

2022 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Plan

Illinois Local Workforce Innovation Area 7

Prepared by:



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LWIA 7 Local Plan Components:

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Chapter 4: Operating Systems and Policies – Local Component

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs). LWIAs must incorporate key documents into the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system and the services that are provided by the workforce partners.

A. Coordination of Planning Requirements

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 7 **Memorandum of Understanding** provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development services as required by WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding (and any subsequent modifications) is incorporated by reference into this plan. See Attachment A for a copy of the LWIA 7 Memorandum of Understanding.

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 7 **Service Integration Action Plan** provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Illinois Service Integration Policy (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 13). The Service Integration Action Plan (and any subsequent modifications) is incorporated by reference into this plan. See Attachment B for a copy of the LWIA 7 Service Integration Action Plan.

B. Provide information regarding the use of technology in the one-stop delivery system, including a description of:

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

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership developed its data system, Career Connect, to reduce silos in workforce service provision. In June 2017, the Case Management component of Career Connect was launched across all area workforce providers. These Case Management functions paired with the Business Service components in use since 2015. Currently, Career Connect allows The Partnership and its network of workforce service providers to:

- Conduct WIOA Title I eligibility, case management, and performance management
- Track participation and outcomes in non-WIOA grants, including tracking co-enrollment in WIOA
- Create an individualized employment plan for each job seeker customer
- Post job orders on behalf of employer clients
- Track services provided to employers
- Easily pull reports to track job seeker and employer status and outcomes

All WIOA data entered in Career Connect transfers to the State's Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS) where it is compiled for WIOA Title I federal reporting and performance management.

In March 2018, the Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition (CCLC) launched a Career Pathway Navigator initiative. The navigator is housed at the Near West Side American Job Center and connects customers with WIOA Title I and Title II services offered by 13 community-based partners in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. In summer 2019, CCLC began using Career Connect to track customer referrals across the 13 partners. With minimal data entry, partners refer customers to services at any one of the 13 providers, and track the status and outcomes of those referrals. CCLC plans to expand the Navigator model to two other American Job Centers in the next year; these sites will also use Career Connect to track referrals. Due to the lack of a unified state data system, American Job Centers primarily use paper forms to refer clients to partner services. This makes it difficult to track referral outcomes. Career Connect will provide a tracking and follow-up tool for both the referring service provider and the

receiving provider. All participating providers will be able to run real-time reports on the status of referrals.

- **How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii)).**

The State of Illinois currently provides multiple platforms for customers to access services through technology.

- Illinois workNet, managed by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), is a client-facing web portal that includes listings of all WIOA Title I providers including approved ITA training providers and programs. The site also includes links to the websites of state agencies that administer or provide services under the other WIOA titles.
- Illinois JobLink, managed by the Department of Employment Security (DES), serves as the state's labor exchange site. Employers post job openings and search candidates. Jobseekers post resumes, search for and apply to the posted jobs. Unemployment Insurance recipients are required to post a resume on JobLink to maintain their benefits. JobLink also includes links to the websites of the other WIOA titles and partners.
- The Department of Human Services' (DHS) website includes an online web referral for Title IV Rehabilitation Services. The simple form feeds directly into the Rehabilitation Service's case management data system and is assigned to a vocational rehabilitation case manager based on zip code.
- The Partnership administers an online American Job Center customer satisfaction survey and shares the results with all American Job Center operators to better coordinate service delivery.
- The Partnership is working closely with the City of Chicago to launch an online resource to connect people with disabilities to workforce services and other resources.

- **As part of the 2022 modification, describe how lessons learned about the remote delivery of services during the COVID-19 National Health Emergency will be adapted into operations over the next two years.**

In response to the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, the state of Illinois and LWIA 7 implemented a variety of tools to provide remote delivery of service:

- The Partnership opened a job-seeker self-service portal on its Career Connect platform to enable remote, virtual WIOA Title I eligibility. Through the portal, jobseekers provide initial eligibility information and upload eligibility documents. Staff then review the information and documents and certify WIOA eligibility. The Partnership coupled this with a DocuSign account for our agencies that allows them to obtain virtual, legal signatures on WIOA applications and other eligibility documents.
- LWIA 7 partners also developed a virtual orientation for our American Job Centers that provides a standard overview of available services across the mandated partners. The universal orientation will be available online for customers to view remotely or for staff to show in the centers. All customers regardless of where they are viewing the orientation will receive the same information.
- LWIA 7 core and required partners continued to meet monthly virtually over zoom to remain connected and informed about each others programs, challenges and successes throughout the pandemic. We learned that virtual meetings increased attendance from partners who were used to providing services via direct linkage (and as such weren't always on site at the centers). Virtual meetings also led to other community organizations joining in.
- The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development and Southern Illinois University developed the Illinois workNet Virtual Job Fair platform. Employers can meet with job seekers looking for employment, host informational sessions, and recruit potential candidates for job openings.
- Supportive service resources were utilized to provide internet access and computers to participants whose training or education shifted from in-person to online. The Partnership also

provided a series of virtual digital literacy classes, open to the public, to help people transition to virtual learning and remote work.

- Increased access to free and cheap computers and Wi-Fi access through partnership with PCs for people and promoting access to government subsidies for connectivity

All the above innovations and tools will continue to be available to WIOA participants, employers and agencies going forward. We are also planning other technology upgrades that will facilitate WIOA service integration and access:

- Through a National Dislocated Worker Grant, the Partnership will purchase technology upgrades for American Job Center resource rooms that will increase their capacity to set up virtual interviews between WIOA participants.
- Coordinating with Chicago Public Library to provide WIOA orientation and recruitment services at local libraries, helping reach jobseekers in all corners of Chicago.
- Piloting a new software platform for intake and referrals across WIOA partners.

Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Unified State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of the following, noting significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency where applicable (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)):

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

The Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) is a business-led board that sees, as part of its core mission, the importance of serving individuals with barriers to employment, and approaches this work using the six strategic methods outlined in the Unified State Plan.

Strategy 1: Coordinate Demand-Driven Strategic Planning

In order to advance a data-driven strategic plan for the Local Workforce Area, the Chicago Cook WIB held a strategic planning retreat in January 2020. The WIB examined the operations of The Partnership and its own governance infrastructure, giving guidance to the Local Plan through six key strategic themes which are reflected throughout this plan:

- Programmatic Geography and Special Populations
- Business Engagement and Sector Strategies
- Innovative Program Design
- Distribution of Training Funds
- Service Integration
- Workforce Innovation Board Operations and Committees

Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

To ensure alignment between the regional talent pipeline and drivers of economic expansion, The Partnership extensively engaged the Chicago Cook WIB, elected officials, and other stakeholders. The Partnership supports local and regional economic development efforts, such as *Invest South/West*, *Economy 2030*, and the *South Suburban Economic Growth Initiative*. With *Economy 2030*, The City of Chicago is committed to reducing inequities across its neighborhoods, starting with economic and community development, through city-wide planning. The plan will guide investments that support inclusive growth and the reduction of racial inequity, and is focused on four key sectors (TDL, Technology, Healthcare, and Hospitality) that look to drive growth in the next decade.

Similarly, Cook County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy aims to address economic and racial inequity by aligning resources and targeting investments towards infrastructure, growing businesses, and human capital. Key industry sectors identified by the County include fabricated metals, food processing and packaging, transportation and logistics, and healthcare. These efforts pursue

policies and programs that create an environment for economic growth and have an intentional focus on reducing inequities in areas that have historically experienced disinvestment in infrastructure, unjust housing policies, and a loss of jobs and economic opportunity.

The Partnership will continue to scale alignment with regional business-facing employment and training programs. In addition to substantial resources invested in employer-facing tools such as on-the-job training and incumbent worker training, The Partnership is directly involved in apprenticeship projects with two entities. The Cook County Bureau of Economic Development seeks to continue and expand their work as apprenticeship navigators, with a focus on manufacturing growth in southern Cook County, while the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago, a collective of regional Local Workforce Innovation Areas, have come together to undertake regional apprenticeship work with an initial focus on the Transportation Distribution and Logistics sector.

In collaboration with the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago, The Partnership created a Regional Business Services Team to address demand from business that have a regional or national footprint. This gathering of local business services representatives from ten counties is organized to strengthen regional integration of WIOA activities. The local business services representatives meet alternate months during a calendar year to discuss current grant activities, regional incumbent worker training projects, share best practices and business services strategies. Most recently, this team participated in professional development to receive a Certified Business Engagement Professional Credential. This team also reviews and discusses sector focused regional activities and impacts.

Strategy 3: Provide Economic Advancement for All Populations through Career Pathways

The Partnership seeks to provide economic advancement for all jobseekers by designing innovative, cross-system initiatives to address expanded access for special populations such as those identified in 2022 WIOA Local Plan – Illinois LWIA 7

the Unified State Plan. Using WIOA formula funds, The Partnership perennially awards providers serving specific special populations including parenting youth, youth with disabilities, foster youth, and others. Using leveraged or braided resources, The Partnership is also able to design and scale pilot initiatives that specifically target additional populations, including opportunity youth, older workers, public housing residents, individuals affected by the opioid crisis, and individuals returning to their communities from incarceration.

The Partnership's Opportunity Works initiative is a blended funding model that exposes suburban youth (ages 16 and 24) who are disconnected from school and/or the workforce to high growth careers, teaching foundational skills while youth participate in a paid internship. The program has attracted more than \$5 million in funding, served more than 1000 participants since inception and continues to attract funders and businesses.

Leveraging funds from the JP Morgan Chase Foundation, The Partnership is expanding capacity throughout the WIOA Youth service system to better serve young adults exposed to violence in their communities. Supportive Workforce Access for Youth began in 2018 as a community of practice in which WIOA Title I providers, with the assistance of Illinois Collaboration On Youth (ICOY), explored the causes and effects of violence in Chicago, and designed strategies to use Trauma-Informed Care practices in serving youth. ICOY, in collaboration with Chicago Jobs Council, has turned these findings into a curriculum design specifically to teach trauma informed practices to front line WIOA staff. In 2020, this curriculum will be rolled out to all WIOA service providers in the Local Workforce Innovation Area.

In 2020, The Partnership began leading an effort to build capacity in the opioid addiction response system, partnering with Haymarket Center and others to expand capacity in both recovery and

employment of individuals affected by the opioid crisis. In 2021, The Partnership partnered with Above and Beyond to provide paid work experience within the addiction recovery field.

Also, in 2020, leveraging federal Department of Justice Second Chance funding The Partnership has begun an initiative to create a regional coordinated reentry system. The Cook County Coordinated Reentry Initiative is a collaboration made possible with the support of the Justice Advisory Council of Cook County Over the next two years, The Partnership will lead a coalition of state and local government agencies, faith-based and community-based organizations in mapping and aligning services critical to individuals returning to their communities from incarceration. In 2021, The Partnership hired two full time staff with lived experience to provide case management and program design. The Partnership intends to create a roadmap of services that will better assist returning citizens in securing documentation, housing, and an opportunity to enter a sustainable career path; thereby reducing recidivism while creating economic growth in underserved communities.

Strategy 4: Expand Service Integration

In 2021 The Partnership issued two Request For Proposals: Delegate Agencies and Career Pathway Training Programs. Both RFPS were designed to expand our outreach and access to historically underserved populations and communities. Through these initiatives, The Partnership funded 13 Career Pathway Training programs including two bridge programs and 14 delegate agencies.

As part of The Partnership's ongoing efforts aimed at service integration, the four comprehensive American Job Centers have begun formal service integration planning intended to deepen alignment in 2022 and beyond. Staff at each comprehensive American Job Center engaged in an individual planning process to set initial goals for the next year. Initial goals include a commitment to cross training for front line staff from all titles of WIOA, increased center level coordination and communication, and a shared 2022 WIOA Local Plan – Illinois LWIA 7

customer database. The Partnership intends to roll out service integration planning to all American Job Centers and secure the engagement of the state agencies that administer the other titles of WIOA.

Strategy 5: Promote Improved Data-Driven Decision Making; and

Strategy 6: Advance Public-Private Data Infrastructure

Data is at the center of The Partnership's effort to create smarter solutions to economic challenges faced by residents of Chicago and Cook County. The Partnership's proprietary case management and data system, Career Connect, has a host of features that allow for new ways to analyze and adjust service provision to optimize customer outcomes. Business service functions in Career Connect allow for rapid analysis of which sectors are being served by the system at any given time, allowing for a clear picture of how the WIOA system is addressing the needs of growth industries in the region. Job orders are posted directly to the system, allowing for interplay directly between businesses who need workers, and the career coaches that are preparing jobseekers for new opportunities. Career Connect takes the additional step of allowing business analysis to be run at the center level, putting new and dynamic tools in the hands of front-line service providers. Other reporting mechanisms in Career Connect allow for geocoding, which gives new insight into how WIOA services and outcomes break down across geographies. Reporting by community area, municipality, or elected official district can give a unique picture for service providers and other stakeholders to use not only in analysis of current needs, but in ways to adjust service provision or align additional resources for better business and jobseeker outcomes in the future.

The Partnership continues to develop the capacity of Career Connect and intends to soon bring online a dynamic resume matching function that will allow business-facing service providers to accurately and

rapidly match jobseekers to opportunities in real time. This function will increase efficiency in placement of jobseekers and make the WIOA system a more nimble partner to the business community.

To promote informed decision making, The Partnership produces regular labor market reports for use by service providers, job seekers, employers and key stakeholders. The “Where are the Jobs” report is created using the Labor Insight tool from Burning Glass Technologies to analyze hundreds of thousands of recent postings pulled from internet job boards. This data helps The Partnership understand current job demand and employer needs in Cook County and its 130+ municipalities. This report is published quarterly, posted on The Partnership’s website and required for use by case managers/career coaches with job seekers when assisting them in developing individualized employment plans. The Partnership also uses this tool with business customers to improve their understanding of the local market as well.

Understanding real-time talent demand led The Partnership to create its current policy focusing Individual Training Account resources toward a limited number of growth occupations. On The Partnership’s website, each of the initial list of 40 occupations has a corresponding “Target Occupation Profile” (TOPs), a professionally designed printable brochure for use by providers and jobseekers. TOPs give an easy-to-understand picture of an occupation, from daily responsibilities to salary trends, to types of preferred and available training for prospective jobseekers.

ITA training and training provider data is housed on IllinoisWorkNet, an online portal which houses resources for use by Illinois workforce development practitioners and jobseekers. There, jobseekers interested in pursuing training in the course of WIOA services can find data on every training program approved for ITA funding, including cost, credentials, and aggregate consumer outcomes.

The Partnership continually explores new data partnerships and affiliations to learn more about their customers, operational efficacy, and to decode the needs of the region’s dynamic business community.

In 2019, Career Connect data was matched to data from the Homeless Management Information System with the cooperation of The Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), a membership organization comprised of more than 100 organizations and individuals who work to prevent and end homelessness in Chicago. This study allowed both the Continuum and The Partnership to definitively know the aggregate number of shared clients and has made possible further analysis to gain insight into service patterns that will allow for improvement and alignment of both systems. In early 2022 the CoC launched a pilot through which employment navigators will help individuals housed through a time-limited Expedited Housing Initiative connect to workforce services, including WIOA Title I. Funding for this pilot was a direct result of the data match, which showed the need for better systems coordination. The Partnership contributes technical assistance and data throughout the pilot.

In 2020, University of Chicago's Urban Labs, an arm of the Harris School of Public Policy, planned to perform data analysis across a wide range of systems. Informed by matching Career Connect data with data from Illinois Department of Employment Security, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Police Department, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, and Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, The Partnership will gain anonymized, aggregate analysis informing who the network's youth customers are, patterns in service provision, and what outcomes they achieve. The Partnership looks forward to gaining a fuller picture of engaged jobs seekers in an effort to mold the WIOA system into an engine for connecting people from underserved communities with the supports they need to have successful careers and fulfilling lives. Due to COVID-19, which shifted priorities, the youth data match did not proceed. However, The Partnership, Urban Labs, and the Chicago Housing Authority plan to conduct a data share and analysis to better understand how Chicago public housing residents are being served under WIOA Title I.

- **Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their GED and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credentials and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations;**

The Partnership is working closely with the City Colleges of Chicago's leadership as they seek to implement innovative Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs across six colleges in order to increase the number of Bridge students obtaining an industry-recognized credential while preparing for the high school equivalency and/or strengthening English language skills. The Partnership is currently expanding support for and alignment with City Colleges of Chicago's Healthcare Bridge Programs. This tuition-free model helps students improve their reading, writing, math, and English skills while earning an industry certificate that can lead to entry-level job opportunities. As the program evolves, The Partnership intends to explore potential expansion of this support to the additional six sectors within the City Colleges Career Bridge Program, as well as consider the potential connection between these programs and successful systemic improvements like the Title II Navigator pilot at the Near West American Job Center, detailed in Section 4D of this plan.

- **Using the insights and lessons learned from successful dual credit programs to scale up similar efforts in other sectors and regions;**

Career Pathway program integration in WIOA In-School Youth and post-secondary partnerships are a core part of innovative efforts funded by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership.

Leveraging local post-secondary partnerships can increase the impact of WIOA funds. City Colleges of Chicago and other community colleges in Cook County offer dual credit enrollment that allows high school juniors and seniors to complete many post-secondary general education courses before graduation, allowing for accelerated study and more rapid progression to the workforce. The results of dual credit alignment between Chicago Public School and City Colleges of Chicago is expansive. Over

65 CPS high schools participate, with over 145 teachers who are now credentialled as adjunct CCC faculty. Students may enroll in one college course per semester, tuition free, at any one of the seven City Colleges locations.

The Partnership also sits on the advisory council for Career Launch Chicago, a grant-funded initiative to build a sustainable non-traditional apprenticeship pipeline between Chicago Public Schools (CPS), City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), and the public workforce system. Career Launch Chicago is a new public-private partnership that aims to build a robust youth apprenticeship system that connects education to accelerated workforce training, thereby launching students into high-demand careers. Through Career Launch, CPS and CCC will put in place the tools, processes, and technology to support the successful onboarding, implementation, graduation, and employment for students and employers.

A national leader in secondary curriculum innovation and recipient of local WIOA youth funds, Arlington Heights School District 214 guides students in choosing coursework that aligns with 16 career clusters. Students are eligible to earn dual credit where available in order to speed completion of studies and accelerate entry into the workforce. Through their Center for Career Discovery, District 214 has engaged over 950 businesses to provide career exploration opportunities and work-based learning experiences, including internships and micro-internships, further accelerating onramps to the workforce.

The Partnership seeks to align WIOA youth services with these and similar models in all appropriate circumstances. By examining ways in which ITA, apprenticeship and other WIOA training resources can be used to augment and support accelerated learning by students in dual credit programs, the impact of the WIOA youth resources can be optimized to scale successful outcomes.

