. An added value has been when parents attend these sessions and get a chance to review the labor market information around careers, wages, jobs, and employers. Workforce Development has set aside time to work with the parents to learn about additional opportunities and ways to connect with employers hiring in high wage jobs.
- In 2016 the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago received funding from DCEO and hired a consultant (EDSI, Inc.) to develop industry guides and manuals, industry and occupational focused PowerPoint templates, industry sector information sheets, and demand occupation information sheets. The products are based on local labor market data for the following industries: Healthcare, Information Technology (industry-occupation hybrid), Manufacturing, Transportation/Logistics (including Wholesale Trade). The guides and manuals incorporate career pathway materials and information to help individuals, workforce career counseling staff, other staff, and business customers in developing pathway-focused training and worker preparation activities. The Job Center and Workforce Development use the tools as part of workshops, presentations, and as a resource in the Job Center.
- Workforce Development has assisted employers in identifying innovative ways to train and advance current employees into high demand/high wage occupations. Employers have worked with Workforce Development to access incumbent worker training funds and developed training plans with underemployed workers. Employers have accessed apprenticeship models to have employees gain additional skills and prepare to advance along a career pathway.
- Senior Community Employment Program (SCEP) is a partner in the Job Center and provides a work-based training program for low-income persons 55 or older who are unemployed and have limited employment prospects. This work-based training program provides the mature worker an opportunity to gain skills in different work settings and helps to expand their hiring potential across occupations and industries. The Job Center has been a worksite for



individuals enrolled in this program – helping with this population making a connection to the services of Job Center.

Workforce Development System Targeted Marketing Strategies continue to be intensified to community, employers, and job seekers - engagement and marketing occurs daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. The pandemic has caused Workforce Development to realign marketing and outreach strategies and leverage all partners in the strategies. Prior to pandemic, strategies were “siloe” in nature and the pandemic forced new approaches and solutions:

- Invested in Canva Pro to assist with virtual branding and creation of professional marketing materials.
- Enhanced outreach and recruitment plan to ensure its targeted to certain demographic groups.
- Capture more analytics and business intelligence to make targeted outreach decisions.
- Converted the Job Center’s LinkedIn profile to a company profile to retrieve more analytics for targeted marketing efforts.
- Collaboration amongst partners for dual marketing strategies.
- Implemented Hootsuite tool, which supports scheduling posts onto social media platforms.
- Started conducting Industry Snapshots to assist with marketing employment opportunities or training programs along with industry information.

## **XL. Career Pathways**

The Workforce Board has a strategic focus on developing career pathways with key partners. The Workforce Board has redirected the focus from identifying career pathways as a linear education and training program such as moving from a CNA to an RN to focusing on the building of career pathway modules that are flexible in nature and customizable for the individual – job seeker – student – youth and employer.

The Workforce Board recognizes there are a diverse set of providers and education partners that have created career pathway components and will be working with these partners to build career pathway models from K-12, post-secondary education, licensing, and credentialing through the transition to training on the job and to the next job. Pathway models will be built and executed that:

- Align with industry sector high demand occupations.
- Hiring needs of employers – both near and long term.
- The individual and where they are with age – education – training – employment – barriers.
- Address awareness, education and training needs, skills development.
- Identify on- & off-ramps throughout the pathway.
- Have mechanisms to identify barriers and solutions for each individual.
- Require partners to collaborate to assist individuals to transition from one module to the next.

Below are a few examples of career pathway models that include promising practices to be looked at for replication:

- Workforce Development partnered with Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. Illinois Chapter (ABC) and the Waukegan Housing Authority to develop and implement Level 1 construction certification training class taught at Waukegan Housing Authority and a community-based organization in Lake County. ABC delivered a 12-week course leading to a National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) credential. that prepares students for a career in carpentry National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). This partnership was initiated through a DCEO Talent Pipeline grant – paying for participants tuition and personal protective equipment and a basic set of tools. Upon successful completion of the training program, ABCIL will work to connect participants to employers that have job placement opportunities.
- The Workforce Ecosystem has developed the Lake County Careers website that has initiated the conversation and development of a number of career pathways in four core industry sectors – Healthcare, Manufacturing, TDL and IT. Information is also available on Illinois WorkNet.
- ConstructionWorks is another example of the Workforce Board collaborating with partners to develop and deliver a career pathway in a key industry sector. ConstructionWorks delivers to career pathway modules from awareness, industry partners, training programs to apprenticeship programs in the construction and trades industry.
- SHINE Pharmacy Technician Program is a WIOA Youth funded program working with opportunity youth ages 18- 24 through a partnership between Workforce Development, Waukegan High School, College of Lake County, and

Walgreens. Occupational training is provided by College of Lake County in Pharmacy Technician coursework, leadership development and internships in the Pharmaceutical Industry as a Pharmacy Technician or in pursuit in other occupations/career paths in Health Sciences pathway.

- Walgreens Corp. has provided work experience at 18 Lake County Pharmacies, hosting interns for 160 hours of a paid work experience. The program is expanding to Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital – providing workplace tours and Pharmacy Staff as guest speakers and a resource to the students during their occupational training at CLC. Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital is working to set up internships within the Pharmacy Department.
- Youth Conservation Corps HVAC Program is a WIOA Youth funded program working with opportunity youth ages 18-24. The program is a partnership between Workforce Development, Youth Conservation Corps, College of Lake County, and area employers. Students are enrolled in an occupational training program in HVAC/R Installation at CLC (18 credits over a 16-week period), selected to learn in-demand occupational skills, prepare for their next step by developing job skills, and ultimately moving into well-paid jobs. Upon successful completion of the CLC training, students are placed in a 210-hour paid internship with a local business. At this point the student will determine if they are interested in employment in the field of HVAC or interested in further education and training in this career pathway.
- The Lake County Area Vocational System allows thousands of students from middle school through high school explore career options through local high school Career and Technical Education classes and through the Tech Campus. The Tech Campus put together a Career Guide that gives stakeholders an overview to explore and become familiar with the CTE opportunities at Tech Campus. The magazine is a great conversation starter with students, counselors, and partners.

Workforce Development due to the pandemic has starting to think of career pathways as an opportunity to address structural issues by directly working with employers to remove barriers, Improving educational outcomes for people of color will not be enough to eliminate racial attainment gaps, but intentional career pathways centered on equity can begin the work to advance racial equity.

#### **XLI. Demonstrated Co-Enrollment Successes**

The Workforce Board encourages co-enrollment by workforce system partners. Collaboration between partners has been used successfully to assist customers in obtaining needed career skills and transition to employment. The Workforce Board partners with training providers on additional workforce grant opportunities in order to expand the training offerings to key segments of the population in Lake County. The Workforce Board has partnered with National Able Network on a DCEO Talent Pipeline Grant and a Department of Human Services SNAP to Success Grant; partnered with YouthBuild Lake County on a DCEO Youth Career Pathway Grant; partnered with Associated Builders and Contractors on a DCEO Talent Pipeline Grant; and partnered with College of Lake County to implement Transform Lake County, funded by the Illinois Community College Board.

Some of the past successes demonstrate the collaborative and innovative ways the Workforce Board and partners have delivered high performing programs with good results: partnered with College of Lake County to provide training opportunities to TANF recipients in health care occupations as well as long-term unemployed in manufacturing. Co-enrollment opportunity continues to be proven successful, that were initiated through the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) where co-enrollment between Workforce Development, Department of Rehabilitation, College of Lake County, and community-based agencies worked together to integrate resources to assist individuals to transition through training into employment. Workforce Development works with College of Lake County Adult Education and collectively the two partners identify Adult Education students ready for employment and work together to provide job readiness and connections to employment opportunities.

#### **XLII. Activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential**

The Workforce Board strongly promotes pursuit of a post-secondary credential by all workforce system participants. The Workforce Board recognizes the value of training providers, educators, and apprenticeship programs as partners in the workforce system. The Workforce Board continues to have a strong collaborative relationship with College of Lake County and works with CLC to expand its offerings in short-term career programs. The Workforce Board has collaborated with

training providers throughout the region to identify high performing programs that meet the talent needs of local employers and regional industries. In 2019, the Workforce Board became a partner on the ConstructionWorks project with the Chicago Cook Partnership in order to strengthen the relationship with local and regional labor and union apprenticeship programs. In addition, the College of Lake County is preparing to launch its apprenticeship programs in 2020. Working with CLC and other public and private educational institutions within Lake County, the Workforce Board encourages the attainment of a certificate or credential. Stackable credentials are discussed with program participants and with local employers, with particular emphasis on those areas identified within high demand industries within Lake County.

#### **XLIII. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)**

The Workforce Board establishes the WIOA grant budget annually and has budgeted the majority of the training budget to be used for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). ITAs are authorized by Workforce Development to WIOA eligible participants assessed as needing occupational training to gain a set of skills and industry credential needed by local employers and regional industry. ITAs are written for short-term occupational training programs that are in a high demand occupation – the training program must be certified on the Illinois Eligible Training Provider List. Eligible participants have access to over 60 high demand occupations across the key industry sectors in Lake County. All training will lead to a certificate of completion and/or an industry credential.

During the past two grant cycles of July 2017-June 2018 and July 2018 to June 2019, Workforce Development has authorized 258 ITAs for WIOA eligible adult participants; 288 ITAs for WIOA eligible dislocated workers; 40 ITAs for WIOA eligible youth; 372 for TAA eligible dislocated workers. Total grant funds expensed for occupational training was more than 3.75 million; or more than \$1.8 annually. The Workforce Board has a high priority occupation list for ITAs. The list is associated with the industry sectors on which the Workforce Board has chosen to focus. The participants are only able to access training on the Workforce Board's certified training provider program list however, a customer may make an appeal to the Workforce Development Director to approve admission to an occupation not on the list on a case-by-case basis.

Workforce Development continues to assess eligible customers for occupational training and receiving an ITA. In response to the pandemic, the following business practices and policy changes have been implemented:

- Invested in DocuSign to administer the ITA's to clients.
- Updated WDB Policy to create ITA Exemptions on ITA amounts and semester-based training programs.
- Updated WDB Policy to remove the time period limit for training services to be received through WIOA.

#### **XLIV.**

##### **XLV. Eligible Training Provider List & Programs**

Workforce Development engages with training providers, educators, and community-based training programs on multiple levels to learn about the training and programs, recruit potential students, share labor market information, and connect with employers. Workforce Development hosts regular meetings with training providers certified through the Illinois Eligible Training Provider list to better inform Job Center partners and career specialists on programs and offerings.

Workforce Development visits with and hosts meetings for training providers to present about their programs, employer connections, and successful outcomes. In addition, Workforce Development engages with training providers when working on rapid response events and industry sector initiatives. Training providers are encouraged to attend resource and job fairs and make efforts to reserve space in the Job Center to share information with customers.

The Workforce Board engaged with training providers, educators, and community-based training programs on multiple levels to learn how they responded to the pandemic and changes to their training and education programs, recruit of potential students, using labor market information, and connecting with employers. At the onset of the pandemic a survey was sent to all providers pertaining to their status, plans and procedures. Many of the providers moved courses to an online platform and have limited onsite training at most providers. With the pandemic provider onsite meetings have stopped and they also have gone virtual. As a response to the pandemic the following solutions are in place:

- Workforce Development has conducted virtual training provider engagements to go over training provider programs and requirements.
- Workforce Development has Conducted virtual training provider snapshots to cover their program offerings along with industries that align with their programs.
- In-Demand Occupation list has been updated to align with current industry environment.

- Training providers are active with virtual rapid response events.
- Training provider resources are posted on the Virtual Information Session landing page.

#### **XLVI. Apprenticeship**

College of Lake County (CLC) will be launching new apprenticeship opportunities in the fall 2020 for students seeking career-related work experience and area employers looking for qualified candidates. CLC plans to have 60 apprentices in manufacturing, healthcare, automotive technology, horticulture, information technology, and business. The apprenticeship program was created as a direct response to requests from area employers. As baby boomers continue to retire, employers benefit by grooming skilled workers and sharing the knowledge base with the next generation. Each apprentice in the program is assigned a mentor, who learns on the job from a senior employee. CLC provides the technology and theory while the employer provides the hands-on, practical application.

DOL Registered Apprenticeship training programs are eligible training program under WIOA to be funded through an Individual Training Account (ITA). The Workforce Board will work with CLC to manage the process of having the DOL Registered Apprenticeship programs approved as part of the Illinois Eligible Training Provider List when appropriate. Workforce Development will make available to potential participants/students' information on the apprenticeship programs and where appropriate and eligible enroll in additional WIOA grant funded services.

#### **D. Coordination Strategies with State, Regional and Local Partners**

The Workforce Development Board is the oversight and policy body for the WIOA Title I grant and funded programs in Lake County – Local Workforce Area 1. The Workforce Board is committed to coordinate strategies and promising practices across the local and regional area as well as engage in state-wide initiatives. The Workforce Board has member representation on the Illinois Workforce Investment Board as well as on the National Association of Workforce Boards. In addition, The Director of Workforce Development as well as the Workforce Board Coordinator are active members of both the regional Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago and the Illinois Workforce Partnership. The Workforce Board takes an active role in coordinating and aligning strategies with partners of the Job Center and workforce development system and has noted that services are enhanced, and duplication of activities are being addressed.

The following sections provide summaries on core partner services that have a focus on integration and coordination:

- WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Employment and Training Activities
- WIOA Title II, Adult Basic Education and Literacy Activities
- WIOA Title III, Wagner-Peyser Act
- WIOA Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Secondary and Post-Secondary Education Partners and Programs
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act
- Workforce Board Supportive Service Policy and Coordination

#### **XLVII. Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title 1**

The work of the Workforce Board is driven by a strategic plan and grants are administered and programs are implemented by the Lake County Workforce Development Department. Workforce Development is also the on-site One-Stop Operator for the One-Stop Operator partner consortium.

Workforce Development Department is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant administrator and service provider and serves WIOA eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Workforce Development provides career planning and coaching, authorizes training vouchers through Individual Training Accounts (ITA), develops career pathways, connects job seekers to employers, and works with employers to up-skill employees. Workforce Development has demonstrated success and innovation in the delivery, management, and oversight of workforce development services and programs to diverse populations, including success in business and industry engagement as led by the Workforce Ecosystem, the partnership between Workforce Development, College of Lake County, and Lake County Partners.

Workforce Development has developed a comprehensive, performance driven customer flow to best serve adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Key components and program elements as defined in WIOA and implemented by Workforce Development in the Job Center and throughout the workforce system include:

- Individual customer outreach, intake, and orientation activities
- WIOA Title IB eligibility determination
- Individual assessment of skills, barriers, and supportive services needs
- Development of individual employment plans
- Program coordination and referrals through an integrated resource team and partner networks
- Access to labor market information
- Access to training provider performance and cost information
- Authorization of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)
- Connection to employers and industry
- Connection to hiring opportunities
- Development of work-based learning opportunities
- Job search assistance
- Follow-up and retention activities
- Incumbent worker training.

## **XLVIII. Workforce Partners of Metro Chicago**

The Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago (WPMC) is a consortium comprised of the Directors of the Workforce Development Boards and the Title I providers in the Northeast Economic Development Region – representing the seven local workforce areas and ten counties of Lake, McHenry, DeKalb, Kendall, Kane, DuPage, Cook, Will, Kankakee, and Grundy. WPMC formed a formal partnership more than 15 years ago and since then has been working together for the purpose of conducting WIOA planning and implementation including: integrating regional business services, developing workforce sector strategies, and coordinating activities with WIOA core partners, economic development entities, community colleges/training providers, and other stakeholders. WPMC recognize that the economic vitality of each local area and county is impacted by cross-geographic issues and that geographic boundaries are often meaningless to businesses and residents. WPMC also realize the importance of collaboration to produce a greater impact across the Region. WPMC focuses on regional initiatives aimed at supporting business and sustaining the region's economic vitality.

