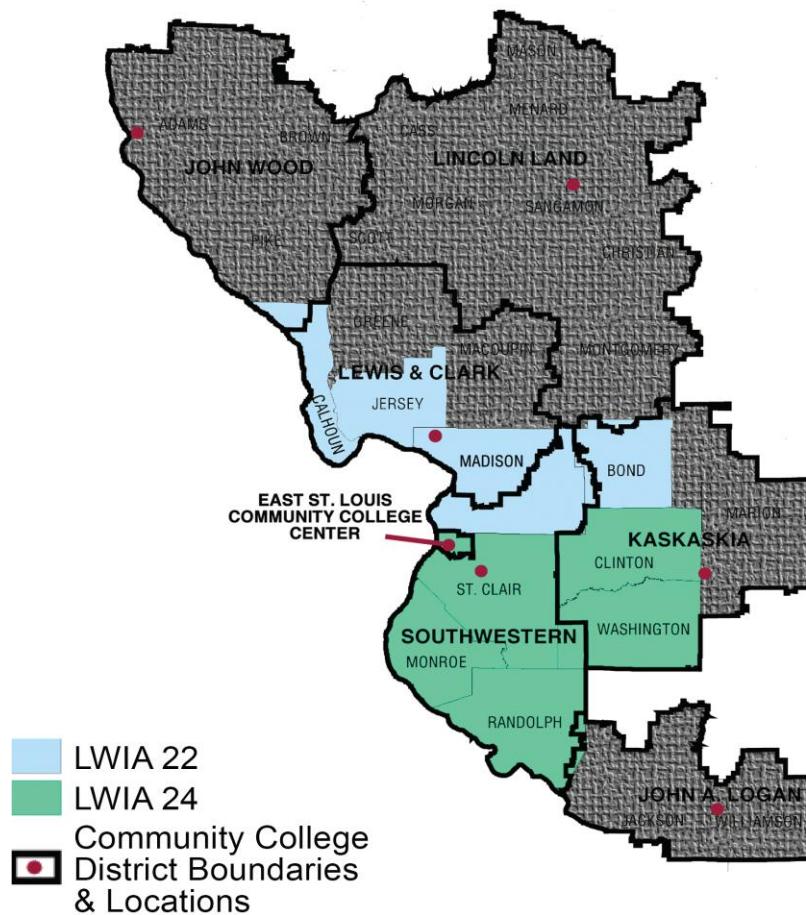


Southwestern Illinois Region 9 WIOA Plan PY 2024 - PY 2028



Revised March 2026

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- F. Describe how a workforce equity lens⁶ is incorporated into the local planning requirements for collecting and analyzing labor market information.

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- A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (§ 679.560(a)(4)). The plan must address the following areas:
- B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). The plan must address the following sections:
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- D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(v)).
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- B. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. This section must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:
- C. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.

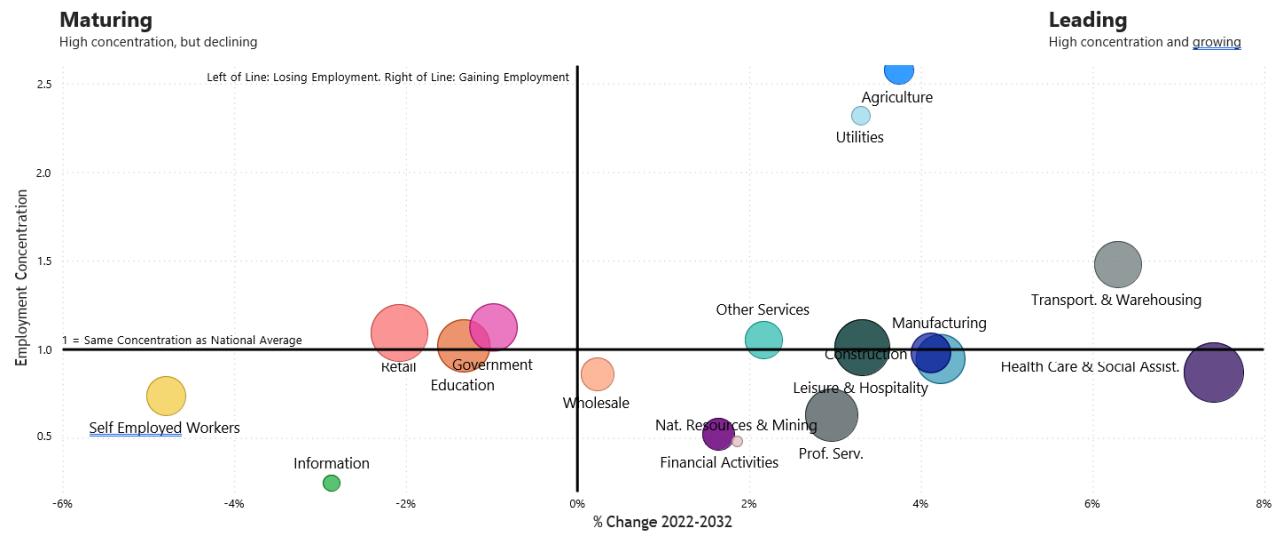
- D. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.
- E. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development, including:
- F. Describe how goals established in this plan will be monitored and evaluated.
- G. Describe how a *workforce equity lens*⁶ is or will be incorporated in the implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies.
- H. Describe how a *workforce equity lens*⁶ is or will be incorporated in the implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies.

CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

This chapter must discuss how the region has collected and analyzed updated regional labor market information including the local planning requirements. Regional teams are encouraged to use the labor market information posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning> to provide consistency in the data used for regional analysis throughout the state³.

A. Provide an analysis of the factors listed below:

1. Economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(i));



Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, 2022-2032 Industry Employment Projections.

- a. What are the targeted industries, high-impact industry clusters, and in-demand occupations in the region?

The emerging in-demand industry clusters in our Economic Development Region 9 (EDR 9) are Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation Distribution & Logistics, Leisure & Hospitality, and Utilities. The emerging in-demand industry clusters in our area on the Missouri side of the St. Louis MSA is Biotechnology.

- b. What industries have favorable location quotients?

The figure above graphically depicts each sector of the region's economy. The vertical axis represents each sector's location quotient (LQ), while the horizontal axis depicts the percentage growth in payroll jobs in that sector between 2022 and 2030. The size of each bubble demonstrates the current size of the region's workforce in that sector.

As shown in the figure, the Southwest Region contains several industrial sectors with favorable LQ. In Illinois's Southwest Region, Agriculture and Utilities each had LQs

greater than 2.0 in 2022 and Transportation & Warehousing had LQs greater than 1.5 in 2022..

c. What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?

Table 1.1: In-demand occupations based on economic growth

Occupation Title (SOC 2-digit)	Median Annual Salary	Estimated annual job openings from economic growth
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations	\$40,958	352
Food Preparation & Serving Occupations	\$29,070	340
Management Occupations	\$94,944	154
Healthcare Support Occupations	\$35,259	91
Business & Financial Operations Occupations	\$76,154	89

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security Employment Projections Program

Payroll employment projections are obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Projections program and follow these definitions:

Total job openings = Growth + Replacement openings

Growth = difference between base-year employment level and projection-year employment level

Replacement openings = *Exits* + *Transfers*

Exits = Current workers exiting the labor force

Transfers = Current workers who leave an industry or occupation to work in a different industry or occupation

Based on long-term projected growth in labor demand, the occupations with the most growth are as follows, and are representative of many industries but particularly Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities:

SOC Code	SOC Name	Annual Growth
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	57
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	57
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	49
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	32
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	29
15-1252	Software Developers	27
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	23

d. What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?

Based on long-term projected job transfers, the occupations with the most replacement openings are as follows, and are most highly represented in the Retail Trade industrial sector:

SOC Code	SOC Name	Annual Replacements
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,490
41-2011	Cashiers	1,349
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers, Hand	1,130
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	949
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	940

- e. What industries are considered mature but still important to the economy?

Three sectors in the region, Education, Government, and Retail are considered maturing sectors. The number of jobs in these sectors is anticipated to decrease looking out to 2030.

- f. What industries are considered emerging in the regional economy?

The Agriculture and Utilities sectors are considered emerging in the Southwest Region due to their projected job growth and low LQ.

- g. What is the projected regional key in-demand occupations?

The projected regional key in-demand industry occupations in our EDR 9 are Agriculture, Aviation, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation Distribution & Logistics, Information Technology and Utilities. The emerging in-demand industry clusters in our area on the Missouri side of the St. Louis MSA is Biotechnology.

- h. What sources of supply and demand data were used to determine the targeted industries occupations and skills?

Supply and demand for occupations are provided through the Illinois Department of Employment Security's (IDES) Employment Projections Program. The skills correlating with those occupations were identified by IDES through occupational descriptions obtained via O*Net Online.

2. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(ii));

The following analysis is segmented by the extent to which education credentials are required for an entry-level position. Among occupations requiring a certificate or license, the top three occupations by projected annual openings are Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers, Nursing Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and Childcare Workers.

Among occupations requiring at least an Associate's degree, the top three occupations by projected annual openings are Registered Nurses, Preschool Teachers, and Paralegals & Legal Assistants.