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

“Articulated Credit For Prior Learning”, a policy of City Colleges of Chicago, allows prospective students who completed career pathway courses of study in high school to reap between 3 and 12 college credits for classes leading to Basic Certificates, Advanced Certificates, or Associate degrees at a City College. In order to receive articulated credit students must be Chicago Public School alumni who are no more than two years removed from graduation and submit both their transcripts and articulated Career and Technical Education award.

Suburban Cook County Community Colleges offer similar options for students. Moraine Valley’s policy, “Achieved Prior Learning” requires that students are enrolled and have completed some work in their course of study. Harper College’s Proficiency Exams and “College Level Examination Program” award credit in certain topics based both on secondary experience, and in some cases through an examination of extensive work/life experience in a course area.

In coordination with post-secondary partners, the Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board will explore strategies for marketing these and other tools for the acceleration of post-secondary completion to youth and young adults pursuing WIOA training in regional community colleges.

- **Investigating how targeted marketing can identify segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations;**

The Partnership has been successful in engaging specific populations such as mature workers and the underemployed. With the support of the AARP Foundation, The Partnership has become an integral part of the “Back to Work 50+” network, which targets the portion of the seasoned workforce that was hit hardest by the effects of the Great Recession. Leveraging WIOA to provide additional appropriate services, The Partnership has successfully engaged this population with targeted marketing in the form

of AARP's *Smart Strategies for 50+ Jobseekers Guide*, *Smart Strategies* coaching sessions, and a yearly symposium held to explore the unique challenges of older workers and attract businesses to the cause. The success of this targeted marketing, and The Partnership's decision to fully integrate these services into American Job Center practices has resulted in over 900 older workers being served in the last program year. The Partnership will continue to address this need.

The Partnership also takes great pride in the connection it has fostered with underserved communities. LWIA 7 has a network of 52 public workforce service providers delivering 70 programs in 83 locations, procured strategically to meet the needs of communities facing high rates of unemployment. In many ways, the geographic coverage of the network is the best form of targeted marketing, putting services at the doorstep of individuals who need them most.

To this end, The Partnership is creating a strategic communications plan to establish a framework for targeting specific audiences of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed. Using a wealth of resources such as texting platforms, social media, digital marketing tools, direct mail, street marketing, media, billboard, radio, public service announcements, paid and free promotional ads, and a network of more than 30K subscribers, The Partnership is able to provide a diverse strategy and reach throughout the Cook County region.

The Partnership aims to garner attention and generate awareness through attending community events and working in cohesion with community partners, local and national influencers, elected officials, and key stakeholders to generate awareness about public workforce programs.

To date, The Partnership has generated support on a local and national level allowing the organization to amplify its support of a diversity of populations that are otherwise underserved and less likely to access workforce development resources. Some examples of The Partnership's outreach efforts include:

- **Media:** Creating public notices and media advisories to promote and publicize activities highlighting project milestones will guide media outreach strategies. The Partnership invites media to attend and have exclusive opportunities to cover organizational progress from a range of vantage points; such as program launch events, hiring events, and individual participant success stories. The Partnership uses media coverage to garner regional and possible national awareness around innovative efforts and initiatives. This will help contribute to the narrative about the positive efforts enhancing the quality of resources available to underserved communities and to showcase the success of the public workforce system in Chicago and Cook County, in turn exposing potential customers to an opportunity to seek services.
- **General Public:** The Partnership seeks to engage community members and general audience through inviting them to participate in open houses, workshops, surveys and public forums. Ideally hosted at workforce service providers like American Job Centers, community based events can make Chicago and Cook County residents feel connected to accessible resources. The aim is to create a space where the public can share their input, interact with service providers, and get education about the workforce system.

Further, The Partnership uses newsletters and mass messaging alerts for sharing events, success stories and information related to workforce development programming, while also soliciting feedback to be used for continuous improvement. In this way, audiences can feel connected to the workforce development system through regular communications about program efforts and highlights.

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

The Partnership currently funds career pathway training programs in the manufacturing and transportation, distribution logistics sectors. These programs feature combined career coaching, basic skills training, technical training and supportive services. The Partnership periodically evaluates the effectiveness of these models and adjusts offerings accordingly.

The Partnership supports scaling of innovative career pathway models such as the Jane Addams Resource Corporation's *CNC and Welding Fast Tracks* programs for entry level employment in manufacturing. The curriculum stresses baseline skills in shop math, print reading and precision metrology. This bridge program is for learners with initial test scores between 5th and 8th grade in math and reading.

City Colleges of Chicago's Adult Education program plays a crucial role in supporting the regional economy and developing neighborhoods through providing opportunities for Adult Education students to transition into the workforce and career pathways. There are over 310,000 Chicagoans without a high school diploma and 615,000 people whose primary language is not English. Over the next several years, The Partnership looks to scale current efforts to co-enroll students from CCC's Healthcare Bridge Program into WIOA Title I services for purposes of braiding funding. City Colleges support the first semester of the bridge program, concentrated on basic skills remediation for success in the field. The Partnership will support the second semester of training via ITAs for the certified nursing assistant credential. The Partnership and City Colleges will continue to review and assess these efforts and explore expanding to other bridge programs during 2022.

In 2021, The Partnership issued a Request for Proposal for Career Pathway Training Programs under WIOA. We nearly tripled our investment in this model and now fund 13 programs in the following sectors: Manufacturing, Construction, Banking, Culinary, Health Care, Information Technology and Transportation Distribution and Receiving.

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

The Partnership is committed to improving access to industry recognized certificates and credentials, predominantly through Individual Training Accounts and Career Pathway training models. The Partnership's training provider eligibility and certification policy requires that ITA-eligible programs result in a recognized credential and requires that programs meet performance criteria of 70% successful completion rate and training-related entered employment rate and 60% credential attainment rate. Further, The Partnership continually examines the geography of workforce service provision to ensure that the network is serving areas of need, as well as aligning with other workforce and economic development plans.

C. In the 2022 modification, use insights and lessons learned from COVID-19 National Health Emergency regarding the identification and service delivery to targeted populations significantly affected by the pandemic.

The Partnership leveraged funds from City and County CARES Act allocations to conduct outreach to individuals impacted by the pandemic. The Partnership developed a website, Chi Serves to reach hospitality workers who were laid off during the pandemic to connect them to workforce serves and immediate job opportunities. The Partnership and its networks of agencies hosted several virtual hiring events using the State's Illinois Worknet site for employers, industry sectors, Veterans and geographic communities in Cook County. In August of 2021, The Partnership hosted a series of large scale virtual hiring events in collaboration with Word Business Chicago. Over 3,000 job seekers attended

With the demand for virtual services, The Partnership conducted several on-line classes on using technology and digital literacy.

The Partnership received a National Dislocated Worker -Disaster Relief Grant to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. Through this grant, The Partnership provided disaster relief employment and COVID education in communities or target populations hard hit by COVID -19. This grant fostered great partnerships with organizations such as, The CARA Program, Housing Forward, Greater Chicago Food Depository, Top Box, Bethel Family Resource Center, Greater Auburn Gresham Development

Corporation, Beds Plus Care, Northwest Side Housing Center and the University of Illinois Street Outreach program.

The Partnership has also launched The Road Home which is an initiative providing specialized services for people coming home from incarceration. The Road Home is funded by the Department Of Justice and the Cook County Justice Advisory Council.

D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Unified State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of:

- **Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I (§ 679.560(b)(6)).**

The Partnership is committed to service alignment across funding streams and program models that will ensure the maximum programmatic impact. Coordination with state partners is a continual process and happens both in the context of regular meetings between organizational leadership and that of Title I administrative agency, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and in the context of regular Workforce Innovation Board engagement. Representatives from Titles II, III, and IV of WIOA sit on the local workforce board and its committees, actively supporting and providing direction for the local workforce system.

The Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago is a coalition of Local Workforce Boards (of the counties surrounding Chicago), developed over 15 years ago to serve as a platform for regional workforce investment and economic development coordination. This collaboration has expanded under WIOA to include Title I Administrators from each local workforce investment area and to provide a forum for periodic coordinated planning with core partners. The Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago fundraises for jointly administered regional grants, committing to project coordination and information sharing.

Local coordination of services has also been extensive under WIOA. The Partnership convenes its network of 48 WIOA Title I service providers bi-monthly, gathering best practices and input for continuous systemic improvement. In addition to jobseeker services, The Partnership also leads coordination of Title I providers' business-facing efforts, meeting monthly with business service representatives from area Sector Centers and other Title I organizations to streamline business engagement and participate in an innovative shared-placement model that incentivizes collaboration between service providers.

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

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership coordinates with the WIOA Title II system administered by the Illinois Community College Board in a variety of ways. The leadership team at The Partnership holds joint monthly meetings with City Colleges of Chicago leadership to discuss alignment strategies, implement new initiatives and share data/practices. These meetings have deepened colocation relationships and resulted in more coordination of bridge programming. The Partnership and City Colleges will continue to explore additional opportunities to leverage Title I and Title II funds in innovative ways.

Staff from The Partnership regularly attend meetings of the Title II Area Planning Council, a network of Title II providers outside of the traditional community college system. As noted elsewhere in this plan, innovative Title II coordination has been successfully demonstrated in an award-winning pilot project in the Near West American Job Center, located in Chicago's Pilsen community. The Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition created a Title II Navigator, a model that resulted in increased efficiency and

streamlined provision of adult education services within the community of Adult Basic Education providers that are members of the Title II Area Planning Council, as well as solutions for tracking and referral of participants that benefit all of the organizations serving the community. The model gained national recognition with a 2020 award from National Skills Coalition. Title II Navigators and providers continue to partner with all American Job Centers to support jobseekers.

The Chicago Cook WIB worked with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) on the implementation of the ICCB review process for the 2017 Cook County applicants for Adult Education Title II funds. The Partnership formed a committee to review the overall ICCB application to determine if the applicant's proposal for the use of Adult Education funds was compliant and coordinated with the WIOA Regional and Local Plans. The Deputy Executive Director of ICCB is a member of The Chicago Cook WIB and ICCB has developed an efficient process for the Title II application review with workforce innovation boards across Illinois. Many of the workforce organizations in Chicago and Cook County have WIOA Title II programs collocated in their offices and other Title II organizations connect to workforce locations by technology for the seamless referral of WIOA customers when Adult Education services are needed. The WIOA Title II organizations in Chicago and Cook County are also partners in the development and approval of the annual WIOA Memorandum of Understanding at all comprehensive One Stop locations.

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

In addition to representation on the Chicago Cook WIB, the local WIOA Title III administrator, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), is actively engaged in ongoing planning and service delivery. Coordinated service provision is common throughout the American Job Centers in the provision of veterans' services, Rapid Response activities, and business services.

The Partnership coordinates business and employer outreach at the American Job Centers with the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Wagner-Peyser services are physically collocated in the comprehensive American Job Centers, which facilitates the collaboration and coordination of employer engagement. The Partnership works with IDES on all aspects of business engagement including streamlined referral processes, hiring events and specialized projects for the benefit of employers.

The Partnership maximizes coordination of job seeker-services and avoids duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services through a variety of strategies. Collaborative efforts include connecting pre-screened job ready candidates including any registered unemployment insurance claimants and individuals served by WIOA to job openings at engaged businesses. Staff share job postings between Wagner-Peyser and Title I through both Career Connect and IllinoisJobLink. In addition, Title I staff participate in Rapid Response activities including attendance at initial meetings and participation at workshops for affected employees. Job-seeker workshops and job clubs are open to participants of both programs and email blasts and phone notifications are targeted to participants of both programs.

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

The Partnership is taking concrete steps to expand coordinated activities with Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation entities. At the center level, The Partnership works to provide access to assistive technology and other accommodations in partnership with Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services to ensure ADA compliance (see Chapter 6B, below) and fully integrate jobseekers with disabilities into the WIOA service structure.

In this WIOA planning cycle, The Partnership intends to activate and develop a WIB committee focused on inclusion of jobseekers with disabilities. In addition, The Partnership is working closely in Chicago with the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities on development of an online clearinghouse

application to assist individuals with disabilities in finding work and other supports. These activities will add depth to existing efforts, which see The Partnership focusing In-School Youth funding on programs which dovetail with the Title IV mandate to address employment barriers for transition-aged youth.

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

The Partnership ensures coordination with education providers in the county through a variety of strategies. On the Chicago Cook WIB, post-secondary interests are represented by the Deputy Executive Director for Adult Education and Family Literacy at the Illinois Community College Board, the Chancellor of City Colleges of Chicago, and the President of Moraine Valley Community College.

The Partnership funds a variety of secondary education entities, including school Districts 214 and 207, and various alternative high schools in Chicago. The Partnership has directly engaged with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) around potential collaboration on Career and Technical Education programming, services to address the high school dropout crisis in Chicago through student recovery and engagement in the workforce, and capacity building to educate school counselors on the WIOA system. Under the CPS initiative “Learn. Plan. Succeed.” every graduating senior is required to have a post-secondary plan for their education and career pathway. Building familiarity with the WIOA system is critical in order to provide a full array of post-secondary career pathways and supports for graduating seniors.

As discussed elsewhere in this plan, entities like CPS and District 214 have set ambitious goals for incorporation of work-based learning experiences in the provision of Career and Technical Education programming. The Partnership intends continued support these and other regional secondary work by examining ways in which WIOA resources can augment or directly support work experiences that lay a foundation for growth careers even before graduation.

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

The Partnership shares the joint vision of the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois State Board of Education, which oversee and implement Perkins V programming. Perkins V is designed to enhance and codify coordination between education and workforce systems in part through expanding the focus on industry-recognized credentials and incorporating the use of work-based learning in curriculum, while expanding access to low income learners and special populations. These shared goals are represented in this plan. In addition to the commitment to participate in local needs assessments, The Partnership sits on the advisory council for Career Launch Chicago, a grant-funded initiative to develop goals that align with Perkins V, creating an apprenticeship system that aligns Chicago Public Schools, City Colleges of Chicago, the workforce system and the private sector, while expanding dual credit opportunities to speed completion of education and accelerate students' entry to and advancement in the workforce.

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

A copy of the local Supportive Service Policy is attached (Attachment C). Through approval of this policy, the Chicago Cook WIB endorses the provision of allowable support services to WIOA customers

at the provider level. Transportation (such as public transit passes or gas cards) and other services are documented both in participant files and at the point of fiscal reimbursement.

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is also exploring new and innovative models for provision of support services. With a grant from Uber Technologies, The Partnership is piloting a Mobility Barrier Reduction Fund with the use of ride credits to facilitate transportation services to WIOA customers traveling to interviews or to work in the early stages post-hire but prior to receipt of a paycheck. The Partnership has also raised private funds from construction firm LendLease to create a Barrier Reduction Fund for individuals entering the construction trades. With these and other resources, The Partnership has been able to expand access to supports for new tradespeople in the form of required tools, boots, personal safety equipment, and stipends to assist individuals during the start of unpaid apprenticeship training. The Partnership will continue to evaluate the impact of these leveraged resources and explore additional fundraising and enhancements where appropriate.

E. Provide a description of how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:

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

The workforce development system in Cook County includes five service delivery models that work together to provide employment and training to the region's residents. These include American Job Centers, Delegate Agencies, Youth Delegate Agencies, Sector Centers, and Career Pathway Programs. Training activities include provision of Individual Training Accounts, Internships/Paid Work

Experience, Pre-Apprentice Training, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training and Classroom Training including bridge programs.

This broad range of training and service models allows the residents of Chicago and Cook County to seek out options that best fit their needs/circumstances. These programs and activities are generally accessible across Chicago and Cook County through The Partnership's network of American Job Centers and Delegate Agencies. The location of each program type is ultimately determined by the procurement process – i.e. which entities respond and how their proposals rate through the selection process.

As part of the Local Plan and procurement processes, The Partnership conducts a geographic analysis of existing programs to determine accessibility to high-need areas of Chicago and Cook County. If gaps are identified, The Partnership expressly seeks services for these areas through the RFP process. For example, in 2018 The Partnership executed a targeted procurement of youth programming in a high need area on the west side of Chicago. Having lost a service provider in the area, geographic analysis and engagement with community leaders revealed that youth services were critically needed in the affected neighborhoods and must be replaced. The Partnership used a political boundary to define the area of procurement and was able to award a highly capable service provider to resume services to the community.

Similarly, based on prior network analysis and community need, The Partnership will open a new education and workforce center in the Chatham community on Chicago's South Side in the Spring of 2020. This state-of-the-art resource will bring workforce development services and high-tech training facilities to a region of LWIA 7 that has experienced significant disinvestment and is in need of community-based resources to support both businesses and jobseekers.

As directed by the Chicago Cook WIB, The Partnership seeks to augment existing geographic analysis to foster alignment with other local economic development initiatives over the coming procurement cycle. By aligning organizational infrastructure to support economic policy imperatives outlined by both the City and the County, WIOA funding can have an outsized impact on accelerating economic growth in communities across Chicago and Cook County.

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

The Partnership coordinates and supports Rapid Response activities with the State Rapid Response Unit (RRU) within the Illinois Department of Commerce and the Illinois Department of Employment Security with assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor. The Partnership is charged with assisting workers impacted by layoffs, employers, local government officials, and other stakeholders by providing resources, technical assistance, and labor market information. Generally, the State RRU receives first notice of major dislocation events, via notices provided under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Act petition notification. The State RRU enlists The Partnership to respond to dislocation events. From the initial information available, the State RRU works with the designated partners to determine the immediate needs of workers and employers and establishes an appropriate action plan for delivery of information and assistance to affected businesses and workers. Whenever possible, a local workforce center and/or labor organization is featured in information sessions.

When formal notice is not filed in accordance with the WARN Act, but a local rapid response staff or other local partner becomes aware of a WARN-level layoff or closure event, The Partnership initiates the Rapid Response process, notifying the state coordinator in order to formulate strategies for carrying

out rapid response activities. When The Partnership or a local partner becomes aware of a layoff or closure event that does not meet the WARN threshold or is not TAA related, it will initiate rapid response per the local operational plan. Rapid Response assistance includes the following activities:

- Employer Consultation
 - Initial planning for Rapid Response workshops
 - Coordination to ensure customization of services to the specific needs of impacted worker group
- Consultation with labor representatives when workers are covered by a collective bargaining agreement
- Services Delivered to Workers
 - Administration of needs assessment surveys
 - Labor market information conveying labor reduction trends, and opportunities for transitioning workers
 - Connections to local service providers, which may also include an appropriate sector center
 - Presentations from RRU representatives on how to engage their respective agencies
 - Delivery of collateral reference materials with instructions and service provider contact information

Since the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic, The Partnership has continued to provide the rapid response services listed above but has shifted to providing rapid response services virtually.