## **XLIX. Integrated regional business services team**

The WPMC have initiated a Regional Integrated Business Services Team (BST) for NEEDR made up of the individual business service teams from each of the seven local workforce areas, including all partners' business facing staff. The goal of the Regional Integrated Business Services Team is to coordinate business services across the Region; including addressing needs of regional industry, integrating core partner agencies (and other partners in the future), identifying and sharing best practices, discussing challenges and identifying solutions, and engaging in professional development activities. Key accomplishments include hosting regional hiring events, Business U, sharing promising practices, joint business meetings, and coordinating responses to major employers with large and critical needs. As businesses and employers relocate to the region and expand across the Region, the BST has responded through customized hiring and talent connection events.

### **L. Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II**

The College of Lake County and its APC 532 partners—Mundelein High School and Highland Park High School—provide adult education and literacy activities to Lake County's population who lack basic skills in reading, writing, math, and those who need English as a Second Language instruction. Under Title II of the 2014 Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, Adult Education providers must integrate and coordinate with Workforce Employment Services (Title III), Workforce Development (Title I), and Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) activities. This can be accomplished primarily through the Job Center of Lake County, functioning as the One Stop Center per WIOA, which will be staffed on-site and off-site by the four core partners.

The College of Lake County and its APC partners provide on-site and/or off-site personnel to coordinate with services and Job Center partners. College of Lake County ABE staff are co-located at the Job Center to provide referrals to adult education and career/technical education providers, job search assistance and workshops, Spanish translation, and referrals to other Job Center partners. Also, CLC's Adult Education program located in the same building as the Job Center will make referrals to the Job Center for any of its students needing services. In Grayslake, CLC's Adult Education program will coordinate with the Job Center of Lake County and CLC's Career and Job Placement Center. Mundelein HS and Highland Park HS will provide direct linkage to the Job Center and will work with Workforce Development to bring services and workshops into their classrooms.

Adult education services are provided at the Job Center of Lake County, College of Lake County's campuses at Grayslake, Waukegan, Vernon Hills, and its community sites; Highland Park High School and its community sites; and Mundelein High School and its community sites.

The Workforce Board membership contains a representative of the Lake County Area Planning Council (APC). The Area Planning Council represents three (3) organizations: College of Lake County, Mundelein High School and Highland Park High School. The APC's representative on the Workforce Board is the Dean of the College of Lake County's adult education program. All three organizations of the APC are members of the Workforce Board's Operations Committee and partners in the Job Center MOU. In addition, the Director of Lake County Workforce Development is a member of the APC Board.

The APC Title II Plan has been endorsed by the Workforce Board Operations Committee- noting that the plan aligns with the WIOA Local Workforce Plan. In addition, as a member of the APC Board, the Director of Lake County Workforce Development assists with the writing of the APC Plan to ensure the most up to date information aligns in both plans.

## **LI. TABE Test**

Workforce Development has entered into an agreement with the College of Lake County Adult Education and ESL Division for TABE testing services. CLC ACEDV agrees to provide TABE testing services to Workforce Development referrals. CLC has designated testing dates at both the Grayslake and Lake Shore campuses for Workforce Development referrals. Workforce Development and College of Lake County have entered into a data sharing agreement as well, authorizing the parties to share personally identifying information about clients for the purpose of providing intake and TABE 11/12 testing.

Workforce Development makes a referral for testing through the TABE testing portal – both parties have access to the customer record and test scores. This partnership has proven to be both an effective use of agency and customer time and efficient in assessing customers within a testing environment. Customers needing services from CLC ABE based on test scores have that immediate referral and connection.

Basic skills testing and administration has gone through multiple changes due to the onset of COVID-19. Workforce Development transitioned to using the Basic Skills Screening Tool with participants from April 2020 to June 30, 2021, then moved to remote TABE Testing administered by CLC and shifted to requiring participants to be onsite to have the TABE Test proctored by Workforce Development. Workforce Development continues to administer the TABE Test onsite and will work thorough opportunities to move to remote testing as well as working with CLC. Click or tap to enter a date. Although no longer an acceptable basic skills assessment for participant eligibility purposes, WDD did find the use of the Basic Skills Screening Tool to be the most efficient with participants as well as an effective measurement to enroll in occupational training and initial data shows participants were successful in completing training, gaining new skills and obtaining employment.

## **LII. Wagner-Peyser Act under WIOA Title III**

Title III Wagner Peyser Act services are provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). Two (2) staff members from IDES are located permanently at the Job Center and provide Wagner-Peyser assistance to individuals. Duplication of services has been greatly reduced by the location of these IDES staff members at the Job Center. Wagner Peyser staff members also schedule e-blasts to those receiving unemployment insurance regarding pertinent Job Center events and resources.

To ensure that local coordination of Wagner-Peyser programs and services is further enhanced and that duplication of services are minimized to the greatest extent possible, an IDES manager serves on the Workforce Board and chairs the Workforce Board's Operation Committee. In addition, IDES is a part of the partner consortium serving as the One-Stop Operator for the Job Center.

Wagner-Peyser IDES staff returned to the Job Center in late 2021.

## **LIII. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program**

The Illinois Dept. of Employment Security (IDES) first transitioned to the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) initiative in 2016. With that transition, those UI claimants that were most likely to exhaust benefits were targeted and required to receive assistance with their reemployment efforts.

RESEA workshops are held monthly at the Job Center by the IDES Wagner-Peyser team co-located at the Job Center. The workshop covers information and tips the job seekers need to consider when looking for work including resumes, job search tips, Illinois Job Link, and overview of key partner programs. Workforce Development participants in the monthly workshop providing an overview of WIOA funded services. Wagner-Peyser staff continue to work with the job seekers by completing an individual employment plan documenting next steps including training, schooling, and job search assistance. Wagner-Peyser completes a 30-day status update with the job seekers. During the COVID-19 pandemic Employment Services and RESEA services transitioned from in-person to virtual. RESEA services have continued to be accessible via phone, and additional virtual services are being explored by IDES.

#### **LIV. Job Club**

The Wagner-Peyser team co-located in the Job Center have scheduled ongoing job clubs for job seekers needing additional assistance in transitioning to their next job. Monthly job clubs are held as a consistent resource for the job seekers, many who are RESEA participants as well, to bring more information to the individuals around trends in employment and hiring practices.

The Wagner-Peyser Job Clubs have halted with the onset of COVID-19.

#### **LV. Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV**

Coordination with the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is promoted and enhanced through the membership of the DRS Local Office Manager on the Workforce Board. This individual has participated in meetings with core and required workforce system partners to enhance coordination of programs and encourage referrals throughout the workforce system. DRS has co-located an employee at the Job Center one day a week – as a result the Job Center partners have focused that day of the week on service collaboration, strategies and programming geared towards individuals with a disability. The co-location of DRS in the Job Center has resulted in an increase in connecting individuals with a disability to employers – including Goodwill Industry who is responsible for the hiring of food-service workers at the Great Lakes Naval Station.

The Workforce Board was a grant recipient for a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant. This grant enabled the hiring of a project lead, and individual with an LSW (Licensed Social Worker) and CADC (Certified Alcohol and other Drugs Counselor) and over 20 years' experience working with families and persons who are dually diagnosed with Mental Health and Substance Abuse. This individual continues to focus on the coordination and alignment of programs and services across the workforce system for individuals with disabilities as well as continues to administer the Ticket to Work Program through the Job Center.

This pandemic has forced more of an operational impact onto the DRS services and plans. Specifically, DRS has pivoted away from a very structured brick & mortar, face-to-face method of interaction between staff, customers, vendors and external partners to a very capable platform which often combines application of computer use, cellular telephone implementation and applicable telephonic/computer communicative platforms such as e-mail, ZOOM, MS Teams, and Web-Ex. Face-to-face interaction during the pandemic has been rare and when it does occur, it is usually under the guidance of very, very strict CDC Guidance which would help to prevent the infection and /or spread of COVID-19 (or any related variant).

#### **LVI. Veterans**

In March 2020, the Illinois Department of Employment Security's (IDES) Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program began enlisting the use of digital tools that facilitated remote work and streamlined day-to-day administrative operations. The use of this technology, as part of a "new normal" activity, allowed customer service provisions to take place that, due to COVID-19's impact, had been restrictive at best. As this dramatic shift to telework and virtual event planning and implementation began to emerge as common practice, lessons were learned and improvements to the delivery model took place. These changes have left its mark on day-to-day operations in the post-COVID-19 landscape.

#### **LVII. Ticket to Work**

Workforce Development and the Job Center is an Employment Network (EN) and delivers the Ticket to Work Program – a Social Security Administration (SSA) program that provides individuals receiving Social Security disability benefits with employment services. As an approved EN, Workforce Development delivers this program to individuals with disabilities receiving benefits from SSA -SSDI or SSI, who are issued a Ticket to obtain services and supports to assist them in preparing for work and entering and maintaining employment.

Workforce Development collaborates with IDHS-VR providing individuals with a disability additional options in receiving employment services. Workforce Development aligns services with the goal of the Ticket to Work program to assist people in reducing their reliance on disability benefits and greater independence through work.



SSA issues compensation payments to Workforce Development for assisting beneficiaries to achieve employment-related Milestones and Outcomes as they move towards self-supporting employment. Payments are made based on participant's achievement of designated levels of work and earnings.

Workforce Development being an employment network has always been about establishing and nurturing relationships. The initiative was designed to reduce silos and barrier to make the Job Center inclusive for all people who sought employment. The pandemic has required adjustments to the services provided to one of the most vulnerable populations acknowledged by WIOA program, persons with disabilities. Continuing, to model the act of resiliency has been instrumental in providing services to PWD (person with disabilities) who seek services via the American Job Center. In agreeance with provisions provided at the County level as well as SSA, we continued to offer support services through remote communication and activity. The ability for consumers to be serviced in person at the American Job Center, has been limited due to access and ability. However, virtual and telephone communication has continued to keep consumers and partners engaged. The pandemic improved communication from both consumers and stakeholders. It has not only strengthened intentional service delivery, but in many ways has improved communication and engagement. Consumers, who feared adjusting to technology, are now more comfortable with usage and the benefits of improving their skillset. Workforce Development maintains contact and consumers know the Job Center is still available to assist them sharing the monthly calendar, focusing on the website, and making sure that individuals are aware that we able to service their ticket needs.

A Workforce Equity Lens has been incorporated in the TTW program since inception. The program challenges assumptions of what a person with disabilities looks like or their skill sets. Being an EN generates revenue that can be used at the discretion of the Job Center of Lake County. It is important to note that it is not tied to any grants. While the pandemic changed where and how services are provided, services were able to continue and nurtured the partnerships. The community continues to look at the Job Center as the expert in employment services in Lake County. We provide full services as an American Job Center and an Employment Network. Historically, it has contributed to the success of making the Job Center of Lake County inclusive for people with mental or physical disabilities. As evidenced by having partners being present weekly and on-site to address the services offered, and to meet the needs of the consumers that have sought out their services.

#### **LVIII. Secondary and Post-Secondary Education Programs**

The Workforce Board recognizes the value to be a collaborative partner with the education systems across the county to ensure alignment with workforce development strategies, to share common data sets, and to further develop and advance career and education opportunities for the communities and residents of Lake County. Lake County is home to many excellent secondary and post-secondary education institutions, including Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, the University Center of Lake County (representing 21 universities and colleges across Illinois), the College of Lake County, Lake Forest College, and numerous award-winning local education systems. The Workforce Board has membership from secondary and post-secondary education systems, including the county-wide elected Regional Superintendent of Schools, the President of the College of Lake County, the Dean of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Program at the College of Lake County and the owner of a proprietary school serving both youth and adults clients.

#### **LIX. College of Lake County**

College of Lake County is the community college serving Lake County and a leader in providing education and workforce solutions. College of Lake County has three campuses – Grayslake, Waukegan, Vernon Hills; and online programming to serve the diverse needs of individuals and employers. The College of Lake County has multiple programs certified through the Eligible Training Provider List and works directly with the Workforce Board to continue to add programs based on the talent needs of employers and industry.

The Job Center of Lake County is located on the College of Lake County Lakeshore Campus in Waukegan, in addition to CLC providing office space at the Grayslake Campus to Workforce Development staff to heighten the awareness of services to individuals and students.

The College of Lake County recently adopted their new strategic plan and the six pillars as noted below align with the goals of the Workforce Board's strategic plan:

1. Access & Success for Students
2. Equity & Inclusion

3. Teaching & Learning Excellence
4. Community & Workforce Partnerships
5. Collaborative Culture
6. Strategic Use of Resources

## **LX. Lake County High Schools Tech Campus**

The Tech Campus is an extension site of many area schools for Juniors and Seniors to attend classes in a specific career training program. The Tech Campus is regarded as one of the best Career Technical Education training facilities in the Midwest with a highly qualified staff dedicated to excellence in career technical education. With 22-member high schools throughout Lake and McHenry Counties representing over 1600 high school students, Tech Campus has the largest career technical secondary educational system in the State of Illinois.

Workforce Development has been an active partner with Tech Campus – participating in the strategic plan, bringing workforce and industry information into the various classroom – including industry guest speakers, leveraging resources to create student internships, and setting up recruitment days for graduating seniors regarding employment and training transition planning into post-secondary education, work-experiences, and/or direct connection with hiring employers.

Tech Campus has been a partner in the Lake County Workforce Ecosystem and the Ecosystem has been instrumental in setting up annual Career Expos for the students of Tech Campus. Career Expos. Ecosystem has successfully launched a series of career expos at the Lake County High Schools Tech Campus – bringing together employers and high schools' students. The Lake County High Schools Tech Campus serves high school juniors and seniors.

## **LXI. Lake County University Center**

The University Center of Lake County is a partnership of public and private colleges and universities offering coursework and degrees within Lake County. The University Center is comprised of 7 public and 9 private institutions providing bachelor completion, graduate, and advanced professional development programs at multiple sites to those who work or reside in or near Lake County. The University Center of Lake County, located on the campus of College of Lake County, offers bachelor's completion programs and, in most cases, only upper division (junior and senior) level undergraduate courses. Admission requirements vary from institution to institution, but generally include approximately 60 hours of undergraduate coursework and/or the equivalent of an associate degree. The College of Lake County can provide that lower division coursework through associate degree programs. More than 130 degrees, certificates, and professional development courses are offered and delivered in a variety of formats that appeal to adult learners: evenings and weekends, face-to-face, online, blended, and interactive video. The University Center, a consortium-based center, provides high-quality educational opportunities for the residents, workers, and employers of the Lake County region.

The Job Center and Workforce Development connects individuals to the University Center for advance education as well as employers hiring for jobs aligned with the programs and degrees offered through the Center.

Lake County University Center is a partner in the Lake County Workforce Ecosystem which has contributed to the advanced dialogue around what additional course work and degrees need to be made available along career pathway to meet the needs of Lake County employers and regional industries.

The University Center prior to the pandemic, offered in-person, online, and hybrid learning modes; financial aid assistance workshops; in-person pre-advisement, however, today given CDC guidelines, many of the programs and services are online. Still, students can take advantage of the building and amenities available should they need a quiet study space, especially if working from home is a challenge. Plan in responding is to increase awareness of the programs and services that University Center has to offer working place-bond adults.

The University Center has historically prioritized workforce equity by intentionally seeking communities in Lake County where high school and college degree completion is below average. Through community partnerships with local businesses and nonprofit organizations University Center collaborates to help inform and recruit prospective students. Additionally, University Center is proactive in addressing challenges that marginalized and underserved communities experience as barriers to achieving a college degree.