Among occupations requiring at least a Bachelor's degree, the top three occupations by projected annual openings are General and Operations Managers, Elementary School Teachers, Business Operations Specialists.

Among occupations requiring education beyond a Bachelor's degree, the top three occupations by projected annual openings are Managers (All other), Financial Managers, and Software Developers.

3. Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(2)); Based on the Southwest Region's list of in-demand occupations, the following details form the basis for an ongoing nurturing of local career pathways.

- a. What are the targeted career pathway clusters in the region?

Agriculture, Aviation, Construction, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Transportation & Warehousing, and Utilities.

- b. What skills are in demand in the region?

The top skills for in-demand occupations, not necessarily arranged by quantitative methods, will be: Active listening, reading comprehension, critical thinking, service orientation, social perceptiveness.

- c. How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local businesses?

EDR 9 uses Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) techniques to identify the skills preferred by employers and works with the secondary and post-secondary education entities to develop and train for those skills identified to produce a well-trained and ready workforce.

4. Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment⁴ (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).

- a. How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?

In total, the region's population in 2024 was 671,610. Of the total, 75.9% of the population reported their race as White, while 14.5% were Black, 1.1% were Asian, 0.1% were American Indian, and 0.4% were either Pacific Islander or multi-race.¹ In terms of demographics, the region has seen some demographic shifts between 2019 and 2023. In particular, the number of Asian (-1.1%), American Indian (-.3%) and Pacific Islander/Multi-race (-2.0%) residents has decreased in percentage terms. The number of Black residents increased by (-1.6%). During this time period, the number of residents under age 20 increased to 29.7%, while the number of residents age 60 and over increased by a sizeable 26.5% while the Statewide percentage is 18%.

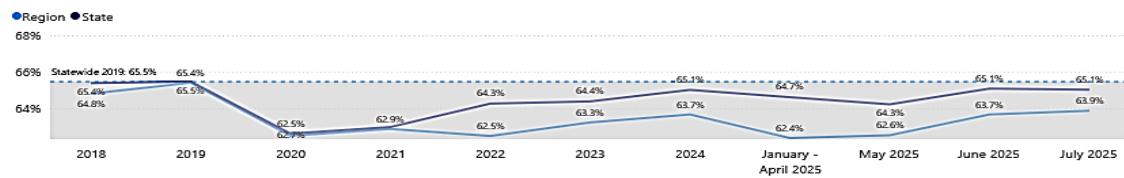
As seen in the graphic, the region's labor supply in July of 2025 was approximately 429,159 persons strong, buoyed by growth in industries such as Agriculture, Construction, Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities. The region's unemployment rate in 2024-Q4 was 4.3%.

¹ Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

Southwest Region Labor Force Participation & Unemployment Over Time

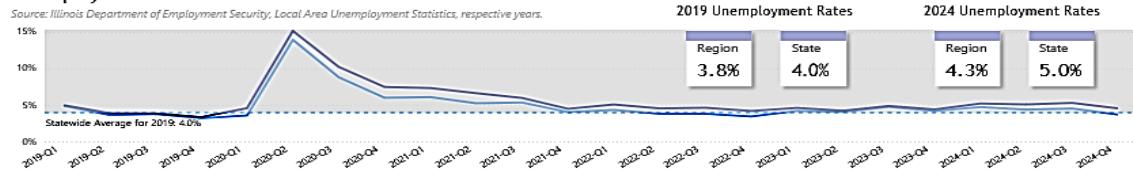
Labor Force Participation Rates

Source: Estimates from [Ladders](#), 2025. Shaded area shows participation rate below statewide rate in 2019.



Unemployment Rates

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, respective years.



²For clarity on what resources to use, regions can discuss the most appropriate data to select with their local IDES labor market economist.

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

b. What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?

In this region, special populations include disabled persons, justice-involved individuals, a small homeless population, persons aged out of foster care, migrant workers, persons facing language or culture barriers, single parents, long-term unemployed individuals, persons living in qualified census tracts, and persons who are deficient in basic workforce skills.

Low-income indicators⁵

- TANF Persons, May 2023: 3,861
- TANF Cases, May 2023: 1,474
- SNAP Cases, April 2023: 94,390
- SNAP Households, April 2023: 51,921

Foster care⁶

- Total: 1,788

Justice-involved population⁷

- Adult prison population (committing region): 2,054
- Adult parolee population (residence region): 757

Persons with disabilities⁸

- Total: 100,440
- Hearing difficulties: 18,682
- Vision difficulties: 17,979
- Cognitive difficulties: 43,290
- Ambulatory difficulties: 45,901
- Self-care difficulties: 17,577
- Independent living difficulties: 36861

⁵ Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

⁶ Source: Illinois Department of Children & Family Services; data as of July 2023

⁷ Source: Illinois Department of Corrections; data as of July 2023

⁸ Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates

B. Describe how the Local Workforce Innovation Board and WIOA partners support the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii)). Plans must answer the following questions:

The economy in Illinois's Southwest Region is dynamic and must remain so during the country's continued push for business efficiency, innovation, and advanced manufacturing presence. In support of growing demand for uncommon skills or knowledge, the region's sector partnerships with workforce development leaders are as vital as ever as some employers consider expanding in EDR 9 while others seek to reskill their existing workforces to better meet the skill requirements of tomorrow's business community.

1. How will the workforce partners convene or support the convening of regional employers, foundations, institutions and other stakeholders to create or maintain sector partnerships?

Workforce partners will provide sector-based round tables, regionals summits that strengthen relationships with employers, foundations and institutions providing common topics, areas of training or open discussions for areas of concern. Past round table topics have included: Apprenticeships, Healthcare, Manufacturing and Education. Sector partnerships are often facilitated and fostered by organizations such as Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois, and Illinois Manufacturing Association. The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois is a not-for-profit member based economic development corporation, which unites many business members from a broad spectrum of industry. They work to engage their coalition of over 250 members of the business community. The Leadership Council works hard to partner with area workforce partners, by providing education, networking, and providing a voice for their members. The mission of the Leadership Council is to unite business, industry, government, education, and labor for economic growth in Southwestern Illinois, hosting member meetings featuring informative presentations on regional economic issues, participation in committees

such as Military Affairs, Levee Issue Alliance, Workforce Development, Agriculture, Aerospace, and Economic Development. Illinois Manufacturers Association (IMA) is a trade association for Illinois Manufacturers bringing education, promotion and advocacy for their manufacturing members, which will partner with workforce to build better resources for manufacturers.

2. Identify the established and active sector partnerships in the region (as defined in Illinois' Next Generation Sector Strategies Guide⁵). If any exist, are they business-led and what is their role in WIOA planning?

No current sector partnerships meet the criteria as defined. Sector partnerships are developing between the National Restaurant Association, High School CTE programs, Collinsville Vocational Center, and Madison County Employment and Training to provide industry recognized training to the hospitality industry across the region, with curriculum development and testing resulting in Industry Recognized credentials. The Hospitality Industry has a strong demand for a trained labor force. There are career pathways for individuals to move up in the industry, or across different lines of hospitality. The Hospitality Industry in the region is vast considering the restaurant and hotel industry that serve the area on a daily basis, and for events that attract national attendance, such as NASCAR racing. Madison County Employment and Training, and St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department have been trained in the National Restaurant Association's Customer Service Training. This training has been provided to area businesses that work directly in the hospitality sector, along with other community members, such as local area high schools, and non-profits that are public facing or beginning their careers in the Hospitality Industry. This training will continue to be provided throughout the region using state supplemental grant funds. The National Restaurant Association adopted the DOL Apprenticeship Standards from Soulcial Kitchen for the first National Food Truck Apprenticeship Program, in St. Clair County. This sector partnership was developed as a result of the ongoing partnership the local workforce areas have with the National Restaurant Association and the hospitality industry in the region. The hospitality training was initially implemented through a grant serving at risk youth, providing a foundation for a career in the hospitality industry, along with additional curriculum being taught in the Local Area Vocational Center Culinary Program. Area business partners have also expressed a desired interest in the training, which will be provided through the local workforce, Madison County Employment and Training and St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department.

The Aerospace Industry in Madison and St. Clair Counties is robust and contain several employers such as, West Star Aviation, Boeing, and Gulf Stream. These employers are leading the sector partnerships through training their labor force to meet the needs and demands of the business, and to build a talented, qualified labor force. West Star Aviation has developed a training academy and apprenticeship in coordination with Southwestern Illinois College. Madison County Employment and Training partners with West Star providing on the job training assistance to WIOA eligible employees. Individuals are hired by West Star Aviation and Trained by Southwestern Illinois College receiving their airframe certificates, while being paid a living wage and working in a relevant, progressive worksite. Gulf Stream has been engaging with Lewis and Clark Community College to implement a progressive avionics program in house that will be implemented by an accredited program. Students can receive training for the aviation industry through the local area community colleges and have a pathway to connect to the industry. Both Madison County Employment and Training and St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Dept promote the industry with distribution of hiring events and

partnering for on-the job training and incumbent worker training for the employers.