F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide youth activities including:

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

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership strives to be an effective steward of limited public and private resources and to create the biggest impact possible for young adult job seekers in Chicago and suburban Cook County. The region is home to a diverse and steady economy that attracts companies and job seekers from across the globe, however Chicago and Cook County are also confronted with a history of community disinvestment, structural racism in the job market, and more currently, the suburbanization of poverty. Despite historically low national unemployment rates, certain demographics of young adults have persistently high rates of joblessness. For example, African American males age 16-19 in Chicago are more likely to be unemployed than have a job.¹ In Chicago and Cook County, there are over 82,000 16-24-year-olds who are out of work and not in school.² This trend has been exacerbated in the past two years as we have seen that young adults who were disconnected before the pandemic are even more disconnected now, and employment rates among all ages within African American and Latinx communities has been slower to rebound as the economic recovery gets underway.

The Partnership works to address this crisis through strategically deploying workforce resources and building partnerships that directly address the difficult realities confronting young adult job seekers. The Partnership prioritizes funding programs that serve young adults who face intense challenges in establishing themselves in a family sustaining career. Specifically, youth who:

- Have a disability
- Have experienced homelessness
- Are involved with justice system
- Are not working and not in school
- Live in a community with high unemployment rates

¹ Out of School and Out of Work 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 Year Olds in Chicago and Cook County in 2017. Wilson, May 2019. Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois Chicago. https://greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/OutofSchoolOutofWorkData_May2019.pdf

² Ibid.

- Are English language learners
- Pregnant or parenting
- Are in state care
- Residents of public housing

The Partnership provides ongoing training, technical assistance, and monitoring of all youth programs to ensure a high level of program quality and integrity. To support the ability to engage youth during the pandemic, The Partnership has expanded access to virtual resources, facilitated system wide employer engagement activities, increased technical support for program staff, and ensured that youth services are available at all AJCs in LWIA 7.

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and Chicago Cook WIB envision a system where all young adults in the region are able to easily access a comprehensive and integrated set of education and training supports that increase the number of young adults productively engaged in the workforce, thereby increasing self-sufficiency and reducing poverty. The Partnership funds a variety of successful workforce investment program models for youth that are implemented through a network of ten American Job Centers and other service providers.

Through the provision of youth workforce development programs, The Partnership seeks to:

- Align youth-serving institutions in order to ease access, reduce duplication, close service gaps, and promote collaboration
- Connect young adults to the labor market, career pathways, education, and/or paid work experience
- Improve outcomes for young adults through placement in employment or education, attainment of industry-recognized degrees or certificates, and achievement of literacy and numeracy gains.

Grounded in these guiding principles, The Partnership dedicates youth funding in several categories including Out-of-School Youth (OSY), In-School Youth (ISY), Youth Innovation Fund, and program

enhancements funded by private or other public resources. Youth services are accessible through all 10 American Job Centers within LWIA 7 as well as 31 delegate agencies strategically located throughout Chicago and Cook County. The following overview of current activities highlights successful models and provides a contextualized description of the multiple strategies that the Chicago Cook WIB is engaging to address the employment needs of young adults and businesses in LWIA 7. All of The Partnership's youth programs continue to meet or exceed all performance metrics.

Out-of-School Youth Activities

In 2018, The Partnership identified and funded four WIOA OSY program models that are conducted in multiple locations across the LWIA.

Model 1: Reconnection to Education through Employment

The Reconnection to Education through Employment model serves OSY who do not have a high school diploma or GED. Programs demonstrate comprehensive service strategies to meet the wide array of needs posed by participants and include access to multiple education reconnection options. Program designs feature linkages to public schools, credit recovery programs, options schools (non-traditional schools), and other systems for attaining a secondary credential. This model also features a strong academic remediation curriculum to ensure skills gains in reading and math, as well as preparing young people to re-enter an academic setting. Programs offer supportive services such as transportation, work attire, and connections to other social services such as housing or court advocacy. The Partnership currently funds five programs at four providers that implement this model including the following:

- The Greater West Town Development Program offers youth an alternative high school education experience with access to manufacturing and TDL training and career exploration.

- Alternative Schools Network provides career coaching to students who have dropped out or been expelled from traditional high schools while reconnecting them to secondary education through a network of alternative or options high schools.
- Central States SER provides onsite GED classes and tutoring combined with career coaching at two locations including one inside of an Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice facility. This provider has developed a service model that is very effective engaging gang involved youth and connecting them to education and employment opportunities.

Model 2: Post-Secondary Education/Training and Employment

The Post-Secondary Education/Training and Employment model is designed to serve youth who already have a high school diploma or GED and are interested in continuing their career pathway through further education or advanced training. This model includes high quality instruction, academic assistance, and social support aimed at preparing youth for successful entry into, and progress through, post-secondary education and/or training. Program elements include strategies that help youth pursue, enroll, persist, and complete post-secondary education programs.

Providers administering this program also offer young people job placement assistance, training for high demand industries, and may utilize Individual Training Accounts. The Partnership requires these programs to demonstrate a strong connection between the provision of post-secondary education/training and available jobs with family sustaining wages; and have a strong record of success in placing youth within their field of study. The Partnership currently funds nine providers that implement this program model including the following:

- Both Bethel Community Services in the south suburbs and Elgin Community College in the northwest suburbs effectively use this program model to connect homeless youth to post-secondary education and employment.

- Asian Human Services has a proven track record of connecting with multiple at-risk immigrant and refugee communities; and engages youth and businesses out of their northside Chicago location.
- Moraine Valley Community College uses this program model to directly connect young adults to college courses at their Blue Island campus through their unique FOCUS job readiness training curriculum.

Model 3: Sector Based Training and Employment

The sector-based training and employment model is designed for youth with an interest and aptitude for a career within a specific industry sector. Sector-based training models, which may include occupational bridge programs, pre-apprenticeships, or paid work experiences, target jobs in high demand industries in Cook County. The Partnership encourages service providers to utilize contextual learning strategies that develop basic and occupational skills simultaneously. These programs feature career exploration, academic and occupational skills training, job readiness, and high-quality work experience activities within a specific industry. Service Providers must work with local employers to identify relevant skills and viable career pathways to train a strong pipeline of skilled workers. The sector-based model results in the mastery of technical skills required for employment, the attainment of employer-recognized certification, and placement into employment or advanced education in the target industry.

The Partnership's sector-based programs actively engage industry representatives in program design and curriculum development. Business partners also participate by providing candidate screening, classroom instruction, career exploration, field trips, job shadowing, and internships. A central feature of this model is sector focused work-based learning that incorporates career exploration, education, and employment activities. Sector based programs also provide career coaching, foundational skills training, placement assistance, and job retention services. The Partnership currently funds four programs that implement this model including the following:

- In locations throughout Cook County and Chicago, Business and Career Services, Inc. offers the Manufacturing Careers Internship Program, which includes a three week ‘Manufacturing Boot Camp’ training, two certifications, paid work experience, and multiple layers of support that facilitate placement into manufacturing careers – an industry sector projected to have over 84,000 job openings in Cook County between 2019 and 2024.
- The YWCA provides a 12-week program on the south side of Chicago that focuses on TDL careers – a sector with over 141,000 projected job openings in coming five years. Participants earn three credentials while completing job readiness training and a paid work experience. The YWCA also provides a variety of supports including childcare, transportation assistance, and mental health therapy when needed.
- Metropolitan Family Services created a partnership with Chicago Community Learning CenterS to provide classroom training with a paid work experience that prepares young adults for careers in Health Care .

Model 4: Young Adult Career Pathways

The Career Pathways model is designed to assist individuals in attaining the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. These programs are grounded in a comprehensive assessment of each participant’s employment history, experience, as well as their career interests, skills, and abilities. Career Coaches work with participants to develop a long-term career plan that involves securing immediate paid work (subsidized or unsubsidized), and/or training relevant to participant’s career plan.

Providers utilizing this model focus on enrolling participants who fit the criteria of the target populations outlined above; and correspondingly provide appropriate service levels to support youth through intensive work-based learning and career planning. Youth Career Pathways programs feature ongoing career mentoring, career exploration, foundational skills development, career planning, access to job training (ITA/OJT), credential attainment, and work-based learning activities that provide maximum opportunities for youth to advance their career interests. Program staff also provide basic skills remediation and tutoring when needed. This model features work-based learning experiences that are

structured opportunities for youth to learn and engage in career opportunities that are of interest to them. The Partnership currently funds 12 service providers that implement this program model in 14 locations including the following:

- Bridges to Work (formerly the Marriott Foundation) utilizes this model to provide intensive services to youth with disabilities. Their models leverage WIOA funding for training and placement, and utilize other funds to support long term follow up that has been shown to improve outcomes for customers with disabilities.
- New Moms. Inc. combines Career Pathways services with parenting education and resources to pregnant and parenting youth on the west side of Chicago. Through leveraging additional resources, New Moms provides an extensive level of support services including childcare and housing for many of their program participants.
- North Lawndale Employment Network utilizes the Career Pathways model to provide ongoing support to youth who have been involved in the criminal justice system. The organization has a long history of serving people who have been incarcerated and utilizes this expertise to reach a target population that The Partnership has prioritized to serve.

In-School Youth Activities

The Partnership targets In-School Youth funding to serve youth who are currently enrolled in school and are at risk of dropping out, have a disability, or are English language learners. In-School Youth programs emphasize activities designed to assist youth in completing their high school diploma and transitioning to post-secondary education/training, or into employment along a career path that will lead to economic security.

In-School Youth programs emphasize tutoring, study skills training, and dropout prevention strategies that lead to attaining a high school diploma. Programs demonstrate strong connections to public schools for youth outreach, recruitment, and program delivery; as well as a strong school to college/career framework. In-School Youth programs are required to provide early introduction and exposure to post-

secondary education/careers and career exploration activities that motivate youth to establish career goals. Programs include career mentoring services designed to help young adults plan beyond completion of their high school diploma.

Serving Youth with Disabilities

Based on program impact analysis and organizational priorities, The Partnership dedicates the majority of WIOA In-School Youth funds to programs that exclusively serve youth with disabilities. Program models for youth with disabilities include intense job readiness skill development and placement. Several programs include paid work experiences to orient participants to workplace environments.

The Partnership funds seven organizations to provide WIOA ISY services through independent program models at multiple locations including:

- AERO Special Education works with four schools in south west suburban Cook County and has developed successful job readiness training for students, as well as training for employers to prepare them to be supportive work environments for their students. This program has a broad diversity of employer relationships including a hospital, airport hotels, a university, and a massage therapist.
- LaGrange Area Department of Special Education works with multiple schools in west suburban Cook County to provide paid work experience, career coaching, intensive interview preparation, and other workforce activities specifically designed for people with disabilities.
- Manufacturing Renaissance provides industry focused training and work experiences for Chicago Public Schools students interested in manufacturing careers.

Youth Innovation Fund

To promote continuous improvement within the public workforce system, The Partnership created the Youth Innovation Fund to incentivize and reward creative, pioneering solutions to youth unemployment problems facing communities in Chicago and Cook County. Through a competitive bid process, The

Partnership aims to enhance services being provided and identify new best practices for serving young adults in the region. The Fund creates space for service providers to test the efficacy of innovative youth service models, achieve greater outcomes, and advance the broader strategy of The Partnership's mission and vision. Two OSY providers successfully secured Youth Innovation Fund awards in the first round of selection that began with the 2018 Youth Services procurement process.

- Pyramid Partnership is providing an intensive four-week job readiness training with a specialized focus on digital literacy. Participants learn how to use common computer programs and effectively complete online applications, as well more traditional skills like business writing and customer service.
- Lawrence Hall serves youth currently in care of the state, and those who have aged out of foster care. They provide WIOA services to residents and other program participants in the South Shore community of Chicago. Their Youth Innovation Fund award allows for their staff to provide trauma informed care activities and clinical counseling sessions alongside workforce development services to improve individual outcomes for program participants.

The Partnership retains the option to fund additional proposals submitted by respondents to the Youth Innovation Fund procurement process and may fund additional promising projects based on the availability of funds.

Program Enhancements Funded by Private or Other Public Sources

In addition to the above-referenced WIOA-funded models, The Partnership encourages Title I Providers to leverage WIOA activities and supplement core youth programming with additional resources. By providing programs and additional supports simultaneously, the providers can more easily connect youth to education and employment; consequently, enhancing the impact of WIOA Youth funds.

Furthermore, as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, The Partnership raises funds through charitable giving and public or private competitive grant processes to innovate and expand service delivery throughout

Cook County. These diverse funds when braided with WIOA dollars foster enhanced WIOA Youth programs, builds organizational capacity of The Partnership, and ultimately allows the public workforce system to serve more youth. Examples of these innovations include:

- *Trauma Informed Care:* With funding from the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation, The Partnership convened a community of practice to study trauma informed care and develop service strategies that support more effective youth engagement within workforce development programs. Fourteen Title I service providers participated in the community of practice, which included training from the Illinois Collaboration on Youth (ICOY), to learn and share their experiences. The Partnership is currently working with ICOY and the Chicago Jobs Council to develop a Trauma Informed Care curriculum manual for professional development of front line workforce staff. The Partnership will use these tools to implement trauma informed care and youth engagement best practices throughout all Youth WIOA programs in Chicago and Cook County.
- *Opportunity Works:* At the behest of Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, The Partnership developed Opportunity Works, a sector focused internship program designed to connect young adults looking for a viable career pathway with businesses in high-growth high-demand sectors. The program provides exposure to careers in Information Technology, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics, and Manufacturing. The Opportunity Works program model includes foundational skills training, paid work experience, and facilitates connections to the next step on participants' individual career pathways. The Partnership funds Opportunity Works programming at five organizations in suburban Cook County, two of which are also WIOA Title I service providers. These WIOA Youth programs have effectively braided Opportunity Works program supports with WIOA paid work experiences and additional training to make a highly effective set of workforce development activities that connect young adults to family sustaining careers.
- *Chicago Codes:* Working with support from the office of the Mayor of Chicago, Facebook, Microsoft and the Rockefeller Foundation, The Partnership launched an all-ages program designed to rapidly advance Chicago residents through a coding boot camp and connect them to employment in the Information Technology sector. This program provides a free, unique, and

impactful training option for WIOA youth program participants who have an interest in and aptitude for coding and technical skills

- *Construction Initiatives:* The Partnership manages multiple programs and relationships focused on connecting residents who have been historically underrepresented in the construction industry to family sustaining careers in skilled trades and construction management. One such program is ConstructionWorks Powered by the Illinois Tollway. The Partnership developed ConstructionWorks to connect people of color, women, and other groups to careers in the skilled trades. Accessible in locations throughout LWIA 7 and the entire Northeast Economic Development Region, Construction Initiatives programming provides participants with support services including access to a barrier reduction fund and training to prepare for employment and apprenticeship application processes. These initiatives provide access to lucrative career pathways for WIOA Youth participants who are interested in the skilled trades. The Partnership had also amplified construction career exposure activities and is working with Chicago Public Schools, the Mayor’s Office, and industry leadership to conduct a skilled trades show in the spring of 2022 that will introduce thousands of high school students to skilled trades career pathways.
- *Hospitality Hires Chicago:* The Partnership leverages its employer relationships to create hiring opportunities for registered WIOA participants across the American Job Center Network in Chicago and Cook County. Hospitality Hires Chicago is a semi-annual hiring event built around the demand for talented employees in Chicago’s hospitality, tourism and retail sectors. The Partnership coordinates candidate pre-screening and prepares employers to make conditional employment offers on-site at the hiring events. Additionally, The Partnership provides access to its ecosystem of workforce training partners and occupational training programs. The Partnership’s provider network is a large source of youth referrals for these events.
- *Cook County Coordinated Reentry Council:* In collaboration with the Cook County Justice Advisory Council, The Partnership secured Federal Second Chance Act funding to develop a pilot reentry program and align systems policies to more effectively support successful reentry. With the long-term goal of creating a coordinated reentry system for Cook County, The Partnership is aligning WIOA and other program resources to directly connect people to employment and training opportunities pre- and post-release from incarceration. These efforts

will allow young adults returning home from incarceration to directly connect to career resources available from the public workforce system in Chicago and Cook County.

- *Hire Chicago and Recover Cook:* At the request of Mayor Lightfoot and President Preckwinkle The Partnership works with businesses in high growth sectors to curate large scale virtual training and hiring events that provide career exposure activities and the opportunity to interview for high-demand positions. Hire Chicago took place in August 2021 and The Partnership continues to follow up with hundreds of employers and thousands of job seekers to fill thousands of open positions. Recover Cook is planned for 2022 and will engage residents across the city and suburbs for similar opportunities.

The Partnership will continue to seek out additional public and private funds to improve service offerings for both businesses and young adults, and to expand the range and impact of the public workforce system in Chicago and Cook County.

Youth Workforce Development Funding Strategy

Recognizing the difficult realities that confront many young adult residents of Chicago and suburban Cook County, the Chicago Cook WIB advances multiple strategies to ensure youth who face barriers to employment can access and succeed in the workforce activities provided by the public workforce system. The Partnership invests in programs that employ best practices and incorporate concepts and approaches of (1) youth development and trauma informed care that meets the psycho/social/emotional needs of young adult job seekers; (2) education and workforce strategies that are relevant to high-growth, high-demand business sectors; and (3) wrap-around services with particular focus on employment outcomes. Specifically, The Partnership supports projects that:

- Demonstrate meaningful partnerships with accredited higher education institutions, employers in high growth industries, and other relevant organizations and service providers that support employment, internships, and educational opportunities for young adults

- Provide long term career development services, such as occupational training, that leads to unsubsidized family sustaining employment in high demand industries
- Demonstrate collaboration with broader young adult initiatives (e.g., One Summer Chicago, Thrive Chicago, Chicago Youth Service Corps, My Chi My Future, or other youth serving programs)
- Include innovative post-secondary bridge programs designed to accelerate credentials and skill building, such as use of contextualized and integrated curriculum and instruction
- Use structured work-based learning, such as paid work experiences, pre-apprenticeship programs, and career exploration, while providing maximum opportunities for young adults to learn theoretical and practical skills relevant to their career interests
- Provide intensive career mentoring and support services, including financial literacy education, to help young adults overcome complex barriers, successfully complete programs, and secure/retain employment
- Demonstrate investment in long-term follow-up with participants upon program completion to ensure continued support and success in post-secondary education, training, or employment

The Partnership prioritizes funding for programs that serve youth with disabilities, justice-involved youth, and young adults who are out of work and out of school. To ensure these priorities are met, The Partnership requires that a minimum of 80% of youth funding is dedicated to Out-of-School programs, and that the majority of In-School programs exclusively serve youth with disabilities who are nearing transition age. Further, The Partnership requires, and trains all service providers to make programs accessible to individuals with disabilities and young adults who have experienced trauma.