## **LXII. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006**

The College of Lake County (CLC) is the provider of Perkins career and technical education services in Lake County and is an active and important member of the Job Center. Coordination efforts have been greatly enhanced through regular meetings between workforce development and CLC leadership. Staff representing CLC are located on-site at the Job Center. In addition, CLC staff are available through the affiliate site located on the CLC campus. CLC works with workforce development partners to coordinate delivery of services and promote provision of career education opportunities for the partners' customers.

College of Lake County is committed to supporting the efforts of aligning workforce and economic development through integrated and coordinated services. This is demonstrated through the delivery of Career & Job Placement Center services (resume writing, career counseling, interviewing prep, internship and placement support), referral services through Counseling and Advising of prospective and enrolled students, and dedicated resources for the One Stop Center and Services.

Perkins/Career & Technical Education – The Career & Job Placement Center, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and EMPS Program Coordinator make referrals to the One Stop Center by sharing location and contact information. When appropriate, they contact Case Managers directly to complete the referral cycle.

New initiatives that were a response to the pandemic and to serve more underrepresented students were the following:

## **LXIII. College & Career Navigators:**

As a more intentional connection to post-secondary education and to better serve the current and future students the College & Career Navigators (CCN) were designed and were assigned to each high school, with the goal of promoting CTE programs. When the CTE students apply to CLC, the CCNs assist with student on-boarding. New students receive 1st semester advising from a CCN in the Recruitment & Onboarding Dept. Career Navigators is a program designed to help young adults and students ages 16 to 24 explore career opportunities and attain the education and training required for success in the workplace. CLC students create a competitive advantage for themselves by gaining the career and technical education required to enter high-wage careers in in-demand industries. Career Navigators meet with individuals and they ensure that the individual's needs are met, all through an equity lens to ensure that members of special population groups are not discriminated against and that they are treated fairly. Career Navigator's work directly with IEPR (Institutional Effectiveness Planning & Research) to make sure that CLC is collecting the correct data at the time of intake. Career Navigators ensure that the entering students feel welcome and that the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion are practiced at CLC.

Whether it is a GED, High School completion, or technical certification aligned with high skill – high wage industries, Career Navigator students make the most of their education with the assistance of professional Career Coaches.

## **LXIV. Apprenticeship Network Event:**

The Apprenticeship Network Events support an apprenticeship model for Lake County area and further develops an outreach plan that shares this model with employers. These apprenticeships deliver internal trainings on the apprenticeship model to faculty and staff. The Apprenticeship Program aligns to CLC's 2020-24 Strategic Plan and its six key pillars. The Apprenticeship Program is intentional with increasing graduation rates by 45%. CLC has developed alliances with workforce partners across the various industry sectors to develop and expand new credentials, expand capacity of existing programs and leverage apprenticeships to meet the regional and Lake County workforce needs.

The Apprenticeship Network Event will attract employers from Lake County that targets the CTE programs applying for a Program of Study status with ICCB in January 2022. These include: Welding, CNC Programming, CAD Drafting, Hospitality & Culinary Management Program, Early Childhood and Education, and Computer Information Technology, and Digital Media and Design. The apprenticeship program will also require support to work closely with the college academic divisions to identify program areas and review curriculum maps to align with the local needs of employers. The network event will help expand CLC's current career programs that already offer apprenticeships that include:

- Automotive Collision Repair
- Business Administration
- Horticulture, Landscape Design, Arboriculture, Production, Construction & Maintenance.
- Manufacturing – CNC Programming, Automation, Robotics & Mechatronics, and HVAC Engineering Technology
- Information Technology - Computer Information Technology & Cybersecurity.

The College of Lake County Perkin's Grant is now active in the Apprenticeship Network Event goals includes the opportunity to expanding apprenticeship opportunities and capacity, as one limiting factor, besides current health concerns, is the number of participating employers in the program. This networking event will provide companies opportunity to collaborate with peers to learn the best practices from others that have already established similar programs. The CLC team will follow-up with employers to discuss their specific area of interest and program objectives.

#### **LXV. Student for Success Taskforce (SST):**

The SST process emphasizes that early intervention for struggling students is essential is student success. The Student for Success Taskforce implemented an identification process for student's in need, including special populations and with a program to intentionally connecting students with relevant supports. The Student for Success Taskforce (SST) model will improve the College's ability to connect and provide resources to meet student needs.

#### **LXVI. Workforce Board Supportive Service Policy**

The Workforce Board has adopted a Supportive Service policy that allows for individuals enrolled in training to receive financial assistance with transportation for the days of attendance. The Workforce Board has budgeted for only transportation expenditures due to the limited funding as detailed in the attached Supportive Service Policy.

The Workforce Board supportive services policy does allow for approval of additional supportive services when an individual is assessed as needing financial assistance to continue to participate in training and be successful. The Workforce Board did work with the core partners to identify the needs of individuals accessing programs and services in the local workforce development system and partners noted: transportation and child-care as the greatest need for many to obtain, retain and advance in a job.

The impacts of the pandemic and the economic fallout have been widespread but remain particularly prevalent among Black and Latino adults. The disproportionate impacts reflects harsh, long-standing inequities — often stemming from structural racism in education, employment, housing, and health care that the current crisis has exacerbated. Households with children also continue to face hardships with schools moving to virtual and hybrid.

The Workforce Development Board responded by making it a priority to review the Supportive Service Policy through an equity lens. WDB changed policy to provide participants greater access to resources to be successful in enrolling and completing training as well as finding and retaining employment. WDB has modified the policy to include greater access to transportation expenses and digital needs. Attachment 2 is the modified Supportive Service Policy.

#### **LXVII. Family Centered Employment**

The Workforce Board has been participating in a national Family Centered Employment community of practice in an effort to better understand the overarching need in the communities for child-care and transportation and begin implementing aspects of tested promising practices around sustainable solutions.

In late 2018 NAWB and Innovate Educate expanded the Family Centered Employment Initiative to incorporate more workforce development boards while launching the Family Centered Community of Practice (FCE CoP) to support workforce development boards interested in integrating family-centered approaches in their workforce development services and local communities. The Lake County Workforce Development Board applied and was 1 of 12 selected to join the 3 pilot sites in a Community of Practice. Since then, the Lake County Workforce Development Board has begun collaborating, alongside key CBOs (United Way, YMCA, College of Lake County, Housing Authority, Waukegan and Round Lake Public Schools, Lake County Tech Campus, Adult Education, and the Job Center of Lake County), to explore integrating services in a family-centered model of service. The pilot collaboration group is called the Family Centered Employment Taskforce, to signify the commitment to pair workforce development with child development to get better outcomes for

both parents and children through training and another workforce support.

In 2019, initial steps were taken to gather data and explore resources that would better serve families, with more extensive and complex strategies expected to be researched and piloted/executed in 2020 and beyond. This group will serve as the key mechanism to identify opportunities to braid resources, coordinate service delivery and expand access to occupational training, job and career search assistance, and supportive services within the local workforce development system. The goal is to eliminate benefits cliffs, leverage existing services and pool resources where there are gaps.

In the next four years the Lake County Workforce Development is committed to the following:

- Identify promising practices in implementing family-centered employment approaches.
- Create awareness about family-centered employment practices in Lake County.
- Promote stronger relationships and collaboration with community organizations, childcare providers, and other agencies.
- Implement system-level changes to promote a family-centered employment approach to advance families and meet workforce demands such as invest in Family Center Coaching training for workforce development professionals and partners.

In 2022 the Lake County Workforce Development Board approved moving forward with the adoption of the Prosperity Agenda's Family-Centered Coaching (FCC).

FCC will strengthen how Workforce Development and partners engage individual customers and families by shifting power back to the families. FCC can be used with anyone, regardless of their familial status, it was designed specifically to support people who set and achieve their goals within the context of their family. The coaching model of FCC will environment where family members are able to think more creatively and critically about their goals and make choices that are more aligned with their family goals. In partnership with families, coaches and organizations will can then create new pathways to economic prosperity, personal fulfillment, and racial justice.

Organizations practicing the Family-Centered Coaching span 35 states (see map). They are rural and urban, community-based nonprofit and government-based, small and large. The model spans across programs providing workforce development, early learning, housing services, and more--all working holistically in partnership with families.

#### **LXVIII. Lake County Workforce Development Family-Centered Coaching Learning Journey**

Through a comprehensive series of learning experiences, The Prosperity Agenda will support Workforce Development and Job Center partners from an initial assessment and all the way through the launch of a continuous improvement process.

The FCC learning journey offers the following outcomes:

- Deepens how organizations center on the experience of families/participant
- Fosters a shared language that supports collaboration
- Builds greater empathy within teams and throughout various levels of the organization
- Breaks down internal organizational silos
- Increases the sense of purpose among front-line staff
- Honors families as they report that they are making progress on their goals

The below outline defines the journey that Workforce Development and Job Center partners will experience as part of the Family Centered Coaching adoption kicking off in early 2022:

Organizational Learning Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff survey</li><li>• Summary of results and recommendations</li></ul>
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FCC Project Kickoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-hour event</li> <li>• Session recordings and slides</li> </ul>
FCC Learning Journey Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-hour event</li> <li>• Session recordings and slides</li> </ul>
Anatomy of a Coaching Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven 90-min sessions, for up to 60 participants</li> <li>• FCC Online Toolkit</li> <li>• Session recordings and slides</li> <li>• Dedicated learning portal for participants (Canvas LMS)</li> </ul>
Toolkit Onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six 2-hour sessions, for up to 40 participants</li> <li>• FCC Online Toolkit</li> <li>• Session recordings and slides</li> <li>• Dedicated learning portal for participants (Canvas LMS)</li> </ul>
Supervision Onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 90-minute sessions, for up to 10 participants</li> <li>• Coaching Conversation Guide</li> <li>• Coaching Self-Assessment Survey</li> <li>• Session recording and slides</li> </ul>
Community of Practice Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 hours of Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Session recording and slides</li> </ul>

#### **LXIX. YWCA Lake County**

Parents are referred to the YWCA when they need assistance with finding childcare and financial assistance to pay for childcare. The YWCA administers the Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP) - affordable, high-quality early childcare and education for working families. YWCA offers the services to connect families to resources for finding, qualifying, and paying for child-care and early education programs.

#### **LXX. TANF**

TANF Recipients receive transportation support and childcare if they are working, and additional support while the recipient is enrolled in an approved education program. For others, community providers sometime have services they can take advantage of; for example, Community Action Partnership currently has a grant from Lake County to cover the cost of drop-in childcare so individuals can go to job interviews, and the cost of daycare until an individual receives his or her first paycheck.

#### **LXXI. Community Action Partnership**

Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Lake County serves residents of Lake County with various programs to help local families find self-sufficiency and as a partner in the Job Center in part of the Job Center referral network. Individuals are referred to CAP for the following programs and services:

- Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP)
- Head Start
- Preschooler full day or before and after school program and financial assistance
- Post-Secondary Scholarships
- Kids Club Summer Day Camp

## **LXXII. United Way Lake County 211**

United Way of Lake County launched 211 services for Lake County in 2019. 211 is a free, confidential, 24-hour information and referral helpline that provides a central access point to health and human services in Lake County. 211 is available to everyone and connects people in need to resources by phone, text and online, including mental health services, addiction support and rehabilitation, crisis counseling, supplemental food programs, shelter and affordable housing options, employment and education support, financial support, and more. Resource navigators at the 211-contact center, who are experienced, trained specialists, guide people to the help they need. The comprehensive 211 service is multi-lingual with English and Spanish speaking staff, as well as interpretations to more than 150 languages. 2-1-1 can help provide information about the following:

- Basic Human Needs Services: food banks, shelter, clothing, financial aid, utility assistance
- Physical and Mental Health Services: healthcare, Medicaid, Medicare, prenatal care, children's health insurance, crisis intervention, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, intervention/rehabilitation
- Older Adult Services: adult day care, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, nutrition, senior centers
- Employment and Income Services: support, job training, job search, education, public assistance
- Children, Youth, and Family Childcare Services: after-school programs, family resource centers, camps/recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services
- Volunteering: opportunities to volunteer and to donate
- Community/Government: times, locations of city council meetings; information about community events; how to contact government offices and officials
- Events/Occurrences: updates about emergency situations (ex. power outages and community-wide issues)

United Way of Lake County marked the second anniversary of 211 services for Lake County in 2021. 211's measurable year two results and impact demonstrates how the system has transformed the way individuals and families from across Lake County are connecting to essential health and human services to improve and save lives.

In its second year of service, 211 has made a combined total of 50,350 connections, including 10,780 calls and two-way texts to the 211 Contact Center and 39,570 visits to the 211LakeCounty.org website. During year two, the average monthly number of calls and texts to 211 grew to more than 900 per month with November through January trending even higher due to 211's involvement with rental assistance screenings. The number of calls to 211 in year two have far outpaced the number of calls in its first year of operation, with 27% of calls and texts taking place outside of normal business hours. 211 could not have come to Lake County at a better time. Since November 2020, 62% of the calls and texts were related to COVID-19.

211 reporting shows that calls and texts have been received from every zip code in Lake County. The Waukegan community represents a significant portion of the 211 contacts at 31% of overall contact volume, with Zion at 9% and Round Lake at 8.1%.

The top needs presented have been housing and shelter, utilities, food, health care, mental health and addictions, and employment and income support. Housing and shelter needs are by far the top category with rent payment assistance consistently ranked as the top housing need each month since 211 launched. Lake County government responded by increasing funding for rent assistance through the COVID Housing Relief Program (CHRP) and more recently the Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (FERA). 211 has centralized and streamlined the rental assistance screening process to make it easier for individuals and families facing financial hardship to access resources.

## **LXXIII. WIOA Youth Providers Policies**

The Workforce Board recognizes the importance of addressing the multiple needs young adults and youth have in continuing to participate in employment and training activities and programs as well as retain employment. The Workforce Board collaborates with youth serving providers and high schools, serving WIOA eligible youth, to leverage resources and set allowable policies that provide for additional supportive services needed for continued participation and success.

#### **LXXIV. Transportation Solutions**

Stakeholders, partners, municipalities, and businesses throughout Lake County recognize the need to collaborate and be innovative in developing sustainable and implementable plans for improving mobility for the residents of Lake County and the workforce commuting to businesses. To address one of the business challenges – attracting and retaining young professional talent - Lake County Partners formed a public-private partnership to launch enhanced reverse commute Metra train service. Together, Lake County Partners, AbbVie, Horizon Pharma, the City of Lake Forest, Metra, and others jointly funded a pilot schedule of enhanced express service between Chicago and Lake County along the Milwaukee District North Line. This pilot schedule began in January 2019 and is scheduled to run for up to two years.

Metra's current schedule isn't ideal for reverse-commute riders to and from Lake Forest, the station nearest several major employers, because there aren't any morning outbound express trains and the afternoon trains are either too early or too late for most workers. The pilot schedule addressing gaps in the current train schedules has Metra adding a new outbound express departing Union Station at 5:35 a.m. and arriving in Lake Forest at 6:25 a.m., change the schedule of one inbound afternoon train to create express service from Lake Forest, and add a new inbound train departing from Lake Forest at 5:30 p.m. and arriving at Union Station at 6:22 p.m.

As a part of the public-private partnership, the group will also work on a definitive agreement to share the cost of installing a universal crossover near Lake Forest to create additional opportunities for enhanced service. This is one example on how local businesses, economic development, and government are coming together to address workforce needs and transit gaps in the county.

Despite Lake County's transportation-related strengths, Lake County continues to struggle with east-west connectivity. Opportunities to enhance Lake County's infrastructure to support business development and increase resiliency are highlighted in the 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Report (CEDS) report.

#### **LXXV. Lake County Paratransit Study**

Since the mid-2000s, Lake County along with communities, townships and transit partners have been evaluating and working to enhance paratransit options. In 2005, the Lake County Coordinated Transportation Services Committee (LCCTSC) was created to facilitate the implementation of public transportation, with an enhanced emphasis on paratransit service. In 2019, Lake County completed a paratransit market study that garnered input from residents and a dedicated group of stakeholders to identify strategies to improve service in Lake County. The new Ride Lake County service is the culmination of these efforts from the community.