The Steel Industry in Madison County is centered around US Steel. US Steel needs qualified employees in various departments from equipment operators to maintenance technicians. The Local Workforce Areas are providing assistance through job postings to promote recruitment efforts, providing incumbent worker training to upskill existing workers, and on-the-job training for new hires. Due to the increase in steel production the region Heidtman Steel Products and Steel and Pipe Supply company have joined to create a joint venture and launch of Granite City Processing LLC, this venture aims to enhance regional steel capabilities and services to broaden the product distribution from the area. The merger will continue to offer existing steel products, increase the products available, provide expansion and growth for another company within the industry.

Madison County Employment and Training has received a Department of Labor Apprenticeship Building America grant to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs and pre-apprenticeship programs for the Healthcare, Education and Bioscience industries throughout the St Louis Metropolitan Region. There have been active sector partnerships established between multiple area industries and businesses through grant activities. McKendree University has developed partnerships to upskill working paraprofessionals into licensed Elementary Education teachers through Registered Apprenticeship Programs, which is greatly needed in the area. McKendree partners directly with area school districts for this program. The community colleges in the region, including Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC), Lewis & Clark Community College (LCCC) and Kaskaskia College (KC), are working to develop education-focused Associate degree programs to work into apprenticeship models that will allow high school graduates to flow straight into full-time employment as paraprofessionals, and will qualify them for McKendree's teaching apprenticeship upon completion. The strategic partnerships between McKendree, the community colleges and numerous school districts throughout the region are creating a skilled pipeline of future teachers who will be tied to the region. The grant has been used to assist in developing the necessary curriculum and in supporting instructor costs associated with running the programs. In addition to the groundbreaking work happening in the Education sector through this grant, there have been 700 apprentices served under the umbrella of bio-science, healthcare, and education.

3. What public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies, and what is their role in planning?

Through Madison County's USDOL grant, pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship Programs for laboratory technicians have been launched through the public university, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) in partnership with leading private industry employers such as Washington University, Thermo Fisher Scientific and Millipore Sigma. Programs have also been expanded and developed in the healthcare field for occupations such as Certified Nursing Assistants, EMT/Paramedics, Medical Assistants and Licensed Practical Nurses through partnerships with community colleges (KC, LCCC, & SWIC) and private healthcare employers such as HSHS Health System, BJC Health Systems, and various senior living and skilled nursing facilities. When developing any of these programs, the grant team has ensured a connection between the training providers, the employers, and the LWIA offices in order to open doors for WIOA planning opportunities.

4. What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region, and what is their role in planning?

The Leadership Council, Illinois Manufacturing Association, Local Chambers of Commerce would be natural conveners for the area. These associations work with members to provide networking, resources, and solutions to their members. They would be able to provide guidance between members and outside organizations.

C. If any employer collaboratives are engaged in the U.S. Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management initiative, describe the following:

- What is the focus of the collaborative(s)?
- How is the workforce system supporting the needs of these employers?

At this time, there are no employer collaboratives actively engaged in the US Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management initiative. LWIA 24, St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Dept., LWIA 22, Madison County Employment and Training, along with Leadership Council introduced Talent Pipeline Management and initiated a conversation within the local Aviation Industry. The industry is reviewing the possibilities of further exploration of TPM. Outreach has been ongoing presenting to area organizations and chambers. The following organizations have had presentations to learn about the benefits of Talent Pipeline Management: Belleville Chamber, Metro East Chamber, Belle Clair Rotary, Fairview Heights Rotary, Leadership Belleville, Terra Source, MAC Medical, Tyson Foods, World Wide Technologies, Soulcial Kitchen, BJC, HSHS St. Elisabeths, Jerseyville Community Hospital, Sparta Hospital, Washing Community Hospital, Glister Mary-Lee, Amazon, and Empire Comfort Systems.

Between LWIA 24 and LWIA 22, there are 4 staff trained in the U. S. Chambers Talent Pipeline Management, to provide facilitation and assistance in the local workforce areas.

D. Describe any broad economic development opportunities in the region within the context of the workforce, education and economic development plans.

Opportunities: across the Mississippi River from metropolitan St. Louis, MO. One of the key assets in the region is the availability and the cost of land. Madison and St. Clair counties have opportunities for growth and expansions. The St. Louis Region's world-class freight network is one of the region's greatest advantages, with freight transportation including, the interstate system, river-ways, and rail system. The St. Louis Regional Freightways has 26 projects funded or partially funded to improve the freight infrastructure in the bi-state region, including southwestern Illinois. Projects include strengthening critical roads, bridges, rail infrastructure, port and airport facilities across the region. There are attractive incentives through enterprise zones, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and business districts. The Reimagining Energy and Vehicles (REV) Illinois Program is a highly competitive incentives program aimed at increasing manufacturing in the clean-energy jobs, to attract companies along the supply chain in the electric vehicle and renewables sectors, which has already attracted employer such as Tesla to the area and has prompted the EV training program at Kaskaskia College. Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, (CEJA) will also provide training opportunities for underserved individuals to learn in demand skills within the clean energy workforce, with a hub located in the Madison County Region. Southwestern Illinois has three access points to higher education through Southwestern Illinois College, Lewis and Clark Community College, Kaskaskia College, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, McKendree University. There are several private training institutions, specializing in training for in-demand occupations such as medical industry, CDL, and IT,

such as Career Center of Southern Illinois, CALC Institute of Technology, 160 Driving Academy, New Horizons Computer Learning Center. The Community Colleges and Local Universities have also become more creative in programming and training programs to meet the needs and demands of employers and students. For Example, SIUE has created a badging program allowing students to earn stackable credentials that are relevant to employer's needs. The state of Illinois has implemented STAR Bonds across the state Region 9 qualifies for 3 of them. STAR Bonds are an economic development tool, allowing local governments to issue bonds to finance large-scale commercial, tourism, or entertainment projects, with debt repaid by the incremental sales tax revenue generated within the designated development districts, rather than general funds, aiming to spur economic growth and job creation. These districts focus on areas with potential significant retail, dining, and attractions, using new tax dollars from development to fund infrastructure, property acquisition, and other project costs.

The list below are examples of economic expansion in the region:

1. St. Louis region positioned to be part of supply chain solution at America's Central Port with merger between Kansas City Southern and Canadian Pacific Railway. The merger puts shippers at two-day truck drive reaching 70% of US population. St. Louis Metro East and Chicago are the only two regions with access to all six Class 1 railroads.
2. Expansion of MidAmerica Airport in Mascoutah.
3. Expansion of MetroLink service to east of MidAmerica Airport.
4. New Manufacturing Training Academy at SWIC.
5. In 2021 & 2022, IDOT completed six major road infrastructure projects totaling more than \$89.1 million including improvements to Interstates 255 and 70.
6. Expansions of several current Metro East businesses including Wieland, Gulfstream, West Star Aviation, Boeing, Tyson Foods and LTI Trucking.

E. Describe any broad economic challenges in the region's workforce, education and economic development plans.

Challenges across the Mississippi River from metropolitan St. Louis, MO is a net loss in population between St. Clair and Madison County. Industries are attracted to the area due to the availability of land, enterprise zones and tax increment financing (TIF) however, the workforce is a topic of concern. The census of residents does not always support the demands of employers who may be attracted to the area. Affordable workforce housing or affordable post graduate housing continues to be unmet. Childcare is an ongoing need for the workforce. There are not enough affordable childcare facilities available to the workforce. Broadband access and connectivity have been a challenge for industries across the metropolitan area.

The list below are issues in the region:

1. Continuation of population decline in region. In 1970 the St. Louis MSA was the 10th largest in the nation. Today it is the 21st. The 2020 Census showed a population decline in eight of the nine Metro East counties.
2. US Steel in Granite City sale to Tokyo Nippon.
3. Ameren Missouri's regulated rates are approximately 24 percent below the national average for similar industrial class customers.
4. Needed expansions of the Center for Advanced Vocational Excellence (C.A.V.E). in Belleville and Collinsville Area Vocational Center (CAVC) in Collinsville to accommodate additional vocational educational programs to meet the needs of local employers. Currently Collinsville CAVC is turning away 100+ students into their programs due to lack of space.

F. Describe how responsiveness, inclusivity, accessibility is incorporated into the local planning requirements for collecting and analyzing labor market information.

The U.S. Census Bureau collects and distributes detailed demographic information for every county in the nation. Outside the often subjective views of county residents, business owners and workforce development coordinators, data on the age, gender and racial composition of communities is collected and distributed via multiple channels.

More directly, as part of the region's *workforce equity lens*, all program participants that are not self-service-only participants must submit personal Equal Opportunity (EO) data, including race/ethnicity, gender, age, and disability status. The Southwest Region's EO Officer assures proper maintenance of these records, and oversees group demographic analysis to ensure each LWIA recipient's activities comply with EO nondiscrimination obligations.

4 Source: Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

5 Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

6 Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers. Regions are required to provide information and analysis of the steps that will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities associated with the regional service integration strategies.

A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (§ 679.560(a)(4)). The plan must address the following areas:

1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region.

EDR 9 has many workforce development strengths, many of which have expanded and grown over the past few years. Whether it's serving businesses, working with individual job seekers or partnering on a regional project, EDR 9's greatest strength is its strong collaboration among its Workforce innovation and opportunity Act (WIOA) core and extended partners through the Regional Business Services Team (BST). This collaboration benefits the 9 counties within EDR 9, but also often times extends across the river to our Missouri workforce partners. Some of these regional collaborative efforts and strengths have included the following:

- **Apprenticeship Expansion Grant** - EDR 9 consortium has an apprenticeship grant totaling \$5,800,000.00.