To select youth service providers, The Partnership assesses providers through a competitive procurement process and offers contract extensions to agencies that are successful in delivering workforce development services to young adults and employers. The Partnership last conducted a youth services procurement in the fall of 2018. This procurement continues to align organizational strategy for youth workforce development activities with WIOA core partners' services, and The Partnership's

guiding principles for youth programming. The process identified providers that are effective at reaching target populations and geographies, delivering high-quality programming, as well as maintaining a significant volume of service activities proportional to the high number of young adults in Cook County who are disconnected from work and/or school. The Partnership's youth programs consistently meet or exceed all performance metrics.

- **A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.**

Cook County has more than 82,000 out-of-school and out-of-work youth/young adults.³ Despite strategic efforts across several public agencies the pandemic of youth unemployment persists. For this reason, The Partnership will continue to award 80% of its WIOA youth funding to organizations serving out-of-school youth – an expenditure rate above the statutory requirement – until demographics change.

- **As part of the 2022 modification, describe how youth activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.**

The Partnership has engaged multiple strategies to support young adult job seekers and their surrounding communities in recovering from the pandemic. While shelter in place orders were in effect, staff provided technical assistance and resources to programs to support outreach, enrollment, and ongoing career support to youth who were increasingly disconnected from employment and social supports. Through National Emergency Grants and the Chicago Community Contact Tracing Corps, we created immediate opportunities for training and employment accessible to youth and adults. In partnership with Roadtrip Nation, a national leader in career exploration activities, The Partnership created the Chicago and Cook County Young Adult Workforce Development Portal that allows youth to

³ Ibid.

explore career opportunities virtually through thousands of video assets and opportunities to connect to career coaching and training. The site also includes an online curriculum that supports youth in developing social capital and learning about potential career pathways by conducting informational interviews with leaders in their intended career path. Utilizing CARES Act funding, The Partnership was able to offer stipends to youth who completed the five-part course. The Partnership has also allowed for delegate agencies to use this course and other virtual experiences to count towards paid work experience expenditures while the shelter in place orders were in effect, employers were not allowing participants on premises, or other circumstances limited youth ability to engage paid work experiences.

While the Pandemic has presented challenges to our network's ability to engage youth and potential employers, it also is creating new opportunities. Meeting the 20% work-based learning expenditure requirement was difficult during the early stages of the pandemic when shelter in place orders were in effect and since then as many employers were weary of allowing non-employee persons in their workspaces. Many work experience slots at employer partners were closed and only slowly have the same employers begun to welcome participants back on-site. To address this reality, The Partnership began identifying alternative work-based learning experiences that could be completed virtually or in a safe environment such as completing the Roadtrip Nation Experience curriculum, other virtual learning experiences, and engaging in pandemic relief activities. As the economy recovers, many employment opportunities are open to youth participants that would not have been as accessible before based on the tight labor market. To capitalize on these opportunities, The Partnership is exploring the possibility of using philanthropic and American Rescue Plan Act funding to increase availability to sector focused youth internship models like Opportunity Works that have high rates of family sustaining career pathway placements, and implementing new service delivery models such as entire family career

coaching; and population specific programming for people with disabilities, returning residents, and other groups that face discrimination in the job market. Additionally, when WIOA Title 1 Youth Services are procured next, The Partnership will utilize an equity lens in policy development and selection process to ensure that limited resources reach young adults and communities that were hardest hit by the pandemic.

G. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment as outlined in the Unified State Plan:

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

The majority of individuals The Partnership serves in adult programs are individuals with barriers to employment as outlined in the Unified State Plan. In PY 2018, 96% of WIOA enrolled adults served had at least one significant barrier to employment. In the same program year, 87% of WIOA enrolled adults served were low income and 30% were basic skills deficient.

In PY 2017, The Partnership established a priority of service protocol to ensure that priority is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient. All WIOA Delegate Agencies, American Job Centers, and Sector Centers must follow the priority of service order, outlined below, when enrolling eligible WIOA Adults into individualized career services and/or training:

- First, veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult Formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.

- Second, individuals who are included in the WIOA statutory priority groups such as a recipient of public assistance, other low-income individuals or an individual who is basic skills deficient but is not a veteran, nor a spouse of a veteran.
- Third, veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who are not included in the WIOA statutory priority group.
- Fourth, unemployed adults who are in need of WIOA services to obtain employment.
- Fifth, employed adults who are working but earning at or below the self-sufficiency level.

In addition to ensuring compliance with WIOA mandated statutory priority groups, The Partnership also funds strategic initiatives targeting these populations. As described above The Partnership, together with the Cook County Justice Advisory Council, received a grant to design a coordinated re-entry system for people returning to Chicago and Cook County from incarceration in Illinois Department of Corrections facilities and the Cook County Jail. The Partnership created a Coordinated Re-entry Council to generate system-wide policy recommendations for increasing the rate of successful community reentry and finalizing the design of a demonstration project from 2021 to 2023. The demonstration project will provide appropriate pre- and post-release services to participants with the goal of reducing recidivism. The Partnership also contracts with providers specializing in serving individuals with prior convictions via Title I services.

Between 2016 and 2018, The Partnership participated as a member of the Chicago Mayor's Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for People with Disabilities (The Task Force). The Partnership meets with the task force regularly and continues to work closely with Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to develop appropriate training and employment opportunities. In addition to these ongoing efforts, The Partnership contracts with several organizations to provide Title I services to individuals with disabilities including Special Education programs for youth.

The Partnership will continue to research and pursue best practices for improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through the Chicago Cook WIB's Disability Inclusion Committee.

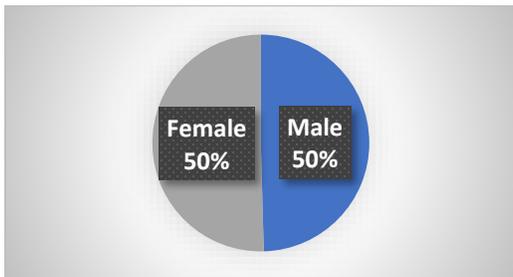
The Partnership contracts with several workforce agencies that provide specialized services to specific populations that face barriers to employment as identified by the state plan. For example, Delegate Agencies provide Title I services to English Language Learners from a variety of backgrounds including Spanish, Polish, and Mandarin speakers, and members of a variety of other immigrant communities. The Partnership will continue to work with these providers to ensure that they are effective in delivering WIOA services to target populations and sharing best practices with the American Job Center Network in Chicago and Cook County.

Through the provision of technical assistance, semi-monthly service provider meetings and monitoring quarterly status reports, The Partnership will ensure that a minimum of 80% of WIOA Adults served are within the statutory priority and/or veteran groups.

- **Describe how the local workforce areas will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:**
 - **Disaggregating data by race, gender and target population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.**

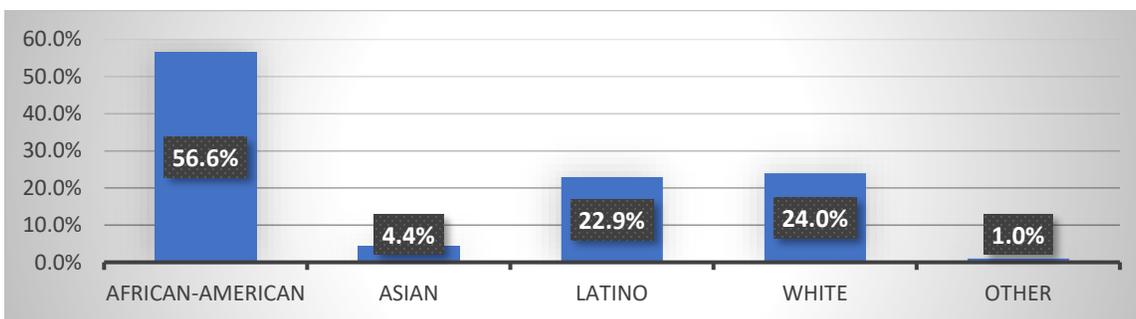
The Partnership regularly reviews disaggregated WIOA Title I data by race, gender, and target population characteristics to assess equitable access to services. This information is routinely shared with the WIB and its committees as well as with the Chief Elected Officials and their designees. Illustrated herein are examples of data collection for the most recently completed program year in which 10,883 clients enrolled in Title I services.

Figure 1: WIOA Title I Participants by Gender, Jul 1 2018 – June 30 2019



Program Year 2018 participants were equally divided across gender.

Figure 2: WIOA Title I Participants by Race/Ethnicity⁴ July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019



As illustrated, over half of all enrollees were African-American, and almost one-quarter identified as Latino

Figure 3: Average Hourly Wage at Exit by Race/Ethnicity, Adult & Dislocated July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

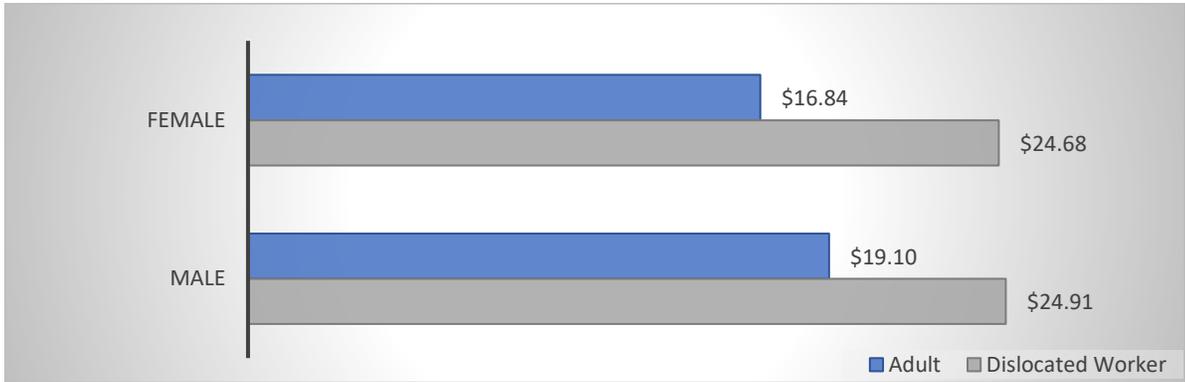
⁴ Participants may identify as more than one race; therefore, the total exceeds 100%. “Other” includes American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native, and Pacific Islander.



In Cook County, the median household income for African-Americans is only 50% that of Whites. Latino households (of any race) earn 69% of Whites⁵. When comparing the average hourly wage at exit for WIOA customers (Figure 3), the picture is more equitable. African-Americans and Latinos enrolled under the Adult program earned an average of \$17 per hour, compared with \$18.50 for Whites and \$20 for Asians. For recently laid off dislocated workers, the equity gap is wider with African-Americans earning \$22 per hour and Latinos \$21 compared with \$27 for re-employed whites and \$44 for Asians. This indicates that WIOA helps bridge the wage gap, but that more work is needed to achieve true economic equity.

Figure 4: Average Hourly Wage at Exit by Gender, Adult & Dislocated July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

⁵ American Community Survey, 2017, Table S1903.



When comparing wage outcomes for men and women, there is a larger discrepancy among Adult participants. Females earned an average of less than \$17 per hour whereas males earned \$19 per hour. Both men and women enrolled as dislocated workers earned almost \$25 an hour upon program completion. (Figure 4.)

Many external factors contribute to economic inequity including, hiring bias, laws that prevent ex-offenders from working in certain industries, and access to transportation to name a few. While The Partnership cannot control all of these factors, one area for further research is racial and gender differences in training enrollment and job placement by sector.

For example, more women than men still gravitate towards the healthcare field. Entry-level Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) jobs have low wages. However, with additional training, women with CNAs could advance into Licensed Practical Nursing, Registered Nursing, or other family-sustaining wage positions within the industry. Through the employer-led West Side United initiative, The Partnership provides incumbent worker training to four area hospitals serving the West Side of Chicago. Full-time employees of these institutions complete an 18-month Medical Assistant certification program at Malcolm X College and earn 30 college credits while maintaining their employment. This helps the employers retain talent and the employees advance within a career pathway without having to sacrifice

income to go back to school. The Medical Assistant Pathway Program is the first of its kind in this region. Additional occupations planned within this initiative are in the areas of Nursing and Healthcare Information Technology.

Over the next four years, The Partnership intends to review training and placement data to identify other patterns of access for jobseekers entering growth industries. This inquiry will be in alignment with the economic policy imperatives outlined by both the City and the County. Based on the findings, The Partnership will identify ways to ensure that all customers are aware of and have access to training and employment in high-growth, high-wage sectors.

Another way that The Partnership addresses equity is by funding a variety of jobseeker service models. American Job Centers are higher volume centers that are either collocated with or connected to all five WIOA Titles. Currently The Partnership supports 10 American Job Centers throughout Cook County. Delegate Agencies are community-based organizations focusing on serving special populations or specific geographies. Career Pathways and Bridge programs provide basic skills training along with occupational training and certification.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of Adult clients served under each model by targeted populations and race/ethnicity. While Delegate Agencies serve 32% of clients overall, they serve 84% of English language learners, 53% of homeless clients, 36% of individuals with disabilities, and 41% of offenders. Career Pathway/Bridge programs serve 6% of total participants, but 9% of those that are basic skills deficient. They also serve a slightly higher proportion of Latinos. American Job Centers are strong with single parents and veterans.

Table 1: WIOA Adults Served by Agency Type and Targeted Population. Jobseekers enrolled July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019

Population	Total Served	American Job Centers	Delegate Agencies	Bridge / Career Pathways
Total Adults Served	4446	58%	32%	6%
Basic Skills Deficient	1345	60%	29%	9%
English Language Learner	122	16%	84%	1%
Homeless	64	36%	53%	6%
Individuals w/Disabilities	86	56%	36%	8%
Low-Income	3888	58%	33%	5%
Offender	515	51%	41%	8%
Single Parents	671	61%	31%	2%
Veterans	126	63%	33%	2%
Race/Ethnicity				
African-American	2765	59%	29%	5%
Asian	247	36%	57%	5%
Latino	797	64%	25%	9%
White	866	57%	35%	7%

- **Developing equity goals in conjunction with the education system and prepare action plans to achieve them.**

As noted above, The Partnership currently reviews data with an eye towards equity. The Chicago Cook WIB has three planned strategies to better understand the demographic make-up and barriers of the job seekers served by the American Job Center Network in LWIA 7, and to use that data to implement equity goals in conjunction with a wide variety of partners.

First, The Partnership will analyze training industries and outcomes by race, ethnicity, and gender to assess concentrations in sectors or training programs by race and gender. Then staff will also determine if training outcomes, including successful completion, credential attainment, and employment, vary by race and gender both across and within sectors. Based on the results of this analysis, The Partnership

intends to refine training policies and work with the ITA-certified training partners to form technical assistance plans that address any resultant equity gaps.

Second, The Partnership will collaborate with state and local partners to attain a fuller picture of who the network serves. WIOA requires documented verification of any barriers used in determining eligibility, but does not require all barriers to be identified in order to deem an individual eligible for services. As a result, providers often do not record all job seeker barriers in the Career Connect data system, nor do participants disclose all barriers. Additionally, individuals may see a stigma in disclosing some barriers such as disability, or justice involvement at the time of application. In order to more accurately assess how well providers are serving participants in targeted populations, and align services accordingly, The Partnership is exploring data analysis projects with other major human service stakeholders. The Partnership recently entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Chicago UrbanLabs to provide aggregated data about WIOA clients and their interactions with other public services. Additionally, The Partnership looks forward to seeing results from the State's Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) and Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) which will match data across eight state agencies.

Third, the Chicago area was selected as one of 10 cities participating in the Jobs and Opportunity Project, an initiative by JP Morgan Chase, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, and PolicyLink. This study will use data to examine workforce trends and inequities that limit access to vulnerable populations seeking entry into the workforce and/or sustaining living wage careers. PolicyLink will develop a standardized data report for each city that analyzes systems and structures that accelerate opportunity and present barriers to equal access to careers. The Partnership and City Colleges of Chicago participate on the local Equity Workgroup, which will identify local data indicators that are not included in the standard report and recommend strategies for improving equity and access. Input from

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other key stakeholders, such as Chicago Public Schools and local government entities, will be included in the process.

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

The Partnership currently funds several Sector Centers to engage businesses in growth industries and to educate the LWIA's network of American Job Centers and Delegate Agencies about career opportunities in these sectors. These include STEM fields such as Information Technology and Health Care. As the Chicago Cook WIB refines the role of Sector Centers, they will determine how to better connect them with youth-serving organizations to provide younger clients with information about and access to these career pathways.

In 2019, The Partnership launched Chicago Codes to address the lack of diversity in Chicago's tech sector while simultaneously developing a pool of untapped talent in some of the city's underserved communities. Chicago Codes is an 11-week, tuition-free, coding bootcamp funded through non-WIOA sources. Of the 40 students enrolled in the program, half were women and nearly all were people of color from distressed communities. Lessons from this pilot project will inform The Partnership's efforts to connect non-traditional workers with high-demand, high-wage careers in IT.

Further, The Partnership supports Career Launch Chicago, a grant-funded initiative to build a sustainable non-traditional apprenticeship pipeline between Chicago Public Schools (CPS), City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), and the public workforce system. Career Launch Chicago is a new public-private partnership that aims to build a robust youth apprenticeship system that connects education and workforce training, thereby launching students into high-demand careers. Through Career Launch, CPS

and CCC will put in place the tools, processes, and technology to support the successful onboarding, implementation, graduation, and employment for students and employers.

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

Currently, WIOA Title I mentoring programs generally focused on youth populations. The Partnership has found success using mentoring in work-based learning environments such as those used in the Opportunity Works initiative. Under Opportunity Works, a youth internship initiative detailed in section 4F in this plan, host businesses such as Chicago Magnesium have assign supportive supervisors to mentor interns on the jobsite, accelerating assimilation into their workforce and giving an enhanced and valuable work experience to the young adult participants.

The Partnership also has a history of employing adult peer mentorship as a successful tool to assist displaced workers affected by mass layoffs. In cases where a layoff event is large enough or in a specialized field for which skill transition will be difficult, The Partnership has sought and received funding to employ one or more of the dislocated workers as peer outreach and support staff. These individuals are trained in WIOA policy and processes and employed to recruit and mentor dislocated peers through workforce services and ultimately through transition to their next career opportunity.