Ride Lake County will provide borderless countywide paratransit service, meaning seniors age 60+ and people with disabilities can get transportation to any area of Lake County for work, shopping, medical appointments, and more. The new Ride Lake County service is anticipated to begin on May 1, 2022. Riders will call a dedicated number to schedule trips in advance. All Ride Lake County vehicles are wheelchair accessible and provide curb-to-curb service from your desired pick up and drop off locations. The service will run from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. seven days a week, excluding holidays. One-way fare costs will vary between \$2.00 and \$6.00 depending on how far you travel. Ride Lake County is sponsored by Lake County and Pace Suburban Bus. The service is funded in part by grants from the Regional Transportation Authority.



## **E. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities**

The Workforce Board provides policy and oversight for the adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including statewide rapid response activities carried out by the Lake County Workforce Development Department.

Workforce Development programs build upon existing program and delivery structures and enhance education and training opportunities leading to a better prepared workforce. Workforce Development responds to the talent needs of businesses and industry by constructing customized workforce solutions and collaborating with key partners to successfully deliver services to job seekers, the future workforce, and targeted populations. Workforce Development leads out the employer and business services with the overarching shared goal to attract, develop and prepare a well-trained workforce to support the current economic base and to promote future business growth.

Below is a list of programs developed and implemented by Workforce Development:

- a. Individual Training Accounts – eligible participants assessed with a skills gap receive grant funds to pursue training in a high-demand, high-wage occupational training program.
- b. Trade Adjustment Act Grants – workers impacted by a lay-off or closing as a result of foreign trade or competition receive additional services, benefits, and grant funding to pursue additional education and training.
- c. Revive Lake County – Workforce’s solution to help reduce recidivism. Work with formerly incarcerated individuals to increase employability skills, receive occupational training and transition to employment. The program is also delivered in the Lake County Jail.
- d. Transitional Jobs – new program to be implemented with the Lake County Jail and departments to transition formerly incarcerated individuals into short-term, paid internships to build new skills and earn a wage.
- e. SNAP To Success – Partnering with a national provider and the Illinois Department of Human Services, SNAP recipients receive training and employment in the IT field.
- f. Disability Employment Initiative – through a special DOL grant, hired a Disability Resource Navigator to assist disabled individuals with navigating resources and services leading to sustainable employment.
- g. Career Crossroads – career awareness program in the high schools for graduating seniors and parents – presenting opportunities when college may not be the first choice.
- h. Family Centered Employment – part of a community of practice throughout the nation, changing the culture of client services to be more inclusive and flexible while serving the family as a whole unit.
- i. Five Steps to Your Next Job – a series of workshops delivered to job seekers and taught by a team of workforce development professionals. Attendees learn the most up-to-date search techniques.
- j. Work Earn & Learn – partnership with DOT and employers providing participants with a paid internship, learning from industry professionals and earning an industry-recognized credential.
- k. Workforce Essential Skills Training – young adults, 18-24, receive career readiness, soft skills training and career pathway guidance and connection to training and/or employment. Delivered at the Depke Center.
- l. Work-Based Learning – participants receive on-the-job training, delivered by an employer and grant funds subsidize the training wages. Many Lake County departments serve as a work site.
- m. Rapid Response – a team responds to lay-offs or closings through a coordinated effort to work with the impacted workers on receiving benefits, rapid reemployment, job readiness skills, and occupational training.
- n. Incumbent Worker Training – a grant funded strategy with local businesses to address employee retention, on the job skills gap, and prepare for career advancement.

## **LXXVI. Lake County Workforce Ecosystem**

As highlighted throughout this plan, the Lake County Workforce Ecosystem has been a solution to engaging a greater number of businesses and industry to the workforce system and partners. The Workforce Ecosystem has expanded its partnership to include secondary and post-secondary. The Workforce Ecosystem partners include: Workforce Development, the Job Center, Lake County Partners, College of Lake County, Lake County High Schools Tech Campus, Lake County high school representative from Grayslake High School, and the University Center. The Workforce Ecosystem is looked beyond the metrics of counting the number of business visits to the level of businesses engage – moving beyond transactional to collaborating to build talent solutions, promote workforce system initiatives, and shape/influence the industry. The work of the Ecosystem has been showcased at the Lake County Partner’s annual Big Event, recognizing a local employer for Innovative Workforce Solutions.

The Lake County EcoSystem was able to pivot and continue local business engagement with employers. Virtual committee meetings with the Lake County Workforce Development Board along with virtual/remote engagements with employers continued to assist with talent attraction of dislocated workers and job seekers. Work base learning models, re-entry programs, and secondary industry career services were implemented by the Eco-System during 2020. The Ecosystem continues the virtual/remote Industry Expo's at the Tech Campus of Lake County to adapt to the current environment and expose high school students to in demand industries while giving employers access to the next supply of talent. The Ecosystem is continuing hybrid options including virtual/remote hiring events. The Ecosystem is enhancing the collective CRM shared system of Salesforce to share business intelligence to make tactical business decisions and implement business engagement strategies. The Ecosystem has made a commitment to work with regional economic development associations and CTE programs to conduct regional and local events.

As it pertains to equity the Ecosystem continues to assess and provide data on career options that do not require college degrees but certificate and industry credentials. Small and minority owned businesses will be a priority of business engagement along with educating businesses on the value of a more diverse workforce and connections to r dislocated workers and job seekers with barriers.

### **LXXVII. Work-based Learning Strategies**

The Workforce Board has been encouraging the use of OJT and Work Experience opportunities as successful work-based learning strategies. As noted previously, the Workforce Board is also promoting the use of Incumbent Worker Training with an allocation from Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA formula funding. Workforce Development has executed a comprehensive work-based learning program for adults and dislocated workers. Through its business engagement strategies, Workforce Development has been working directly with employers across the key industry sectors of healthcare, manufacturing, TDL and professional services to develop and execute work-experience, on-the job training, incumbent working training and piloting transitional jobs. Workforce Development has been instrumental in demonstrating how these work-based learning strategies, when executed in collaboration with employer – participants – Workforce Development, is not only a successful hiring incentive but a retention strategy as participants have a training track with accountability and expectations defined upfront.

To better serve the targeted dislocated worker and provide more equity in delivery of skills development and labor exchange activities, Workforce Development (LCWD) is implementing a mobile/remote job center – using current inventory to set up a pod of laptops and purchasing additional technology to allow for video conferencing within underrepresented and underserved communities. The mobile job center will be brought into underserved communities providing job seekers access to Job Center services, applications, resume writing, connection to employers, job searching and access to training, interviewing and workshops. This mobile job center will allow underserved, targeted job seekers to connect with services without having to travel to the Job Center in Waukegan.

The new smart video conferencing devices will enhance interaction with employers and job seekers in Lake County. Technology will allow for better connection with employers to provide access to a broader audience with virtual job fairs and hiring events as well as a much-needed way to provide skills training and job search workshops to a remote group of job seekers.

The work experience program markets to underserved communities, organizations, and job seekers to expose diverse individuals to this training opportunity- Workforce Development will continue to outreach to a diverse pool of workers and employers.

The Workforce Development EO will continue to monitor enrollments, demographics, and outcomes of the participants enrolled to ensure equal access and diversity.

### **LXXVIII. Statewide Rapid Response Activities**

On behalf of the Workforce Board, Workforce Development takes the lead on rapid response and coordinates activities with Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Illinois Department of Employment Security

(IDES). When unable to gain access to impacted workers prior to the actual layoff and at the employer site, Workforce Development and IDES invite impacted workers to the Job Center or an affiliate site to learn about services and available funding opportunities for training and employment.

When an employer provides access to the impacted workers prior to the actual layoff, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT provides an overview of services and takes the opportunity to meet individually with impacted workers interested in employment and training services. Workforce Development has found a successful practice of rapid re-employment by connecting hiring employers to the impacted workers prior to the lay-off date. When the current employer allows, meetings with hiring employers have been made at the workplace with favorable results.

After separation, Workforce Development and IDES target laid-off workers with IDES e-blasts and holds job fairs with similar employers hiring in like positions. Workforce Development will continue with this highly successful strategy around rapid reemployment and when applicable reach out to other partners to help with recruitment and assist with identifying employers. Workforce Development has also recognized the need to expand the network to regional local areas and has included employers from surrounding areas in the job fairs to maximize the re-employment efforts.

When applicable, Workforce Development works with DCEO to have rapid response events certified for the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA). Workforce Development then administers the requirements of TAA with the eligible impacted workers. Workforce Development has successfully administered TAA training grants to impacted workers receiving an array of training from certificate-based to master level programs and teaching certifications.

Workforce Development has continued to conduct rapid response events for employers laying off workers. The events have pivoted to virtual event/presentations than onsite events to display and market Workforce Development, Illinois Department of Employment Security, and Employee Benefits Security Administration services. There has been a significant decline in rapid response events/layoff events now that rehiring has increased, and the unemployment rate has decreased. Affected workers from layoff events continue to receive Workforce Development services and direct hire opportunities to transition from unemployment to employment in a short period of time.

#### **LXXIX. Sector Recruitment Specialists**

Workforce Development received a rapid response grant from DCEO in 2017 to pilot a Sector Recruitment Specialist Strategy. The goal of the project was to enhance rapid-response program services connecting dislocated workers to high demand jobs in four key industry sectors in Lake County: healthcare, manufacturing, TDL and IT. The Sector Recruitment Specialist Program hired four dislocated workers that have worked in one of these industry sectors and have a demonstrated orientation to the industry's needs and demands as related to the workforce. The Specialists possessed necessary qualifications, skills, and insights to the industry elements in order to engage with the diverse population and employers. The Specialists worked to expand upon rapid-response program activities that include worker recruitment, worker assessment of transferable skills, employer information gathering strategies that could lead to potential lay-off aversion; and connections with employers with hiring needs. The pilot program resulted in a more effective documented process to connect the dislocated worker to employment. Workforce Development has been able to retain the services of the sector specialists and adopt workplans around industry sector business outreach.

The pandemic provided Workforce Development with the opportunity to rebrand the business service team as the needs of business and industry were swiftly changing, they had to know Workforce Development was on the front-line to help them address their needs. Business Service Reps established the title "Account Executive" to represent their relationship with businesses. Each Account Executive is an industry specialist overseeing a specific industry such as Hospitality/Retail, Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics, Healthcare, and Information Technology with the expectation of creating industry experts. Industry Account Executives have deployed industry specific solutions and assistance to local business and industry during the pandemic.

The Account Executives are the point of contact with the business and industry, they also foster business to business engagement, business to training and education providers, membership organizations and additional business services as well as the job seeker to hiring opportunities. Workforce Development has a diverse employment team and has ensured the Business Service team account executives are also diverse and represent the communities being served.

## F. Youth Employment and Training Activities

The Workforce Board has designed a WIOA youth program model - WIOA Youth Comprehensive Career Pathway Program - a program based on an integration of services delivered among and across multiple partners including the Workforce Development Department and the Job Center of Lake County. The WIOA Youth Program is moving beyond stand-alone programs focused on intake-assessment-services-outcomes to a program design centered on service integration guiding youth to successfully establish and pursue employment, education, and a career goal. The following sections provide a description of the WIOA grant funded youth programs as well as programs supported by the Workforce Board and administered by Workforce Development:

- The WIOA Youth Comprehensive Career Pathway Program
- Bring Your 'A' Game
- Career Crossroads
- Lake County Summer Youth Employment Program
- Minimum Expenditure for Out-of-School Youth
- Edge Factor and 2020 Leadership

### LXXX. The WIOA Youth Comprehensive Career Pathway Program

The WIOA Youth Comprehensive Career Pathway Program takes into consideration the delivery and accessibility to the fourteen (14) required WIOA program elements. Program services and activities include recruitment, assessment, training, education, work-based learning, and employment retention elements; in addition to career exploration, training and education leading to credential and work-based learning opportunities.

The Workforce Board requires that all enrolled youth have access to meaningful work-based learning activities and to successfully accomplish this program element and in keeping with the intent of service integration, Workforce Development Department will lead out all business services outreach and activities that will connect with local employers and develop meaningful relationships.

The Workforce Board has published a Request for Proposal (RFP) designed to solicit workforce development partners and youth serving providers to collaborate with the Workforce Development Department to deliver the high performing, innovative, WIOA Youth Program. The successful subrecipients will work with the Workforce Development Department to ensure the WIOA eligible youth receive the most comprehensive sequence of services that will prepare them for a high wage/high demand occupation along a career pathway. Service integration will occur with Workforce Development working with each of the subrecipients to manage the youth's progress, completion of milestones, outcomes, and deliverables along a sequence of services as defined as Phase I and Phase II.

The WIOA Youth Program design emphasizes program modules and services that integrate promising practices and leveraging strengths of partners, providers, and educators. Promising practices that are incorporated into the overall program include:

Contractors	Workforce Development	Contractors and Workforce Development
<b>Recruitment</b>		
Contractors will develop and execute a plan to recruit WIOA eligible young adults throughout Lake County. The population targeted through this RFP will be WIOA eligible 16-24 years of age who are <b>In-School</b> youth pursuing a high school diploma, alternative high school diploma, or a post-secondary certification/diploma and assessed as needing assistance to successfully complete and transition along a career pathway OR <b>Out-of-School</b> youth disengaged and disconnected from an educational institution and assessed as needing assistance to identify and transition into a career pathway.		
<b>Eligibility</b>		
Workforce Development will certify and document WIOA eligibility, maintain an electronic file in the Illinois Workforce Development System, complete all program enrollment requirements. <b>Promising Practice:</b> Workforce Development will meet directly with all youth to complete required applications, collect eligibility documentation, and certify the youth as eligible.		

### Basic Skills Assessment – Pre & Post Test

Contractors and Workforce Development will coordinate the completion of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) pre and post-test. **Promising Practice:** College of Lake County administers the TABE Test.

### Case Management and Support

Contractors will develop the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) with the participant to create employment and training goals while providing the support needed as the participants progresses through their ISS plan.

**Promising Practice:** Contractors will meet weekly with the participants to review ISS plan and document progress.

### Enrollment

Workforce Development will complete the process of enrolling the youth which includes collecting the necessary documents, entering the participant in Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS), and creating the participant's file.

**Promising Practice:** All participants need to be WIOA eligible.

### Career Interest Assessments

Contractors will guide youth through assessment tools.

**Promising Practice:** All participants complete the NOCTI 21st Century Skills Assessment.

### Support Services (WIOA Program Element)

Contractors will assess and document the participant for the need of support services.

**Promising Practice:** Participant needs are documented in the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) along with referrals

### Comprehensive Guidance (WIOA Program Element)

Contractors will assess the participant for the need of counseling services and will provide those services or make an appropriate referral.

**Promising Practice:** Participant services and referrals are documented in the Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

### Financial Literacy (WIOA Program Element)

Contractors will provide activities that expose the participants to financial literacy.

**Promising Practice:** All participants will receive a minimum of 2 hours of financial literacy and delivered through a financial institution or a community partner organization.

### Entrepreneurial Skills Training (WIOA Program Element)

Contractors will provide activities that expose the participants to entrepreneurial skills training.

**Promising Practice:** All participants will receive a minimum of 2 hours of entrepreneurial skills training and expose participants to College of Lake County Small Business Administration.

### Leadership Development (WIOA Program Element)

Contractors will provide opportunities for the participants to complete community service and peer-centered activities.

**Promising Practice:** All participants will receive a minimum of 3 hours of activities.

### Job Readiness Training

Contractors will provide job readiness training activities. Workforce Development will provide Bring Your A Game – a 7 module training designed to build workplace skills.

**Promising Practice:** Participants will successfully complete the contractors job readiness activities and earn Work Ethic Certification from Bring Your 'A' Game.