- **MOU Partnerships** – LWIA 22 and 24 continue to maintain successful partnerships and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) for their respective certified one-stops. This includes successful completion of the one-stop certification process.
- **Metro-East Business Services Team** – Regional Business Services team that includes the WIOA partners and additional organizations. The team has many accomplishments to date, including the introduction of *Talent Pipeline Management (TPM)* and many collaborative efforts such as the recent regional apprenticeship event and numerous hiring, community and career day events.
- **Additional Examples of the Region's Strong Collaborations** – St. Louis Regional WIB Consortium, Southwestern Illinois College's Annual Manufacturing Day, Kaskaskia/Southwestern Illinois Growth Alliance's Manufacturing Career Fair, Accommodations for Success Reverse Job Fair, SICAP Construction Industry Career Expo, Madison County ROE Career Days and Gateway Trade Port.

Despite these many strengths within our region, there are still weaknesses within the workforce development system that are being addressed on an ongoing basis. These weaknesses include a lack of overall available workforce participants to fill the many open positions in our region. In addition, as addressed in the previously mentioned *Bridging the Talent Gap* report and outlined in the state's unified plan, there is an urgent need to develop career pathways and strategies to fill skills gaps, strengthen our workforce and grow our talent pipeline. Finally, our last perceived weakness is related to a lack of workforce development funding. Working within a system that continues to see annual budget cuts has made it difficult to not only maintain staffing, but it is a challenge to direct outreach and name recognition efforts. However, EDR 9 has recognized these weaknesses in the system, acknowledged them and is utilizing its many strengths to deal with them.

2. Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment.

EDR 9 as part of its collaboration with its WIOA and other partners has a variety of programs and services in place to address the education and skill needs for the workforce, including individuals that are harder to serve or have significant barriers to finding employment, retaining employment and finding a suitable career pathway. The following are some of the programs and services throughout the region designed to address those needs:

- **Accommodations For Success** – A regional reverse job fair geared toward job seekers with a disability.
- **Nexus Group** (as part of the BST) - Community agencies coming together *to leverage career opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment through collaboration and business partnership*
- **Cahokia and Belleville 201 Fairs** – Local career fairs designed to promote career and technical education opportunities, especially hard to serve and underserved students.
- **SIUE/East St. Louis Higher Education Center** – Run by a consortium of educational providers (SIUE, LCCC & SWIC), the center is designed to promote a variety of educational and work-based learning opportunities for hard to serve and underserved youth & adults.

- **TAP** – Transition Assistance Program for Veterans, conducted at Scott Air Force Base every two weeks. The class is designed to provide career and educational information to transitioning military personnel and their spouses.
- **Project Homeless Connect** – Annual event intended to engage homeless individuals and families to learn about and receive numerous services.
- **Connections To Success** – Regional comprehensive network of services and support to help people living in poverty become economically self-sufficient.
- **LCCC Supported College Transition Program** – Academic preparation and support services provided to students with limited mainstreaming activity in high school.
- **EDR 9 Vocational Schools** – Area vocational centers offering many certificate programs and preparation for post-secondary education & employment.
- **EDR 9 Transition Events** – Numerous regional events offering a variety of resources to students that are transitioning from high school to adulthood.
- **Madison County & St. Clair County Career & Technical Education Programs (CTE)** – Career and technical education programs current and relevant to meet industry standards and needs.
- **CSBG Skills Training** – Training and other programs designed for CSBG eligible participants. Madison County Community Development continued to provide CSBG services to customers during the COVID pandemic. While some of our partnering agencies worked remotely others limited in-person appointments whereas using electronic devices for completing and/or receiving applications, supporting documentation and determining eligibility.
- **Bridge Programming & ICAPS** – Adult Education programs focusing on contextualized bridge programs and ICAPS (Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) integrated instructional models.
- **SWIC Technical Education** – Custom designed programming and career readiness for employment in advanced manufacturing.
- **PACE Programming** – Vocational based programming in area high schools for students with disabilities. Previously known as the STEP Program.
- **Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services** – DRS offers employment support services at the time of referral to assist with job retention as well as ongoing assistance for an extended period of time.

3. Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide activities to address the needs of employers.

EDR 9, comprised of LWIA 22 and 24, has developed a BST to address business needs throughout the 9-county region. Officially named the *Metro-East Business Services Team*, it is comprised of 20 plus members that incorporate WIOA partners as well as additional organizations that serve the business community. Also, the team works closely with municipal, county and state economic development organizations in Illinois & Missouri as well as numerous chambers of commerce. The team has also been going through an ongoing self-assessment and continuous improvement process since its inception. These accomplishments and partnerships have included Illinois Job Link training & access, Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, an Threats (SWOT) Analysis, Asset Mapping, TPM, Nexus Group and team services brochures as well as a future business services team certification. Led by EDR 9's Business

Services Representatives, the group has also led many efforts to promote, grow and expand regional apprenticeships in the region. The BST members have also been responsible for organizing hiring events at the local one-stops as well as at offsite locations. Beyond hiring events and assisting businesses with recruitment needs, the team also works to provide informational workshops for businesses as well as individuals. For example, IDES hosts employer roundtables throughout the region. The team is also partnering with numerous high schools and vocational training institutions to promote career and technical educational opportunities to students and parents as part of the region's efforts to grow its talent pipeline.

4. How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?

One of the major ways that EDR 9 addresses the need for a skilled and prepared workforce is through a variety of work-based learning strategies. These “earn while you learn” initiatives provide an opportunity for an individual to upgrade their skills as part of a career pathways model while also earning wages. Also, some of these programs are often times shorter in duration than normal training programs. These work-based learning strategies include Paid Work Experience (PWE), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and Registered Apprenticeships.

5. Summarize the commitments of each program partner to implement the selected strategies described in the “Action Plan for Improving Service Integration in the Region.”

Both LWIA's, 22 and 24, conducted service integration self-assessments in their respective areas. In each area, the core partners as well as the extended one-stop partners are greatly involved in the Regional Business Services Team and implementing a coordinated effort to improve service integration for the region.

B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). The plan must address the following sections:

1. What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?

- EDR 9 boasts an excellent mass transit system including bus and light rail & Metro Link. The schedules are available at the job centers to assist customers who rely on public transportation.
- Door to door Paratransit services are available to qualifying individuals with a disability that are unable to utilize Madison County Transit (MCT) or Alternative Transportation Service (ATS) in St. Clair County. MCT and ATS also provide travel training programs to teach riders how to travel confidently and independently.
- Salvation Army: Alton Corps issues bus passes to residents of their *Booth House* homeless shelter who are looking for employment.
- Catholic Urban Programs will provide a bus pass to low-income residents who have begun employment for their first week until they receive a paycheck.
- Southwestern Illinois College provides transportation services for students enrolled in their programs, including bus and Metro Link passes. They also provide career training (including how to conduct a job search, resume development, interviewing skills and on the job behaviors),

transition services (inclusive of filing for FAFSA and other forms of financial aid and enrolling in college classes at SWIC) and childcare assistance (through Children's Home and Aid). In addition, all students are entitled to utilize SWIC's Disability and Access Center, Student Success Center, Library, computer labs and free, on-campus parking. SWIC also provides an office at both its Granite City and Belleville Campus that is a single point of contact for all students being funded through WIOA/TAAs programs in various Workforce Development Areas in Illinois and Missouri. This enables the customer to deal only with one office at the College staffed by personnel with knowledge of college requirements and Government Regulations.

- Kaskaskia College (KC) Kaskaskia College provides services for students including: Career services - resume assistance, career assessment and research, assistance with job placement; support services including transportation assistance, counseling, and childcare; accommodations for students with documented disabilities; tutoring services; mental health screenings.
- Lewis and Clark Community College (LCCC) provides transportation services to eligible students including bus passes and bus tokens. They also provide career services, tutoring through its student success centers and financial assistance and supports for all students. Students have access to LCCC's Access and Accommodations Center, counseling, the Library Resource Center, computer labs and free parking at the main campus and all of the centers across the district. LCCC's Adult Education programming provides transportation, case management and transition services for its students as well.
- Metro St. Louis-Travel Training Program teaches persons who are elderly or have a disability how to use public transportation in St. Clair County, St. Louis City and St. Louis County. Once a participant is comfortable with their progress and able to travel independently, a customized travel route is developed.
- Community Hope Center provides weekly computer classes and budgeting food dollar classes.
- Urban League offers computer courses and a variety of other job readiness classes & services in Fairview Heights and St. Louis.
- The MET Center offers training programs for special populations requiring supportive services on both the Missouri and Illinois side of the river.
- Madison County Employment and Training (LWIA 22) offers free Madison County Transit bus passes to their youth and veteran customers that need to come to the one stop center for job search, see an employer for a job interview, or initially need transportation to a new job until they receive their first paycheck.
- LWIA 22 offers other supportive services to their WIOA enrolled customers to assist in filling an employment or training need. An example of this need may be auto insurance payment, limited childcare while conducting a job search or attending an interview, a car repair payment, rent assistance, temporary shelter payment, utility payment, job interview clothing, or other legitimate need of a customer that is reasonable and necessary.
- LWIA 24 provides transportation and childcare on a case-by-case basis. Also, LWIA 24 refers clients to appropriate agencies within their county of residence for additional supportive services, i.e., LIHEAP, CSBG, etc.
- The Community Resource Packet published by Madison County Community Development offers a comprehensive regional compilation of supportive service providers.