- **Providing training to workforce program staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.**

The Partnership provides reporting and data monitoring training to internal and external workforce program staff members for performance and quality control. Organizational leadership will use Chicago Cook WIB, staff, and provider meetings along with other forums to share findings on equity gaps and will work collaboratively with regional partners to develop strategies to close those gaps. This includes

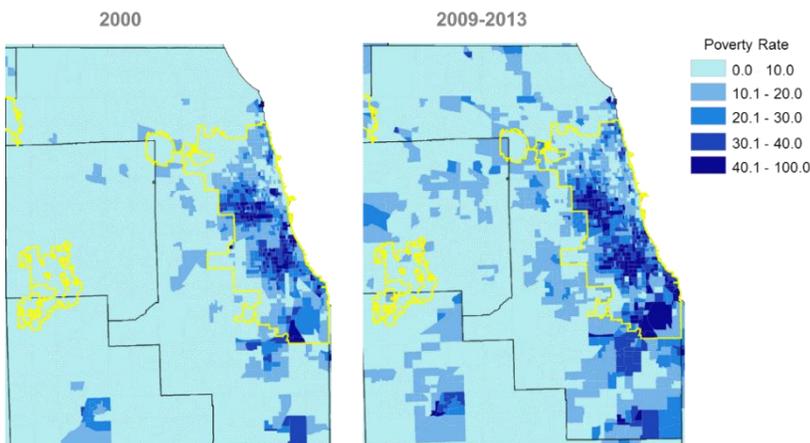
sharing the data and equity strategies that emerge from the Jobs and Opportunity Project throughout the workforce system.

As opportunities arise, The Partnership seeks to add new capacity to data analytics efforts through specialized professional development. For example, in 2019 The Partnership were able to certify two data specialists through the Coleridge Institute’s *Applied Data Analytics* program. Targeted at government agency staff, the program provides training in core data analytics techniques by working on specific projects with real-world micro-data using the Administrative Data Research Facility (ADRF), a secure data analytics environment. The Partnership will continue to progressively provide staff with such enhanced capacity as opportunities and resources align.

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

Since 2000, poverty rates have grown throughout Cook County (Figure 5). However, poverty grew fastest on the south and west sides of Chicago and in south suburban Cook County. These areas are also home to large concentrations of African American and Latino residents.

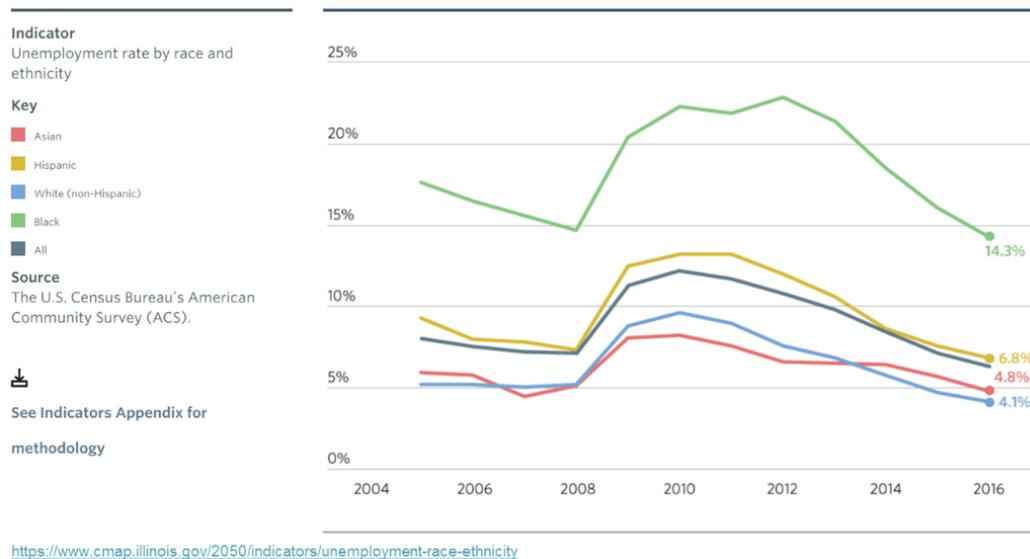
Figure 5: Geography of Poverty Rates in Cook County



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data

Although unemployment rates throughout the Chicago metropolitan area have declined steadily since 2012, in 2016 the unemployment rates for African Americans was over three times higher than for non-Latino whites (Figure 6). Latinos were one-and-a-half times more likely to be unemployed than whites.

Figure 6: Unemployment Disparity Rates in the Chicago Metropolitan Area



In 2019, the City of Chicago launched INVEST South/West, an unprecedented community improvement initiative from Mayor Lightfoot to marshal the resources of multiple City departments, community organizations, and corporate partners toward 10 neighborhoods on Chicago’s South and West sides (Figure 7).

Through this groundbreaking collaborative by government, businesses, philanthropies, and community leaders, the City will align more than \$750 million in public funding over the next three years. The initiative will seek to maximize those public investments in order to attract private capital, respond to changing commercial trends and enrich local culture.

Figure 7: INVEST South/West Communities

**EQUITY IN INVESTMENT
FOCUS ON 10 NEIGHBORHOODS**

Austin

Humboldt Park

North Lawndale

New City

Quad Communities (North Kenwood, Oakland, Grand Boulevard, Douglas Park)

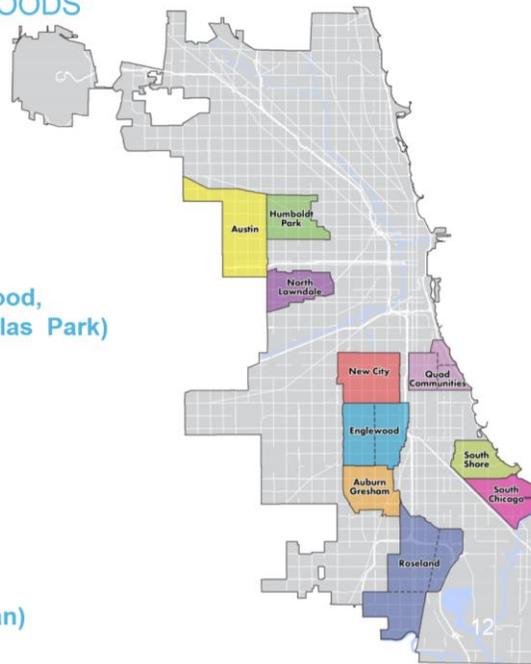
Englewood

Auburn Gresham

South Shore

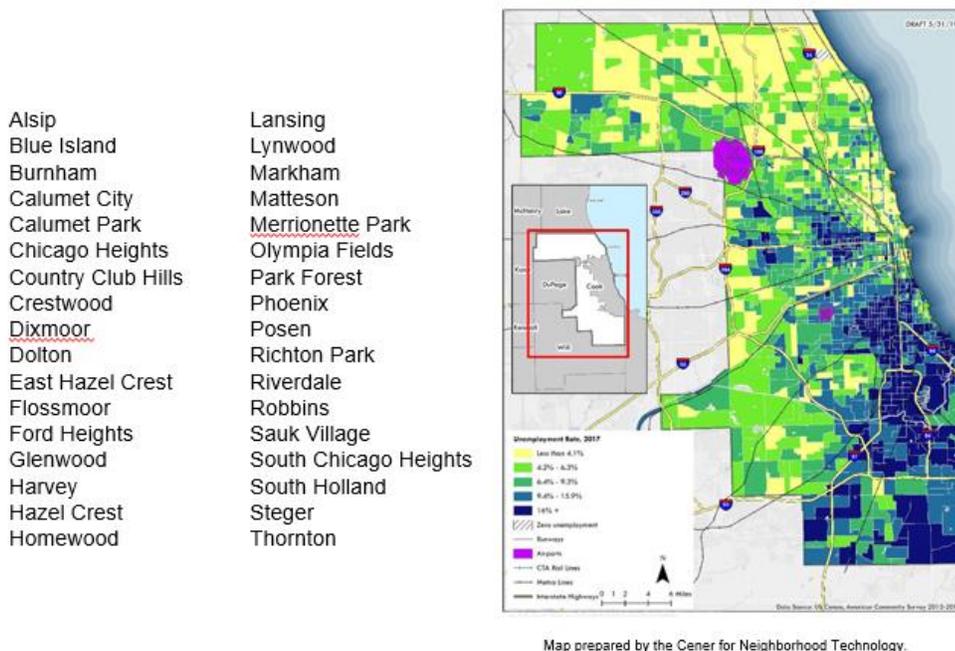
South Chicago

Roseland(Pullman & West Pullman)



Through multiple regional planning efforts, Cook County developed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that aims to address economic and racial inequity by aligning resources and targeting investments towards infrastructure, growing businesses, and human capital. The Partnership works closely with the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development, Housing Authority of Cook County, and aligned initiatives like the South Suburban Economic Growth Initiative, and the Chicago Metro Metals Consortium to pursue policies and programs that create an environment for economic growth. These efforts have an intentional focus on reducing inequities in areas that have historically experienced disinvestment in infrastructure, unjust housing policies, and a loss of jobs and economic opportunity. Cook County has identified 34 suburban towns and municipalities that they are prioritizing for investments in community and economic development. (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Cook County Priority Communities



Currently, LWIA 7 has ten American Job Centers, including five in the City of Chicago and five in suburban Cook County. These high-volume centers provide access to all WIOA Titles and are located to facilitate equal access throughout the service area. In addition, The Partnership also funds 42 Delegate Agencies to provide services in targeted geographies or to targeted populations such as returning citizens and youth with disabilities.

Over the next four years The Partnership plans to revisit the geographic locations of its American Job Centers and Delegate Agencies to ensure alignment with the City and County priority communities. The Chicago Cook WIB will explore several strategies to bring services into targeted areas that do not currently have service providers physically located in the community:

- Use the provider procurement process to establish services in targeted areas
- Implement innovative strategies to outreach and provide services in nearby communities that do not have physical workforce centers

- Collaborate with City and County officials to remove transportation and other barriers that prevent jobseekers from accessing current service locations

COVID laid bare the inequalities in the economy and labor force. It had a significant impact on WIOA enrollment. As noted earlier in this report, local and statewide shutdown mandates went into effect in late March of 2020. It was approximately 6 weeks before The Partnership was able to update its system to accommodate virtual enrollment. Additionally, agencies had to adapt their recruitment and service models. Many training programs halted or moved online. In comparing calendar years 2018, 2019 and 2020, new WIOA enrollments were down by over 2,000 participants in 2020.

In looking at the demographics of WIOA participants from 2018 to 2020, the most notable change the drop in women program completers in 2020. In prior years, women and men completed WIOA services at an almost 50/50 split. However, in 2020, only 46% of program completers were women. This aligns with nationwide data showing that women were more likely than men to drop out of the workforce to care for dependents during the pandemic.

The percentage of those who received training services (see Table # below), was up compared to those who exited in the prior two years. Women and African-Americans were especially more likely to attend training in 2020 than in prior years. However, both groups were also less likely to earn credentials.

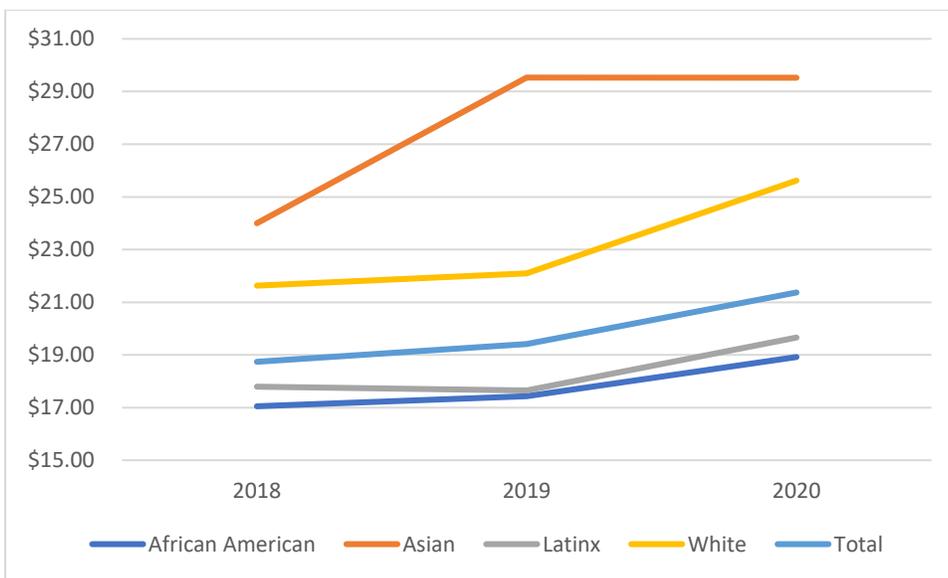
Table # - Training Participant & Credential Attainment Patterns by Gender, Race & Ethnicity

	2018		2019		2020	
	Received Training	Earned Credential	Received Training	Earned Credential	Received Training	Earned Credential
Gender						
Female	59%	73%	61%	68%	64%	67%
Male	64%	74%	67%	73%	68%	71%
Race/Ethnicity						
African-American	59%	75%	63%	70%	66%	67%

Asian	55%	78%	66%	64%	68%	69%
Latinx	69%	68%	66%	71%	67%	69%
White	63%	74%	65%	76%	64%	74%
Total Completers	61%	73%	64%	71%	66%	69%

COVID also had a direct impact on employment at program outcomes. Overall employment at WIOA exit was 66% in 2020 compared with 69% in 2018 and 71% in 2019. Only 64% of women who exited in 2020 were employed. When looking at employment by race and ethnicity, all groups except Asians saw a significant drop in employment at exit. For those who were employed, however wages were up in 2020 compared to prior years. Part of this is likely due to increases in the minimum wage in both Chicago and suburban Cook County. Additionally, the labor shortage in certain essential jobs may have pushed up wages. However, as shown in the chart below, the wages of African-Americans and Latinx participants still lagged behind their white and Asian counterparts.

Average Hourly Wage at Exit by 2018-2020 by Race and Ethnicity



H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area, including:

- **How local areas will meet the annual Training Expenditure Requirement (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 4⁶);**

The Partnership budgets a minimum of 50% of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program funds for training. The Chicago Cook WIB requires the public workforce network of American Job Centers, Delegate Agencies, and Sector Centers to make available various types of WIOA training tailored to the specific needs of jobseekers and employers. Staff from The Partnership regularly monitor and evaluate this activity to ensure total compliance therewith.

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

In recent years, The Partnership has invested more than 75% of training expenditures in Individual Training Accounts, for which the need and demand is overwhelming, splitting the remaining training funds between On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and Career Pathways trainings. Considering the persistent and increasing demand for business-facing training models, The Partnership will conduct a thorough analysis of training data across models, including enrollment and outcomes, alongside labor market information and best practices from other LWIAs. Based on the findings, The Partnership will set ambitious targets around the number or percent increases in OJT and IWT and will identify and strategically engage employers in order to facilitate this shift. The engagement strategy will include outreach to the employer community through Chambers of Commerce, industry associations, the County's Bureau of Economic Development and the Office of the Mayor of

⁶ <https://apps.il-work-net.com/WIOAPolicy/Policy/Index/250>

Chicago; and will result in the creation and marketing of a robust menu of WIOA services designed to support employer customers efforts to build a skilled workforce.

Supporting the efforts of WIOA core and mandated partners, The Partnership also engages actively in support of work-based learning strategies derived from other funding streams. Community Colleges, Secondary Districts, philanthropic and public/private partnerships have found that aligning with the WIOA system can bring the benefit of tangible leveraged supports for their participants. To that end, the Partnership has engaged in apprenticeship efforts, bridge programs, and other initiatives described elsewhere in this plan in order to encourage co-enrollment and the use of WIOA supports.

- **Provide a copy of the local Individual Training Account Policy and describe how training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (§ 679.560(b)(18)); and**

The Individual Training Account Policy Letter, dated September 2019, is attached (Attachment D). The American Job Centers facilitate each jobseeker's ITA application and training selection process. American Job Center career advisors assist job seekers with researching and selecting training programs that align with the job seeker's IEP. Jobseekers use their training vouchers with approved training programs / providers listed on the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS) certified training provider list.

The Partnership contracts with a third-party entity, referred to as the Training Assessment and Referral Agency (or TARA) to process ITAs. The TARA analyzes patterns and trends and provides a system of

checks and balances to ensure participants receive equitable services and to minimize conflicts of interest. Customers are required to research different training providers and conduct site visits, as well as check outcomes for the training provider on Illinois WorkNet. The TARA monitors the referral process and contacts clients to ensure they are exercising informed customer choice.

Individual Training Accounts are by design a tool of customer choice, meaning that customers are free to choose from any approved training program for which they qualify. This framework has led to disproportionate spending in two categories of occupational training; nearly two-thirds of ITAs (by volume and by dollar amount) are invested in commercial driver's licenses and entry level healthcare certifications (certified nursing assistants, patient care technicians, phlebotomists, etc.). The Partnership is committed to exploring ways to diversify this investment across a greater variety of high demand occupational training while ensuring alignment with the economic and community development initiatives of the City of Chicago and Cook County

- **Provide a copy of the local training provider approval policy and procedures. Describe how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.**

The Training Provider Eligibility and Certification Policy Letter (dated April 2017) is attached (Attachment E). At the inception of the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership in 2012, staff reviewed the extensive list of eligible training providers from three local workforce investment areas and sought to pare it down to ensure job-seekers would be pursuing training for jobs in high-growth, high-wage industries. The Partnership reduced the then list of more than 700 occupations to a considerably smaller 40 occupational clusters. The occupations are both high-growth and high-demand and provide at minimum family supporting wages as set forth by Cook County. Based upon the duration and

complexity of training then assigned maximum tuition levels to each occupation. Finally, in accordance with labor market information The Chicago Cook WIB narrowed the workforce system's focus to seven high-growth sectors for the region – Healthcare, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics, Information Technology, Business and Professional Services, Manufacturing, Hospitality, Culinary and Retail. The Partnership reviews the local Eligible Training Provider List on a quarterly basis to ensure it reflects the current local employment needs. The review covers existing programs whose continued eligibility is subject to renewal, as well as new programs. As a result, over the past eight years, the Chicago Cook WIB has continued to refine the list, adding new target sectors, such as construction, and new occupations, such as early childhood education and addiction counseling. The Workforce Innovation Board reviews and approves all such changes.

Additionally, The Partnership seeks continuous input from American Job Center, Delegate Agency, Business Intermediary and Sector Center staff. The Partnership shares training information with the network of American Job Centers and Delegate Agencies through quarterly contractors meetings and they in return are able to offer suggestions for improvement, share information on training providers in need of technical assistance, and facilitate linkages to the Sector Centers.

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

- **To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.**
- **To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i).**
- **To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).**
- **To use funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2-3).**

Each year The Partnership submits a planned annual WIOA program budget to the Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board. Any recommended plans for transfer of WIOA funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams are included in the budget as are any requests for incumbent worker training funds. Transfer of funds between Dislocated Worker and Adult streams along with the amount reserved for incumbent worker training are based on available dollars and local needs. The Partnership continuously evaluates the demand for funding. The Partnership may request modifications to the budget including transfer of funds and increases in incumbent worker funds during the program year as needed, to address issues and/or shortfalls. Recommendations for a budget modification are presented to the Board for approval and submitted to DCEO.

