

NORTHEAST REGION WIOA PLAN

I. REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations

Through the Illinois' Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified Plan, the State has provided direction on analysis of economic conditions. The Illinois Northeast Economic Development Region (NEEDR) plan will use similar analysis. The table below provides economic production, employment and earning numbers over the past decade.

TABLES 1-2: REGION VS. ILLINOIS VS. NATION: CHANGE IN GDP, EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS OVER LAST 10 YEARS

	Gross Domestic Product (\$)			Employment			Earnings (\$)		
	2004	2009	2014	2004	2009	2014	2004	2009	2014
Chicago/Naperville/Elgin Metropolitan Area	524,083	521,172	557,745	4,572,132	4,453,140	4,648,034	209,477,216	231,649,396	272,088,493
ILLINOIS	637,828	641,880	680,448	5,934,131	5,935,337	6,071,686	256,671,215	286,828,581	333,471,194
US	13,772,746	14,329,566	15,773,516	147,379,583	154,188,500	155,899,000	5,417,439,000	6,244,497,000	7,469,374,000

	Percent Change in Gross Domestic Product			Percent Change in Employment			Percent Change in Earnings		
	2004-2009	2009-2014	2004-2014	2004-2009	2009-2014	2004-2014	2004-2009	2009-2014	2004-2014
Chicago/Naperville/Elgin Metropolitan Area	-0.05	7.00%	6.40	1.60	5.01	6.69	10.58	17.46	29.89
ILLINOIS	0.60	6.00%	6.70	0.00	2.30	2.30	11.70	16.30	29.90
US	4.00	10.10%	14.50	4.60	1.10	5.80	15.30	19.60	37.90

Sources: Gross Domestic Product, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (millions of chained 2009 dollars) Employment and Earnings, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Local Area Personal Income and Employment

The main narrative told by the numbers in the above tables is that the Metropolitan Area (which is the closest in geographic area to the NEEDR with available data) was struck hard by the economic downturn. The region had negative GDP growth while the state had very low growth and the nation had modest growth. In addition, the region has been slower to recover than the nation, but faster than the state, as shown in Table 2. At the same time, the Chicago region is unique among major US

metropolitan areas in that the area is home to both a strong service sector and a strong manufacturing sector. The metropolitan region’s unemployment rate is down to around 6%. By the end of 2017, the region is expected to have recovered all jobs lost during the downturn with growth over the next decade expected at 8% (New Skills at Work, JP Morgan Chase and Co).

The table below shows recent as well as projected employment demand through 2022 for major industry sectors across the Northeast Region. The largest industry sectors in the Northeast Region by employment are Marketing and Sales, Hospitality and Tourism, Law and Public Safety, Business Management and Healthcare, with Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL), Education and Training and Manufacturing also playing important roles in the region's economy. However, the largest growth in job openings on a percentage basis are expected to be in the Information Technology (IT) industry. Large percentage changes in employment are also expected in Law and Public Safety, Healthcare and Business Management. The region is also expecting growth in agriculture and a resurgent construction sector, each with about 15% growth.

Illinois' WIOA Unified Plan lays out a framework for analyzing growth industry sectors that will be useful for analysis in the Northeast Region.

Major industry sectors are categorized according to the following methodology:

- **LEADING** industries are identified as those which are expected to grow during the projection period, and which are important within the state (i.e., have a location quotient greater than 1.0).
- **EMERGING** industries are identified as those that are not strongly represented in the current economy (i.e., have a location quotient that is less than 1.0), but are expected to grow during the projection period.
- **MATURING** industries are identified as those that are important within the state, but are not expected to grow during the projection period.

Each of these categories are significant for the economy, for job growth and availability, and are hence important for the planning of WIOA and partner programs during the period of this regional plan.

TABLE 2: REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Cluster	2012 Employment	2022 Employment	Net Employment Change	Percent Employment Change	Location Quotient	Demand
Marketing & Sales	1,486,398	1,655,634	169,236	11.4%	1.02	Leading
Hospitality & Tourism	1,072,558	1,195,218	122,660	11.4%	0.64	Emerging
Law & Public Safety	659,602	785,008	125,406	19.0%	1.17	Leading
Business Management	503,349	583,855	80,506	16.0%	1.42	Leading
Health Care	498,816	581,060	82,244	16.5%	0.81	Emerging

Transportation , Distribution & Logistics	390,479	433,897	43,418	11.1%	1.25	Leading
Education & Training	379,002	398,055	19,053	5.0%	0.95	Emerging
Manufacturing	376,840	374,497	-2,343	-0.6%	1.12	Maturing
Finance	258,940	269,960	11,020	4.3%	0.96	Emerging
Construction	161,560	185,578	24,018	14.9%	0.71	Emerging
Information Technology	64,820	86,724	21,904	33.8%	1.05	Leading
Arts & Audio Visual	60,547	64,394	3,847	6.4%	0.78	Emerging
Research & Development	48,530	51,189	2,659	5.5%	0.72	Emerging
Agriculture	14,033	16,210	2,177	15.5%	0.30	Emerging
Energy	12,304	12,919	615	5.0%	0.46	Emerging

Sources: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

The below table shows the projected employment demand through 2022 for major occupational sectors in the region. The largest numbers of new jobs are expected to be created within the healthcare, food prep and service, office administration and support and transportation and material moving occupations. Large numbers of job openings (including replacement jobs) are expected in sales and office and administrative occupations.

TABLE 3: REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR

SOC	Description	Base Year Employment	Share of Metro Region Base Year Employment	Projection Year Employment	Employment Change 2012-2022		Average Annual Job Openings due to:		
		2012	2012	2022	#	%	Growth	Replacements	Total
11-0000	Management Occupations	286,480	6.71%	309,195	22,715	7.93	2,272	6,741	9,012
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	235,035	5.50%	263,272	28,237	12.01	2,824	5,452	8,276
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	129,062	3.02%	153,874	24,812	19.22	2,481	2,484	4,966
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	56,902	1.33%	60,221	3,319	5.83	332	1,637	1,969
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	24,339	0.57%	26,898	2,559	10.51	256	878	1,133
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	59,382	1.39%	67,275	7,893	13.29	789	1,561	2,350
23-0000	Legal Occupations	45,347	1.06%	50,092	4,745	10.46%	475	816	1,290

25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	273,569	6.41%	294,733	21,164	7.74%	2,116	6,430	8,546
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	73,230	1.72%	76,682	3,452	4.71%	345	2,271	2,616
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	222,039	5.20%	252,215	30,176	13.59%	3,018	5,384	8,401
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	115,068	2.69%	141,303	26,235	22.80%	2,624	2,669	5,292
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	105,538	2.47%	112,711	7,173	6.80%	717	3,099	3,816
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	310,878	7.28%	356,582	45,704	14.70%	4,570	12,844	17,415
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	147,666	3.46%	164,803	17,137	11.61%	1,714	3,852	5,565
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	156,918	3.67%	181,391	24,473	15.60%	2,447	4,110	6,557
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	458,090	10.73%	479,712	21,622	4.72%	2,162	15,563	17,725
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	652,088	15.27%	686,012	33,924	5.20%	3,392	16,949	20,342
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	6,388	0.15%	6,634	246	3.85%	25	257	281
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	136,338	3.19%	146,432	10,094	7.40%	1,009	3,805	4,815
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	129,501	3.03%	140,779	11,278	8.71%	1,128	3,532	4,660
51-0000	Production Occupations	285,346	6.68%	286,417	1,071	0.38%	107	8,322	8,429
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	330,203	7.73%	367,426	37,223	11.27%	3,722	9,591	13,313
		4,269,884	100.00%	4,654,857	384,973	9.02%	38,497	119,033	157,531

Sources: EMSI occupation employment data are based on final EMSI industry data and final EMSI staffing patterns. Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors). Occupational wage estimates also affected by county-level EMSI earnings by industry. This report uses state data from the following agencies: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Employment Projections

The NEEDR has chosen to focus sector efforts on Healthcare, Manufacturing and TDL, with acknowledgement that IT underlies all of these and is an important economic driver in its own right, as well as having the potential to provide jobs that are a more accessible and a better fit for people with disabilities, including those with mobility restrictions. Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA) in the NEEDR also focus on additional sectors as warranted by local conditions. While there are many industries that could be the focus of sector initiatives, these particular industries were chosen for a variety of reasons. World Business Chicago has identified the shortage of middle-skill workers as a major regional hurdle and each of these industries are expected to grow in middle-skill positions in the near term. Approximately 20,000 new middle-skill jobs are expected between 2014 and 2019 in the region in healthcare and TDL. In manufacturing, middle-skill machining and installation, maintenance and repair occupations within the sector are projected to grow 9% by 2023 across the MSA. These jobs pay family sustaining wages and provide

opportunities for career growth (EMSI and New Skills at Work, JP Morgan Chase and Co). Additionally, each of these sectors provide for other economic impacts, as shown in the table below.

TABLE 4: METRO CHICAGO ANNUAL IMPACT BY SECTOR (EVENT SIZE = 10)

	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Manufac. Employment	10	6	5	2
Manufac. Sales/Output	\$1,759,127	\$691,086	\$382,518	\$2,832,731
TDL Employment	10	2	3	15
TDL Sales/Output	\$827,719	\$228,256	\$263,005	\$1,318,980
Healthcare Employment	10	2	3	15
Healthcare Sales/Output	\$552,401	\$145,646	\$238,171	\$936,218

Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2015Q4

In addition to the reasons above, manufacturing was chosen as a sector for focus because manufacturing is, and continues to be, a sector with tremendous innovation. Chicagoland has always been at the forefront of this innovation and intends to maintain that place in national leadership. The manufacturing sector also is a driver in terms of sales and employment creation in the metro region.