- St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department (IGD) offers a listing of supportive services through its office at 19 Public Square, Suite 200, Belleville, Illinois 62220.
- The Madison County Career and Technical Education Program has placed an increased focus on connecting with their high school counselors to share information regarding career opportunities in the CTE fields. They have an annual joint counselor meeting with schools from this region of the state. During the past few years, they have asked CTE students to sit on a panel and share their experiences with the counselors. As a result, the counselors have and continue to become increasingly aware of the impact high school CTE programs have had on their students (and not just dumping grounds for students who are not otherwise able/willing to perform). The counselors are also learning about the importance of the opportunities available in the workforce without a traditional four-year university education, including Process Operations Program at LCCC and Registered Apprenticeship Programs through the local trades. Counselors are realizing once again that high school CTE programs are a very viable way to bridge many of the current skills gaps.
- Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services (Madison County and St. Clair County) provides books, transportation, assistive technology, information and referral/counseling and guidance and other substantial services to customers who qualify.
- The standardized curriculums used by Adult Education providers include instruction designed to enhance individual's self-management skills, ability to develop interpersonal relationships and workplace readiness skills.
- IMPACT CIL offers a Community Technology Center/Learning Lab that is available upon an appointment request. Individualized assistance is available for keyboarding skills, WORD, PowerPoint, Email, Internet usage, as well as other basic career development skills (resume and cover letter writing and job searching).

2. What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?

Through partner meetings and continuing cross-training among partners, policies and procedures may be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery by ensuring that:

- Sufficient supportive services funding is available.
- Skilled program leaders and staff maintain linkages and coordination.
- Collaborative partners share a common purpose and understand the customer's needs.
- Initiatives with a customer do not take a "one size fits all" approach.
- The timeline for the customer career plan must be reasonable.
- Communication among collaborating partners by utilizing partner referral form.

- Expand Career Center focus toward longer-term career development with Career Information System and Career Clusters.

C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vii)). The plan must address the following sections:1. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?

Illinois Department of Economic Development Regional Economic Development Team RED serves the state of Illinois with Economic Development strategies and support.

Southwestern Illinois Development Authority works with the public and private sectors to jumpstart investment and job creation & retention.

Chamber of Commerce of Southwestern Madison County represents the cities of Granite City, Madison, Venice, the Village of Pontoon Beach, and the unincorporated area known as Mitchell.

Edwardsville-Glen Carbon Chamber of Commerce represents nearly 500 businesses in the city of Edwardsville and village of Glen Carbon.

Collinsville Chamber of Commerce serves the business community in the City of Collinsville through supporting growth and economic development opportunities.

Riverbend Growth Association is both the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Organization for Alton, Bethalto, East Alton, Elsah, Foster Township, Godfrey, Grafton, Hartford, Roxana, South Roxana, Wood River and the Wood River Township.

Troy/Maryville/St. Jacob/Marine Area Chamber of Commerce promotes business development and networking to enhance growth in their communities.

Greater Belleville Chamber of Commerce supports and advances business and community interests, promoting the quality of life in Belleville and surrounding communities.

O'Fallon-Shiloh Chamber of Commerce serves the city of O'Fallon and the village of Shiloh by promoting business and fostering economic growth.

Highland Chamber of Commerce serves the city of Highland. The Chamber's mission is Community Prosperity: Making Highland the best place to live, learn, work, shop and play. The chamber is an advocate and service organization for business and provides a venue through which business professionals can take effective action for the progress and growth of their communities.

East Side Aligned promotes policy, practice and investment across sectors to ensure all children &

youth within the greater East St. Louis area are supported and ready for life.

Madison County Community Development houses an economic development division that offers a wide range of programs to help businesses cost-effectively locate and expand their operations within Madison County. These programs are designed to provide assistance in the form of tax incentives, business financing, infrastructure development, employee recruitment and training, and general technical assistance such as confidential site location services. A network of economic development assistance organizations, staffed by experienced professionals at the state, regional, and local level, are linked together in Madison County to provide optimum assistance to businesses interested in development or expansion in the County. This network is ready to utilize all available resources to confidentially develop a comprehensive incentive proposal.

St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department (IGD) The Intergovernmental Grants Department serves as an umbrella agency containing three divisions providing services to the public. They are Community Development; Community Services; and Workforce Development. Economic Development activities are also administered by IGD's Executive Director.

LWIA 22 and 24 One-Stop MOU Partners (core and other partners) actively promote and administer services for both businesses and individuals under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

2. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses were invited to participate but declined?

No organization declined to participate.

D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(v)).

If an issue is found that is not addressed in our local MOU's, we will proceed as follows: In the event of a need for administrative cost pooling or coordination, the parties involved will enter negotiations. Any administrative costs will be reviewed by the partners and examined for appropriate cost allocation. The results of this procedure will determine the course of action to be taken to address administrative costs sharing.

If an issue arises that is not addressed by the MOU and budget, the local WIOA agrees to absorb any administrative costs until such time that appropriate cost allocation can be reviewed and negotiated among the one-stop partners. Given the current state budget crisis and its toll on one-stop partner budgets, this would be the most effective way to address administrative costs in a timely manner. Recent examples of partner negotiations include the One-Stop Operator Consortium and the agreement to negotiate the funding of a resource room Business Services Representative after the expiration of a proposed service integration grant.

E. Describe how *responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility*⁶ is or will be incorporated in the regional service integration strategies, including job seekers and employers.

Southwestern Illinois Area Planning Council #522 in partnership with the St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department hosts a bi-monthly meeting with regional educators, community-based organizations and employers to discuss education and workforce needs. The Homeless Coalition of St. Clair County (HSCSC) attended a recent meeting and brought up a need for their clients to have transportation. HSCSC stated that some of their clients wanted employment in the warehouse and manufacturing tract along the Highway 255/111 corridor in Edwardsville. HSCSC also brought up that the Salvation Army location on Main Street in Belleville would be opening a homeless resources center.

Recognizing the need to provide convenient healthcare training opportunities to its employees, Memorial Hospital partners with Midwest Career Source Vocational School (MCS) and St. Clair County's Intergovernmental Grants Department (IGD) to create a unique opportunity to "grow" its direct patient care team and help reduce turnover in entry level roles. The program is targeted at employees working in other hospital departments who have a passion for a role in direct patient care. Currently, MCS offers a patient care technician (PCT) program at Memorial, however, there is a desire to expand program offerings in the future to include other roles in direct patient care. Memorial's goal was to implement this training opportunity as a pilot for other healthcare career needs. If there are not enough internal candidates to fill the class, we take referrals from our employees or from a list of applicants who have applied to work at BJC but need additional training for the role.

Person-centered planning is a growing priority across local workforce areas, focusing on understanding the unique needs, strengths, and goals of job seekers and program participants. Through service integration and strong partner collaboration, referrals are timelier and more effective, and services are better coordinated. This approach streamlines service delivery, reduces duplication, and improves outcomes by ensuring participants receive comprehensive, responsive support aligned with their employment goals.

CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This section will outline how the Local Workforce Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas. The responses must illustrate that business, education and workforce development stakeholders have provided input and are involved with the development of the strategies and to ensure alignment with other plans.

A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth (§ 679.560(a)(5)). Describe how this aligns with the State of Illinois' vision and principles (page 1). Include a description of how the region and local areas will accomplish the local strategic vision and support state and regional economic growth.

The strategic vision for EDR 9 and Local Workforce Innovation Area 22 and 24 (LWIA 22 and 24) is to provide business-driven talent and data-driven solutions that integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals, and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the regional and state economies. Our vision aligns with the State of Illinois' vision, as declared in the 2024-2028 State of Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan, to foster a statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy.

Utilizing essential labor market data, this Regional Plan provides equal opportunity and equitable access for area residents to achieve economic independence and improved quality of life. These opportunities are provided through a collaborative workforce development system built on the solid foundation of strong partnerships with local businesses, integrated services, robust career pathways, and cross-agency connections. The combined efforts of all players in the local workforce will promote life-long learning and proactively address the talent and technical skill needs of employers in our region.

This is achieved through a comprehensive Illinois workNet Center and access sites throughout our 9-county region. These locations provide business driven services, with emphasis on developing and strengthening career services for businesses and job seekers, strive for continuous improvement, and provide accountability for results. By providing training and education to those who are unemployed or underemployed, as well as offering supportive services - such as employment readiness, resume building, interviewing skills, job referrals, mileage reimbursement, childcare, uniforms, etc. - to assist special populations facing increased obstacles to success, the LWIB will nourish and expand the local skill and talent pool for high-demand occupations in the region.

B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators (§ 677.155(a)(1)). Include a description of how the region and local areas will accomplish local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and goals relating to performance.