The Partnership does not currently plan to use transitional job models within WIOA. The Partnership is researching performance-based model contracts and reserves the right to pilot this model in the future.

J. As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) otherwise not already described above. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic regarding the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs).

In response to the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, the state of Illinois and LWIA7 implemented a variety of tools to provide remote delivery of service which are detailed under response 4a. The Partnership and its network of agencies quickly pivoted to connect to jobseekers remotely. In addition to the activities outlined under response 4a, the Partnership worked closely with mandated partners to increase collaboration and promote referrals among partners. This increased collaboration allowed The Partnership and its network to provide tailored approaches to various populations based on their needs. Title II, Adult Education providers report that many jobseekers preferred remote interactions in the wake of COVID and benefited from virtual training and employment offerings. However, it was noted among Title II programs that many customers could benefit from a hybrid and in some cases in-person approach when social distancing guidelines allowed.

Several Adult Education students voiced concerns around childcare, COVID symptom management, quarantine and sanitation protocols. In collaboration with One Stop Operator, The Partnership provided support and technical assistance to partners to offer personal protective equipment for staff and clients, to sanitize offices daily, to ensure technological capacity and ensure limited class sizes.

The Partnership continues to examine its policies and operations to respond to the pandemic. Its network of delegate agencies and community partners will continue to provide an array of virtual, hybrid and in-person services over the next 2 years.

K. Describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the operating systems and policies as part of the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs)

Since 2020, The Partnership has examined its policies and deepened its commitment to racial equity in the workforce. The Partnership has begun incorporating a workforce equity lens into all of its work. The Partnership formed a Racial Equity Committee and joined the City of Chicago’s “Together We Heal” equity initiative in 2021. The City of Chicago asked participating organizations to form one specific racial equity goal and as a result The Partnership set the following goal:

In 2021, The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership will elevate our organizational commitment to racial equity by establishing a Racial Equity Committee, taking active steps to build a foundational understanding of Racial Equity among the staff at The Partnership, incorporating racial equity benchmarks into our procurement process, and naming Equity as a core value of the organization. We aim to build our capacity to engage all facets of our work through a racial equity lens; and the committee will work with organizational leadership to advance racial equity goals for the organization in 2021 and strengthen this commitment in years to come.

After engaging all staff in a collective reflection and brainstorming process, The Partnership added the following Equity Value to its list of core organizational values in 2021:

We intentionally acknowledge systems of oppression when providing workforce development resources and supports necessary to help people reach their full economic and human potential. We actively work to eliminate disparities people experience based on race/ethnicity, disability, economic standing, educational status, background, gender, age, or sexual orientation. We partner with employers who share our belief that all residents of our region can achieve a meaningful career that provides family sustaining income.

As part of The Partnership’s efforts to build a foundational understanding of equity among the staff, The Partnership’s Racial Equity Committee led a Racial Equity Book Club where close to 30 staff members read and discussed the book *Caste: The Origin of our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson. The Partnership’s Racial Equity Committee all attended implicit bias training online as part of their work, and in 2022 all remaining Partnership staff will complete implicit bias training to continue building the organization’s understanding of racial equity. In 2021, The Partnership issued requests for proposals for WIOA Title I services at American Job Centers and at smaller, neighborhood-based organizations called “delegate agencies”. The RFPs specifically asked respondents to address access and equity both in jobseeker services and in employer engagement and those responses were incorporated in the scoring. The delegate agency RFPs also targeted high need community areas and hard-to-serve populations.

The Partnership also pulls quarterly WIOA Title I participant data by race, ethnicity, gender and geographic distribution throughout Cook County and provides this data to Chicago and Cook County leadership to help identify any inequities. We also use this data internally to measure how well services are reaching target populations and communities.

The Partnership is also conducting a compensation analysis of its own staff. This process is ongoing, but The Partnership already uses ADP’s national database to cross reference job description, years of experience, and level of education to create market specific salary range recommendations void of consideration for age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or any other protected class.

Chapter 5: Performance Goals and Evaluation – Local Component

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)).

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

- **WIOA Performance Measures**
- **Additional State Performance Measures**

In Program Year 2019, The Partnership exceeded all the WIOA performance measurement goals. In the fall of 2020, The Partnership (along with all LWIAs) renegotiated our performance goals. Although we were in the middle of the COVID pandemic, negotiations were based on our pre-COVID performance outcomes. As a result, our performance goals increased significantly for Program Years 2020 and 2021. (See WIOA Performance Table below.)

WIOA Performance Goals & Outcomes PY 2019-PY 2021

Performance Measure	PY 2019 (July 1, 2019- June 30, 2020)		PY 2020 (July 1, 2020- June 30, 2021)		PY 2021 July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022
	Goal	Outcome	Goal	Outcome	Goal
Adult					
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	70%	77.5% Exceed	73%	69.8% Meet	73%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	68%	75.3% Exceed	71%	66.3% Meet	71%
Median Earnings	\$4,500	\$7,280 Exceed	\$6,500	\$7,488 Exceed	\$6,500
Credential Attainment	58%	76.7% Exceed	73%	77% Exceed	73%
Measurable Skills Gain	n/a	n/a	47%	52.4% Exceed	47%
Dislocated Workers					
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	76%	83.2% Exceed	81%	79.9% Meet	81%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	75%	78.8% Exceed	80%	77.3% Meet	80%
Median Earnings	\$6,950	\$10,637 Exceed	\$10,000	\$10,515 Exceed	\$10,000
Credential Attainment	59%	72.9% Exceed	70%	73.9% Exceed	70%
Measurable Skills Gain	n/a	n/a	44%	62% Exceed	44%
Youth					
Employment/Placement in Education Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	62%	73.8% Exceed	72.5%	71.4% Meet	72.5%
Employment/Placement in Education Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	58%	71.1% Exceed	70%	67.1% Meet	70%
Median Earnings	n/a	n/a	\$3,275	\$4,789 Exceed	\$3,275
Credential Attainment	60%	71% Exceed	67.5%	63.8% Meet	67.5%
Measurable Skills Gain	n/a	n/a	33%	48.5% Exceed	33%

Although The Partnership met or exceeded all its PY 2020 performance goals, the impact of COVID-19 was evident, and we expect the impact to be even greater on our PY 2021 goals.

The Exit Cohort and Employment Measures (Chart 1) below includes adults, dislocated workers, and youth who exited WIOA between January 1 and December 31, 2019. These exiters are included in the PY 2020 Employment Rate Q2, Employment Rate Q4 and the Credential measures. This chart shows how many participants exited each quarter and when they reached the 2nd and 4th quarter employment goals.. Only the 1,103 participants who exited in January-March of 2019 reached all their performance metrics prior to COVID. This cohort also reached the 4th quarter employment measures in the 2nd quarter of 2020. The COVID shutdown in Illinois began roughly 2 weeks before the end of that quarter. All other participants – 1,732 adults, 1,168 dislocated workers, and 1,142 youth – reached at least one employment measure quarter during the pandemic.

Chart 1: Exit Cohorts and Employment Measures Chart

Pre-COVID Shutdown				Active Pandemic			
Jan-Mar 2019	Apr-June 2019	July-Sept 2019	Oct-Dec 2019	Jan-Mar 2020	Apr-June 2020	July-Sept 2020	Oct-Dec 2020
# Exited Adults: 485 DWs: 310 Youth: 308		Reached Q2 Employment Measure		Reached Q4 Employment Measure			
	# Exited Adults: 601 DWs: 418 Youth: 485		Reached Q2 Employment Measure		Reached Q4 Employment Measure		
		# Exited Adults: 635 DWs: 399 Youth: 369		Reached Q2 Employment Measure		Reached Q4 Employment Measure	
			# Exited Adults: 496 DWs: 351 Youth: 288		Reached Q2 Employment Measure		Reached Q4 Employment Measure

A comparison of 2019 WIOA exiters to those who exited in 2018, shows a stark difference in the drop-off in employment rates from the 2nd to the 4th quarter after exit. Chart 2 below compares the change in

the Adult quarter 2 and quarter 4 employment rates for the 2018 exit cohort to the 2019 exit cohort overall and by gender and race.

Chart 2: Adults % Change in Employment Rate 2018 Cohort vs 2019 Cohort

	Adults Exited Jan-Dec 2018			Adults Exited Jan-Dec 2019		
	% Employed Q2	% Employed Q4	Change Q2 to Q4	% Employed Q2	% Employed Q4	Change Q2 to Q4
Total	72%	71%	-1%	70%	62%	-8%
Male	66%	64%	-2%	62%	54%	-8%
Female	78%	78%	0	77%	69%	-8%
African-American	71%	71%	0	70%	61%	-9%
Asian	76%	75%	-1%	72%	64%	-8%
Latinx	76%	77%	+1%	72%	67%	-5%
White	73%	69%	-4%	70%	61%	-9%

Overall, 72% of Adult participants who exited in 2018 were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit and 71% were employed in the 4th quarter after exit. In contrast, 70% of Adults who exited in 2019 were employed in Q2, but only 62% were employed in Q4 a drop of 8%.

Interestingly, the drop in the employment rate from Q2 to Q4 was similar (8% or 9%) across genders and races. Only Latinx participants seemed to fare slightly better, with their employment rate dropping 5%.

Chart 3 provides the same comparison for Dislocated Workers.

Chart 3: Dislocated Worker % Change in Employment Rate 2018 Cohort vs 2019 Cohort

	DWs Exited Jan-Dec 2018			DWs Exited Jan-Dec 2019		
	% Employed Q2	% Employed Q4	Change Q2 to Q4	% Employed Q2	% Employed Q4	Change Q2 to Q4
Total	79%	76%	-3%	78%	72%	-6%
Male	76%	73%	-3%	76%	72%	-4%
Female	83%	79%	-4%	81%	71%	-10%
African-American	80%	75%	-5%	76%	69%	-7%
Asian	78%	74%	-4%	65%	63%	-2%
Latinx	78%	76%	-2%	79%	73%	-6%
White	79%	77%	-2%	81%	76%	-5%

Dislocated Workers who exited in 2018 had a 3% drop in employment from the 2nd to the 4th quarter. Those that exited in 2019 had a 6% drop. Among women who completed WIOA in 2019, the drop was 10%. While Asians who exited in 2019 only had a 2% drop from the 2nd to the 4th quarter, their 2nd quarter employment rate was only 65% compared with 78% for 2018 exiters.

Chart 4 shows the Q2 to Q4 employment change for Youth.

Chart 4: Youth % Change in Employment Rate 2018 Cohort vs 2019 Cohort

	Youth Exited Jan-Dec 2018			Youth Exited Jan-Dec 2019		
	% Employed Q2	% Employed Q4	Change Q2 to Q4	% Employed Q2	% Employed Q4	Change Q2 to Q4
Total	66%	64%	-2%	67%	59%	-8%
Chicago	63%	64%	+1%	65%	56%	-9%
Suburban Cook	70%	68%	-2%	69%	64%	-5%
Male	64%	63%	-1%	63%	56%	-7%
Female	66%	68%	+2%	70%	62%	-8%
African-American	66%	65%	-1%	69%	60%	-9%
Latinx	69%	68%	-1%	67%	61%	-6%
White	68%	66%	-2%	65%	63%	-2%

Overall, the percent of youth employed in the second quarter after exit was similar for the 2018 and the 2019 cohorts. What changed was the drop-off in employment rates from quarter 2 to quarter 4. Sixty-six (66%) of Youth participants who exited in 2018 were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit and 64% were employed in the 4th quarter after exit. In contrast, 67% of Youth who exited in 2019 were employed in Q2, but only 59% were employed in Q4 – a drop of 8%.

The drop in the employment rate from Q2 to Q4 for 2019 youth exiters was similar across genders. African-American youth experienced the biggest drop (9%), followed by Latinx participants (6%). The drop in employment for white youth was only 2%. (Note that due to the small sample size, Asians are not included in Chart 4.)

Our PY 2021 performance cohorts will consist of participants who exited WIOA between January 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 and thus all of their performance metrics will be during COVID. We are awaiting clarification from the state on how a statistical adjust model (SAM) will be applied to our PY 2020 performance. The SAM is designed to incorporate economic factors and other data to adjust performance goals based on the conditions during the performance period.

The Partnership regularly monitors and provides technical assistance to its contractors on the WIOA performance measures of each service provider within the network. The Partnership sets additional benchmarks with service providers such as number of new enrollments, number of placements and percentage of positive exits. Providers failing benchmark goals are placed on a Program Improvement Plan for one quarter and subject to termination if progress is not demonstrated.

B. Provide a description of the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the local board and program administrators as appropriate.

- **What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?**

The Partnership has undertaken the following evaluation activities to identify service strategies that yield the most promising return on investment.

- Comparison of program costs and outcomes across existing service models and service providers:
 - Comparative cost analysis of Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs
 - Comparative cost analysis of American Job Centers, Delegate Agencies, and Career Pathway programs as job seeker-facing service models
 - Comparative cost analysis of Sector Centers, Business Intermediary, Incumbent Worker Training, On-the-Job Training, and Individual Training Accounts as business-facing strategies
 - Comparison of service, training, credential, employment, and wage outcomes across American Job Center, Delegate Agency, and Career Pathway, service models
 - Comparison of service, training, credential, employment, and wage outcomes across ten American Job Centers within The Partnership's network of providers
 - Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of existing service delivery system with respect to cost-effectiveness and performance
- Assessment of geographic coverage of existing service delivery system:
 - Evaluation of existing service locations in consideration of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of communities throughout LWIA 7
 - Evaluation of existing service locations in consideration of transportation and other accessibility factors
 - Evaluation of existing service locations in consideration of economic development priorities of Cook County and the City of Chicago
 - Evaluation of existing service locations in consideration of cost efficiency

- Evaluation of existing service locations in consideration of service integration with WIOA Core Partners
- Evaluation of number of existing service locations in consideration of program funding capacity and cost efficiency
- Evaluation of existing service strategies for priority populations:
 - Analysis of existing service delivery system’s responsiveness to priority populations with high rates of unemployment
 - Evaluation of capacity within existing service provider network for effectively serving high-need priority populations in Chicago and Cook County, including veterans, formerly incarcerated persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with substance use disorders
 - Assessment of The Partnership’s data collection practices with respect to comprehensive capture of the system’s service to priority populations
 - Assessment of service strategies in consideration of City of Chicago and Cook County strategies for priority populations
- Evaluation of existing business engagement strategies:
 - Analysis of business services in consideration of the size and projected growth of employment sectors in the region
 - Analysis of wages and projected growth of occupations in which Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker program participants are placed
 - Comparison of service, sector-based employment, and wage outcomes across business-facing models (Sector Centers) and job seeker-facing models (American Job Centers, Delegate Agencies, Career Pathway programs)
 - Evaluation of functions of Sector Centers vis-à-vis American Job Centers, Delegate Agencies, and Career Pathway programs
 - Evaluation of functions of Sector Centers vis-à-vis employers
- Evaluation of existing customer training strategies:
 - Comparative cost analysis of On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), Career Pathway programs, and Individual Training Accounts (ITA) as current training strategies

- Comparison of service, employment, and wage outcomes by training sector across IWT and ITA service models for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth
- Analysis of expenditure and performance outcomes of ITA “customer choice” model
- Analysis of potential realignment of funds between IWT, OJT, Career Pathway, and ITA training models
- Evaluation of ongoing efforts to integrate service delivery with other WIOA Core Partners; Adult Education and Literacy (Title II), Illinois Department of Employment Security (Title III), Illinois Department of Human Resources Division of Rehabilitation Services (Title IV):
 - Analysis of current state of service integration with respect to physical collocation, utilization of technology for collaboration, Core Partner engagement, knowledge transfer between Core Partners, data sharing, customer experience, and employer experience
 - Formulation of research plan for ongoing Service Integration Self-Assessment Process

In addition to the above evaluation activities, The Partnership will also evaluate the following strategies as a result of the public comments received on the WIOA Local Plan:

- Existing level of sector-specific services within The Partnership’s seven high growth sectors including:
 - Evaluating the need for a new Sector Center in sectors beyond the three current Sector Centers in IT, Retail and Hospitality, and Healthcare
 - Evaluating ways to deepen collaboration between The Partnership and its partners, like Cook County, around employer driven, sector-based partnerships to increase competitiveness of a sector, including manufacturing
- Feasibility of developing and investing in mutually beneficial tools with Cook County and other partners including TPM (Talent Pipeline Management)
- Ways to collaborate and leverage resources to provide common platforms for The Partnership, Cook County, and other partners to engage employers
- Ways to collaborate with partners like the Chicago Jobs Council to provide training and clarity for Delegate Agencies on allowable braiding and blending of funding sources
- Current service integration strategies that can be expanded beyond WIOA Core Partners and MOU partners like DFSS to include other organizations also serving jobseekers such as

organizations specialized in serving harder to serve populations like individuals experiencing homelessness

Local needs for transitional jobs programs and an explore potential alternative sources of funding available to operate transitional jobs programs

- Internal data collected on WIOA funds used towards supportive services as well as evaluation of opportunities to share this data analysis
- Feasibility and value of piloting an “employment navigator” to increase access to employment and training services for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Ways to further leverage ongoing digital literacy efforts to expand access to jobseekers experiencing homelessness
- Ways to collaborate with organizations like the Chicago Continuum of Care to implement training for Delegate Agencies on the rights of economically vulnerable jobseekers such as individuals experiencing homelessness

The Partnership will continue to provide information on the process and results of the above-mentioned evaluation activities to the local board at quarterly board meetings and did so at a board retreat dedicated to soliciting feedback for the LWIA 7 Local Plan. Program administrators have participated in the above-mentioned evaluation activities as members of The Partnership’s Local Plan Committee and receive and discuss related information in weekly committee meetings.

The Partnership has entered several data share agreements to help evaluate service delivery strategies and outcomes for special populations. In partnership with the University of Chicago’s Urban Labs, organizational leadership plans to analyze the characteristics and outcomes of Youth customers. Additionally, The Partnership plans to continue its collaboration with All Chicago to evaluate service delivery strategies for homeless customers and identify strategies with the most promising return on investment.

The Partnership will at relevant times provide information on planned evaluation activities to the local board at quarterly board meetings. The Partnership will inform and engage relevant program administrators on planned evaluation activities through ongoing program meetings.