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.

Please refer to Attachment A for a crosswalk between the detailed (3-digit) industry clusters and the occupational pathways for the region. This crosswalk identifies occupations related to the detailed industry clusters identified LEADING, EMERGING and MATURING.

Analysis of the regional workforce, including 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 employment.

Labor Force Size, Demographics, Employment and Unemployment

The number of people in the labor force in the region is just over 4.5 million, which is about the same as it was in 2009. While the Illinois labor force in the 25-54 age group has declined by almost 200,000 (-4.4%) between 2009 and 2014, according the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey estimates, the regional labor force for that age group has remained relatively stable, declining about 1%. It is a racially diverse region, with nearly one third of residents identifying as non-white. Overall, unemployment rates have dropped between 2009 and 2014. This is in line with a stronger overall economy in 2014 relative to 2009. The unemployment rate in 2009 was 10.2% and in 2014 was 7.1%.

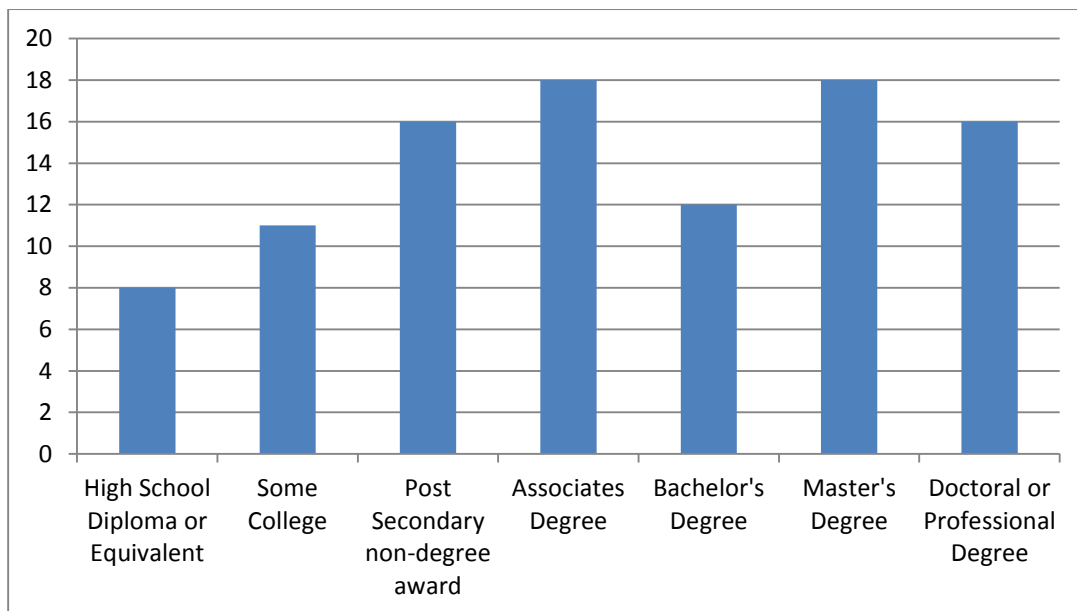
Labor Market Trends and Education and Skill Levels including individuals with barriers to employment

In general, the region’s labor force is characterized by high educational attainment and the labor market (as noted above) has experienced recovery in terms of unemployment rates. Despite these strong factors the deep economic recession of 2008 had a lasting impact on the labor market and

communities and many have yet to fully recover. Alarming, some communities within the Chicago region continue to experience high unemployment rates. For some low levels of educational attainment and a lack of basic skills compound the situation Thirty percent of adult Chicagoans have low basic literacy skills (Southern Illinois University–Edwardsville, FY 2011 Demographic Data) and according to US Census Bureau data, more than half of the population in Chicago does not have a college degree. In contrast, by 2020, 67 percent of Illinois jobs will require a college degree or certificate putting individuals with limited education and a lack of basic skills at a serious disadvantage in a labor market that is not yet fully recovered from the recession.

Occupational skill requirements are increasing in many industries, both across the nation and in the northeast Illinois region. In its most recent set of occupational employment projections, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS) shows the increasing need for advanced education and training to qualify for occupations with the highest growth rates.

FIGURE 1: PROJECTED US EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS 2012-2022



Additionally, the 2014 American Community Survey shows us that educational attainment in the northeast region is directly correlated to earning power.

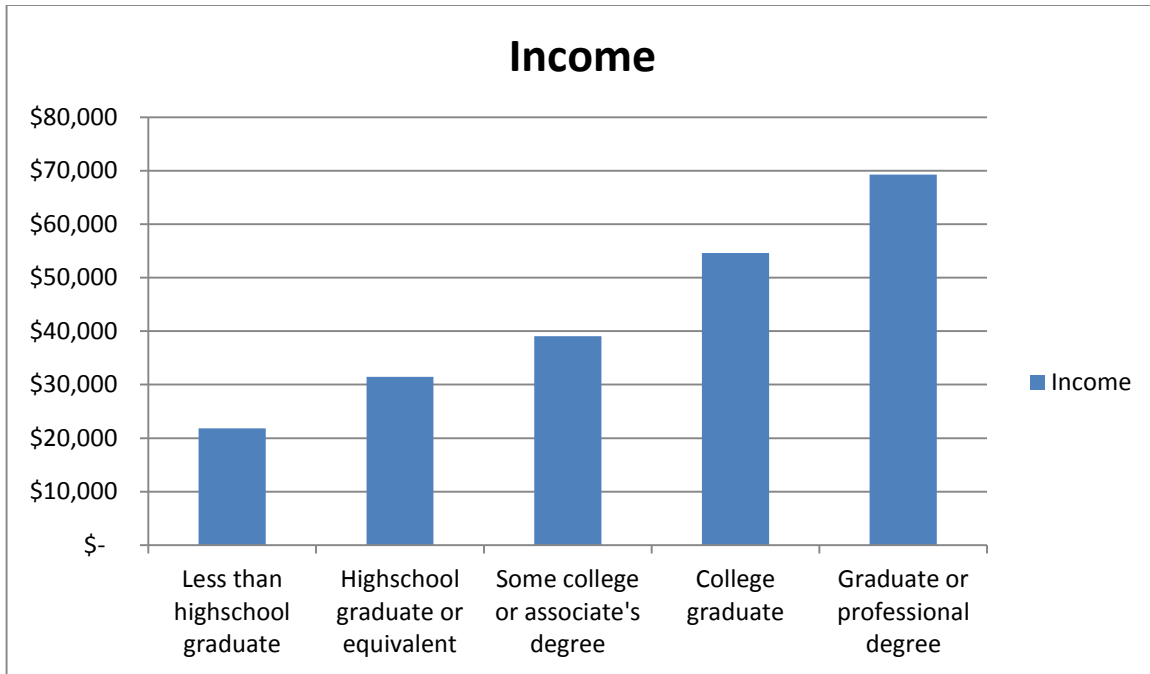
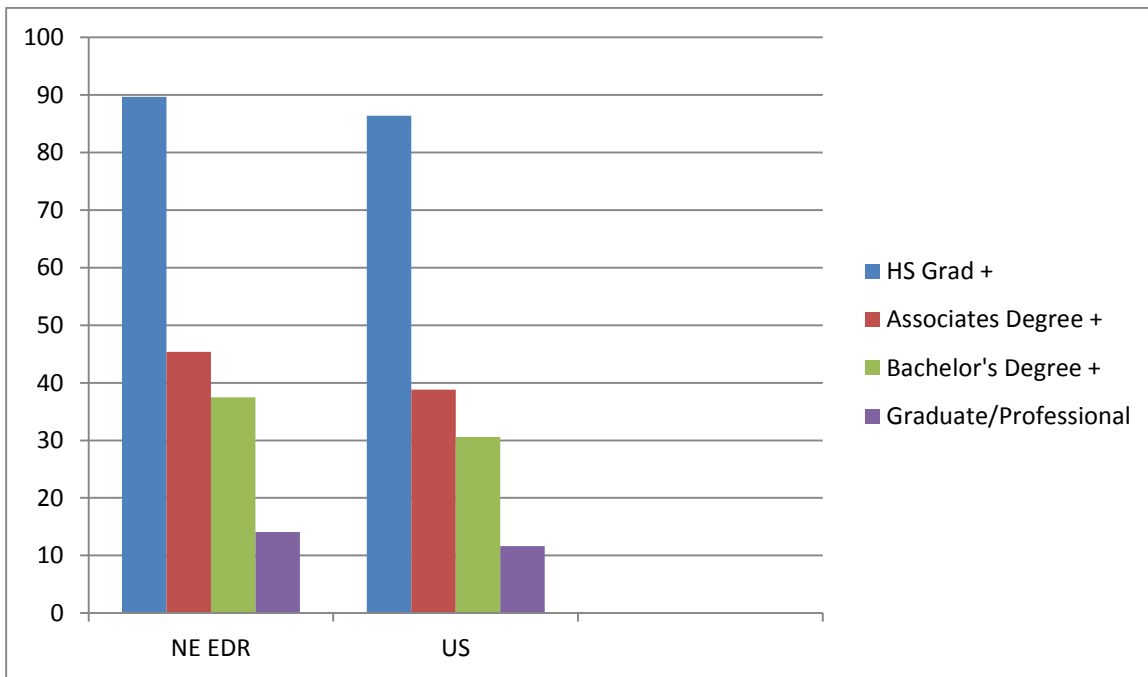


FIGURE 2: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE REGION VS. US, AGE 25+ POPULATION



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Analysis of US Census Bureau Data

Local Workforce Development Boards serve clients with a variety of barriers to employment. Local areas' policies include priority of service for veterans and qualified spouses, persons receiving public assistance, and low income and/or basic skills deficient individuals as well as individuals

with a disability. Local areas take steps to promote awareness in the employer community about the benefits of hiring special populations, particularly Veterans, Individuals with Disabilities, and others prioritized for workforce services by the State of Illinois. The local areas assist individuals with disabilities and coordinate activities with the Department of Rehabilitation Services as well as work with Veterans Affairs to assist veterans, qualified spouses of veterans and disabled veterans. As noted in Chapter II (pages 17-22), local areas invest in a variety of strategies to serve individuals with barriers to employment. Local areas leverage the resources and skills of a variety of partners to serve these individuals, including TANF, Title II, CDBG, Title V, IDES, the Department of Corrections, community based organizations and Small Business Development Centers among others.