- Develop curriculums that align with the state's elementary and secondary education content standards which will specify what adult education learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition.
- Promote transition from adult education to postsecondary education and employment through career pathways by providing adult education instructional services that are contextually related to workforce training and the needs of employers.
- Assist immigrants and English language learners in (a) improving reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehending the English language and (b) acquiring understanding of American government, individual freedom, and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Establish high quality professional development programs to enhance the instructional services provided by adult education providers.
- Operate established One-Stop centers for services to employers, with job seekers prepared to meet employer hiring needs.
- Promote educational attainment and credentials that meet employer hiring needs.

- Develop and support workforce strategies that respond to current economic conditions and specific regional and local needs, customizing services for specific employers.
- Proactively address future workforce needs.
- The community colleges are committed to improving methods to accurately track the employment of all completers and document the anecdotal data presently collected that demonstrates successfully obtaining a recognized academic credential. The credential will lead directly to employment in the field of study with employment continuing into the second and fourth quarter after exit. A valuable resource to find Illinois colleges that best fit a student's educational priorities and career goals within the state is the website, *Illinois College2Career* at <https://www.ilcollege2career.com>.
- Further develop the existing pipeline to area middle and high schools so their usage of the Illinois Career Information System increases. The Junior version (grades 5-8) and Standard (grades 9-college) provide learning plans and portfolios that are portable to Illinois schools. Curriculum in all subject areas is included, with an emphasis on the required state standards on career investigation and planning.
- Continue to utilize and expand the usage of the Jobseeker version of the Career Information System in the Illinois Job Centers, where customers can receive staff assistance in establishing their portfolio career plan.
- Assist veterans who access services in the job centers to make career goals based on their interests, establish career plans utilizing all job center partner services and support including financial.
- Ensure that educational goals for persons with disabilities are appropriate and provide necessary support services for success.
- Actively engage students with disabilities while in secondary school to ensure smooth transition to post-secondary school and/or workforce.

Title 1-B PY 2025-2026 Performance Goals

Performance Measurement	LWIA #22	LWIA #24
Adult Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	80.0%	74%
Adult Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	78.0%	70%
Adult Median Earnings	\$11,00	\$9,000
Adult Credential Attainment	78%	76%
Adult Measurable Skills Gains	65%	73%
Dislocated Worker Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	82.0%	75%
Dislocated Worker Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	80.0%	75%
Dislocated Worker Median Earnings	11,000	\$10,700
Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment	75%	80%

Dislocated Worker Measurable Skills Gains	70%	75%
Youth Employment/Placement in Education Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	72.0%	67%
Youth Employment/Placement in Education Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	72.0%	69%
Youth Median Earnings	\$3,500	\$3,500
Youth Credential Attainment	74.0%	77%
Youth Measurable Skills Gains	65%	65%

Regional Adult Education Performance Measures

National Reporting System – FY2025 Illinois Targets

Rolled-up Level Completion	41%
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**PY 2024-2025 Performance Targets:
Jobs for Veterans State Grant Funded Services**
(Source: ETA-9173 for JVSG)

Employment Rate - 2nd Quarter After Exit (Source: Item D.1, Total Current Period column)	58.0%
Employment Rate - 4th Quarter After Exit (Source: Item D.2, Total Current Period column)	59.0%
Median Earnings - 2nd Quarter After Exit (Source: Item D.3, Total Current Period column)	\$8,500

C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. This section must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:

1. To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§679.560(b)(3)(i));

Outreach is conducted to employers posting job orders to develop awareness of recruitment assistance available from the One-Stop Centers which may include on-the-job training grant opportunities, facilities for job fairs, interviewing, or testing, and some level of candidate screening. Additional services are offered to employers to strengthen the workforce in the form of work-based learning: on-the-job training; incumbent worker training; paid work experience and apprenticeship opportunities. Outreach to small businesses occurs through partnerships with the local chambers of commerce. BST members provide outreach at chamber sponsored events and educate small businesses on regional services. In-demand occupations and employers for in-demand occupations

are targeted for outreach by the BST once identified by monthly LMI at monthly BST meetings.

The local One-Stop Centers in Region 9 provides the following services that also support the workforce system: assessment of hiring needs, customized recruiting, job-postings, veteran recruiting, training grants for skilled, new and incumbent workers, soft-skills training, labor market information and space for hiring events.

2. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii));

The two leading organizations representing EDR 9, St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department – Workforce Development Group and Madison County Employment & Training, currently administer the WIOA grants as well as an existing Apprenticeship Expansion Grant. Both entities, as county departments, have been able to utilize the local government support and existing resources to effectively serve businesses throughout the region. This has enabled not only the administration of WIOA business services, but also the county (and state) incentives vital to not only retain businesses, but to help them thrive and expand. In addition, both organizations have led the formation and growth of the Regional Business Services Team. This team is dedicated to providing business services across EDR 9 and has grown to incorporate Business Services Representatives, and the focus on work-based learning, including registered apprenticeships. All of this has led to strong relationships within our regional business community, which in turn has led to business “buy-in” and participation when it comes to projects such as the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant.

Both St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department – Workforce Development Group and Madison County Employment & Training have greatly utilized their extensive partnerships when it comes to key stakeholders within EDR 9. Representatives from both organizations, including the Business Services Representatives, participate in numerous committees and workgroups connected to chambers of commerce, economic development organizations and social service agencies. This has been vital to serving the business community and also is critical to implementing the TPM strategies throughout the region. These key relationships also allow the consortium to reach out to the harder to serve populations in a much more cohesive fashion. In addition, both workforce development organizations serve as registered apprenticeships intermediaries and work in cooperation with the Regional Business Services Representatives to develop and grow new intermediaries.

The manufacturing sector has long been a mainstay of the Southwestern Illinois economy and is currently the top maturing industry. Each October for several years now, SWIC, at the Sam Wolf Granite City Campus, hosts “*Manufacturing Day-from Handmade to High Tech*”. Open to the public, attendees start the day at the SWIC Industrial Technology Center Open House, tour the SWIC advanced manufacturing facility, see demonstrations of cutting-edge technology, try their hand at virtual welding and meet more than 25 local manufacturers. The event is presented in partnership with the Gene Haas Foundation, Granite City Economic Development Department,

IMEC – Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center, Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, Madison County Employment and Training, St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department, and the Southwestern Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

3. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iii));

Our Business Services Representatives for EDR 9 are members of the EDR 9's BST. Members of the BST meet and make contact with regional businesses. Members of the BST meet monthly. In an effort to reduce redundant business contacts, the BST developed a business contact protocol. The contact protocol sets forth that the first BST member making contact with a business will do an assessment of the business to determine the business' needs, then refer to the business the BST organization or other organization that can provide the resources to the business.

Training of the BST took place in March and April of 2019. The BST members were trained on the services that each member organization had available for businesses. In order to make sure all BST members are aware of contacts that are made, a communication system for business contacts was developed. When a BST member makes a business contact, an email with the business' name as the email subject is sent to all BST members via an Outlook group contact along with a brief summary of the contact substance, person(s) contacted, and needs of the business. A follow up action is listed and a referral made if needed.

The Business Services Representatives regularly attend Chamber of Commerce meetings and events creating awareness and understanding on apprenticeships, Talent Pipeline Management strategies and work-based learning opportunities. The Business Services Representative meets with the Regional Offices of Education and School Superintendents to create awareness and understanding on apprenticeships, Talent Pipeline Management strategies and work-based learning opportunities.

4. To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv));

EDR 9 has two one-stop centers, one full service in Belleville that has Unemployment Representatives on site to address questions, issues and assist with filing claims online. The other center in Wood River provides direct linkage, computers for self-service filing of claims and phone to call customer service 1-800#. All staff located in the centers refer customers for employment and training services.

5. To promote entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services (§ 679.560(b)(4));

EDR 9 participates in initiatives of the Small Business Development Center at SIUE and encourages customers in the One Stop Centers to explore additional opportunities for small business startups.

The SIUE Small Business Development Center (SIUE SBDC) is a service to the community supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) School of Business.

SIUE operates two Small Business Development Centers and the International Trade Center. All Centers provide resources and information to Southwestern Illinois entrepreneurs, business owners, small business service providers, and the university community.

By assisting entrepreneurs and companies in defining their path to success, the SBDC network positively impacts the Southwestern Illinois Region by strengthening the business community, creating and retaining new jobs, and encouraging new investment. The SBDC enhances Southwestern Illinois's economic interests providing one-stop assistance to individuals by means of advising, training, research, and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses. When appropriate, the SBDC strives to affiliate its ties to the Southwestern Illinois Region to support the goals and objectives of both the SIUE School of Business and the University at large.

6. To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers (§ 679.560(b)(3)(v)).

Our Regional Business Services Team, is currently working with the regions high school career and technical education facilities and programs to develop partnerships with local businesses to develop apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities. Some of these facilities and programs are in underserved areas and have a large portion of students that qualify under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) eligibility requirements.

The Business Services Representative gives presentations to local high school classes on apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities that exist and how to connect with those opportunities. The Business Services Representative educates on the employability skills necessary to get and retain employment and where to learn these skills to increase the students' chances of getting and retaining employment.

Kaskaskia offers a non-credit training on Essential Workforce Skills which students can earn a badge for through our badging system. We would welcome the opportunity to expand this training. More information can be found [Essential Workplace Skills - Kaskaskia College](#) .