Since receiving the above mentioned Public Comments on the WIOA Local Plan in 2020, several of the strategies we evaluated resulted in new activities:

- The Partnership received comments about the need for additional Sector Centers and in 2021 The Partnership added a Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics (TDL) Sector Center.
- The Partnership received comments about increasing engagement with community based organizations serving the same customers as WIOA, and in 2021 the new One-Stop Operator has engaged several community based organizations throughout our network including Legal Aid Chicago who regularly attends monthly partner meetings at various American Job Centers.
- The Partnership received comments recommending that our network include workers rights training as part of its offerings, and in the most recent Request for Proposals for WIOA Title IB services The Partnership included workers rights training as a necessary offering that successful respondents must include in their programming.
- The Partnership also received comments recommending increasing outreach and services to individuals experiencing homelessness. The Partnership continues to partner with the Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County to increase training and employment opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness in this region. Partnership staff and delegate agencies meet quarterly with the Education, Career and Housing sub-committee to collaboratively design supports and pathways to employment. The Partnership is a documented partner for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project which is a multi-year initiative designed to implement a comprehensive plan to end and prevent youth homelessness. In 2022, The Partnership and the

Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County will pilot a peer mentoring program which will provide paid internships for youth who have been through the Community of Care housing programs to mentor newer youth and assist them with access to professional development and career training. The Partnership also serves on the Employment Task Force (ETF) of the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC). The CoC strategizes and plans a coordinated, comprehensive approach to providing housing and services for people experiencing homelessness and the ETF works to create better connections between the homeless and the workforce systems. In 2022 All Chicago will pilot a workforce navigator model to connect people in its Expedited Housing Initiative with workforce services, including WIOA Title I services. The Partnership will participate in the evaluation of the pilot with an eye to how to better recruit and serve people experiencing homelessness and housing instability under WIOA.

➤ The Partnership received comments recommending increasing the network’s use of Transitional Job Programs. The Partnership committed to exploring additional funding, outside of WIOA Formula Funds, to fund Transitional Jobs Programs. In 2020, The Partnership received a grant from the City of Chicago to establish a Contact Tracing Corps to assist with the City’s efforts to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. This program resulted in nearly 600 transitional jobs. These individuals have gone on to work at City run mass-vaccination site and other public health related positions.

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

Based on evaluation of return on investment and other factors, The Partnership will:

➤ Explore methods for expanding service delivery in geographies with the greatest need and curtailing service delivery in geographies with less need

- Explore alternative models for expanding service delivery in high-need geographies that lack service providers with the capacity to operate WIOA programs, such as satellite service locations at public libraries and community colleges, mobile service delivery, and virtual service delivery
- Expand targeted marketing and community outreach efforts to increase participation by job seekers from high-need populations and geographies
- Eliminate business engagement functions that yield minimal return on investment and/or duplicate functions fulfilled by American Job Centers and Delegate Agencies
- Align sector strategies with those of Cook County and the City of Chicago
- Expand incentives and requirements for American Job Centers and Delegate Agencies to collaborate with Sector Centers
- Expand existing/develop new efforts to educate employers on WIOA business services and labor market conditions
- Expand employer-based training services (On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Training)
- **What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising return on investment?**
 - **What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollment?**
 - **What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?**

As outlined in section 4H, The Partnership invests 50% of Adult and Dislocated Worker program dollars in workforce training. More than three-quarters of those training dollars are invested in Individual Training Accounts, a customer-choice model that allows jobseekers to spend a training voucher on approved programs. The remaining training funds are split between Incumbent Worker Training, On the Job Training, and Career Pathways training. The Partnership has begun to analyze training data across models, including enrollment and outcomes, alongside labor market information and best practices from other LWIAs around training barriered populations. Initial findings show that the largest segment of

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ITAs are spent on training for Commercial Drivers Licenses and entry level healthcare occupations such as Certified Nursing Assistants. The Partnership's goal is to encourage people to both consider and utilize ITAs for other high growth – high demand occupations, thus diversifying The Partnership's training investments, and to connect job seekers who face barriers to employment to supportive training environments that yield high impact results.

D. As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic on the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers, not covered in the above sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic in regard to the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

Several thousand job seekers received unemployment benefits during the pandemic. Increased collaborations and information sharing with the Illinois Department of Employment Security allow The Partnership to provide targeted outreach to those job seekers. As several employment and training opportunities shifted to remote delivery, the increased need for digital literacy training and inclusion resources remains.

The Partnership is collaborating with the OSO to pilot a universal referral software in 2022 to facilitate cooperation between partners. Additionally, The Partnership sits on several regional committees which include regionals workforce investment boards and groups like Midwest Urban Strategies which is coordinated effort of urban workforce development boards (WDB) across the Midwest. The Partnership will continue to work closely with these regional committees to combine innovative and traditional workforce development practices with economic development strategies.

The Partnership will also continue to seek and utilize recovery funds oriented to serve families with an aim toward economic stability in communities hardest hit by pandemic. Services will include increased

access to youth internships, service navigation, increased services to target populations, and higher level of coordination with other systems within city, county, and state government.

E. As part of the 2022 modification, describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the analysis of performance goals and implementation of evaluation activities.

For more detail on how The Partnership is incorporating an equity lens into all of its work please see the response to Chapter 4, Question K above. With respect to analyzing performance goals and implementing evaluation activities, The Partnership is planning to examine its WIOA performance data in even more detail than current standard practices. The Partnership will move beyond an analysis of how many people of color its network serves, but also how well the network is serving them. In 2022, The Partnership plans to analyze ITA training program participation and outcomes by race and ethnicity to help identify any patterns and ensure people of color have access to career training in all of The Partnership's target, high-growth sectors. Based on the data analysis The Partnership will develop strategies to increase equity and improve outcomes in our services for people of color.

As mentioned above in Chapter 4, Question K, The Partnership examines WIOA performance data by race, ethnicity, gender and geographic distribution on a quarterly basis and provides this data to Chicago and Cook County leadership.

The Partnership is also an active member of the City of Chicago's Office of Equality and Racial Justice Committee and will continue to further this work.

Chapter 6: Technical Requirements and Assurances – Local Component

This chapter includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv)).

A. Fiscal Management

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

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is the designated administrative entity responsible for the disbursement of WIOA funds in Chicago and Cook County (LWIA 7).

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

The Partnership utilizes a request-for-proposals process to competitively procure American Job Centers and other Title I service providers, the One Stop Operator role, and other services. Please see attached Procurement Policy Letter, dated March 30, 2017 (Attachment F).

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

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

The Comprehensive American Job Centers will maintain a culture of inclusiveness in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA 29 CFR 38, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. The WIOA Partners shall not unlawfully discriminate, harass or allow harassment against any employee, or applicant for employment or services due to gender, race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, veteran status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition(s), age, sexual orientation or marital status. Partners will assure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and its amendments, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as other applicable regulations and guidelines issued pursuant to the ADAAA. Additionally, partners agree to fully comply with the provisions of WIOA Title I, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, WIOA Title IB, 29 CFR Part 38 and all other regulations implementing the aforementioned laws.

In partnership and cooperation with the WIOA partners and Equal Opportunity (EO) staff of The Partnership, the LWIA 7 Comprehensive One-stop Centers have at least one fully accessible workstation with staff trained on the operations of the adaptive equipment and programs. The WIOA Title I partners also commit to offering priority for services to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals or individuals who are basic skills deficient when providing individualized career services and training services with WIOA adult funds.

Additionally, the physical characteristics of the facilities, both indoor and outdoor, meet compliance with 29 CFR Part 38, or most recent ADAAA standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. In some cases, the facilities are leased by neither The Partnership nor its service providers (e.g., IDES CMS or the City of Chicago). In this case, organizational leadership is in active, urgent and ongoing negotiations with the parties to continue ADAAA compliance.

Services are available in a convenient, high traffic and accessible location taking into account reasonable distance from public transportation and adequate parking (including parking clearly marked for individuals with disabilities). Indoor space is/will be designed in an “equal and meaningful” manner providing access for individuals with disabilities.

Additionally, in terms of programmatic accessibility, all WIOA partners agree that they will not discriminate in their employment practices or services on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status and gender identity) national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, veteran’s status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law. The Partnership and WIOA partners have policies and procedures to address these issues, and those policies and procedures have been disseminated to staff/employees and otherwise posted as required by law. The Partnership and WIOA partners further assure that all are currently in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding these issues.

All WIOA partners will cooperate with compliance monitoring that is conducted at the local level to ensure that all Comprehensive American Job Centers, programs, services, technology and materials are accessible and available to all. The LWIA 7 Equal Opportunity Officer has over 11 years of EO experience, and her network of internal EO designees at each Center, continually and expeditiously resolve any problems or complaints that might arise.

The Partnership has a combination of procedures and guidelines that enable the Comprehensive American Job Centers to successfully provide individuals with complete access to all services, such as Sign Language Interpreter Services (CAIRS) and Language Services (PROPIO). In addition to Propio services, bilingual staff is available to assist and translate at most Comprehensive American Job Centers.

Request for Reasonable Accommodation is in place to assist individuals upon request. If, additional services are required, individuals are also referred to WIOA vocational rehabilitation partners, Illinois Department of Human Services-Division of Rehabilitation Services. Also, technology translation assistance is available through Google Translate.

These services will be provided “on demand” and in “real time” in the physical American Job Center in person or via technology consistent with the “direct linkage” requirement as defined in WIOA (WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and Section 678.305(d) of the draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking). Additionally, staff members will be trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style and intelligence or education level. An interpreter will be provided “in real time” as provided by the vendor to any customer with a language barrier.

The Comprehensive One-Stop centers refer individuals with barriers to employment to appropriate workshops such as reading and/or math literacy training, job readiness training, computer literacy training and/or vocational training if it has been determined that the training will lead to employment opportunity in that field of study. The Comprehensive One-Stop centers are provided with other material, equipment, and software to assist and address the needs of the individual with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities accessing services at the Comprehensive one-stop centers have access to the center’s resources not limited to: TTY and/or TextNet (Internet TTY services), Sign language Interpretation Service, Computer, Printer, Phone, Assistive Technology (scanning/reading software, specialty ergonomic keyboard/mouse etc.). The One-Stop centers are educated on the WIOA 2014, Title 29 Part 38, Section 188 Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity regulations. The One-Stop centers adhere to and apply the EO policy and procedures to their daily operation as they assist and address the needs of individuals and individuals with disabilities.

The Comprehensive One-Stop centers have a selection of Assistive Technologies, listed below, available for individuals with disabilities. The assistive technology is available upon request and/or as needed for the following services; Orientation, Registration, Testing, Workshops, Job Fairs, Rapid Response and the Resource Room. In addition, the Comprehensive one-stop centers have access to TextNet Services (Online TTY) to assist individuals that are Deaf and/or Hearing Impaired and Language Services to assist individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). If an individual's needs are not within the Comprehensive One-Stop center staff ability to address, in accordance with the "direct linkage" requirement under WIOA, the Comprehensive one-stop center will refer the individual to a WIOA partner (e.g. IDHS-DRS, IDES, Housing and Urban Development and others) that has the appropriate services and ability to assist the individual. This will be done within a reasonable time by phone or real-time.

Additionally, assistive devices, including but not limited to the following are currently available and being updated and distributed:

- TextNet
- ZoomText
- JAWS (a screen-reading software program)
- OpenBook
- Dragon (a screen-reading software program)
- MS Office Professional (8 or higher)
- Wynn Wizard
- Computers
- Large Screen Monitors
- Intellikeys/Keyboard
- Enlarged Keyboard
- Adjustable Keyboard Trays
- Trackball Mouse
- Adaptive mouse and keyboard
- Large Print Labels (for keyboard)
- Scanners
- Magnifiers
- Headphones
- Audio Tape Players

- Adjustable Table/Chairs
- Pocket Talker (Assistive Listening System)
- Staff (Real Time) Reader
- Braille
- Large print material
- Audio Tapes
- Text transcripts
- Television w/ closed and open captions
- Video Tapes

As referenced elsewhere in the 2022 update to this Plan, in March 2020 all ten American Job Centers had to close for in-person services due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. All AJCs were able to quickly begin serving customers virtually and make use of a variety of assistive technologies when needed. Supportive Services resources were used to provide internet and computer access to individuals whose training shifted from in-person to online. Additionally, The Partnership hosts regular free virtual digital literacy courses to close the digital divide. As digital access becomes even more crucial, The Partnership has partnered with PCs for People, a nonprofit that provides low or no cost computers to low-income individuals, to distribute computers to customers who qualify to help ensure programmatic access continues despite the impacts of the Pandemic.

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

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 7 WIOA MOU is attached (Attachment A).

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

- **Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations (§ 679.560(b)(19)).**

2020 LWIA 7 Local Plan

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership posted the proposed WIOA Local Plan on The Partnership's website on February 14, 2020, with instructions to submit public comment by email to localplan2020@chicookworks.org. Comments were accepted at this email address through 5:00 PM on March 16, 2020.

To encourage public comment, The Partnership promoted the Local Plan public comment period through in person contact, social media, and email throughout its network of businesses, education institutions, labor organizations, government agencies, elected officials, policy organizations, foundations, and service providers. Additionally, The Partnership published the following notice in the Chicago Sun-Times on February 12, 2020 and in the Chicago Tribune on February 13, 2020 to invite members of the public to comment on our proposed 2020 local plan:

“Chicago/Cook County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2020-2024 Local Plan is posted for public comment on 2/14/2020 at www.chicookworks.org.”

During and after the public comment period, The Partnership reviewed all submitted comments and considered them in relation to the overall strategy of the Chicago Cook WIB. Comments that aligned with or enhanced organizational strategy were incorporated into the body of the WIOA Local Plan. All comments submitted to The Partnership during the public comment period can be found in Attachment G.

Additionally, The Partnership enacted a series of activities to engage stakeholders in the development of the Local Plan before the public comment period. Beginning in October 2019, staff from The Partnership conducted the following action steps to ensure that a diversity of opinions, strategies, and expertise were consulted during the development of the Local Plan:

- Literature review of policy documents, data sets, reports, surveys, analysis of promising practices, position statements and other existing documents that have bearing on workforce development policy
- Focus groups with Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board committees, delegate agencies and AJC Title 1 providers, individuals with lived experiences from target populations, business service staff, and the Chicago Workforce Funders Alliance
- Briefings with the Chicago Cook WIB, WIOA mandated and required partners, and policy leadership staff from the offices of the Mayor of Chicago and the President of Cook County
- Individual conversations with thought leaders and subject matter experts
- Online surveys of businesses, jobs seekers, and required partners
- Anonymized survey of service contractors of The Partnership
- Strategic planning retreat with the Chicago Cook WIB

Information and perspective gained during the stakeholder engagement process considered the viewpoints of businesses, organized labor, educational institutions, job seekers, foundations, policy organizations, and elected officials; and informed the development of the WIOA Local Plan. Individuals who participated in stakeholder engagement were also invited to submit public comments during the 30-day period.

2022 LWIA 7 Local Plan Modification

In 2022, The Partnership posted the LWIA 7 Local Plan Modification to its website (www.chicookworks.org) with instructions to submit comment by email to localplan2022@chicookworks.org. The Plan was posted from February 14, 2022 through March 16, 2022, and comments were accepted until 5:00pm March 16, 2022.

To encourage public comment The Partnership posted notices in two local newspapers: The Chicago Sun Times and The Chicago Tribune on February 15th, 16th, and 17th, 2022. The Partnership promoted viewing the LWIA 7 Local Plan Modification via its social media channels as well as through its monthly newsletter sent out to 30,000 subscribers.

The Partnership received two comments from the public: one from The Chicago Workforce Funders Alliance and one from the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development. Both comments along with The Partnership's response to each are posted below at the end of the 2022 LWIA 7 Local Plan Modification.

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

The Partnership received four public comments from the following local stakeholders: The Cook County Bureau of Economic Development, Chicago Jobs Council, Skills for Chicagoland's Future, and The Employment Task Force of The Chicago Continuum of Care. The Partnership would like to thank all four stakeholders for their engagement in this process and for submitting such thoughtful comments on the WIOA Local Plan. The following response includes a summary of the comments. The full comments are available in Attachment G to this Plan.

The CEO reviewed all public comments submitted while the WIOA Local Plan was posted for public comment and greatly appreciated the recommendations from these four stakeholders. Additionally, all public comments were shared with the members of the Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board for their review and input. In response, The Partnership made changes to the WIOA Local Plan in Chapter 5 Section B to add the strategies now under consideration as a result of these comments. The following section summarizes the comments received.

Cook County Bureau of Economic Development Comment Summary

The Cook County Bureau of Economic Development (Cook County) submitted eight recommendations for consideration:

1. Commit to striving for greater parity of facilities and services between the City of Chicago and suburban Cook County.
2. Consider Cook County’s “Priority Communities” (Health Communities, Open Communities, Sustainable Communities, Safe and Thriving Communities, Vital Communities, and Smart Communities) as prioritized for strategic implementation.
3. Re-establish Manufacturing Sector Center(s) to focus on the employment needs of manufacturers.
4. Expand pro-active lay-off aversion strategies.
5. Deeper collaboration with Cook County regarding employer driven, sector based and community supported partnerships to increase the competitiveness of a sector such as manufacturing.
6. Develop and share mutually beneficial tools like TPM (Talent Pipeline Management) and approaches to sharing tax relief entities.
7. Collaborate and leverage resources to provide common platforms to engage employers.
8. Adopt a forward-looking approach to skills training and credentials.

Additionally, Cook County submitted the 2020 Cook County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as an attachment to this public comment. The CEDS was posted in December 2019 for public comments and vetted by several County partners and agencies. Once approved by the federal Economic Development Association, the CEDS will be posted to the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development website at <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/bureau-of-economic-development>.

Chicago Jobs Council

The Chicago Jobs Council (CJC) submitted several recommendations and questions broken down into four categories.

Opportunities to break down siloed services:

1. Incentivize or help agencies to blend and braid funding and offer more guidance around what blending of funding sources is allowed; and
2. Include non-WIOA services in the Service Integration Plan and create a working group addressing delegate agencies integration with services from other systems.

Access to workforce services and employment:

1. The Partnership relies on five different customer facing technology systems. Five different systems could be confusing to jobseekers, especially those without consistent access to the internet and technology.
2. How will The Partnership ensure that all its programs, for example Apprenticeship programs, are accessible to individuals with barriers to employment?

Services on the Career Pathways Continuum:

1. How will The Partnership's current programs outlined in this Plan improve access to career pathways for individuals who experience barriers?
2. How will adults with low literacy and low educational attainment access career pathway programs?

3. Consider using Transitional Jobs to balance the needs of jobseekers and employers rather than focusing so heavily on the needs of employers when it comes to work based learning opportunities.
4. The Partnership should offer goals for specific work-based learning activities as well as proposed outcomes.
5. The Partnership should use private funding and non-WIOA investments to fill in gaps that exist in WIOA services. For example, offering private funding to delegate agencies to work with jobseekers who need more attention and assistance before registering in WIOA.