### Labor Market Information (LMI)/Employment Information (WIOA Program Element)

Workforce Development will provide LMI data for the four main Lake County high demand occupational industries.

**Promising practice:** All participants will be exposed to LMI through the Lake County Careers website.

### Business Services – Business Outreach

The contractors 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.

Workforce Development will set up multiple company tours for the participants to attend.

**Promising Practice:** Contractors and Workforce Development staff will integrate business service team staff.

### Work Based Learning/Education Offered (Stipend Max Allowed \$1000) (WIOA Program Element)

Contractors will provide activities that exposes the participants to jobs, industries, and employers in Lake County. These activities, as defined by WIOA, include but are not limited to job application preparation, resume writing, mock interviewing practices, job shadows, and company tours.
<b>Promising Practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants complete 3 mock interviews with industry professionals.</li> <li>• Participants complete 2 job shadows in two unique industries/occupations.</li> <li>• Participants complete a job application worksheet, resume, and mock interview.</li> <li>• Participants complete 4 company tours of high demand industries.</li> </ul>
<b>Occupational Skills Training – Computer Literacy Skills (WIOA Program Element)</b>
Contractors will provide participants with basic computer literacy skills training leading to an industry recognized credential. The contractors can partner with a training provider of their choice.
<b>Promising Practice:</b> All participants will earn Microsoft Office Suite certificate.
<b>Education for Specific Occupation/Career Pathway (WIOA Program Element)</b>
Workforce Development will authorize Individual Training Accounts in accordance with the Workforce Development Investment Board high priority occupational list (Attachment O).
<b>Tutoring, Study Skills Training (WIOA Program Element)</b>
Contractors 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.
<b>Promising Practice:</b> Participants will receive the services as needed.
<b>Alternative Secondary School Services/Study Skills -as needed (WIOA Program Element)</b>
Contractors will deliver or make accessible through a referral services that prepare youth to earn a high-school diploma or equivalent.
<b>Promising Practice:</b> Participants will earn their GED or High School diploma equivalency.
<b>Prep for Post-Secondary/ Training (WIOA Program Element)</b>
Contractors will provide activities that help participants prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.
<b>Promising Practices:</b> All participants will receive a minimum of 3 hour of completing the FAFSA and assistance with financing college, reviewing award letter, and other grant and scholarship opportunities.
<b>Job Search Services</b>
Contractors will provide participants with job search activities including assistance with job search websites, attendance to employment workshops, hiring events, and job fairs.
<b>Promising Practice:</b> All participants will receive a minimum of 3 hour of job search activities and accessing services at the Job Center of Lake County.
<b>Adult Mentoring during Follow-up Services (WIOA Program Element)</b>
Contractors will make accessible adult mentoring during program enrollment and follow-up services to provide the necessary support to enable youth to retain/advance in program, employment and education.
<b>Promising Practice:</b> Meaningful, two-way communication and support by employees, community leaders, employers, and program alumni.
<b>Follow-up Services (WIOA Program Element)</b>
Contractors and or Workforce Development will provide participants with follow-up services.
<b>Promising Practice:</b> All participants will provide 12 months of meaningful, two-way communication during follow-up services.

The Workforce Board funded a project with Lake County Partners to identify employers in key industry sectors that were interested in working with youth and young adults. A component of the project was to document the skills local employers and businesses looked for when considering hiring youth and young adults in current open positions as well as the likelihood to provide internships to young people in Lake County. Consistent themes documented by businesses and human resource personnel was the need for soft-skills, young people need to focus on basic work-place skills; a desire to work with more high schools; a desire to connect with high school students about jobs and careers; a willingness to host internships with youth interested in the type of work and industry. Based on these findings, several initiatives were launched in partnership

with the Workforce Board, Workforce Development, Lake County Partners, local high schools, and multiple employers from key sectors.

#### **LXXXI. Bring Your ‘A’ Game**

The Workforce Board charged Workforce Development in researching promising practices in teaching/reinforcing these skills with young people. This research included reviewing standard programs and curriculums. Workforce Development selected Bring Your ‘A’ Game as the best tool and curriculum.

Bring Your ‘A’ Game is a curriculum for building the seven foundational workplace skills of Work Ethic. The Center for Work Ethic Development developed a set of seven skills, soft skills, work readiness, or portable job skills. These seven skills have been identified through research and validated by the competency models developed by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The seven workplace skills that comprise Work Ethic are attitude, attendance, appearance, ambition, acceptance, appreciation, and accountability. The curriculum is flexible in nature and can be delivered through a series of workshops, integrated in classroom settings, or broken out into the modules most appropriate for the audience and setting. At the completion of the full curriculum program, individuals can earn their Certified Work Ethic Training certification.

The Workforce Board endorsed the tool and budgeted for individuals to receive training and be certified in delivering the program as well as train the trainer. Workforce Development has two career specialists trained and certified in delivering Bring Your ‘A’ Game. The team of two have delivered the curriculum to groups of youth and young adults, trained additional career specialists who deliver the curriculum in the Revive Lake County Program and have used the flexibility of the program modules to deliver components to high school students – both in the high school during career fairs and the youth in the Lake County Summer Youth Employment Program and with a plan to have all WIOA eligible youth enroll in a Bring Your ‘A’ Game workshop. The seven foundational workplace skills include:

- **ATTITUDE:** Staying positive in every situation. Take control of the way you react.
- **ATTENDANCE:** Showing you’re reliable in every phase of your life. Be on time, every time.
- **APPEARANCE:** Being professional both in the way you act, and the way you look. Choose to be a pro.
- **AMBITION:** Taking initiative and adding value. Do more than the minimum.
- **ACCEPTANCE:** Having respect and following direction. Be coachable and play by the rules.
- **APPRECIATION:** Demonstrating your gratitude towards others. Provide selfless service.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Living honestly and having integrity with every decision you make. Refuse to rationalize bad decisions.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Bring Your ‘A’ Game went to a virtual platform of delivery as of August 2020. Workforce Development has expanded the team of two career specialists to four. This allows us to deliver this curriculum in the virtual environment for successfully. The ability to deliver this virtually has made the tool more accessible and inclusive to the youth in Lake County.

#### **LXXXII. Career Crossroads**

Workforce Development is partnering with local high schools to bring greater awareness to the industries, jobs, and careers in Lake County. Workforce Development attends an assembly at local high schools and provides information to high school juniors and seniors information on industries and occupations. Using the most up-to-date labor market information along with a presentation from local employers, students are exposed to occupations, career choices and an introduction and connection to the workforce development system. Career Crossroads has resulted in working with local high schools to host resource fairs with local training providers and employers for both students and parents, creating partnership with area employers and connecting students to additional education and employment opportunities.

Through Career Crossroads, employers have been connected to high school students creating and developing work-based learning opportunities. This is a program model that can be replicated with multiple high schools.

Workforce Development continues to be a resource to local high schools who are interested in offering a Career Crossroads experience to their high school juniors and seniors and parents and has expanded the local high schools involved with the



program.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and serving the more vulnerable youth population, Workforce Development took the Career Crossroads concept and created a program designed to partner with Lake County High Schools to deliver career awareness and work readiness training to high school students in a virtual environment for identified seniors with an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan.)

#### **LXXXIII. Lake County Summer Youth Employment Program**

Over the past 19 years, Workforce Development has been allocated general revenue dollars from the Lake County Board annually to administer a summer jobs program for low-income, in-school youth ages of 14 up to 21 (with an IEP). It is important to highlight this program as the amount of federal workforce dollars for in-school youth continue to shrink.

Youth have been placed with community-based providers and governmental offices across the County. These jobs have given the youth an opportunity to be exposed to the work environment, many for the first time; gain work experience, confidence, and something to put on their resume. Workforce Development and the Workforce Board have also been approaching local businesses to leverage these County dollars and have the businesses take on the wages and supervision of some youth in the summer.

As part of continuous improvement, Workforce Development has incorporated elements from the Bring Your 'A' Game curriculum into the summer youth program onboarding process exposing youth to key workplace behaviors and discussing how these behaviors will be reviewed and evaluated by their supervisors and the program manager.

A hybrid approach has been designed to continue to serve the youth of Lake County during the COVID -19 Pandemic. The approach combines the traditional model of matching the youth to a worksite in the community where the student worker can work for 4- 6 weeks and earn an hourly wage. A Virtual Job Readiness Bootcamp was created to involve students who were unable to be assigned to a worksite and could benefit from the Bring You're A Game Curriculum and additional job preparation skills while earning a stipend for attendance and participation.

#### **LXXXIV. Minimum expenditures for out-of-school youth.**

The Workforce Board has designed a WIOA youth program model – WIOA Youth Comprehensive Career Pathway Program - that is conducive to meeting the WIOA minimum out-of-school youth expenditure requirement. The WIOA Youth Program focuses on service integration with workforce development partners, youth serving providers and the education system with a priority of service to the out-of-school youth. Through this integrated program model, the Workforce Board awards WIOA funding to youth serving organizations through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process and will award funding to align with the expenditure requirements.

A critical component in the program design is the program integration with Workforce Development which includes approving youth eligibility, youth enrollments and monitoring program activities and invoices on a monthly basis. Through this level integration and oversight, Workforce Development will manage the real-time information on enrollments, activities, and expenditures – all that are contributing factors to ensuring expenditure levels are being met.

Workforce Development prepares a monthly grant expenditure report for the Workforce Board Executive Committee as part of the monitoring and oversight. Grant benchmarks are monitored throughout the grant cycle, allowing the Workforce Board to provide direction on corrective action if a trend is noted toward not meeting the expenditure requirements.

#### **LXXXV. Youth Workforce Development System Assessment and Action Plans**

In response to challenges youth and young adults faced in accessing education, employment and training services during the pandemic, The Workforce Development Board hired a consulting firm to complete a thorough assessment of the youth service network in Lake County with a focus on the WIOA Youth Funded programs and services. The scope of work included the following and the report will be published in March 2022:

1. Community Assessment and Profile
2. Interview Target Populations



3. Stakeholder Interviews/Roundtables
4. Service Delivery/Gap Analysis

To develop and guide the actions recommended by the report, The Workforce Board is convening a Youth Task Force led by Dr. Michael Karner, Regional Office of Education Superintendent. The Youth Task Force will review the report and make recommendations. The report and Task Force will focus on maximizing WIOA Youth Funding, leveraging additional funding and collaborating with a larger network of youth serving organizations and high school. The recommendations will also focus on how best to address recruitment and service gaps; collaborating with a larger network of youth serving organizations and high schools and focusing on key sectors of the population including youth aging out of foster care, youth with a disability, youth tied to the justice system – on probation, and homeless youth.

#### **LXXXVI. Edge Factor and 202 Leadership**

The pandemic has challenged Workforce Development to research more creative and youth friendly programs. Below are two that are being explored to implemented in early 2022:

1. [Edge Factor](#) empowers communities to tackle workforce development, inspire students, reach parents, and build relationships between local companies, schools, and families. They equip K-12 and postsecondary schools, businesses, workforce development organizations, and families with e-learning tools to showcase industries and careers, teach soft skills, show how Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) comes alive in the real world, while highlighting local training and career opportunities.
2. [220 Leadership](#) is an all-in-one youth development platform for schools and nonprofits to deliver world-class content, increase learner engagement, reduce staff burnout, and equip participants for lifelong success. 220's mission is to teach the leadership, professional, entrepreneurship and personal finance skills learners need to thrive in the 21st century.

These programs are both ready-to-implement resources and are being used by educational partners across the United States—school districts, afterschool programs, community-based organizations, and workforce development agencies—to change how students and youth and young adults are equipped with the skills they need to succeed in the workplace real world. The online programs include custom content for parents of young students to ensure they have everything they need to reach their unique goals.

## **G. Priority of Services Strategies and Policy**

The Workforce Board has set policy and to ensure individuals with barriers to employment have access to services through the Job Center and throughout Lake County communities. The Operation Committee of the Workforce Board has a focus on how priority of service is 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). (Sec.679.560(b)(21)) as well as determining priority populations and how to best serve them.

The Job Center of Lake County partners are committed to priority of service to individuals identified as veterans, spouses of veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, in accordance with Illinois DCEO's WIOA Policy 16-WIOA-4.2. Job Center partners have been collaborating on best ways to serve these populations.

- Veterans receive immediate assistance through the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) team. Veterans receive an immediate referral and appointment when they visit the Job Center. In addition, veterans receive a contact name that they can reach directly. Veterans that self-identify when meeting with other Job Center partners are also referred to IDES.
- Recipients of public assistance are invited to attend workshops and counseling sessions every Friday in the Job Center. In addition, the SNAP to Success works directly with SNAP recipients. Recipients of public assistance are also served off site with both the Waukegan Housing Authority and Lake County Housing Authority as well as community-based organizations that have a large volume of recipients such as women shelters.
- Individuals screened as low income are referred to the correct network of partners to establish an employment plan that considers the mixture of services and programs that can be accessed. In addition, individuals receive financial counseling and career path planning from Job Center partners.
- Basic skills deficient individuals are served through the adult basic education providers as well as several community-based organizations focused on enhancing the skills of community members. The Job Center and College of Lake County share the same building and referrals are seamless. Workforce Development services and programs are introduced to students in the adult basic education programs through presentations in classrooms and at group workshops.
- Workforce Development has developed programming to engage high school students in conversation and awareness around careers, industry, and occupations - Career Crossroads and the Lake County Careers website.

The Workforce Board's strategic plan has a system-wide goal to prioritize services to vulnerable populations and the Operations Committee provides ongoing reviews to evaluate the services and programs are serving these populations. Workforce Development leadership and staff meet regularly to review that data on services to identified individuals and discuss areas of improvement.

The Workforce Board will comply with all applicable requirements regarding determination of priority populations. There are a variety of other special populations in Lake County that need assistance as well. The Workforce Board and the Job Center Partners will need to determine how access is offered, how specific needs are prioritized and addressed, and how resources are prioritized. The success of the implementation of the Disability Employment Initiative grant provides an excellent example of progress in developing collaborative efforts, the Disability Navigator has been retained in the Job Center to continue to serve individuals with a disability.

Workforce Development has expanded its priority of service provisions by creating programming efforts and initiatives with the following agencies and partners:

- Housing Authorities- Lake County Housing Authority and Waukegan Housing Authority
- Department of Human Services- SNAP Participants
- Department of Rehab Services
- IDES-DVOPs
- Lake County's Veteran Commission, Veteran Administration (VA), and Great Lakes Naval Base

- Local Municipalities and High schools that encompass low income, high veteran representation, and underserved residents
- The College of Lake County Adult Education Department
- Lake County Jail
- Pads of Lake County
- YWCA

Workforce Development identifies individuals eligible for priority of service at the point of entrance and upon identification individuals are notified of:

1. Their entitlement to priority of service;
2. The full array of programs and services available to them;
3. Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and services.

An individual who qualifies for priority of service is informed upon identification of their entitlement to priority of service. Workforce Development works to ensure individuals who qualify for priority of service receive career and training services before other non-covered individuals and receive priority on any waiting lists that are maintained for training slots. However, once a participant is enrolled in a workshop, training, or service, they may not be displaced by an individual qualified for priority of service.

## H. Training Activities and Policy

The Workforce Board is responsible for setting policy and providing oversight in regard to the following WIOA grant-funded training and activities:

- Annual Training Expenditure Requirement
- Work-Based Learning Strategies
- Individual Training Accounts
- Training Provider Approval

### LXXXVII. Annual Training Expenditure Requirement

The Workforce Board and Workforce Development comply with the State requirement that a minimum of 50% of local expenditures be for direct training costs. Workforce Development as the fiscal agent has developed a robust expenditure reporting process utilizing comprehensive Excel Spreadsheets that provide a detail crosswalk from the Lake County General ledger to the training expenditure reporting. Workforce Development prepares a monthly grant expenditure report for the Workforce Board Executive Committee as part of monitoring and oversight. Grant benchmarks are monitored throughout the grant cycle, allowing the Workforce Board to provide direction on corrective action if a trend is noted toward not meeting the expenditure requirements. The Workforce Board has approved training budgets that include direct training utilizing Individual Training Accounts, supportive services, and work-based learning including work-experience, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and transitional jobs.