Our BST is working with local businesses in target sectors to host site visit events for the area high school students to develop interest in the businesses and to develop interest in possible apprenticeships with the businesses. The BST is also working with local businesses to host events for high school student's parents in order to get parental buy-in for possible apprenticeships.

The Business Services Representatives are working with the local high schools in an effort to get

the schools to use the Illinois Career Information System (ICIS) to access the students in order to know what career cluster the student's assessment identifies. The goal is to identify the career cluster, find out what jobs contained in the cluster interest the students and provide contextualized instruction for the identified jobs.

The Business Services Representatives are on a committee to develop a yearly career fair for the St. Clair County high school career and technical education programs. The first career fair was held on March of 2024. Kaskaskia College in partnership hosts a career fair on our campus yearly during the fall semester for all high schools in our district. It is in partnership with Marion, Clinton and Washington Counties Career & Technical Education Center.

The plan is to start with St. Clair County schools and to expand to include all of the schools in Economic Region 9.

The Business Services Representatives meets with all three community colleges in Region 9 to coordinate partnerships with the community colleges and the schools, businesses, and community-based organizations.

St. Clair IGD is currently engaged in an IWT project with MAC Medical to train 10 registered apprentices in welding. IGD will pay for the related training instruction and OJT for the apprentices.

EDR 9 will host four sector-based employer roundtable events each year to promote business services and work-based learning resources available to businesses.

D. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.

Economic Development Region 9 Apprenticeship Consortium

EDR 9 Apprenticeship Consortium has requested funding for several apprenticeship proposals over the past couple of months. The EDR 9 Apprenticeship Consortium has chosen the medical and manufacturing sectors for this work. Both sectors are highlighted in the Unified State Plan as well as the WIOA Regional Plan for EDR 9.

Working as the Business Services Representatives, the Consortium will immediately pursue formal DOL approved apprenticeships for Gulfstream to provide a new approach for recruitment and training. Gulfstream has expressed their strong desire to be part of this opportunity. West Star Aviation, located in East Alton, Illinois, plans to utilize the Department of Labor approved Airframe and Power Plant Mechanic apprenticeship program. West Star has implemented 3 cohorts of the West Star Academy hiring and training employees. The educational provider is Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) and the educational component will be an Associate in Applied Science Degree for Aviation Maintenance Technology. The classroom portion is 75 credit hours in length, and the anticipated length of the apprenticeship is 8,000 hours. EDR 9 is in an enviable position in that all of the WIOA Core partners and many of our non-core partners have already come together to create a formal Regional Business

Services team. This team holds regular meetings and has been granted access to and trained on the Illinois Job Link system as a means to operate cohesively under one system. Based on conversations with other Local Workforce Area Directors, this is unique to our region. By utilizing WIOA partners in our navigation plan, the Consortium will be able to leverage existing relationships, address eligibility and capacity issues and concerns, and cover a much broader geographical region. The Consortium expects that this model will vastly increase awareness and the rewards of apprenticeships to both employers and job seekers.

The Business Services Representatives from both LWIA 22 and LWIA 24 will educate employers and the public on the use of apprenticeships and Talent Pipeline Management strategies to produce a skilled workforce using WIOA eligible individuals and individuals with barriers. The team will educate employers and the public on responsiveness, inclusivity, and accessibility in the workforce. The Business Services Representatives educate employers and the public on using the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary in order to standardize language and understanding and using the Illinois Career Information System to access student's career pathways.

The Business Services Representative's anticipated goal under this project is to develop apprenticeships for the occupations of Certified Medical Assistants, Aviation Maintenance Technicians, Avionics Maintenance Technicians, Industrial Maintenance Technicians, Diesel and Auto Mechanics, and Welders and other occupations as the need is identified by Labor Market Information. Every effort will be made to identify non-traditional occupations across all sectors.

The Business Services Representatives will assist the Community Colleges, Regional Offices of Education, Employer Associations, Employers and regional high schools to become intermediaries and provide technical and resource support in order to increase the number of effective intermediaries available to grow apprenticeships in Region 9.

Bridging the Talent Gap Report

A main reason employer survey respondents experience difficulty in hiring includes the lack of the right skills for the job (48%). 80% of respondents report that their business does not provide any support for work-based learning. 65% of respondents indicated that they did not currently work with a local education provider to assess skill gaps. It is our hope that this report has opened the eyes of businesses that they may need to work with the local one-stops in our region for assistance with work-based learning opportunities, including apprenticeships.

Southwestern Illinois Regional Apprenticeship Meeting

Madison County Employment & Training, St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department and the City of Collinsville hosts a Southwestern Illinois Regional Apprenticeship Meeting from 9 a.m. to noon Thursday, each October at Collinsville's Gateway Convention Center. The meetings feature presentations and panel discussions exploring the apprenticeship opportunities in our local area. Area

business leaders, training providers, workforce professionals, and apprentices explained the benefits of implementing work-based learning, and attendees learned more about growing apprenticeship opportunities as part of building a sustainable talent pipeline in our region.

Regional Business Services Representatives

When a business decides that a registered apprenticeship is a tool of value to the business, the Business Services Representatives help navigate the business through the apprenticeship process from start to implementation of the apprenticeship. The team facilitates the contact between the business and the intermediary and provides any needed technical assistance to the business. An example of technical assistance to a business is sitting down with a business to analyze talent flows to see where their current talent came from.

The Regional Business Services Representatives assist pre-apprenticeship participants in transitioning to registered apprenticeships, for example, identifying to participants the requisites necessary to enter a registered apprenticeship.

Our Business Services Representatives have held meetings with businesses and educational providers from secondary and post-secondary education to use apprenticeships as a part of the TPM System. The team will continue to look at program offerings by the high school career and technical education programs and make recommendations on how to strengthen those programs to achieve better results with more recognized credentialing.

E. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.

Digital Badging. SIUE has partnered with Acclaim to provide professionals with a digital version of their earned credentials. Digital badges can be used in email signatures or digital resumes, and on social media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. This digital image contains verified metadata that describes the professional's qualifications and the process required to earn them. SIUE currently offers 10 STEM badges and on-line certificates.

Kaskaskia College is also developing a digital badging program to promote qualifications and non-credit training that participants can use on resumes and social media sites.

Talent Pipeline Management (as defined in Section F) is another initiative to shorten the time from credential to employment. Strategy 2 (Engage in Demand Planning) addresses the quantity, location, and time in which talent needs to be ready for critical jobs identified by the employer collaborative. Strategy 3 (Communicate Competency & Credential Requirements) addresses the final missing piece – quality – by addressing the competency, credentialing, and other hiring requirements for these jobs. Employers need to work together to create a common language in describing skills, competencies, credentials, and other hiring requirements. Through a shared language, employers in a collaborative

can better communicate similarities and differences in hiring requirements to education and workforce partners. Strategy 3 takeaways are to understand the importance of better communicating competency and credentialing requirements to fill critical positions, to identify opportunities for employers to better communicate and prioritize hiring requirements, and how to combine and share the results of employer demand planning and communicating competency and credentialing requirements.

F. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development, including:

1. Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.

EDR 9 employs the initiative, TPM, developed by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation. TPM is a demand-driven, employer-led approach to close the skills gap that builds talent supply chains aligned to dynamic business needs. The demands of today's economy require a strategic alignment between classroom and career, so through this approach, employers play an expanded leadership role as "end-customers" of our education and training systems. TPM is a workforce strategy for our time that can meet the needs of an ever-changing business environment.

2. Expanding career pathway⁷ opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.

In order to enhance the current WIOA services to expand career pathways, integrate programs of study to lead to industry-recognized credentials, and improve job opportunities and earnings, EDR 9 will plan and develop the following steps for a results-driven workforce development system:

- Engage employers and use labor market intelligence in determining providing training and hiring options in their industry sector.
- Develop and implement earn-and-learn job opportunities with employers through on-the-job training, internships and apprenticeships.
- Measure and evaluate employment gained by program enrollees and earnings outcomes by target enrollment group.
- Promote steppingstones for employment from entry, to advancement, to career.
- Promote competency attainment in industry sectors with training skills.

3. Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services.
 - Perkins V- reauthorized in 2019 as Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century, develop more fully the academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of secondary and postsecondary students enrolled in CTE programs of

study, increasing the employment opportunities for special populations. Perkins V staff have a presence in all three community colleges in our region.