B. DESCRIBE THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTOR INITIATIVES FOR IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS OR OCCUPATIONS FOR THE PLANNING REGION.

The NEEDR has significant experience in sector-based workforce initiatives. Some local areas have been successful in utilizing WIOA funding as well as private funds to implement business-led sector initiatives. These include:

- The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership(The Partnership)'s workforce system includes One Stop sector centers in three industries in the region. National Able operates a sector center for IT businesses and job-seekers interested in information technology careers. The Chicagoland Retail Sector Center is operated by Pyramid Partnership, INC. and the Chicagoland Healthcare Sector Center is operated by ResCare Healthcare.
- The Partnership was recognized as a national leader in sector-focused workforce development when it was selected by the Walmart Foundation to implement a national sector initiative for retail. Implementation of the initiative will result in a retail sector center for Cook County where retail-focused training for new employees preparing for a first job and current workers looking to advance their careers will be provided. Courses range from interpersonal skills that help employees succeed in the workplace to more technical customer service and retail programs that might help an employee qualify for certification through the National Retail Federation.
- The Health Professional Education Consortium in Lake County is a consortium of universities, community colleges and Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science along with business partners, medical and healthcare groups, the Lake County Health Department and the Lake County Workforce Development Board and Department. The consortium leverages resources and programs to prepare local students to become the next generation of healthcare providers and researchers by expanding opportunities in medical and health sciences education and careers through education, internships, and mentoring.
- The Workforce Board in Will County is a part of the Will County Community Friendly Freight Plan. This unique plan is aiming to address issues of land-use and community livability in this fast-growing business sector in the County. The Freight Plan will encompass a holistic planning approach covering freight mobility, land-use integration, workforce development, education/training and community livability. Workforce issues

were identified by Freight companies in the County to be one of the top concerns of growing the industry locally and as such will be carefully considered and addressed in the plan.

Working together on regional sector initiatives goes as far back as the state's Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI) through which the region applied sector-based labor market analysis to workforce investments across the region. More recently workforce, education, economic development and human services entities have collaborated on significant sector projects. The infrastructure, relationships and lessons learned from these projects will drive the region's sector-based programs into the future. These regional initiatives tend to be grant-funded and the NEEDR has been competitive in receiving these funds. All initiatives are driven by the region's employer-led local workforce boards. Recent initiatives include:

- The Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago will work together on a new Career Pathways project through their NEG grant. The project will include development of career pathway materials for a variety of sectors to be used by local areas in the region. Following a regional meeting to finalize critical sectors, the following materials will be developed for each critical industry sector in the region and customized for each local workforce area use: industry overview document, demand occupation information, career counselor manuals and sector specific orientation materials.
- The metro suburban region received a \$2 million grant award for the Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) program to work with employers in developing workers for high demand manufacturing jobs. The program primarily benefited manufacturers in DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties. It was administered through a partnership that included Local Workforce Boards and their respective local WIA Programs/IllinoisworkNet Centers, economic development organizations, industry associations, and manufacturers. Training focused on providing individuals with skills and industry credentials needed for the following occupations: CNC Operators, Welders, Mechanical Engineering Technicians, Industrial Machinery Mechanics, Machinists, and Electronic Repairers/Robotics Technicians. Trainees demonstrated attainment of occupational competencies prior to placement in paid work experiences/internships or employment. The ATIM program trained 230 individuals between August 2013 to March 2015.
- The Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago received a five-year Health Professions and Opportunity Program (HPOG) grant from the U.S. Health and Human Services Department to train low-income individuals in healthcare occupations. The initiative was a unique partnership among the region's Local Workforce Boards, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), three of the community colleges in the region (McHenry County College, College of Lake County, and Joliet Junior College) and three community-based workforce organizations (Central States SER, Instituto del Progreso Latino and Jewish Vocational Service). Through bridge educational programs and occupational training for certified nursing assistants, nursing, medical assistants, pharmacy technicians

and dental assistances, the initiative provided access to healthcare careers for TANF participants and other low-income individuals.

- The Job Driven NEG Grant provides \$3.1M for a regional project that provides services, occupational and work-based training, certification(s) and job placement in the information technology sector, focusing on long-term unemployed job seekers, UI recipients who have been profiled as likely to exhaust benefits, and foreign-trained immigrant workers who qualify as dislocated workers and face barriers to obtaining employment in their trained field or profession. Partners include Local Workforce Boards of Lake, DuPage and Will counties, and residents recruited from DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties. A subcontractor, TEC Services, Inc., was selected to deliver the program on behalf of the region. Outreach and recruitment materials were developed for use by all of the areas involved in the project in addition to community-based agencies, employers, industry associations, chambers of commerce, and other partners. Each area collaborates on outreach and recruitment, prescreening of applicants and referring them to the contractor if they are eligible. Customers participate in classroom training and gain skills and certifications/credentials. After classroom training, some customers are directly placed in employment. Others are placed in work-based training opportunities and then into employment. Mentoring, job coaching and counseling are provided to assist with participant retention. This comprehensive model will ensure that customers who participate in this project have the supports they need to be successful in training and employment. Occupations include Computer Support Specialists, Computer Programmers, and Info Security and Web Developers. Training and Certifications include A+, Security+, Project+, Mobility+, Microsoft Technology Associate, Microsoft Office Specialist and Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate.

In addition to sector initiatives in the Title I program, there has been significant development in Title II programs to align adult education with sector-specific career planning and skills training. A number of the region's community colleges offer the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) model, through which adult education students (including ESL, Adult Basic Education, and Adult Secondary Education) simultaneously receive basic skills instruction that is contextualized to a specific industry sector and credit-bearing, industry-recognized college coursework that leads to a credential for jobs with family-sustaining wages. These programs offer robust support services, cohort models, team-teaching strategies, and yield high completion rates in various career cluster areas, such as Manufacturing, Healthcare, IT, and TDL. All Title II-funded adult education providers (colleges and community-based organizations) in the region also provide at least one bridge program for adult learners, which help transition underprepared adults to career pathway programs. These programs deliver contextualized instruction and career planning in Healthcare, Early Childhood Education, Industrial Arts/Manufacturing, IT, TDL/Automotive, and Office Administration.

Due to the large geographic area of the northeast region and the many sector-based initiatives located in northeast Illinois, other sector initiatives not described above are listed in the table below. These are examples and not meant to be a comprehensive list.

TABLE 5: OTHER REGIONAL SECTOR INITIATIVES

Initiative	Key Partners	Geographic Area	Industries Targeted
Workforce EcoSystem – Connecting business, education and workforce around talent needs and training	Workforce Dev Lake County Partners College of Lake County	Lake County	Manufacturing Healthcare Bio-Pharma IT Professional Services
Pharmacy Tech Program	Waukegan High School CLC Walgreens	Lake County	Healthcare
AHIMA Apprenticeship Program – Health Informatics	Rosalind Franklin Workforce Dev Health Department College of Lake County McHenry Community College	Lake County	Healthcare
Healthcare Professional Education Consortium Rosalind Franklin University led consortium of education leaders focused on workforce solutions in healthcare sector	Rosalind Franklin College of Lake County Universities/Colleges Lake County Partners Workforce Dev Local Workforce Board Private Sector	Lake County	Healthcare
YouthBuild Lake County Manufacturing Pre-Apprenticeship Program	YouthBuild LakeCounty Workforce Dev Local Workforce Board Private Sector CLC Lake County Foundation	Lake County	Manufacturing

NationalAble IT cohort training and work experience	NationalAble Workforce Dev Lake County Tech Hub IDES	Lake County	IT
Pipeline grant	Manufacturers, MCEDC, McHenry County College	McHenry County	Manufacturing-Industrial Maintenance Technician training for Incumbent workers
Manufacturing and Healthcare Career Training and Internship program for O/S Young Adults	Businesses, McHenry County College	McHenry County	Manufacturing and Healthcare
Harvard and Woodstock Enterprise Zone	Local ED	McHenry and Boone Counties	Agriculture and Food Processing, Manufacturing and Healthcare
Manufacturing Careers Internship Program (MCIP); Designed to help employers find and hire young adults interested in manufacturing and provide out-of-school youth with an opportunity to start a career in manufacturing	Business Career Services (BCS)	Kane County Youth ages 18-21, Cook County, Chicago	Manufacturing
My Way	Business Community	DuPage County	Manufacturing TDL Hospitality
Disability Employment Initiative Grant	Downers Grove High School College of DuPage	DuPage County	IT
1E Grant	Business and Training Providers	DuPage County	Manufacturing TDL Hospitality

			IT
Title I Sector-Based Bridge Programs	Central States SER; Erie Neighborhood House; Greater West Town; Instituto del Progreso Latino; Jane Addams Resource Corporation	Chicago and Cook County	Information Technology; Healthcare; Manufacturing; Shipping & Receiving
TWL (CDL) Employer Services	Local TDL employers	Grundy Kankakee Livingston	TDL
Community Friendly Freight Plan	Will County Center for Economic Development, Will County WDB, Will County, Employers	Will County	TDL
One Stop Sector Centers	The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership; Pyramid Partners, Retail ResCare Healthcare, National Able, IT	Chicago and Cook County	Healthcare, Retail, IT

II. REGIONAL INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIES AND SERVICES

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. THIS COMPONENT MUST DESCRIBE THE REGIONAL SERVICE STRATEGIES INCLUDING USE OF COOPERATIVE DELIVERY STRATEGIES.