Workforce Development has experienced minimal negative impact on the Annual Training Expenditure requirement for the adult and dislocated worker funding streams. Workforce Development had seen an increase in job seekers applying for services and wanting to be trained during the pandemic while layoffs were occurring, and job opportunities were not available during lock down. There was a net positive effect where job seekers took the time to upskill during the pandemic and training providers assisted in this effort and moved to remote learning and virtual learning environments.

Workforce Board reviewed and updated policies to have been enacted to assist with training services that inadvertently also assist with the spending requirement:

- Technology Policy- \$1,500 laptop purchase available along with technical assistance
- Daycare Assistance- In Process of creating a reimbursement process
- Hot Spot financial assistance to support remote learning
- Allowing previous WIOA registrants to receive services even if they received services 1 year ago due to the pandemic or being laid off again due to COVID-19
- In house budget spreadsheets have been created for each career specialist to increase accountability during COVID-19
- Training Institutions with the assistance of Workforce Development created virtual/hybrid learning environments to support the continuity of training and education
- Virtual Training Provider education sessions were created to educate job seekers, the community, staff, and partners on high wage/high demand occupational training opportunities and skill requirements of key industry sectors/job.

Workforce Development plans to adapt and conduct activities moving forward that include:

- Continue to make available online training opportunities.
- Continue to make available support services to participants enrolled in training – addressing barriers to successful attendance and completion.
- Virtual Training Provider forums for community members and partners to expose job seekers to training programs and services which affect the expenditure rate.
- Increase access to support services including support services needed to be successful in a remote learning environment.
- Explore budgeting and implementing of the WDB Needs Related Payment Policy.
- Continue to support virtual learning platforms offered by training and education providers.
- Allocate a percentage Business Services Account Executives' time to work-based training activities and oversight.
- Use technology to streamline the customer enrollment, such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and WebEx.
- Continue to monitor and support priority of service.

- Continue to work with Job Center partners to increase customer referrals

Workforce Development incorporates an equity lens to training activities and policies by:

- Review and enact grants that support priority population groups- Continue to implement the Woman of Color grant over the next two years.
- Continue to implement supportive services policies such as Needs Related Payment, Technology Devices, Hot Spots, Daycare, and Transportation resources that are severely needed within underserved communities and certain population groups.
- Market training resources to underserved communities through mobile workshops within those communities and creating work environments within those communities to increase diverse enrollment and equity across all funding streams.
- Monitor training enrollments and percentages and have EO Officer address disparate treatment if it occurs
- Ensure enrollments and marketing of training services occur from all communities within Lake County by connecting/marketing to partners that serve diverse clients and families.
- ADA accommodations are implemented by training providers when request occurs.
- Engage Women, African American, Disability, Veteran, and other diverse population groups on workforce planning.
- Assess if technology resources have assisted with training goals. Survey job seekers from adverse situations.

#### **LXXXVIII. Work-based Learning Strategies**

The Workforce Board has set policy for work-based learning opportunities and continues to review the policies of the workforce boards in the region to ensure alignment.

**Work Experience** policy provides guidance around WIOA-funded work experience programs opportunities for adults, dislocated workers, and youth who have completed training programs and/or whose Individual Employment Plan includes work experience. Work experience is a planned, structured training experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period. Work experience may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate. A work experience workplace may be an office of local government, a non-profit organization, or a for-profit employer. Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act, exists.

Workforce Development responded to the safety and protocol needs of businesses when the pandemic occurred and had to stop some of the work-based learning opportunities due to safety concerns.

There was also an inadvertent positive impact as Workforce Development went through the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Allowed workers that were laid off when the pandemic initially occurred to receive work-based learning opportunities and earn a wage while learning a new job.
- There was an increase of impacted workers eligible and ready to enroll in a paid work experience.
- Processes and procedures created a streamlined program and worksite onboarding.
- Policy change allowed for work-experience wages to align with industry standards/pay and pay participants a competitive wage while learning a new job.
- Creation of hybrid onsite and remote work base learning opportunities and job description .

Workforce Development will adapt and conduct activities moving forward that include:

- Continue to assess the program and the environment to see what changes need to be made
- Continue adapting to the environment and continue to offer hybrid internships with employers
- Look at a transferrable skill work experience program where job seekers can work at multiple sites as an employment plan to expose them to different industries, job functions, and industry experts. This would require a change in policy and duration of work experiences
- Hot Spot and technology resources to conduct the hybrid work base learning plan

Workforce Development incorporates an equity lens as it pertaining to work-based training activities and policies by:

- The work experience program markets to underserved communities, organizations, and job seekers to expose them to this training opportunity. Outreach strategies will focus on recruiting a diverse pool of workers and employers
- EO officer will continue to monitor enrollments, demographics, and outcomes of the participants enrolled to

ensure equal access. Currently the work-based learning program has a percentage of 85% of its participants are diverse and come from a minority group

**Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)** policy provides general guidance for all IWT projects, as well as specific guidance for the formula fund grants when utilizing their twenty percent authority and Discretionary funds for grantees of the Statewide fifteen percent funds. The incumbent worker training program is designed to assist employers in upgrading the skills of their workforce in order to remain competitive in both regional and global markets. The training is “employer driven” and responds to changes in market conditions as well as the introduction of new technology into the workplace. The employer is the primary customer and the primary beneficiary of the training. Benefits to the Employees – The training provides new work-related skills and prepares the workers for job upgrades.

IWT was not a priority of business and industry as the focus through the pandemic and economic downturn has been focused on viability and keeping their operations running, staying open, and retaining the current workforce where possible. DCEO Policy allowed for IWT to occur upon hiring and it has with this opportunity that IWT is a retention and career pathway strategy at the time of hiring Workforce Development plans to adapt and conduct activities moving forward that include:

- Continue to assess internal needs of employers and policy changes that can be flexible in the ever-changing environment.
- Support IWT during the hiring process and incorporate OJT/Apprenticeship training during the same period of time.

Workforce Development works with business and industry on hiring and retaining a more diverse workforce through training, reskilling and advance education.

**On-the-Job Training Policy (OJT)** is training that is provided by an employer to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that provides the knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job. OJT programs must provide potential new employees, or active underemployed employees (adults, dislocated workers, or eligible youth, when appropriate) with the opportunity to acquire new skills or knowledge essential to job performance.

The pandemic has affected the OJT program due to employers laying off and not hiring during the initial months of the pandemic. But a viable program with employers ready to hire and train the right candidate.

Moving forward Workforce Development continues to assess policies that address today’s environment and the future environment.

Board Policy enacted to address equity by letting employers know if they address our priority population groups there is a financial incentive connected to hiring a competent worker:

- 1) Reimbursement rate up to 90% when considering the following factors:
  - a) The characteristics of the participants taking into consideration whether they are individuals with barriers to employment which is defined as a member of 1 or more of the following populations:
    - i) Veterans
    - ii) Displaced homemakers
    - iii) Low income individuals
    - iv) Individuals with disabilities
    - v) Older Individuals
    - vi) Out of School Youth
    - vii) Ex-Offenders
    - viii) Homeless Individuals
    - ix) Participant is unemployed 26 weeks or longer

**Transitional Jobs (TJ)** policy is one that provides a limited work experience, that is subsidized in the public, private, or non-profit sectors for those individuals with barriers to employment because of chronic unemployment or inconsistent work history; TJ are designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success, and develop the

skills that lead to unsubsidized employment.

Workforce Development was in the process of implementing this program through a partnership with the Lake County Jail. The pandemic halted this engagement and Workforce Development plans to revisit the partnership with Lake County Jail in the future.

#### **LXXXIX. Individual Training Account Policy and training services**

The Workforce Board has adopted the attached ITA Policy and has been directing Workforce Development to establish business practices and service delivery strategies to execute the elements of the ITA Policy. The Individual Training Account (ITAs) policy provides guidance regarding the issuance of ITAs for training and associated eligible costs when utilizing WIOA funds participants under one of the following provisions of WIOA: Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth (in-school and out-of-school). Participants eligible to receive an ITA must select an approved training program that leads to a credential attainment in a career that is listed on the High Priority Occupation List. Eligible and approved participants may, in consultation with the designated career planner, select an eligible program and training provider from the eligible training provider list as documented on IWDS. The guidance and selection process will be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice. The Workforce Board includes in the ITA policy a funding cap per program as well as the frequency a customer can access funding through an ITA – both of these are contingent on the current state of training, tuition costs, industry needs and total funds available.

As noted in the ITA policy, the Workforce Board has adopted a High Priority Occupation Policy. The High Priority Occupations (HPOs) policy aligns the investment of workforce development funds for training with the education and skill requirements of employers in the critical sectors of local economy. HPOs are skilled job categories within target industry sectors that show the potential for job growth and pay a living wage. Focusing training funds on these occupations serves both employers who are in search of qualified talent, and jobseekers who are looking for careers with bright job prospects.

The Workforce Board has and will continue to utilize ITAs as the main form of occupational training for eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Customer choice for a training program is available to eligible adults and dislocated workers who are assessed as suitable to receive an ITA for occupational training and have identified a training program and provider that aligns with the employment and training plan developed with a Workforce Development career specialist. The selected occupational training must be in an occupation identified by the Workforce Board as High Priority Occupation as noted in the Workforce Board's policy.

When priorities are set and plans are put in place, classroom training may be used to train cohorts for specific occupations/certificates/industry credentials, and customized training will be utilized to tailor training to meet employer needs. Contracts for training can occur in situations where incumbent or customized training is required to meet the needs of a specific employer. These contracts will still be subject to the administrative procurement policies and procedures of Lake County, Illinois.

The Workforce Board continues to explore opportunities with local education, training providers and programs to invest in classroom training for economy of scale, when an entrance point along a career pathway and when determined as the best way to serve a cohort of eligible individuals. For example, if there is a vendor delivering computer training/industry credentials consistently utilizing a substantial number of ITAs year to year, the Workforce Board will explore negotiating classroom "quantities of training" with that vendor to maximize grant funds. In addition, when a program has demonstrated success in training individuals along a career pathway that has led to employer engagement and successful completers gaining employment, the Workforce Board will work with the entity to document a program deliverable that aligns with occupations on the High Priority Occupation List leading to employment opportunities and will work to pilot the program.

During the pandemic, Workforce Development experienced an increase of job seekers interested in enrolling in occupational training using an ITA. Individuals were laid off and took the time to focus on careers, education attainment, and self-reflection as it pertains to how workforce could assist with training and tuition assistance.

The Workforce Development Board promptly modified policy to remove a 5-year wait time for returning eligible individuals to receive an ITA for occupational training. Additional ITA policy modifications that assisted in individuals pursuing training through an ITA:

- 150% exemption from the base amount approval
- 100% of semester-based programs at approved associated degree schools paid for
- Expansive HPO list considered and additional occupations can be added based on need
- Supported hybrid training or 100% remote training programs

Workforce Development plans to adapt and conduct activities moving forward that include:

- Continue to support hybrid or 100% remote training options
- Supply ITA recipients with technology and hot spots to support the ITA
- Look at cohort training or class-room size training options depending on funding
- Continue and expand training provider and industry snap shots/forums for job seekers to better understand the training programs that support high wage/high demand jobs in key industry sectors.

Workforce Development incorporates an equity lens as it pertaining to ITAs:

- Continue to serve 51% of job seekers that are basic skill deficient, SNAP recipients, long term unemployed, under employed, and low-income individuals.
- Continue to recruit and outreach in underserved communities in partnership with groups/agencies representing the underserved populations.
- EO office continue to review, assess, and provide findings on any disparity of enrollments
- Continue to look at grants that support the ITA and training process that support equity deliverables
- Work towards a more wholistic customer-centered design, bringing services into communities, reduce the need for travel to one location to receive services and increasing the number of job seekers recruited in different zip codes.
- Continue to expand on the WDB Equity Task Force in reviewing policy.

#### **XC. Local Training Provider Approval Policy and Procedures**

Currently the Workforce Board has set no additional criteria for certifying training provider programs beyond what is required by DCEO's policy. Workforce Development hosts regular meetings with training providers to learn more about the programs and each program's success with participants and employer engagement for hiring. The Workforce Board will be expanding upon these regular meetings to host a training provider performance meeting to look at the data and discuss strategies to serve populations and engage a greater number of businesses. The Workforce Board may look at additional criteria based on the results of these series of performance meetings.

The Local Training Provider/Program Certification policy defines the standards for training providers applying for certification and recertification under LWIA 1 to be identified as eligible to receive WIOA Title I funds. This policy ensures accountability and compliance to policies related to Training Provider Certification issued by DCEO. Workforce Board staff shall assume responsibility to review and verify the eligibility of training providers and training programs on behalf of the Workforce Development Board.



## **I. WIOA Title IB Workforce Funds Policy**

Under WIOA, the Workforce Board has authority to manage WIOA Title IB workforce funds, with regards to transferring and budgeting for specific programming within grant compliance requirements. The following areas are addressed:

- Fund transfers
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Transitional Jobs
- Pay for Performance Contracts

### **XCI. Fund transfers between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams**

The Workforce Board analyzes the expenditure trends and variances as part of its annual budget policy process. The Workforce Board takes into consideration the expenditure trends in direct training and the type of training programs that were most effective in achieving performance measures. As part of budget policies, the Workforce Board considers local strategies, transfers between adult and dislocated worker funding streams and the use of funds for incumbent worker training.

The Workforce Board has not had a need to transfer funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams, but it reserves the right to revisit this item in the future and will adhere to DCEO Policy that allows no more than 50% of funds be transferred between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams.

### **XCII. Incumbent Worker Training Policy**

The Workforce Board has an approved Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) policy that provides general guidance for all IWT projects, as well as specific guidance for the formula fund grants when utilizing their twenty percent authority and Discretionary funds for grantees of the Statewide fifteen percent funds. The incumbent worker training program is designed to assist employers in upgrading the skills of their workforce in order to remain competitive in both regional and global markets. The training is “employer driven” and responds to changes in market conditions as well as the introduction of new technology into the workplace. The employer is the primary customer and the primary beneficiary of the training. Benefits to the Employees – The training provides new work-related skills and prepares the workers for job upgrades.

The Workforce Board has budgeted the use of fund for incumbent worker training and has successfully met the training needs of small to mid-size businesses throughout Lake County. The Workforce Board will continue to budget funds for incumbent worker training across key industry sectors.

### **XCIII. Transitional Jobs Policy**

The Workforce Board has adopted a policy on Transitional Jobs in 2019 and has budgeted funds to pilot the program in Lake County Departments and serving WIOA eligible adults that have recently been released from the Lake County Jail.

This program will be evaluated in the first 18 months of delivery based on the success of transitioning participants into full-time employment and/or additional training where assessed as suitable. Where the program is successful, it is anticipated the Workforce Board will continue to budget funds for transitional jobs and begin a longer-term strategy of making the program available throughout the county.

The Transitional Jobs (TJ) policy is one that provides a limited work experience, that is subsidized in the public, private, or non-profit sectors for those individuals with barriers to employment because of chronic unemployment or inconsistent work history; TJ are designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment.

### **XCIV. Pay for Performance Contracts**

The Workforce Board has not researched or developed pay for performance contracts at this, but it reserves the right to revisit this item in the future.