Supportive Services:

1. What lessons can be learned through data collected on how WIOA funding has been used for support services including the per person average cost, trends over the years, and how do barriers relate to the uptake of supportive services?
2. Would being connected to other systems like SNAP or homeless response system help fill more support services gaps?

Chicago Continuum of Care Employment Task Force

The Chicago Continuum of Care Employment Task Force submitted several comments within two broader categories:

Conduct a Public Comment Process:

1. Inclusive stakeholder engagement process to collect meaningful input on priority populations and service strategies, build consensus on actionable strategies, and collect input on implementation methods;
2. Report results of stakeholder engagement to WIB and DCEO;

3. Consider and commit to service delivery changes based on stakeholder feedback; and
4. Modify local plan in accordance with changes.

Investing in services and strategies appropriate for homeless job seekers, including:

1. Pilot an “employment navigator” to increase access to employment and training services for individuals experiencing homelessness;
2. Invest WIOA funds in transitional jobs to help homeless job seekers successfully reconnect to the labor market;
3. Leverage existing digital access and digital literacy initiatives to expand access to services for homeless job seekers;
4. Expand the capacity of existing financial capability programming by The Partnership’s delegate agencies to serve homeless job seekers;
5. Implement training across The Partnership’s delegate agencies on employment rights, including the rights of economically vulnerable job seekers such as homeless individuals; and
6. Adopt a “no time limit” and “zero exclusion” approach to serving homeless job seekers that increases flexibility and exercises discretion on performance, comprising service strategies such as:
 - a) Supporting multiple attempts at jobs or job training;
 - b) Increased flexibility on service length and gaps between service;
 - c) Tracking persistence through other evidence beyond existing metrics; and
 - d) Expanded recognition of employment success to include part-time employment, contract employment, and other means of earning and increasing income.

The Employment Task Force appreciated the invitation to provide input as part of the 2020 local planning process but does not believe that serving individuals experiencing homelessness is sufficiently reflected in the WIOA Local Plan.

Skills for Chicagoland's Future

Skills for Chicagoland's Future (Skills) submitted three comments about the role of a Business Intermediary within the local public workforce network:

1. Skills emphasized the importance of a Business Intermediary, such as Skills, as supporting The State of Illinois Vision Statement as the Business Intermediary has a business-driven mandate to provide linkages between employer's needs and connect these opportunities to the many nonprofit organizations in the workforce system;
2. Having a Business Intermediary, such as Skills, supports expanded service integration efforts by aligning supply side training programs with local talent demands; and
3. The Local Plan should not eliminate business engagement functions but should expand the role of the Business Intermediary.

In response to the 2022 LWIA 7 Local Plan Modification, The Partnership received two comments from the public. Both comments and The Partnership's response to each are posted in full below at the end of The 2022 LWIA 7 WIOA Local Plan.

- **Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.**

The Partnership posted the plan at www.chicookworks.org (the website of the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership) with instructions on how to comment over the 30-day public comment period. The

Partnership also posted notices in local newspapers as described above. The CEO reviewed all public comments and all public comments were also shared with the members of the Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board for their input. In response, The Partnership made changes to the WIOA Local Plan in Chapter 5 Section B to add the strategies now under consideration as a result of these comments. The WIOA Local Plan will be sent to all Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board members for comment. Additionally, all public comments will be answered, and the information will be posted on the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership website by April 3, 2020.

2022 LWIA 7 Local Plan Modification

In January 2022, after the State released the updated WIOA Local and Regional Planning Guide, The Partnership formed an internal team to review and modify the LWIA 7 Local Plan. The internal team reviewed the 2020 LWIA 7 Local Plan in its entirety and made certain edits to reflect any changes in The Partnership's strategy, particularly in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The majority of the strategies outlined in the 2020 LWIA 7 Local Plan remain unchanged. In addition, the internal team consulted with additional staff and stakeholders to respond to the new questions added as part of the 2022 Local Plan Modification.

The Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board reviewed the 2022 LWIA 7 Local Plan Modification and voted to approve the Modification at a March 29, 2022, board meeting.

A. Describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in with meeting the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs

For more detail on how The Partnership is incorporating an equity lens into all of its work please see the response to Chapter 4, Question K above. The Partnership uses a competitive procurement process to award subgrants, and as already mentioned above in Chapter 4, The Partnership incorporated an

equity lens into its most recent procurement process for Title I services. Respondents' proposals had to address equity both in jobseeker services and in employer engagement and those responses were incorporated in the scoring.

2022 LWIA 7 Local Plan Modification Public Comments and Response:

COMMENT 1

From: Matthew Bruce <mbruce@cct.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 11:05 AM
To: LocalPlan2022
Cc: Kindy Kruller (Bureau of Economic Development); Adam Levine; Patrick Combs
Subject: Comments on WIOA Plan

Hello,

I'd like to make some comments on the local plan: <https://chicookworks.org/wioa-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-local-plan-2022-modification/>

First of all, we love the work the Partnership does and deeply value all our collaborations. These plans are no small feat, so kudos to your staff for pulling together the plan originally, and making the adjustments this year.

A few thoughts to share:

1. So glad to see the mention of CCWLC and the Career Pathway Navigator and the great use of Career Connect on page 4. This was/is really great work.
2. On page 5, I would invite the Partnership to consider using www.careerpathways.net and/or www.talentsolutionsconnector.net in the answer to the question. These systems are built/updated collaboratively with City and County and many key WIOA partners (CPS, CCC etc) They're free and they certainly serve to connect people to WIOA funded services. We would love to see these systems evolve into something we collectively "own" and co-create.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership is open to reviewing these systems to see if and how they could complement our existing data system, Career Connect, and the state platforms used by the other WIOA titles.

3. On Page 8 there is a section titled: “Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives” I think the plan could mention the industry workforce partnerships that we work on together. These are arguably the very definition of “employer-driven regional sector initiatives.” I am talking about the Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative, the Calumet Manufacturing Industry Sector Partnership and the Public Health Workforce Collaborative. The Partnership has been very active with all three.

RESPONSE:

Thank you for bringing this to The Partnership’s attention. It is an oversight that these initiatives were not mentioned here. The Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative (CHWC) unites employers and industry partners to support an inclusive healthcare workforce, provide accessibility for unemployed and underemployed populations, and develop innovative responses to the evolving needs of the healthcare industry. As part of this effort, The Partnership together with several local hospitals runs the Medical Assistant Pathway Program (MAPP) which is now entering its 4th cohort. The MAPP program provides free training to non-clinical, full-time employees and places them on track to become Medical Assistants with their current employer.

The Calumet Manufacturing Industry Sector Partnership (CMISP) is a network of over 30 manufacturing businesses in the Calumet region. CMISP is employer-led and supported by several community based and government organizations including The Partnership. The CMISP is pursuing two goals: developing a skilled workforce and increasing business to business networking in the manufacturing sector. The Workforce Action team of the CMISP is tackling the skills gap and providing meaningful career opportunities for local residents by increasing awareness about the industry, promoting careers in manufacturing, and aligning training and curriculum with industry needs. The B2B Networking action team is focused on developing a network of manufacturers to support the economic vitality of the Calumet region. The action team serves as the go-to spot for

problem solving, accessing suppliers and customers, gaining references, and keeping business in the region in order to support the economic vitality of our community.

The Public Health Workforce Collaborative works to build a unified, sustainable, and equitable public health workforce in the Chicagoland region and is comprised of over 20 organizations that include the region's largest local health departments, public health research institutions, FQHCs, and community-based organizations who were vital to emergency-response efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Partnership is a contributing, advisory member related to development and expansion of this workforce within the public health sectors and communities.

4. On page 9 I believe the prompt is asking about building a career pathway system. But most of the following paragraphs are about specific grant funded programs, without much description of how they fit together. A good program is an essential element in a career pathway system, but the plural of program is not "system". A system requires shared frameworks, shared tools, shared language and shared relationships strengthened through capacity building. I think the Partnership's work on the Young Adult Workforce Development Portal <https://roadtriplnation.com/workforce/chicago> is a much stronger example of system-building work, it's a shared tool that can help career pathway connectivity across many different programs. I think the Partnership should see itself less as a funder of programs, and more as a key leader and influencer in a workforce eco-system that stretches well beyond its full control.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership believes that a network of strong programs is necessary to deliver results to individual job seekers and employers and works to coordinate resources both within and outside of our network to meet the needs of the regional economy. When thinking of a system as shared frameworks, shared tools, shared language and shared relationships strengthened through capacity building, The Partnership has developed the Young Adult Workforce Development in conjunction with several other system facing activities. The Partnership participates in several working groups such as the Healthcare Workforce Collaborative, Cook County's Equity fund, the ProPath working

group, Cook County's policy road map group, We Will Chicago, My Chi My Future, the South Suburban Ministerial Alliance and several others. The Partnership has also trained several of its youth agencies in Trauma Informed Care and have done extensive work around promoting a coordinated pandemic response through community employment and engagement strategy. Moving forward, The Partnership is committed to working in collaboration with city, county and philanthropic partners to coordinate implementation of ARPA funded and existing projects to ensure maximum impact.

5. On page 11, the section about Service Integration, I think mentioning the CCWLC One Stop Operator work would reflect very well on the Partnership.

RESPONSE:

Thank you for drawing attention to LWIA 7's new One Stop Operator's work. At the time of drafting the original Local Plan, The Partnership had not yet engaged the Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition (CCLC) as the new One Stop Operator for all ten American Job Centers in LWIA 7. Since competitively procuring CCLC as the One Stop Operator in September 2020 they have led several successful service integration projects including creating a new universal WIOA Orientation video, hosting 10 monthly partner meetings across the 10 American Job Centers each month (120 meetings annually) to improve communication and collaboration between mandated partners, implementing shared events calendars for all partners at each American Job Center, and leading reopening discussions at several centers as COVID conditions improve. Over the next two years, the One Stop Operator plans to evaluate available technology options for a universal referral system and then implement this new referral system, improve and standardize cross training between American Job Center partners, implement new technology for tracking universal service customers, and continuing to lead the monthly partner meetings.

6. Page 13 talks about the Where the Jobs Are reports, these are so great! But I haven't been able to find them for a long time

RESPONSE:

The Where are the Jobs reports are currently being reformatted but will return in the 2nd quarter of 2022. The Partnership is also revamping the "Data" portion of the website to include additional labor market and participant outcome information. Please note that The Partnership is happy to respond to requests for Data from partners and community members.

7. Page 28 talks about the LendLease barrier reduction fund, but doesn't mention the Hire360 Barrier Reduction fund. I believe, at least for construction, the Hire360 Barrier Reduction Fund has greater permanence, and is share across many providers (CWIT, Revolution etc)

RESPONSE:

The Hire360 Barrier Reduction provided a valuable resource for ConstructionWorks participants while seeking training and employment. The need for this fund was so great that it was exhausted prior to the start of 2020. The Lendlease barrier reduction fund was active at the time of plan development.

8. I believe this sentence on page 28 speaks again to my bullet point above: "The workforce development system in Cook County includes five service delivery models that work together to provide employment and training to the region's residents." This implies that the programs funded by the Partnership are synonymous with the "the workforce development system." CDBG funded workforce programs, other City or County funded workforce programs, SNAP E&T funded workforce programs, other federal grant funded workforce programs, ALL of these should be considered part of our "workforce development system." The Partnership's WIOA funded programs are only part of a much bigger whole, but the Partnership can and should be a leader and positive influence on the ENTIRE ecosystem. Perhaps the Local Plan could better reflect the reality of our wide and varied workforce ecosystem, with the Partnership in a critical leadership role?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for raising this point. The Partnership certainly agrees that its WIOA funded programs are part of a larger workforce development system in Cook County, and it was not The Partnership's intention to imply otherwise. In the sentence quoted above the authors of The LWIA 7 WIOA Local Plan are referring to the five service delivery models of The Partnership's funded network of agencies and not the entire workforce development system that includes the programs referenced above. The Partnership will make this distinction clearer in The 2024 LWIA 7 WIOA Local Plan.

Thanks!
Matt Bruce

Matthew Bruce (he/his)
Executive Director
Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance
617-291-9507 (c) - chicagoworkforcefunders@gmail.com
www.chicagoworkforcefunders.org
Follow us on: [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#)

COMMENT 2

From: Kindy Kruller (Bureau of Economic Development) <Kindy.Kruller@cookcountyil.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 4:51 PM
To: LocalPlan2022
Cc: Xochitl Flores (Bureau of Economic Development); Irene Sherr (Bureau of Economic Development)
Subject: Local Plan 2022 Comments
Attachments: Review of Local Plan - BED Comments 031622.docx

- 1. Provide parity for all programs in Chicago and throughout Cook County to create universal approaches to The Partnership's work.**
 - a. Coordinate with all libraries in Cook County, not just Chicago Public Library.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership does coordinate with some Cook County libraries beyond the Chicago Public Library. One of The Partnership's Delegate Agencies is located in the Evanston Public Library and is a true model for working with the library system.

- b. Coordinate with all resources for the unhoused, not just The Chicago Continuum of Care.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership is working to increase coordination of resources for individuals experiencing homelessness. Through a recent Disaster Recovery Grant The Partnership was able to provide additional employment services to individuals experiencing homelessness via several experienced service providers including BEDS Plus, Bethel Family Resource Center, Respond Now and Housing Forward. The Partnership also funds work crews who provide food and emergency services to homeless shelters. The Partnership also funded work crews at Top Box and the Greater Chicago Food Depository who worked to supply food pantries throughout Cook County.

- c. Conduct research for all of Housing Authority of Cook County, not only Chicago.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership does work closely with the Housing Authority of Cook County most notably at the South Suburban Cook County American Job Center in Harvey.

- d. Work with all Community Colleges in Cook County on programs, not only City Colleges of Chicago.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership works with many suburban Community Colleges and highlighted some specific programs in The LWIA 7 WIOA Local Plan. It was not The Partnership's intention

to imply that it only works with, or even mostly works with, City Colleges of Chicago. Both Harper College and Prairie State College are active members of the American Job Centers. In fact, one of The Partnership's American Job Centers is located at Prairie State College. The Partnership also has a delegate site at Oakton Community College and funds South Suburban Community College, Moraine Valley Community College and Elgin Community College as delegate agencies.

- e. Work with all high schools in Cook County, not just CPS. Increased effort in suburban schools.

RESPONSE:

Based on the state and LWIA Policy, The Partnership focuses the majority of youth resources on young adults who are out of school and not working. Most of The Partnership's efforts focused on in-school youth take place in suburban Cook County. These resources are largely directed to programs working with students with documented disabilities. This area of work engages schools in 15 southwest suburban districts through the work of the La Grange Area Department of Special Education; the schools of Maine Township; and seven schools in the northwest suburbs through District 214. Additionally, staff from The Partnership and our delegate agencies have worked with high schools from Evanston to Tinley Park to provide technical assistance to School Leaders, Guidance Counselors, and Teachers on how to connect students to public workforce system resources. The Partnership is also currently working to launch a summer internship program to introduce youth to careers in high growth industries that will primarily focus on serving suburban high school students. The Partnership engages with Chicago Public

Schools on a systems level through participation in the Mayor’s Education and Human Services Cabinet in efforts to ensure that staff and students are aware of workforce program resources and would welcome the support of the Bureau of Economic Development or other Cook County entities to identify ways to connect with suburban districts in a similar manner.

- f. Identify partners in Cook County providing services to individuals with disabilities in suburban Cook beyond the Chicago Mayor’s Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for People with Disabilities (The Task Force).

RESPONSE:

The Partnership funds two Delegate Agencies in suburban Cook County who specialize in serving individuals with disabilities: Lagrange Area Department of Special Education and A.E.R.O. Special Education.

2. Provide timeframes for all future identified activities.

- a. Through a National Dislocated Worker Grant, the Partnership will purchase technology upgrades for American Job Center resource rooms that will increase their capacity to set up virtual interviews between WIOA participants.

RESPONSE:

Five laptops and seven desktops with web cameras were purchased and delivered to the American Job Centers in early February 2022.

- b. Piloting a new software platform for intake and referrals across WIOA partners.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership will pilot different software options throughout 2022 and plans to select and implement the new system in 2023.

- c. In 2020, trauma informed practices curriculum will be rolled front line WIOA staff in the Local Workforce Innovation Area.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership introduced the trauma informed practices curriculum to all youth agencies in October 2020.

- d. The Partnership continues to develop the capacity of Career Connect and intends to soon bring online a dynamic resume matching function that will allow business-facing service providers to accurately and rapidly match jobseekers to opportunities in real time.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership is in the process of hiring a Database Coordinator to increase our capacity to administer Career Connect. Once that Coordinator is on board, we will reassess our system priorities and project timelines.

- e. The Partnership, Urban Labs, and the Chicago Housing Authority plan to conduct a data share and analysis to better understand how Chicago public housing residents are being served under WIOA Title I.

RESPONSE:

The Partnership expects this analysis to be completed by December 31, 2024.

- f. The Partnership is creating a strategic communications plan to establish a framework for targeting specific audiences of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed.

RESPONSE:

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic The Partnership's Communications Team quickly pivoted towards enhanced digital communications and outreach to dislocated workers. In the past two years The Partnership has increased its social media and other virtual communications, enhanced its website and joined with other funders and partners to create several innovative initiatives aimed specifically at workers dislocated as a result of the

Pandemic. These include large scale hiring events like ChiServes and Hire Chicago. The Partnership will re-evaluate the timeline for creating a strategic plan establishing a framework for targeting specific audiences such as mature workers and the underemployed.

g. The Chicago Cook WIB has three planned strategies to better understand the demographic make-up and barriers of the job seekers served by the American Job Center Network in LWIA 7, and to use that data to implement equity goals in conjunction with a wide variety of partners.

RESPONSE:

For reference, The Partnership is referring to the three strategies listed in response to a question about developing equity goals in conjunction with the education system on page 54 of the LWIA 7 Local Plan.

With respect to the first strategy regarding training industries, The Partnership is currently conducting an analysis of its training industry and training occupation provider outcomes across race, ethnicity and gender. The Partnership will use this information to refine policies and practices across units. This analysis is scheduled to be complete in June 2022.

With respect to collaboration with human services providers to accurately obtain a picture of who WIOA serves, The Partnership is working with the Chicago Housing Authority to assess the alignment and use of services across populations. The data analysis between WIOA and CHA customers is scheduled to begin in May 2022.

Finally, with respect to the third strategy regarding participating in the Jobs and Opportunity Project with the National Fund for Workforce Solutions and Policy Link this

project was completed in January 2021 with the release of the [Advancing Workforce Equity in Chicago: A Blueprint for Action](#) Report.