Title I is operated through the state Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) and Local Workforce Boards. There are 7 LWIAs in the Northeast Economic Development Region and ten counties: Cook, Dekalb, DuPage, Will, McHenry, Lake, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee and Kendall. Residents are served through a range of comprehensive One Stop Centers, affiliate organizations, and training providers. Title I works in partnership with core partners: Title II (Adult Education),

Title III (Wagner-Peyser), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation), in their own site locations as well as through co-location in the comprehensive One Stop Centers. There are 17 community college districts in the NEEDR.

The region has developed important points of coordination that provide ongoing opportunities to deploy integrated strategies in the region. One is the Northern Illinois Workforce Coalition that convenes quarterly meetings of the Community College Presidents and Local Workforce Board Directors. The coalition was originally formed as a result of the CSSI sector work; the partnership was formalized 6 years ago. The coalition has joined together for grant applications, shared information and coordinated resident and business services throughout the region. As described in Chapter 1, the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago is the coalition of Local Workforce Boards developed nearly 15 years ago that is the platform for developing many of the NEEDR's sector strategies. The collaboration recently changed its name to make it inclusive of all partners and will expand under WIOA to include Title I Administrators from each LWIA and provide a forum as coordinated planning with core partners is needed. The Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago undertakes joint grant applications, project coordination and information sharing.

Due to the large geographic size of the NEEDR and the diversity of its economy, level of development, and needs of residents and businesses, the types of workforce development services offered vary. Each local area has different strategies, toolboxes and areas of focus for best servicing the needs of its residents and employers. There are, however, many commonalities of workforce development activities and types of services with promising return-on-investment (ROI) that warrant continued focus and development.

- **Work-Based Learning Opportunities:** Several of the Local Workforce Boards use On-the-Job-Training (OJT), Apprenticeships, and Internships to provide the skills needed for job-seekers to be successful in the workplace. In addition, all of the community colleges coordinate internships, on-the-job-training, apprenticeships, and incumbent worker training within the region. Efforts have begun to better connect adult education students to these opportunities. Overall, these types of programs are an opportunity for growth under WIOA.
- **Career Pathways:** Workforce development and education partners in the NEEDR are increasingly developing Career Pathway programs to prepare individuals to be successful in secondary and post-secondary education as well as help individuals enter or advance within a specific occupational cluster. Community colleges offer stackable credentials in many sectors, providing a pathway approach for adult learners, who can complete one credential and advance to the next credential. ICAPS programs, bridge programs, transition coordinators, faculty (through specialist job-skills courses), and career development service areas provide goal-setting, academic advising, and enrollment assistance. This type of coordination/advising will be necessary within the One Stop centers in order to meet the needs of clients/students.
- **Sector Strategies:** As detailed in Chapter 1, the NEEDR provides many sector-based workforce development services for residents and businesses.

Many promising cooperative service delivery strategies are currently present within the region. Additionally, the regional plan will provide opportunities for new regional cooperative agreements.

Co-Location of Services

- Adult education partners with numerous agencies in the cooperative delivery of services. The majority of adult education programs in the region offer classes at outreach sites located throughout their communities in public schools, churches, municipalities, and other locations. Often, these agreements provide free or low-rent locations in order to expand the local delivery of basic skills education. Some adult education programs offer classes within workNet locations or unemployment offices, and some affiliate One Stop locations are located within adult education programs.
- Oakton Community College serves as a satellite location for The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and is operated by National ABLE network, offering on-site career services and WIOA orientation sessions as a satellite of the One Stop. They coordinate TABE testing to avoid duplication of services, allowing one test to meet the needs of both agencies.
- College of Lake County serves has a one-stop affiliate site, where adult education students are referred for career services. In addition, two College of Lake County adult education staff are co-located at the Lake County Job Center to provide direct services to customers needing basic adult education services and workshops. Workforce Development and College of Lake County Adult Ed have partnered to deliver career and employment services directly to the students enrolled in classes – during and after classroom times.
- Elgin Community College and Harper College partner with The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership at the Hanover Park Education and Work Center, offering adult education and workNet services within one location.
- The Kane County Office of Community Reinvestment sends an employee to ECC one-half day per week to conduct on-site WIOA eligibility screening. South Suburban College partners with IDES and offers on-site adult education classes at this location, which will be expanded soon.
- College of DuPage currently provides adult education and career technical education staffing at their One Stop and will offer classes on-site in the near future.
- McHenry County College offers ESL classes, which are now offered within the One Stop center, where the college also supports a part-time employee. In addition, McHenry uses Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funding to provide training funds for customers that are not WIOA eligible but who meet CSBG guidelines. Through the braiding of these two funding streams the McHenry LWIA can provide coordinated serves and training.
- Kankakee Community College and Joliet Junior College offers on-site adult education classes in both the Kankakee and Grundy Counties workforce services office.

Technological Solutions

- Kankakee is planning to install computers with Skype capability at the Bradley One Stop extension center to offer face-to-face communication for students/clients rather than a referral.

Systems Level Coordination

- The Illinois Department of Human Services collaborates with local One Stop centers in partnerships in all areas of the NEEDR. This includes formal MOU's and informal agreements. In addition, IDHS has agreements with some of the community colleges for TANF Job Placement Programs.
- At Elgin Community College, a new Workforce Development Council has been established (inclusive of an employee from the Kane County Office of Community Reinvestment) to improve collaboration and employer outreach efforts college-wide, co-led by adult education and career-technical education.
- In Will County, OJT service delivery is provided through a contractor who has staff located at the One Stop center. Youth programming is provided through Joliet Junior College and Joliet Junior College Workforce Development is a partner in the One Stop System, provides staff to assist in resource room, provide workshops, and to advise customers on JJC. IDES and Workforce Services Division of Will County coordinate joint job fairs, employer recruitment events and workshops. In addition, the Local Workforce Board and Will County Center for Economic Development are co-located and have a formal cooperative arrangement to do joint marketing, outreach, and communications, sharing of staff/costs, business attraction/retention, coordination of workforce and training support, enhancement of training opportunities and skill enhancement funding, and coordination of talent pipeline development.
- Title I Business Services collaborate with the Workforce Development Department at Waubensee Community College to identify and address workforce needs, develop services and curriculum to address those needs, as well as to exchange referrals. The DeKalb workNet center partners with Goodwill Industries to co-host a computer literacy class once a month at the center and also on site at Goodwill's facility. Experience Works has maintained an on-site SCSEP employee at the DeKalb workNet center for the past 4 years, providing valuable work experience for the participant and helping the center with its staffing needs. Title I staff also attend monthly workforce development meetings to discuss the needs of Elgin area businesses and residents.
- The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is working with the Chicago Housing Authority on the CHA jobs Plus Pilot program at Altgeld Gardens. This pilot program will develop local-based, job driven approaches to increase earnings and advance employment outcomes through work readiness, employer linkages, job placement, educational advancement in technology skills and financial literacy for residents of public housing. The Partnership is overseeing employer and industry relations.

NEEDR Strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities

The following summarizes key strengths of the region's workforce system as identified by core partners.

Demographic/Location Strengths

- Overall a highly educated workforce with sub-regional differences
- Diverse industry and employer base
- Wage and employment growth, the region is rebounding from the recession

Relationship and Partner Advantages

- Long history of partnership through the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago
- Strong employer partnerships
- Community colleges with good reputations
- Existing local partnerships among WIOA Titles

Service Delivery Advantages

- Experience with sector strategies, including operating sector centers and regional and local sector-based workforce initiatives
- Strong understanding of regional labor market, employment trends, and projections
- Career pathways and ICAPS model
- Large pool of training providers

The following summarizes challenges of the region's workforce system as identified by core partners.

Resource Challenges

- Lack of a state budget
- Sufficient and flexible resources to serve jobseekers that present in the WIOA system with multiple barriers to employment, including basic-skills deficient, criminal records, and undocumented workers.
- Partners have less of a stake in the system because of lack of contribution of resources
- Recent proposed federal budget drastically cuts workforce services

Geographic Challenges

- Lack of consistent public transportation throughout the NEEDR
- Lack of geographic alignment between economic development regions, area planning councils and community college districts.

Demographic Challenges

- Skill gaps of youth, people with barriers and long term unemployed leave jobs unfilled
- Aging population and population decline with sub-regional differences

Systems-level Challenges

- No one entity with authority or responsibility to coordinate the core partners in the region
- Lack of an integrated, shared data system across the core partners
- Silos among Titles (opportunities for coordination under WIOA)
- Need for priority alignment between state level agencies and local service delivery
- Lack of central entity to coordinate business services across the region and partners

Capacity to provide workforce development activities to individuals with barriers to employment

Due to the large geographic area and the differences in population throughout the region, as well as access to different funding sources, each local area focuses on individuals with different barriers to employment. Examples are provided below.