## **J. Equity Lens – Services and Policies**

Partner programs, organizations, communities served, and job seekers that come from an array of communities are strategically engaged through the Workforce Development equity lens by:

- Embedding services within underserved communities
- Utilization of Census Data to engage and attract students and job seekers that may have barriers
- Conduct and create workshops for age specific groups
- Apply and secure grants to address gender, class, and race inequities
- Monthly review of EO Demographic data as it pertains to trainees and job seekers served to ensure equity is being applied within WIOA services
- Leverage community partners that have access to diverse job seekers, families, institutions, and state resources to market services accordingly
- Branding displays diversity and equity
- WDB Board Equity Task force and diverse make up of board members provides oversight of programming areas to ensure an equity lens is applied or that there is representation from all demographic groups along with a priority of service expectation
- Engage schools that may have subpar graduation rates and infuse workforce programming to ensure resources are made available
- Programs allow for pathways and onboarding ramps to ensure equitable access
- Policies that support and address equity that ultimately increases engagement amongst priority populations
- Supply resources that typically are not available or affordable amongst different demographic groups

## Chapter 5: Performance Goals and Evaluation – Local Component

### A. Local Levels of Negotiated Performance

#### WIOA Performance Measures

The negotiated performance goals for Program Year 2020/2021 are:

Performance Measure	PY 2020/PY 2021
<b>WIOA Title I - Adults</b>	
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	75%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	71%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	\$6,500
Credential Attainment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	84%
Measurable Skill Gains	50%
<b>WIOA Title I – Dislocated Workers</b>	
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	76%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	75%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	\$12,500
Credential Attainment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	85%
Measurable Skill Gains	50%
<b>WIOA Title I - YOUTH</b>	
Education/Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	73%
Education/Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	72%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	\$3,500
Credential Attainment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	78%
Measurable Skill Gains	45%

#### Additional State Measures

There are no additional State performance measures.

The Local Board has been instructed to not factor the COVID-19 National Health Emergency into performance negotiations or considerations.

## B. Current and Planned Evaluation

The Workforce Board has established high performing goals consistent with the factors developed by the State Board. To maintain itself as a high performing workforce board, the Workforce Board has included in its agendas service and program evaluation summaries as well as financial management reports. The Workforce Board has recognized the value of its members and modified meeting formats to allow for a greater focus on innovation, member input, and engagement on workforce development topics, industry trends, and partner integration. In addition, the Workforce Board members have asked for additional time to hear success stories from participants and service providers.

The Workforce Board is proud of some of its most recent recognitions:

- Current Workforce Board Chair, Andrew Warrington, serves on the Illinois Workforce Investment Board.
- Former Workforce Board Chair, Jennifer Harris, President CR Search, serves on the National Association of Workforce Boards as the Vice Chair and Chairs the Small Business Task Force.
- Revive Lake County recognized by Illinois Workforce Partnership 2018 Innovative Solutions Award.
- HydraForce recognized by the National Association of Workforce Boards as the recipient of the 2019 W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award.
- Laser Precision recognized by Illinois Workforce Partnership 2019 Business Leadership Award.
- Workforce Development Board's Efforts Toward Diversity, Equity and Inclusion recognized by Illinois Workforce Partnership with the 2020 Innovative Solutions Award
- Chicago Boiler Company (CB Mills) recognized by Illinois Workforce Partnership with the 2020 Business Leader Award.
- Eva Lock, Job Center of Lake County One Stop Supervisor and lead One-Stop Operator was recognized by National Association of Workforce Development Professionals as the 2020 Workforce Hero

The Workforce Board is reviewing the following existing service delivery strategies to be expanded based on promising return on investment.

- The Lake County Workforce Ecosystem is working to further expand the collaboration and strategies among the partnering agencies – Workforce Development, College of Lake County, Lake County Partners, Lake County High Schools Tech Campus, Lake County high schools, and the University Center of Lake County. The work is rooted in a newly developed purpose statement: Increase the economic vitality of Lake County by leveraging the resources of a coalition of partners and committing to a shared approach that enhances the current and builds the future workforce. As the Ecosystem partners begin going down the path of creating strategies to implement, the partners have agreed to the guiding principle that every action will be selected, designed, and measured through an equity lens.
- Workforce Development has developed a high performing business services team and has expanded services to be part of the Regional Integrated Business Services Team and has plans to have a greater level of service integration with youth serving providers and local high schools. The regional work will expand services to key industry sectors throughout the region as well as share promising practices. The expansion with youth providers and high schools will help to increase work-based opportunities with youth and high school students. To be more effective with industry sector work, Workforce Development will work towards industry sector specialists.
- Workforce Development has begun a robust program partnership with area high schools to connect high school students and graduating seniors with employers in the community. A pilot program launched in 2020 with North Chicago High School has demonstrated success with the program model and will be evaluated for success with both the student and employer with a goal to replicate the program model with multiple high schools, businesses and across industries. The goal is to create a standard way for businesses to engage with high school students and create an employment option for graduating seniors not transitioning to a four-year institution.
- Through the most recent strategic planning process, the Workforce Board identified strategies to carry-out its role as an advocate for workforce development policy and regional initiatives - the Workforce Board leadership will be leveraging its experience and position with national, regional and state associations to work towards making a greater difference. In addition, the Workforce Board will continue to operate within a culture that is resilient and adaptable and agile to a changing economy.
- Workforce Development has looked inwardly to reassess its priorities and is working to align strategies and goals with three overarching themes:

- Create a high performing organizational environment
- Create service delivery culture of equity of inclusivity
- Align workforce development programs with data-driven industry sector initiatives

The Workforce Board has provided oversight of programs and services delivered through the Job Center of Lake County and administered by Workforce Development that have provided significant return on the investment with the resources they were provided by the State of Illinois in the last year:

- 1,820 job seekers received employment services
- Over 800 job seekers participated in Job Center workshops
- Over 5,000 visitors registered at the Job Center to use a service or meet with a partner agency
- The Job Center website recorded 49,381 visitors
- Workforce Development exceeded performance goals and reported the following employment rates: Youth 69%; Adult 72%; Dislocated Worker 77%
- Workforce Development reported WIOA participant credential attainments: Youth 110; Adult 76; Dislocated Worker 140
- Employment data aligns with key industry sectors with 25% of the reported employment in Manufacturing; 25% in Healthcare; 14% in Technology and 7% in the Transportation Industry
- Over 100 employers engaged with youth at career events resulting in 31 youth enrolled in a paid work experience
- Workforce Development reported over 50% of grant dollars have been spent on direct training services for job seekers, work-based learning opportunities and incumbent workers.

The Workforce Board evaluates service delivery strategies based on return on investment, where it is determined a return on investment is minimal and/or a service delivery is duplicative. In 2019, the Workforce Board acted to only award WIOA youth funding to programming that integrates service strategies across partners and with Workforce Development. This change was based on documenting a minimal return of investment with stand-alone youth programs that experienced challenges with recruitment and short-term programming. The Workforce Board will evaluate strategies with partners to address duplicative services and will evaluate strategies based as a result of service integration activities undertaken by the Workforce Center partners. Partners plan to address duplicative services they offer and either eliminate them or potentially offer them in a different way so that a larger or more targeted population is impacted.

The Workforce Board will continue to gather qualitative feedback and quantitative data from training providers that are certified on the Eligible Training Provider List and have enrolled participants from the local area. The Workforce Board will host a series of performance sessions to have the training providers present data, successes, and employer relationships.

The Workforce Board will continue to include youth serving organizations and training providers as members of committees to share information and ensure services and activities continue to align with the Workforce Board's strategies.

The Workforce Board will work with the Job Center Partners and the Service Integration Action Plan to develop definitive metrics and measures of success. Evaluation and data collection will be defined by the Job Center partners, collected, and reported by the One Stop Operator and reviewed by the Workforce Board's Operation Committee quarterly.

The Workforce Board committees are working to document processes and data needed to evaluate services and programs are using the most cost-effective approach to ensure high performing programs and determine programs are serving underserved residents in underserved areas.

### C. Equity Lens - Performance Goals and Evaluation

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

### XCV. Board Service Policy Internal Review Process

Workforce Development's Career Specialists with case management responsibility will participate in monthly review and training of local policies, associated forms and general practices used in the case management process. This training will serve as a review of processes already being followed and will allow us to perform reviews of policies/documents to ensure consistency, compliance, equity, convene impactful internal discussions around policy additions/omissions to serve clients with barriers more effectively. Sessions will be held on a bi-monthly/monthly basis and will be completed in a one-hour virtual session targeted for February 2022.

As Workforce Development looks ahead modifying policy's, it will be more important than ever to ensure that decision-makers consider the specific needs and challenges of disadvantaged and low-income communities in future policies and programs aimed at serving business and reskilling customers. These efforts will be guided by prioritizing equity in all policy and program modifications. Elevating equity for Workforce Development also means that resources to disadvantaged and low-income communities must be prioritized and access for the most underserved be expanded.

An outline of the Board Service Policy Internal Review Process is described below:

Project Plan: Review of local policies, associated forms, best practices, and system applications to ensure consistency and compliance.

- **Goal:** Review selected policy (one to two policies per month) to ensure all rules/guidelines are being followed per procedure and being implemented accordingly.
  - Create uniformity across all case managers.
  - Program education sharing amongst team members.
  - Consistent transfer of service/activities with customers.
  - Utilize findings/outcomes from Peer-to-Peer Project Plan for Best Practices for WIOA Files, Case Notes, and Lines of Service.
- **Target Group** – required training for Career Specialists and Project Leads with case management responsibility (entire staff will be invited and welcome to attend the sessions but are not required).

### D. Regional Service Strategies

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

## Chapter 6: Technical Requirements and Assurances

The Workforce Board adheres to the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) including the following:

- Fiscal Management
- Procurement Policies and Procedures
- Physical and Programmatic Accessibility
- Plan Development and Public Comment

### A. Fiscal Management

The Lake County Workforce Development Department has been identified by the CEO of Lake County as the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as described in WIOA. Workforce Development has developed tested processes and procedures that align with Lake County government's financial requirements and purchasing ordinance. The Workforce Board sets budget policy aligning with Lake County's budget policies.

The Workforce Board has established a Finance and Compliance Committee. The Finance Committee provides financial analysis, advice, and oversight of the organization's budget. The Committee's sole responsibility is to ensure the organization is operating with the financial resources it needs to provide programs and services to the community.

### **XCVI. Procurement Policies and Procedures**

The Workforce Board and the Workforce Development Department follow Lake County's Purchasing Ordinance and the Lake County Purchasing Division takes the lead in managing the process. The competitive process used to award sub-recipients and contracts for activities carried out under WIOA Title I are pursuant to the Lake County procurement policies and procedures. The Workforce Board works with Lake County Purchasing when releasing request for proposals for youth services and one-stop operators and request for quotes for professional services.

A copy of the County's Purchasing Ordinance is attached.

The local area must provide updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.

The primary impacts of the pandemic stem from the need to virtualize the delivery and structure of WIOA services and programs. As part of this mass virtualization, service accessibility has now inherently been increased to allow for 24/7 access for many core workforce services without the need to travel to a physical office location. This adoption of new technology resources has also enabled LWIA staff to continue to work effectively and efficiently in a hybrid or fully remote environment.



## **B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility**

The Job Center of Lake County MOU clearly defines how the entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operator and the one-stop partners will comply with WIOA Sec. 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities.

- The Job Center of Lake County is reviewed for facility and programmatic accessibility by an EO Officer from DCEO on a routine basis (e.g. annually or semi-annually).
- Workforce Development has a trained EO Officer who reviews the Job Center as well as external partner sites where services are provided such as at College of Lake County Grayslake Campus, Youth Program contractor locations, and training providers in Lake County accepting ITAs.
- The Job Center's layout supports a culture of inclusiveness in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.
- The Job Center is recognizable in a high-traffic area; and is accessible through public transportation and a reasonable walking distance. The Job Center has both accessible on-street parking with spaces closest to the door marked for individuals with disabilities as well as access to a parking garage with dedicated parking spaces marked for individuals with disabilities.
- The Job Center has assistive technology equipment available.

The Job Center Partners are committed to ensure all individuals seeking services at the Job Center will be given access to services on site and the opportunity to explore occupations to understand the technical and physical requirements. Accommodations will be made for individuals when necessary. All partners agree that they will not discriminate in their employment practices or services on the basis of gender, age, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran's status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law. The partners assure that they have in place policies and procedures to address these issues, and that such policies and procedures have been disseminated to their employees and otherwise posted as required by law. The partners further assure that they are currently in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding these issues.

Partners, co-located at the Job Center, cooperate with compliance monitoring that is conducted to ensure that all comprehensive one-stop center, programs, services, technology, and materials are accessible and available to all.

The local area must describe steps that will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with meeting the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.

In addition to the workforce equity lens described in this Local Plan, LWIA 1 will continue to monitor the lasting effects of the pandemic to maintain adaptability and flexibility with regards to the delivery of WIOA programs and services across all demographics. Examples may include the continued use or adoption of technology resources, as needed, or the continued analysis of data pertaining to customer demographics and/or characteristics.



### **C. Plan Develop & Public Comment**

The Workforce Board has ensured there are multiple opportunities for the public to have input into and comment on this Plan.

- The Workforce Board held a public meeting with to gather feedback from Job Center and workforce system partners. The feedback focused on each entity identifying the population groups they serve, the types of services delivered, the unique service elements for populations, as well as service gaps.
- Lake County Partners presented a State of the Current Workforce in Lake County Report to Workforce Development and key partners. The most up to date information was shared with regards to the current economy, industry and occupational data, demographics, and educational information.
- The Workforce Board collected comments and feedback at committee meetings including the Operation's Committee, the Talent Pipeline Committee, the Employer Connection Committee, and the Executive Committee.
- Through the work of developing a new strategic plan, the Workforce Board engaged with community leaders and partners to gather information on strategies that align and feed into the local plan.
- The Workforce Board worked with the Job Center partners to document ways to increase access to services to underserved in underserved communities.
- Individual interviews were conducted with core partners, education and training providers, partners of the Workforce Ecosystem, as well as Workforce Development teams developing and executing programs and serving individual customers and business customers.
- The Workforce Board posted a legal notice in the Daily Herald on February 28, 2020, indicating the plan was available for review and provided email address to provide public comment. The draft Plan was available for public viewing at the Lake County Workforce Development Board office at 1 N. Genesee Street, Waukegan, IL and posted on the Workforce Board website.

#### **XCVII. Public comments received and how the information is addressed by the CEO, partners, and local board in the final plan.**

No public comments were received during the 30-day public comment period.

#### **XCVIII. Plan modification procedures.**

The Workforce Board will consider modifications to this plan per federal and state requirements. The Workforce Board will undertake a review annually to determine whether modifications outside of the required modifications are needed and will conduct modification of the plan pursuant to guidance from the State of Illinois.

#### D. Equity Lens – Administrative

Lake County Workforce Development is focused on creating a more equitable, accessible, and effective workforce system grounded in an understanding of user and stakeholder experience, including how racial, social, and geographic inequities inform experience and outcomes. The Workforce Development Board has adopted the following definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, to guide our work.

- **DIVERSITY** - Understanding that everyone is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimension of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. A focused dedication on meeting the needs of everyone in our community, especially those who have been historically underserved.
- **EQUITY** - The effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Consistently striving to meet individuals where they are, while providing them with support and access to services. Working to achieve equity acknowledges unequal starting places and the necessity to correct the imbalance.
- **INCLUSION** - A state of belonging, when persons of different backgrounds and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers and collaborators. Inclusion involves people being given the opportunity to grow and feel/know they belong. Diversity efforts alone do not create inclusive environments. Inclusion involves a sense of coming as you are and being accepted, rather than feeling the need to assimilate.

As Workforce Development advances in this work, we aspire to move further on the equity spectrum toward justice—the dismantling of barriers to resources and opportunities in society so that a more equitable and accessible workforce system, regardless of remote or in-person service delivery is created.