- DVR provides a program entitled "Community College Initiative". If a customer meets the approval criteria, he/she will be funded by DVR to begin and obtain an Associate's Degree. Bachelor's and Master's Degree programs may also be funded if approval criteria are met.
- DVR will also provide reasonable accommodations for the disabled individual if necessary.
- SWIC and L&C provides career services not only to students and graduates through their Career Services Department but has dedicated staff at the WIOA Career Services offices on the Belleville Campus, Granite City Campus and at the East St. Louis Higher Education Center performing general career services to student and the general public. In addition, by providing a single point of contact for WIOA students, the students receive additional job search assistance and counseling during their program of study. L&C also has IL High School Diploma classes at the MCETD One Stop Center. SWIC and L&C provides career services not only to students and graduates through their Career Services Department but has dedicated staff at the WIOA Career Services offices on the Belleville Campus, Granite City Campus and at the East St. Louis Higher Education Center performing general career services to student and the general public. In addition, by providing a single point of contact for WIOA students, the students receive additional job search assistance and counseling during their program of study. L&C also has IL High School Diploma classes at the MCETD One Stop Center. Kaskaskia College also provides Illinois High School Diploma classes at our education centers and main campus.
- SIUE's Career Development Center incorporates career counseling and development with co-ops and internships in a comprehensive program to prepare students to enter the world of work. Serving SIUE students and alumni, they provide a starting point to access valuable career information. Through comprehensive services, their experienced staff help students and alumni connect with employers and find the resources they need. They also work with employers seeking to network with and hire SIUE students and alumni.
- Monthly meetings of the Regional ROE Transition Planning Committee and monthly meetings of the Area Planning Committee will continue with program information sharing and updates on educational opportunities and bridge programs.
- The IDES Labor Market Economist continues to provide training to DRS vocational rehabilitation counselors on the Illinois Career Information System, including the portfolio feature, to assist clients with planning and achieving career goals after investigating and comparing available options.
- The IDES Labor Market Economist continues to provide training to WIOA staff in the job centers on the Illinois Career Information System, including Career Plan.
- EDR 9 seeks to develop a stronger pipeline to juvenile and adult probation, both state and federal for enhanced career and employment services.
- The Hire the Future program provides presentations on career/job readiness to youth probationers.
- The Re-Entry Employment Service Program (RESP) helps people with criminal records find a job. RESP also provides job readiness workshops and services.
- Madison County Employment and Training presents job readiness workshops to residents at the Madison County Housing Authority.

- Connection to Success offers a holistic approach to pathways to employment. Services include coaching, weekly group sessions, employment support, mentoring, personal and professional development, transportation and used vehicles.
- L&C Adult Education's Building Futures YouthBuild effort provides a comprehensive model of youth development for out-of-school young people. This includes IL High School Diploma classes, vocational training, case management and counseling, leadership development, a stipend so youth can earn while they learn and follow up and transition services for a year or more after programming.
- Kaskaskia College provides ICAPS programming for participants in the Adult Education program. Adults can obtain this Illinois High School diploma while simultaneously participating in college classes to jump start their post-secondary education.
 - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
 - Welding
 - Automotive Technology
 - Carpentry
 - Disability Support Services

G. Describe how goals established in this plan will be monitored and evaluated.

Every year in January, the partners involved in the local and regional planning process will meet to evaluate the goals written into each plan. This is done to amend, if necessary, the local and regional plans as required by the WIOA Act.

H. Describe how responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility is or will be incorporated in the implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies.

Apprenticeship opportunities for students with disabilities have been established in EDR-9.

Apprenticeships for students participating in the PACE program, formally known as the STEP Program have been developed and shown great success with assisting high school students in obtaining and maintaining gainful employment beyond graduation. Apprenticeships have been established between Collinsville High School, and the Gateway Convention Center, Edwardsville High School and the ACT -All County Transit Bus System, Granite City High School and Weber Chevrolet, and Scoggins Law Office, and Icon Mechanical. Bond County High School and Supplied Energy. Apprentice occupations are: landscaping/groundskeeping, housekeeping, event set up, bus sanitizer, warehouse worker, law office receptionist, safety assistant. Additional apprenticeships have been established for non-profits assisting individuals with disabilities in the areas of childcare assistant, housekeeper, pool maintenance assistant, animal care attendant, and librarian.

Person centered planning will also be instrumental in understanding the needs of participants and job seekers, helping to braid funding and opportunities. Person-centered planning supports individuals with disabilities by ensuring services are guided by each individual's strengths, goals, and support needs. This approach promotes meaningful participation in education, training, and employment by aligning services with personal interests, abilities, and necessary accommodations. Through coordinated service delivery and partner collaboration, person-centered planning reduces service gaps, improves access to integrated supports, and increases opportunities for competitive, integrated employment. As a result,

individuals with disabilities receive more responsive, effective services that support long-term independence and economic self-sufficiency.

Soulcial Kitchen has established a food truck court and restaurant in Swansea, Illinois. The restaurant serves as a commissary and training facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities, veterans, and other hard-to-hire personnel that are Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding eligible. The unique program, the first of its kind in the United States, provides access to a two-year registered apprenticeship (Cook – Restaurant and Mobile operations) developed with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship. Upon successful completion of the apprenticeship the individual will have the opportunity to receive private funding to launch their own food truck and develop a unique hospitality business with an established route to market.

One of the ways that equity can be explored and goals developed is by participating in the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) required as we undertake implementation of Perkins V. The following is taken directly from the plan, “the CLNA process is meant to be completed alongside a diverse body of external stakeholders … Using responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility, the CLNA requires disaggregation of data to highlight, analyze, and work toward closing equity gaps for underserved populations. The CLNA process also crosswalks Perkins V and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements for standards and examination of equity and access for specific student subpopulations (Perkins V). Community colleges are required under Perkins V to engage a diverse body of stakeholders in the CLNA process.” In order to achieve equity, local boards and partners must be able to reflect on how existing practices and systems may be creating barriers for underrepresented and marginalized groups. They must then be willing to make changes that rectify these inequities. Participating in the CLNA process will guide our development of equity goals as well as ensure that we prepare action plans in order to achieve these goals.

One example of promoting accessibility access and overcoming a barrier for students is to offer services in multiple locations so that they are able to access services in a less intimidating location that may be closer to home. This effort is especially helpful for communities of color, English Language Learners and adult education students, many of whom have not had the experience of navigating a college environment. L&C is doing this at its Scott Bibb Center in the Alton community. This location focuses primarily on adult education students and offers the first semester of Integrated Education and Training in several career pathways. Integral to this first step of training is a comprehensive and high support first semester that also builds in the next step – a transition to CTE whenever appropriate.

Another example is L&C’s NO Nelson Center in Edwardsville reducing barriers for our English language learners and by offering ESL classes in a convenient, accessible location that data shows is near where most of our ESL students live. Once they have built their skills, we focus on transitioning them to CTE courses when they are interested in pursuing them.

L&C will be hosting the Alton Area’s Clean Jobs Workforce Network. L&C’s Scott Bibb Center will

become a CEJA HUB for the area's Climate and Equitable Jobs Act and will provide Clean Energy workforce training in solar and energy efficiency as well as a Clean Energy Bridge course for equity-eligible populations in the coming year. Demand-driven clean energy and related trainings will be added in the years to follow.

All DVR staff have been trained on Disability and Inclusion. In addition, we are getting ready to hold a Trans Humility Training for Regions 4/5 DVR staff next month. DVR Metro East (Madison and St. Clair County) has a pilot project in the works to do Digital Outreach and Education for potential customers.

Title 1B, under the equitable lens, advocates for participants to their training providers if they need a reasonable accommodation or modification that will allow them to complete the requirements of their program within the guidelines of the provider.

Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) submitted an application for a Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) Grant from the Illinois Community College Board for East St. Louis and surrounding areas. The principal goal of the grant is to provide accelerated workforce training programs and supportive services for the targeted population that will ultimately lead to employment in high-skilled, high-wage occupations. SWIC's overarching objective is to increase minority enrollment with emphasis on Health Sciences, Information Technology, HVAR, and Manufacturing program opportunities in the service region through expansion and development of programming and support services by the grant conclusion. This project would continue to actively promote equity and expand previous WEI programming while also embedding academic and personal support into previously established programs. In broadening the scope of the previous project, SWIC will address a larger array of gaps in workforce equity, with specific regard to the African American community. The overall project objectives will allow SWIC to establish new, streamlined avenues for strategic workforce placement that lead to at-risk and African American populations receiving training and credentials to support a fiscally sustainable lifestyle. WEI funding from the 2020 fiscal year resulted in a strong focus on racial equity with 70% of participants identifying as African American. This grant set the groundwork for other SWIC projects which promote racial equity, including a Cannabis Industry Certificate program designed to target communities disproportionately impacted by the criminalization of cannabis. Pending ICCB approval, SWIC will be working with local dispensaries and cultivation centers who actively hire from minority populations. SWIC also participates in a community revitalization project centered around Venice, Illinois, which seeks to impact holistic change to a historically underserved African American majority population through affordable housing, a health center, a new grocery store, and workforce training center.

Kaskaskia College also is the recipient of the WEI grant for their district. KC serves students in Health Sciences, Information Technology, HVAC, Welding, Carpentry Occupations, and Automotive Technology programs.

SWIC is also in the planning stages of constructing a new manufacturing training academy which will actively support the enrollment and employment of women and minorities. As with construction and building trades, regional demographics of the manufacturing industry overwhelmingly trend white and

male, and the college aims to balance that through equitable recruitment and programming, with a goal of at least 40% of manufacturing students identifying as minority and 25% identifying as women.

⁷ The [State of Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary](https://isac.org/pace/cp_dictionary_11-13-18_final.pdf) is available at isac.org/pace/cp_dictionary_11-13-18_final.pdf

APPENDIX ITEM I
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS AND
LOCAL WORKFORCE INNOVATION AREAS
UPDATED JULY 1, 2019