Low-Skilled Adults

The adult education programs at local colleges are working to incorporate workforce development activities into programming for low-skilled adults. At Triton College, adult education will work with The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership to create and promote accelerated high school completion courses and short-term job skills courses to reduce the time between school and employment. Many adult education providers in the region include career readiness activities within the ABE/ASE/ESL curriculum. For example, at South Suburban, it is mandatory for students to complete a resume with a transitions coach, and this is a classroom activity, along with attending an on-site job fair as a field trip once per year. Elgin Community College's adult education division includes a workforce development department wherein various employment-related programs and services are available, including unemployment services, resume assistance, a TANF program, two WIOA programs for youth, and an AARP program for adults. Co-enrollment for adult education students in these programs is common. McHenry County, Kankakee and Grundy counties offers ABE/ ESL / GED on site at the One Stop center.

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership utilizes WIOA funding to support Bridge programs, which enroll adults with basic skills deficiencies in literacy and numeracy and transition them into occupational training and employment. Bridge programs typically enroll participants at a 6.0 grade level in reading and math, contextualize their education to a specific industry and occupation, and offer supportive services to adults. The Partnership currently funds 5 bridge programs across three industries. The Partnership supports those bridge programs that have a strong track record of increasing participants' education levels to at least an 8.9 in reading and math, offering entry-level industry recognized credentials, and transitioning participants to occupational training and employment. As a supporter of career pathway models, The Partnership recognizes the importance of collaborating with those adult education programs that enroll participants at lower levels than 6.0 – those programs are some of the strongest feeders for the bridge programs. The Partnership has representation in the Illinois Community College Board Area Planning Council (APC) in Chicago. The APC is a mandated group of local adult education providers that come together on a quarterly basis to provide the development and coordination of adult basic education programs in the city.

Individuals with Disabilities

Local Title I providers coordinate with Vocational Rehabilitation staff as well as provide other services. Examples include:

- Will County has a pilot on-the-job training project for individuals with disabilities, which includes both work experience and a job coach.
- Parents Alliance Employment Project is a community based organization located in the workNet DuPage Career Center which provides a variety of programs and services to

individuals with developmental disabilities including career counseling, job training and preparation, job development, job placement, and job coaching and follow-up services.

- In addition, in DuPage, there is a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant that is a partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation, the College of DuPage and Downers Grove High School to transition youth with disabilities from high school to community college.
- Project Search is a dedicated program focused on providing education and training to young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through an internship format. It is a one-year program geared toward selected high school seniors who are entering their last year of a transitional high school program. Funding for teachers is from Vocational Rehab and Parents Alliance provides the job coaches who are funded through WIOA. Central DuPage Hospital provides the space and wages for the students who are rotated through multiple positions at the hospital and then hired full time in the position they are best suited for upon completing the program. Other partners include SASSED, Cadence Health, Community High School 84, District 200, and the Department of Commerce (Commerce).
- Through a DEI grant, Lake County Workforce Development has created partnerships through formal MOU agreements with Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and several agencies throughout Lake County that serve disabled individuals. The partnerships are based on creating a referral network among the agencies and participating where appropriate as part of the integrated resource teams.

Adult education providers have always been strong in serving individuals with learning disabilities. Excellent professional development is available, leading to a Special Learning Needs credential for adult educators and staff working with potentially learning disabled students. Accommodations are available to adult education students with disabilities through the ADA coordinators at each college campus, as well.

Currently Vocational Rehabilitation staff has a regularly scheduled presence and meetings with center managers and is co-located in most workforce areas One Stops. In addition, there will be cross training of staff in proper and effective processes for providing services to customers with disabilities. All One Stop centers are required to provide auxiliary aids and accommodations to customers with disabilities upon request. Vocational Rehabilitation provides technical assistance in these and other areas to the One Stop centers. Vocational Rehabilitation and career center business services staff will share information on how to effectively work with employers to provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. These discussions will be formally scheduled on a quarterly basis and will be included in the memorandum of understanding. Under WIOA, The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership will have a standing committee for providing services to customers with disabilities. This committee will develop policies and procedures related to the memorandum of understanding to enhance the coordination of career center services with those offered by Vocational Rehabilitation.

Formerly Incarcerated/Criminal Justice Involved

VERA Youth Futures is a program of The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership through the VERA Institute of Justice with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor. It is a comprehensive program that provides 370 juvenile-justice involved youth with the tools and support they need to achieve employment and education goals. Three of The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership's delegate agencies (Central States SER, Metropolitan Family Services and Phalanx Family Services) assist the youth in preparing for college and careers. Services include assistance with returning to high school, soft skills training, paid internships, job preparation and placement, mentoring and service-learning, among other supports.

The Partnership also funds the Safer Foundation for adults who are returning citizens for job preparation and other services in Cook County.

McHenry County offers re-entry workshops and counseling and acts as a referral for the drug and mental health courts. Lake County workforce development serves as a workforce resource and partner with the Lake County Coalition to Reduce Recidivism, providing community-based reentry services to reduce recidivism by assisting returning individuals in becoming productive members of the community through programs and supportive services.

Out of School Youth

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is part of a national initiative, 100,000K, with the goal of creating the largest employer-led private sector coalition committed to creating pathways to employment for 100,000 opportunity youth (OY) by 2018. Thrive serves as the backbone organization to lead local 100K efforts in Chicago, and The Partnership leads the implementation of the 100K employer-facing work. The Partnership's Business Relations and Economic Development (BRED) team leverages its existing employer relationships to focus more specifically on the OY population. BRED staff will lead the OY efforts supported by 100K to cultivate employer relationships, identify open positions, and aggregate demand to be met through bi-monthly hiring events and other innovative engagement activities. BRED works closely with Thrive to lead the planning of hiring events as well as the development of other placement, retention, and career advancement strategies for OY.

Other local areas provide specific initiatives for out-of-school youth as well. In Will County, the Connect to Your Future youth program provides occupational training and work based learning opportunities and in both Will and DuPage counties all youth funding is for programming for out-of-school youth. WorkNet DuPage offers the "My Way" program which was replicated from Northern Cook. The program serves out-of-school youth and young adults. It includes pay for three weeks of career and employer exploration, placement in a paid internship of up to eight weeks and job search assistance and help with further funding for school or technical training. The program currently offers training and internships in office/admin, manufacturing, hospitality and logistics. McHenry County offers GED boot camp for opportunity youth as well as career pathway programs in healthcare and manufacturing which focus on classroom and work based learning opportunities. In Kane, Kendall and DeKalb Counties, WIOA services focus on pathways to employment and education through several components. In Lake County, two YouthBuild Lake County and Youth Conservation Corp are DOL YouthBuild grant recipients. The YouthBuild programs serve out-of-

school youth with multiple barriers in a pre-apprenticeship model program leading to additional training, internships and/or employment in key industry sectors. These programs include work based learning initiatives, which are employment opportunities that allow youth to experience a specific occupation through relationships that youth services develop with community employers as well as programs that focus on vocational exploration, aiming to broaden a youth's awareness of available careers as they develop a plan for their future.

The Illinois Immigrant Funders Collaborative and the Chicagoland Workforce Funders Alliance are working together on an initiative to ensure Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) eligible residents can access WIOA services. As part of this project, the Chicago Community Trust approved a grant to the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) to spearhead the project that will target DACA youth and enroll them into WIOA services. NCLR will be partnering with agencies that have both WIOA and immigration/legal services programs, including Erie Neighborhood House, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chinese American Service League and the Polish American Association. These projects will create assessments and tracking mechanisms that can follow participants that enroll into DACA to make the WIOA referrals and follow-up with DACA recipients. NCLR will facilitate the cross-training between staff so the immigration staff learn about the WIOA system and vice-versa. The Chicago Jobs Council, Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and Illinois Business Immigration Coalition will help facilitate the cross-training.

Veterans

Veterans receive priority of service, as required by WIOA. IDES provides veteran representatives and WIOA managers who coordinate job fairs and host quarterly meetings with veterans representatives from community colleges and other veteran entities. In addition, the IDES staff host workshops and do presentations to veteran groups. Other specialized programs in the region also serve veterans. For example, The Chicago Federation of Labor has a specialized training program with Peoples Gas to train veterans for jobs with opportunities for advancement and family-supporting wages. Will County has a Disabled Veteran representative located full-time in their One Stop Center and the Will County Veteran's Assistance Commission is located across the hall from the One Stop Center for ease of client referral.

English Language Learners

One Stop centers provide referrals to the ESL programs at community colleges. In addition, the College of DuPage offers transition courses in ESL, including workforce prep and/or college prep at the workNet DuPage Career Center, ESL is offered onsite at the McHenry County One Stop center and onsite at the Grundy and Kankakee County workforce services offices. Bridge programs have proven successful in serving ESL learners. The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership has Title I-funded Bridge Programs for specific sectors that reach the ELL population: technology and healthcare (Central States SER); healthcare and manufacturing (Erie Neighborhood House and Instituto del Progreso Latino), manufacturing and shipping and receiving (Greater West Town), manufacturing (Jane Adams Resource Corp). In addition, the Partnership uses Title I funds for delegate agencies that work with large populations of English Language Learners, including the Chinese American Service League, Polish American Institute, and Instituto del Progreso Latino.

Homeless

In DuPage County there is a Community Partner Mutual Service Agreement with DuPage Pads serving individuals and families who are at risk or homeless in DuPage County. This includes a referral program, as well as career counseling, job search assistance and resume writing to individuals referred to the workNet Center. In Lake County, the local WDB works with local community agencies such as Northpoint to provide specialized workforce services to individuals with disabilities as well as a disability case manager. In McHenry County, workforce staff partners with the Housing Authority to provide staff outreach at various locations around the County. In Kane, Kendall and DeKalb Counties, Title I staff coordinate with the local Continuum of Care system and have attended meetings to convey information regarding employment and training services and opportunities to homeless providers in the area. Staff will continue to incorporate homeless service strategies related to employment and training in collaborating with the Continuum of Care boards. The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership provides Title I funding to Inspiration Corporation, which serves adult homeless customers exclusively. In addition, The Partnership is a member of the Employment Task Force of Chicago's Continuum of Care that is focused on improving connections between housing and homeless services and workforce services.