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

## **Attachments**

### **Lake County Workforce Development Board Policies**

- Individual Training Account
- Supportive Services
- Local Training Provider Program Certification
- Procurement Policy

## Attachment 1

### POLICY 5: Individual Training Account

#### I. Purpose

This policy provides guidance regarding the issuance of ITAs for training and associated eligible costs when utilizing WIOA funds.

#### II. References

Illinois workNet ePolicy Chapter 7, Section 2: Training

Illinois workNet ePolicy Chapter 7, Section 3: Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility DCEO WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3

#### III. Terms

An ITA is an account established on behalf of a WIOA eligible participant.

#### IV. Policy

##### 1. Requirements

- a. Participants must be eligible under one of the following provisions of WIOA:
  - i. 1A – Adult,
  - ii. 1D – Dislocated Worker, or
  - iii. Youth – In school and out of school
- b. Participants eligible to receive an ITA must select an approved training program that leads to a credential attainment in a career that is listed on the HPO List. Eligible and approved participants may, in consultation with the designated career planner, select an eligible program and training provider from the ETPL as documented on IWDS. The guidance and selection process will be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice.
- c. The use of ITAs should not be used as enticement to terminate traditional academic programs. The use of ITAs will enhance, not replace, current delivery systems in accordance with local area recommendations.
- d. The WDB may develop eligibility standards for program participants beyond state policy.
- e. The WDD will use the approved HPO List for ITAs funded through WIOA.
- f. Workforce Development will be responsible for authorizing Individual Training Accounts for eligible participants enrolled in subrecipient programs.

##### 2. Funding Guidelines

- a. The fund amount for an ITA shall not exceed \$7,000.00, except for identified healthcare training, and must be for training for careers on the HPO List. Funds may be used to pay for occupational training and related pre-requisite coursework, as identified in the participant's IEP, including tuition, required books, school fees, supplies and equipment as outlined in the provider's course catalog and made available to the public. ITA funds may also be used for licensing and credentialing exam costs related to the training program and the industry recognized credential that is identified in the participant's IEP.
- b. In recognition of the higher cost of training for healthcare programs, eligible participants choosing to go into the healthcare field may request and receive an ITA of up to \$10,000.
- c. Eligible clients choosing to pursue an Associate Degree program on the Workforce Board High Priority Occupation Policy #15 List and from institutions that award college credits that are transferable at degree completion are eligible for additional funding to cover the full cost of the specific program.
- d. WIOA funds authorized from ITAs are prioritized for Lake County residents and/or eligible participants dislocated from a Lake County employer.
- e. Participants are required to apply for other forms of federal financial aid. WIOA funds will not be withheld while the participant is awaiting determination of other financial aid eligibility. Participants who are delinquent in repaying a student loan will not be automatically disqualified from being considered for an ITA but will be counseled and advised to arrange a repayment plan with the financial institution which holds the defaulted debt.
- f. Participants utilizing a WIOA-funded ITA will be ineligible for additional WIOA-funded ITAs for a five-year period from the date of training completion. - this funding restriction will not be in effect beginning

March 9, 2020 through June 30, 2021 and extended through June 30, 2022.

- g. If the costs of prerequisite coursework push the total costs of a participant's IEP above the appropriate funding cap, the Director of the WDD is authorized to approve an ITA for an amount higher than the funding caps on an individual basis in cases when he or she finds that:
  - i. The participant is unlikely to find employment in a high priority occupation without the training identified in the IEP; or
  - ii. The individual is basic skills deficient; or
  - iii. Based on their previous employment or academic achievements, the participant shows a high likelihood of successfully completing the training listed in their IEP and achieving training-related employment; or
  - iv. The incremental costs more than the funding cap are minimal.
- h. In no case will the total amount of the ITA exceed 150% of the appropriate funding cap.

3. Circumstances in Which an ITA May be Denied

- a. An ITA may be denied for an otherwise eligible participant under one or more of the following circumstances:
  - i. WIOA training funds are exhausted;
  - ii. The participant has reached the maximum amount allowed;
  - iii. The individual does not meet the priority of service as defined in the WDB's Local Plan;
  - iv. The individual resides outside the geographic area of Lake County and/or was not dislocated from a company in Lake County;
  - v. The individual is not likely to succeed in training, based on an in-depth assessment;
  - vi. The training course or program is not likely to result in employment upon training completion;
  - vii. The training course or program does not lead to a career on the HPO List;
  - viii. The service provider does not accept the participant;
  - ix. The individual attempts to make changes to the ITA voucher without approval; or
  - x. The individual does not comply with reasonable program and participation requirements and conditions.

**POLICY 15: Support Services**

**I. Purpose**

This policy provides guidance regarding the use of WIOA funds for supportive services to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth.

**II. References**

DCEO PY2005 WIA NOTICE NO. 05-NOT-04 WIOA sec. 134(C) (2) and (3) (Adults and dislocated workers) and sec. 129 (C) (2) (Youth) and defined in WIOA sec. 3(59). 20CFR 680.900-970 and 681.570.

**III. Terms**

Supportive services include transportation, childcare, dependent care, assistance with educational training and testing and technology broadband internet services, payments, and fees for employment and training related applications, test, and certifications, reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities and housing.

**IV. Policy**

**1. Eligibility for Supportive Services**

- a. Transportation costs are eligible for payment/reimbursement after verification for the days the participant has attended a scheduled training class, a scheduled work-based learning activity including an interview, a job shadow, a work-site tour, an unpaid work-experience.
- b. Transportation costs are eligible for payment/reimbursement for the first 60 days of employment.
- c. Technology costs are eligible for payment/reimbursement when remote learning is required, and a participant does not have access to a home computer. Payment/reimbursement not to exceed \$500.
- d. Broadband internet service costs are eligible for payment/reimbursement when a customer needs to create or maintain a wireless connection for distance learning, searching for jobs, and other employment and training services where such services are already allowable. Based on research payment/reimbursement should not exceed \$25.00 per month while enrolled in services.
  - i. Case managers should analyze and ensure that the broadband internet service costs are reasonable and necessary on an individual basis.
  - ii. Case managers should work with each individual customer to identify the most cost-effective method of obtaining the internet service. For example: case managers direct participants to local companies that aid with low-income residents in accessing the internet. Please see: [Your Guide to Internet Service During COVID-19 Outbreak](#).

**2. Supportive Services Eligible for Funding**

- a. Transportation is an allowable supportive service to WIOA eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth.
- b. Transportation costs are eligible for payment/reimbursement after verification for the days the participant has attended class, employment, or other required program events.

**3. Amount of Supportive Services Payments**

- a. WIOA eligible participants are eligible for transportation payments/reimbursement not to exceed \$2,500.
- b. WIOA eligible participants who utilize public transportation will be reimbursed the actual cost of the public transportation pass or ticket, or \$10 per class day, whichever is less.
- c. WIOA eligible participants who utilize a private automobile will be reimbursed based on the following mileage as documented through Google Map at the following rates:
  - i. Participants living less than one mile (0.99) from the training provider will not be eligible for transportation reimbursements.
  - ii. Participants living between 1 mile and five (5.0) miles from the training provider will be reimbursed for \$5 per class day.
  - iii. Participants living between 5.1 miles and ten (10.0) miles from their training provider will be

- reimbursed for \$10 per class day.
  - iv. Participants living between 10.1 and fifteen (15.0) miles from the training provider will be reimbursed for \$15 per class day.
  - v. Participants living 15.1 miles or more from the training provider will be reimbursed for \$20 per class day.
  - vi. No participants will be reimbursed for more than \$20 per class day.
  - d. For Trade eligible participants, transportation reimbursement will be consistent with the Trade Act.
  - e. For participants that were enrolled and began their training before July 1, 2012, the previous reimbursement policy for WIOA customers shall apply until July 1, 2013. At that time, all clients will be subject to this policy. The previous policy allows for reimbursement for \$10 per class day for travel within Lake County, and \$20 per class day for travel outside of Lake County. Beginning July 1, 2013, all WIOA clients, no matter when they were enrolled or began training, will follow this policy.
4. Reimbursement
- a. Reimbursement requests must be accompanied by an attendance form that verifies their attendance in class for the days for which they are seeking reimbursement. Attendance forms must be signed by instructors or other authorized staff of the training provider who can verify attendance, as well as by the participant.
  - b. It is the responsibility of the participant to ensure that the reimbursement request and attendance forms reflect true and correct information. If false information is submitted as a part of a reimbursement request, including on any related paperwork, the WDD reserves the right to disqualify that participant from any future reimbursement payments.
  - c. WDD staff must review and approve all reimbursement requests and associated attendance forms in advance of any payments to the participant.
5. Eligible Supportive Service for Contracted Youth Programs
- For contracted Youth Programs, Supportive Services can include any service allowed under WIOA, if those services are outlined in the program design, included in the program budget, and agreed to in the contract for youth services. Reimbursement for supportive services should follow the regular invoicing procedure, as outlined in the contract for youth services.

## C. Attachment 3

### POLICY 3: Local Training Provider/Program Certification

#### CI. Purpose

This policy defines the standards for training providers applying for certification and recertification under LWIA 1 to be identified as eligible to receive WIOA Title I funds. This policy ensures accountability and compliance to policies related to Training Provider Certification issued by DCEO.

#### CII. References

Illinois workNet ePolicy Chapter 7, Section 3: Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility DCEO Policy Letter NO.09PL57

#### CIII. Terms

The ETPL contains all eligible training providers and their eligible training programs that have been certified by the WDB and that provide training services funded by WIOA Title I funds.

#### CIV. Policy

##### 1. Oversight

- a. Board staff shall assume responsibility to review and verify the eligibility of training providers and training programs on behalf of the WDB.
- b. Board staff shall present updates on approved, rejected, and recertified programs at the Employer Connections Committee meetings, as appropriate.
- c. Board staff will conduct monitoring of all eligible training providers and their certified training programs.

##### 2. Provider Verification of Initial Eligibility

- a. Training providers must satisfy the following qualifications to be verified as eligible to apply for certification of their training programs:
  - i. Offer training programs that are occupational in nature in high growth/high demand industries/occupations within the NEEDR based on the State of Illinois' DOTL.
  - ii. Offer training programs that lead to the attainment of an occupational skill certificate, industry recognized certification, and/or licensure.
  - iii. Are accredited by the ICCB, North Central Association, or any other Federal or State accrediting agency (applicable to colleges, universities, and technical schools).
  - iv. Are certified, approved, and/or recognized by a State, Federal, or nationally recognized industry standard association for a minimum of a year (applicable to training institutions, business, community-based agencies, proprietary schools, or other training providers).
  - v. Offer at least one training location in LWIA 1 if the training provider holds multiple training site locations. Training providers that offer only online training do not need to be physically located in Lake County to apply for certification in LWIA 1.
  - vi. Offer out-of-state training only when it has been established that no other compatible training is available in Illinois or when it has been determined (documented by assessment of the client needs) that it would be in the best interest of the client to attend the out-of-state provider. The out-of-state training provider must be certified by the LWIA within their state of residency.
  - vii. Fully comply with all non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the law.
  - viii. Have been "open for business" for at least one year prior to their application.
  - ix. Provide verification of the following criteria to demonstrate their status as "open for business," including:
    - i. Legal and good standing state and/or locally registered business,
    - ii. FEIN,
    - iii. Physical location to provide training (not applicable for online training providers),
    - iv. Proof of delivery and outcomes of training services related job placement services,
    - v. Proof of accreditation,
    - vi. Copy of training catalog,
    - vii. Training institution tuition refund policy, and
    - viii. Proof of published program/tuition cost.



3. Program Verification of Initial Eligibility

- a. Authority is given to the Board staff to approve the training programs of each eligible training provider with consideration to the following elements:
  - i. Physical location (not applicable for online training providers),
  - ii. Quality of instructors,
  - iii. Accessibility and Equal Opportunity compliance,
  - iv. Student-to-teacher ratio,
  - v. Curriculum structure,
  - vi. Placement outcomes and salary expectations of graduates, and
  - vii. Commitment and evidence of the ability to maintain records of completion and/or transcripts for five years.
- b. Board staff will respond to applications no later than thirty days after all training program information has been submitted via IWDS.
- c. Board staff will submit the information of each training provider and training program that is determined eligible to the WDB for review.

4. Program Recertification

- a. After initial certification, all programs require re-certification within one year of the original certification. Training providers must reapply for program certification within sixty days prior to the one-year anniversary. For example, if a program's initial certification is January 31, 2011, the re-certification must be completed between December 1, 2011 and January 31, 2012.
- b. Training programs are subject to re-certification if significant program changes occur.
- c. Program re-certification will be evaluated by the same requirements as initial certification.
- d. Programs that fail to apply for recertification during the appropriate period are not eligible to reapply for recertification for a period of six months after their original anniversary date. For example, if a program's certification expired on July 1, 2012, and the training provider failed to apply for recertification between May 1, 2012 and June 30, 2012, the training provider cannot apply for recertification until January 1, 2013.
- e. All eligible training providers seeking recertification must meet the following program performance outcomes:
  - i. Entered Employment Rate of  $\geq 40\%$ , and
  - ii. Employment Retention Rate of  $\geq 40\%$ , and
  - iii. Average Earnings of  $\geq \$2,000$ , and
  - iv. Credential Attainment Rate of  $\geq 20\%$ .
- f. Programs that fail to meet any of the performance measures will be removed from the ETPL. Once the program is removed from the ETPL, no new students can be funded by WIOA ITAs.
- g. Programs that fail to meet the requirements for recertification may reapply after twelve months from the date of the expiration of their previous certification.
- h. Programs that lack enough participants to post results in IWDS are exempt from the performance outcome requirements. Board staff will monitor performance based on available outcome data and may deny recertification if outcomes are not consistent with the standards outlined in this policy.

5. Decertification

- a. A training provider may be decertified at any time if:
  - i. It intentionally supplied inaccurate information in its application for certification or recertification of a training program;
  - ii. It substantially violated any requirement under the WIOA, or
  - iii. It voluntarily chooses to cease being an eligible training provider or goes out of business.

6. Notification and Appeal for Denied Certification/Recertification

- a. If a program is denied certification or recertification, Board staff will notify the training provider in writing. The notice will include:
  - i. The training program(s) that are being denied certification,

- ii. The reason(s) for the denial, and
  - iii. Information detailing the appeal process.
- b. The notice must be sent within seven business days via registered mail to the training provider and to DCEO's OET.
- c. The training provider has twenty-one days from the date of receipt of the notice to send a request for appeal to the WDB via registered mail. The request for appeal must include the following information:
  - i. A statement that the training provider is appealing the denial of its program(s) certification,
  - ii. The reason(s) the certification should be granted,
  - iii. Contact information for additional information, and
  - iv. The signature of the chief executive of the training provider.
- d. The WDB will review the request for appeal within twenty-one days of its receipt.
  - i. If the decision is reversed, the WDB will notify the training provider via registered mail and forward a request to DCEO's OET to add the training program to the ETPL.
  - ii. If the decision is not reversed, the WDB will notify the training provider via registered mail and forward a copy of the letter to DCEO's OET within twenty-one days from the receipt of the appeal request. The notification will include information about how to appeal its denial of certification with DCEO's OET.

## **CV. Attachment 4**

### **POLICY 1: Procurement**

#### **I. Purpose**

This policy ensures that procurement of services are conducted in a fair and open competitive environment.

#### **II. References**

TEGL NO. 15-16 2 CFR 200.319

#### **III. Terms**

None.

#### **IV. Policy**

##### **1. General**

All purchasing is governed by the Lake County Purchasing Ordinance.

##### **2. Procurement Timeframe**

- a. The WDB must select the OSO through a competitive process, as required by §121(d)(2)(A) of WIOA.
- b. The competitive process must be conducted no less than every four years.
- c. The OSO will be procured according to the following timetable:
  - i. July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2022
  - ii. July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2026