Older Workers

National Able, on-site at the workNet DuPage Career Center, provides recruitment and workshops for older workers and SERS is on-site to provide services at the One Stop in McHenry County. The workNet Center in DeKalb coordinates with Experience Works to serve the population 55 years of age and older. The "Back to Work 50+ Cook County" grant from AARP serves Cook County jobseekers through workshops, career coaching, and training services in order to obtain employment. Through this grant, The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership will link older workers to the region's high demand sectors: Business & Professional Services, Healthcare, Retail, Culinary and Hospitality, Information Technology, Manufacturing and Transportation, Distribution & Logistics. Job Seekers will be connected to training that prepares them for one of 40 occupations that have strong projected growth, including health information technician, retail supervisor, and computer support specialist. In Chicago, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, sponsored by the Illinois Department on Aging, is a training program designed to assist the mature worker (at least 55 years old) in re-entering the job market. It operates under a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor under the Title V of the Older Americans Act. The training program places eligible individuals, usually for 20 hours a week at minimum wages, in nonprofit agencies or community service agencies community assignments. Mature workers will also be assisted in skill enhancement opportunities and assistance in the transition to unsubsidized employment. Joliet Junior College received a Plus 50 Grant to assist older workers in returning to the workforce. They work collaboratively with the WIOA system to offer training and workshops to job seekers over 50 who are re-entering the workforce.

Long Term Unemployed

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership completed a Platform to Employment specialized grant for the long-term unemployed, and incorporated the some of the training practices from that grant into their ongoing case management work.

Capacity to address needs of employers

Employer services include occupational and labor market information to inform economic forecasting, no-cost human resource services for recruiting, retaining, and hiring qualified employees and accelerated and customized employer-based training programs for increasing skills of existing and new employees.

Each local area includes a business services team. These teams:

- Engage the business community to identify industry-hiring trends and industry-recognized credentials.
- Support industry-specific sector strategies designed to facilitate in-depth focus on particular industries with business partnerships in these areas.
- Analyze and disseminate labor market information to project job growth, wages, and training requirements.
- Provide comprehensive analysis of our regional labor market.
- Provide Area wage and benefits analysis for targeted positions.
- Create custom recruitment plans.
- Post jobs online.
- Conduct targeted recruitment through email and social marketing tools.
- Provide an application collection center.
- Conduct applicant screening using business' key criteria and assessment tools.
- Organize job fairs and special employer events.
- Provide interview scheduling service and facilities.
- Provide pre-hire training for eligible applicants.
- Provide On-the-job training program funds.
- Facilitate employed worker training for industry certifications and credentials.
- Respond to WARN notices, facilitating workshops on behalf of the State, City, and County by providing information on rights, responsibilities, and resources for the workforce.

In addition, Title III partners provide the following services to employers:

- Assists employers with creating an Illinois Job Link registration, posting job orders and searching for resumes in illinoisjoblink.com.
- Assists employer with their recruitment events, either at the One Stop centers or at their assigned location.
- Facilitate quality job matches, conforming to State labor laws.
- Create customized Phone Notifications (PN) and e-mail blast messages to job seekers to inform them to attend events in an effort to assist employers with their workforce needs.
- Conduct outreach efforts to assist the business community.

- Provide employer seminars to keep employers informed on new laws and regulations in Unemployment Insurance and employment services.
- Provide Labor Market Information to employers.
- Provide mass notification of local hiring events.
- Provide assistance with Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC), Fidelity Bonding, Apprenticeship Information, On-Job-Training (OJT), Veteran Programs and Federal Contractor Regulations.

B. TRANSPORTATION AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The Northeast Region is fortunate to have an extensive transportation system, including public transit, although, as mentioned above, outside of the core, transit can be a challenge. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) provides more than two million rides each weekday on bus and rail services in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties. The region's transportation system includes the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace bus and (ADA) Paratransit Service. The RTA's system covers approximately 3,700 square miles and serves approximately 8.4 million residents. The RTA also provides rider services, including online and telephone travel planning assistance and travel training for seniors and people with disabilities. Public transportation is less available in the lower-density, outlying areas of the region. The RTA does not cover Kendall, Kankakee, Grundy or DeKalb counties, which have smaller, local bus services and paratransit services. Some of the local areas provide gas cards to clients in training in areas with less public transportation options and some will work with suburban bus lines to provide easy to understand information for job seekers on transportation services.

One Stop clients are referred to entities or organizations that are not available at the One Stop center for supportive services. Examples include housing, health, transportation, services for individuals with disabilities and financial counseling. Veteran have assistance available to them for transportation needs and expediting referral to housing and medical services. In addition, supportive services are available for IDHS customers receiving TANF and/or SNAP benefits that agree to participate in any approved program with the partners. In some local areas, youth receive incentive payments and gas cards for training and work experience transportation.

Some adult education providers are able to collaborate and deliver childcare services. Many adult education programs have a transitions coordinator to assist underprepared adults with the transition to college. Some colleges offer special services for all students on campus, such as a women's center providing support in the case of emergency. Many colleges provide credit waivers of differing amounts for high school equivalency (HSE) graduates and/or ESL completers, and many have a scholarship fund for high scoring HSE graduates. Foundations on campus are often able to provide various types of support to students, such as funding the cost of the GED test.

C. DESCRIBE THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND PROVIDERS

Due to the large population and geographic size of the region, much of the coordination with economic development services and providers happens at the local level. For example, in many of the local areas, the local economic development department or authority has a seat on the Local Workforce Board and is included in policy making decisions.

- Local Workforce Boards across the region work with county and municipal economic development offices to address workforce issues associated with companies relocating to the region. For example, The Partnership works closely with the City of Chicago Department of Planning Development and the Mayor's economic development team. In this capacity, the Partnership has assisted with supporting the expansion of local companies and participated in "pitch" meetings whereby the City, World Business Chicago, and The Partnership have met with companies considering locating to Chicago.
- Additionally, The Partnership participates in various forums created by the Mayor's Office to address underserved communities throughout Chicago at mini town hall meetings and provides support in the planning and implementation of the City of Chicago Neighborhood Resource Fairs. Recently, the Mayor's Office created the Mayor's Economic Development Kitchen Cabinet. Led by the Deputy Mayor, the Cabinet is comprised of local community leadership including representatives from faith based institutions, community developers, development corporations, development funds and managers, the City's small business development, zoning and other related business units and works to address workforce related issues.
- In DuPage County, Choose DuPage Regional Economic Development Corporation works consistently with the DuPage Business Services Team to identify training needs for businesses. The Workforce Development Core Partner's Business Services Representatives meet quarterly along with a representative from Choose DuPage Regional Economic Development Alliance to coordinate team visits and share information on the businesses in DuPage.
- Lake County Workforce has partnered with the local economic development group, Lake County Partners (LCP), to provide Business Service Outreach. LCP is responsible for serving as the official greeter to local employers and providing referrals back to Lake County Workforce as appropriate from interactions/conversations. These services will continue to expand to include additional partners and stakeholders including the local community college, College of Lake County.
- In Will County, the Local Workforce Board conducts joint planning with the Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) and all Local Workforce Board staff are located at the CED. This partnership enhances coordination with economic development and provides additional services to employers.
- In Cook County, The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership's CEO is a member of the County's Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC). EDAC is the forum where certain tax credit and loan applications are reviewed and approved. Additionally, the Committee also provides advisement on the allocation of Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnership, Emergency Solutions Grants, and other eligible projects. As part of EDAC, The Partnership advises on all matters related to workforce and

connects with approved applicants to promote the business services of the workforce system. The Partnership provides workforce development advisement on capital planning projects with diversity goals and manages the workforce recruitment activities associated with these projects. The Partnership also engages any of the more than 100 Cook County municipalities around their workforce development needs by supporting their economic development interests and presenting to companies that are expanding and/or considering location within the municipality.

- The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership also works with World Business Chicago on the 1000 Manufacturing Jobs campaign. 1000 Manufacturing Jobs is a pilot campaign developed by World Business Chicago's Advisory Council for Chicagoland Manufacturing and funded by approximately \$1 million in public and private contributions. The Partnership participates on the Steering Committee for the Campaign. In this capacity workforce development provides input on the pilot's strategy, goals, and program implementation.
- In McHenry County, representatives from the Department of Commerce Economic Development unit and local economic development agencies participate on the business services team. McHenry County partners with economic development groups in the Northern Stateline EDR for grant applications, business outreach activities, and the implementation of a comprehensive economic development strategy.
- Grundy Livingston Kankakee Workforce Board staff are co-located with the Economic Alliance of Kankakee County in order to continue to coordinate economic and workforce development.

At the regional level, an example of coordination with economic development entities is the Chicago Metro Metal Consortium. The Chicago Metro Metal Consortium is one of 24 'Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership' (IMCP) designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce. With leadership from Cook County's Bureau of Economic Development, it is an unprecedented collaboration of more than 70 partners, including the 7 counties of northeastern Illinois and the City of Chicago. Representatives from The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and the McHenry County Workforce Board co-chair the workforce development committee.

Additionally, the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago have partnered with MEGA (Metropolitan Economic Growth Alliance) to prepare economic and industry reports. Finally, at least one Local Workforce Board Director is a member of the Chicagoland Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Economic Development Committee and regularly provides input on the regional planning efforts that CMAP is responsible for.

In preparing the Regional Plan, the Department of Commerce Regional Economic Development (RED) team was part of the discussions, including attending statewide forums on regional planning and regional Workforce Partner meetings. In addition, a member of the RED team has been identified to work with the region going forward and will be included in regional strategy meetings going forward.

Local Workforce Development Boards held focus groups and business forums with representatives from local Economic Development departments, employers and business groups to review sector

strategies, how they use the workforce system and continuous improvement efforts. Invitations to the forums were distributed via email through economic development agencies and community colleges. Representatives from the finance, manufacturing, sales, staffing and human resources, hospitality, entertainment, housing, economic development, utility, social service, education and construction sectors participated in the forums. The local WDB also conducted phone interviews with stakeholders. Employers saw value in working with both economic development and workforce development. Employers input included a suggestion that workforce development programs be administered more uniformly in different geographies and that they would like to see a more streamlined process. In addition, all economic development and business representatives on each local Board had the opportunity to review the regional plan and provide input. Business Service Teams also reviewed the plan.

D. DESCRIPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE COST ARRANGEMENTS

The MOU, which is to include administrative cost sharing arrangements among the partners, is still pending. The MOU under WIOA will be finalized July 1, 2017.

Local Workforce Development Boards have engaged the WIOA partners in discussion around costs and are currently negotiating based on their fair share use of the workforce development system. Additionally, partners have identified cost contributions based on available funds and system use. The partners will work together towards continuous system improvements through shared costs, leveraging of resources and a foundation of cooperation. Additionally, The Workforce Partners of Metro Chicago have agreed to pool funds to execute regional projects identified through strategic planning. The Workforce Partners of Metro Chicago have pooled funds for more than a decade and have successfully engaged in regional initiatives and projects. The local Title I staff will negotiate with partners to include Regional Planning costs in the MOU.

III. REGIONAL VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

A. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIC VISION TO SUPPORT STATE AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Northeast Economic Development Region WIOA partners will work collaboratively to deliver a workforce development system that provides opportunities for career growth for the region's jobseekers and workers as well as ensures a skilled workforce to meet the needs of businesses. The region's workforce development system will be responsive to changes in the economy, including changes in dominant industry sectors, as well as changes in the skills and education needed for jobs. The system will assist the region's workers and job-seekers to advance along career pathways and will effectively collaborate with educators and economic development agencies to provide an aligned system for the region's stakeholders. Specifically, the One Stop delivery system shall provide a true "One Stop" experience, at which any employer, worker or job

seeker can access the programs and resources they need, whether in-person or electronically. Finally, the workforce system will utilize ongoing evaluations to assess programmatic success, providing for continuous system improvement.

B. DESCRIBE THE 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 DESCRIBED IN 20 CFR 677.155 (A)(1)

- Improved and expanded regional sector partnerships, which increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors
- Expanded career pathway opportunities, including work-based training models and integrated programs of study, that lead to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings
- Expanded workforce opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to career advancement through improved career services, career pathway programs and expansion of bridge programs.

At this time there has been no direction from the Illinois Department of Commerce on regional performance levels for all four core partners.

C. PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIES THAT WILL ACHIEVE THE VISION AND GOALS. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGIES AND SERVICES THAT WILL BE USED IN THE LOCAL AREAS TO: FACILITATE ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYERS IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, INCLUDING SMALL EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYERS IN IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS, SUPPORT A LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES IN THE LOCAL AREA, BETTER COORDINATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, STRENGTHEN LINKAGES BETWEEN THE ONE STOP DELIVER SYSTEM AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAMS, STRENGTHEN LINKAGES BETWEEN THE ONE STOP DELIVER SYSTEM AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAMS, OTHER INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT THE VISION AND STRATEGIES 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.

The vision and principles will be implemented through the following policy strategies that together are necessary to reach the NEEDR plan goals.

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

The NEEDR has been working to increase partnerships with businesses to better serve their needs through cooperative strategies with partners. For example, Will County developed a Business Service Team that identified the key employer services provided by the following entities: Joliet Junior College Career Services, Joliet Junior College Workforce Development, Joliet Junior College Corporate and Community Education, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Employer and Employment Services, Workforce Services Division of Will County, Will County Center for Economic Development, and the Workforce Board of Will County. Two immediate projects are underway: the first is the identification and implementation of a Customer Relationship Management system to share employer connections and activities. The second is the development of a web-based information system to provide employers with an avenue to connect with the appropriate entity for specific employer services.

Lake County is also expanding and enhancing business services. As part of the work developing their local plan, workforce development staff have had opportunities to engage employers in surveys and focus groups to solicit new input into programming. Lake County also will review training programs and classes with employers to verify the relevancy of training programs to the skills needed in the workplace. Lake County is also developing solutions around the hiring needs of employers with a greater focus on the hard-to-fill jobs and positions that struggle with retention, as well as working with staffing firms and growing internship programs. In addition, Lake County is utilizing an on-the-job training strategy to assist small businesses that want to help employees move up the career ladder and create opening in entry-level positions.

The local WDBs will work to create expanded relationships with Chambers of Commerce to create small employer events that benefit the workforce system. Additionally, in Lake County, the WBD has strong relationships with the economic development departments in each municipality, which provides information about small businesses.

In Kane, Kendall and DeKalb Counties, the Business Services Team has established contacts with small businesses that have participated or expressed interest in the on-the-job training and incumbent worker programs. Partnerships have also been established with the Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Elgin Development Group. Kane, Kendall and DeKalb counties are expanding the business services team to include two additional Business Service Representatives to strengthen the outreach to local businesses and to form mutually beneficial partnerships with employers. Existing relationships with the business centers at the Elgin, Kishwaukee, and Waubensee Community Colleges will also be vital to maintaining open channels of communication with employers across all three counties in the local area. Kane County is currently developing web content to market and promote services to businesses on its website.

DuPage County continues to enhance and refine its business services offerings, with a renewed focus on work-based learning. New business services representatives were added in order to grow and strengthen relationships with employers, to learn of their workforce challenges and needs, and to provide them with a talent pipeline, especially for sectors experiencing a shortage of talent. A county-wide Business Services Team has been assembled to coordinate and synergize outreach to businesses. The team includes representatives from DuPage County Workforce Development Division, Illinois Department of Commerce, Choose DuPage (Economic Development), College of DuPage Business Solutions, and College of DuPage Center for Entrepreneurship. In addition to expanded outreach, the team conducts information sessions at which businesses can learn of the grants, tax credits, and other services available to help them become more competitive. The team is conducting a campaign to recruit additional business leaders to the DuPage Workforce Board in order to capitalize on the industry expertise that they would bring to the Board and that would inform and guide local workforce development initiatives.

In order to coordinate business services as a region, LWIAs in the NEEDR will explore ways to market regional on-the-job training and incumbent worker opportunities to employers with multiple locations throughout the metro region through coordinated efforts across local areas. The NEEDR is working to coordinate with IDES to provide system-wide services to employers and leverage employer relationships across funding streams. Local Business service team members held a regional meeting to discuss best practices and regional collaboration.

The region's local boards are working to increase coordination around layoff events. Rapid response teams from each area will share their layoff events with others and encourage local employers to attend layoff event that might be outside of their county or city to recruit valuable workers from another location. The region is working toward a regional strategy that will include monthly communications that will approach layoffs from a regional perspective.

Local WDB's will engage SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) to explore promoting entrepreneurial skills and microenterprises in the NEEDR. Local WDB's coordinate with Small Business Development Centers (where they exist) on entrepreneurship and will explore offering workshops electronically and with coordination of regional partners.

Partners recently convened a meeting of business services staff from throughout the region. Discussions included how each of the local areas have their business services structured and what local staff people handle different functions in each area. Incumbent Worker Training, On-The-Job Training projects, internships, adult work experience, files and monitoring, Rapid Response, and business services strategies were also discussed. The meeting provided an opportunity for building relationships among business service staff across the region, exchanging ideas, and sharing job openings and company closures. For example, a large mail sorting company that recently moved into LWIA 6 contacted DuPage's Business Services staff for guidance on how to source candidates for roughly 30 openings. LWIA 6 shared the job information with counterparts within a reasonable commuting distance of those areas and connected the company to partners serving disabled and veteran job seekers. The business service teams have made a commitment to meet quarterly; a second meeting has been scheduled for spring of 2017.

Strategy 2: Increase coordination between workforce development and economic development

The region will continue to partner with MEGA, as described above and including joint planning sessions. Additionally, local areas will work with economic development organizations to identify the value add of specific employer driven programs, such as on-the-job training and incumbent worker training. Workforce development business service teams have sponsored round tables with economic development partners and the region plans to expand this practice to include additional core partners and to span across local areas.

Strategy 3: Strengthen linkages between the One Stop delivery system and unemployment programs

Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located in the One Stop centers providing employment services to all job seekers. Title I and Wagner-Peyser (Title III) staff have begun working together on joint business service committees, coordinating outreach to businesses. Efforts to further coordinate business services will be expanded.

Strategy 4: Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management

This strategy integrates and enhances the career services now received through education and workforce funding streams and programs especially for populations facing multiple barriers to employment. The region will implement state policies on how to integrate the delivery of enhanced career services resulting in individualized plans and coordination of case management services based on these plans. The region will use career services and case management guides and training provided by the state and follow the direction of the state to implement integrated case management systems across applicable core programs that allow data sharing between multiple service providers and programs.

One example of local work to enhance career services at the One Stop centers is a Value Stream Mapping project in Cook County. The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership will develop a new plan for customer services at the comprehensive One Stop Centers. This process will involve all of the WIOA Core Partners (Wagner Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education) and mandated partners will be invited as well. Value Steam Mapping will develop a new on- site customer flow process as well as an established referral process for all of the agencies involved in the six WIOA Comprehensive One Stop Centers in the county. As part of that project, a consultant will develop a list of roles and responsibilities, develop an assets map that documents all resources, facilitate meetings with the objective of fully integrating core and required partners in the letter and spirit of WIOA, utilize the existing current Cook County map to create the future One Stop map, provide a complete process and procedures manual and provide a full SWOT analysis of the combined partners in the WIOA One Stop delivery system.

Strategy 5: Expand Access to Labor Market Information

This strategy improves access to labor market information for both employers and job seekers that will allow them to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities and find education, training and support services.

This strategy will support employers in establishing and managing regional sector partnerships using employer talent pipeline management tools and resources. It will provide easier access to career guidance and planning information for the delivery of enhanced career services, including information on career pathways within critical sectors of in-demand industries and occupations. It also will provide better information to employers on how to promote career opportunities and job openings and access business services, education, training resources and services.

All LWIAs in the region have access to and purchase a variety of privately developed labor market information systems. These include: EMSI, Chmura (JobsEQ), Help Wanted on Line, and Burning Glass among others. The utilization of a combination of secondary data and real-time data for both employers and job-seekers has ensured a much richer perspective on the labor market, labor force needs, and future skill requirements.

Strategy 6: Expand Career Pathway Programs and Work-Based training programs

The Accelerating Opportunity initiative helped Illinois implement ICAPS, The Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System, which moves Adult Basic Education from a system focusing on attainment of the GED or equivalency to one that transitions students to post-secondary education credentialed programs. ICAPS is a partnership between Adult Education and Career & Technical Education. It integrates technical training and basic skills education in a team taught environment, leading to industry-recognized credentials and opportunities to continue on a career pathway. The NEEDR WIOA partners will work to support expansion of ICAPS. Additionally, the WIOA partners will work within the local areas to develop or expand work experience, internship, and employment opportunities for adults and youth, including those with barriers to employment. In general, many of the local areas have been moving away from individualized training accounts toward on-the-job training and work-based learning and/or blending on-the-job training and internships with ITAs and will continue this trend under WIOA.

In Lake County, the WDB is working to expand the current on-the-job training program, which will be used to move employees up the career ladder. The idea is to create openings in entry-level positions and work with employers to fill those openings. The region will also work to coordinate incumbent worker trainings across counties so that employers interested in particular trainings can take advantage of nearby trainings in another local area.

D. ALIGNING AND INTEGRATING EDUCATION, WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Description of how the region will foster 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.

As detailed in Chapter 1, LWIAs in the NEEDR have worked in recent years to expand its sector initiatives, including several sector centers in Chicago as well as sector partnerships throughout the region and sector-based career pathway programs at the community colleges. Regional initiatives will be guided by the development of a statewide policy framework that defines the goals and guiding principles of employer-driven partnerships and how state and regional resources can be used to launch, expand and support them. The state has developed a statewide guide for business and industry associations to work with education, workforce and economic development in establishing and managing these partnerships to achieve and promote economic growth and economic advancement. This region will work to align and integrate business services among the core programs along with regional economic development partners. Finally, the region will explore how to integrate funding and resources from core programs and economic development to support employer-driven sector initiatives, including how to leverage rapid response and layoff aversion for business retention. Additionally, the NEEDR will work to share demand occupation information and develop common marketing and outreach materials around key industry sectors and demand occupations.

Description of how the region will expand career pathway 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.

The region will continue to promote opportunities that lead to career and economic advancement in critical and in-demand industries.

- As described above, the region will support expansion of ICAPS programs.
- The region is also interested in replicating the ATIM program in other parts of the NEEDR and in other sectors.
- Local partners are working to offer new career pathway programs. For example, the College of Lake County is developing a career pathway that will be initially focusing on attainment of the CNA credential. The Adult Education Division of CLC has been working to gain approval of this program. CLC is also exploring accelerated training in IT which would include short-term, certificate based training based on employer needs and address the dislocated worker skill gap.

Another new work-based career pathway program is underway at Harper College. Harper College received a \$2.5 million grant to support Apprenticeships on Demand, a new initiative that aims to integrate technical instruction and on-the-job learning to train workers in high-growth and high-demand fields including insurance, IT and manufacturing. The U.S. Department of Labor awarded a total of \$175 million to 46 applicants through its American Apprenticeship grant competition, the single largest investment to date to expand U.S. apprenticeships.

- Especially innovative is the partnership between Harper and Zurich, which recently teamed to launch a first-of-its-kind apprenticeship program for the insurance industry. The program, which will foster the next generation of underwriters and claims professionals, will emulate the longtime successful dual education model in Switzerland. The first cohort began in January 2016. All apprentices are hired by Zurich into entry-level positions. They

attend classes at Harper two days a week pursuing an Applied Associate of Science degree in Business Administration, with a concentration in Insurance. The course pathway includes several industry-recognized credentials. Tuition and fees are paid by Zurich. Zurich also provides incremental increases in pay to the apprentices as they progress through the program. Harper College and Zurich worked collaboratively to design the curriculum pathway for this program.

- Additionally, the College will offer apprenticeships in manufacturing, including Industrial Maintenance Technician, Computer Numeric Control Operator and Supply Chain Assistant. Apprentices are paid employees who pursue formal coursework at Harper College focused on the Applied Associate of Science degree in Manufacturing. Apprentices follow the traditional earn and learn model where they apply the concepts learned in the classroom to on-the-job experiences. The course pathway includes several industry recognized credentials. Tuition and fees are paid by the employer and apprentices receive pay increases regularly, as they progress through the program. Employers provide input into curriculum design.

Description of how the region will expand 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 and expansion of bridge programs.

Career Pathways

As described above, the region has been expanding career pathway offerings throughout the workforce development system through the ICAPS program. ICAPS includes comprehensive academic and social student supports (e.g., tutoring, child care, transportation, access to public benefits, subsidized jobs), making the program ideal for many populations with barriers to employment. In the NEEDR, ICAPS is offered at City Colleges of Chicago, Prairie State College, McHenry County College, Elgin Community College, College of DuPage, College of Lake County, Joliet Junior College, Waubensee Community College, Kishwaukee College, South Suburban Community College and Harper College. Efforts are underway to develop and expand other career pathway initiatives in the region to serve populations with barriers. For example, McHenry County is coordinating with Vocational Rehab for an on-the-job training and evaluation program for people with disabilities and is also working on plans to coordinate career pathways and career service delivery with McHenry Community College.

The region's providers will advocate that the ICAPS model be expanded to include non-credit programs, which are currently not allowable under the model. Improved coordination between core partners through the MOU negotiation process, co-location of services within One Stops, and adult education's involvement on the Local Workforce Boards should make referral into these programs a reality. Additionally, local programs will explore ways to better leverage TANF, SNAP, CSBG and CDBG for support services for participants facing multiple barriers.

Bridge Programs

Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training that leads to career path employment in skilled jobs. While there is not a dedicated federal or state level source for bridge funding, the Illinois Community College Board and Commerce have expanded and continue to expand these programs within their existing workforce and education programs. The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership has a new Bridge Programs RFP being released shortly which will expand WIOA Bridge Programs. Additionally, the Illinois Community College Board recently released their RFP for adult education. The RFP puts focus on coordination under WIOA, bridge programs, and accelerated learning strategies for lower-skilled adults and ESL learners.

The Career Foundations curriculum is a tool to educate low-skilled adults on career pathways and support transitions to sector-focused bridge programs and post-secondary education and training at community colleges or community-based providers. The curriculum exposes students and job seekers to local career pathways programming options, assists with creating a plan to transition to advance to post-secondary education or training, and encourages job seekers to not only focus on the immediate job, but plan for how they could advance along a career pathway. Currently, Career Foundations is being implemented across the seven City Colleges of Chicago within the Adult Education department. Additionally, twelve community-based adult education and workforce providers (listed below) in LWIA 7 are implementing the curriculum within their workforce or adult education programs.

- Asian Human Services (Title II)
- Centro Romero (Title II)
- National Able Network (Title II)
- Howard Area Community Center (CDBG workforce program)
- Erie Neighborhood House (Title I)
- Centers for New Horizons (workforce program)
- Central States SER (Title I)
- Albany Park Community Center (Title II)
- Heartland Alliance (Title II)
- Chicago Federation of Labor Worker Assistance Committee (CFLWAC) (Title I)
- Chicago Commons (Title II)
- Tolton Learning Center (Title II)

Description of how the region will expand information for employers and job-seekers to access services by improving the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

Local areas and the region will work to implement any state-led initiatives to improve the public-private data infrastructure. Given the diversity of data systems between partners in the system, it will be necessary to have leadership from the state to allow for comprehensive integration.

On a local level, The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is implementing Career Connect, a new data infrastructure project. Approximately 130 agencies provide workforce services to Chicago and Cook County residents, using a variety of public and private funding sources. Agencies use multiple data systems and spreadsheets to track participants and outcomes for each program. Career Connect will serve as the front-end data system for workforce service providers to track job seeker clients across programs and funding streams. In June 2015, The Partnership launched the Business Services phase of Career Connect, giving workforce service providers a system to manage employer contacts, post and share job orders across agencies, and track employer services.

The second phase of Career Connect, scheduled to launch in fall 2016, will add comprehensive case management tools for staff and a universal customer portal. Career Connect will interface with Commerce's Illinois Workforce Data System (IWDS) which will remain the state system of record for WIOA Title I federal reporting. The Partnership is also in discussions with the IDHS Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to develop an electronic referral interface between Career Connect and WebCM (the DRS WIOA Title IV data system). The referral interface would provide for better coordination and customer follow-up between Title I and Title IV, and would be in place by June 2017. Career Connect is funded by a \$3 million Workforce Innovation Fund grant from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and by the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance.