

Program Years 2022 & 2023

Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local and Regional Plan Modification Cover and Signature Page

*Economic Growth Region 3/Northeast
Indiana Works (NEINW)*

Regional Plan

September 30, 2022

Attachment A – Planning Template

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Workforce Development Board (WDB) Local/Regional Plan Modification Approval

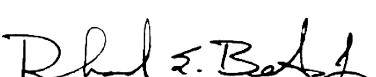
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I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and I submit this plan on behalf of the WDB listed above.

Modification approved - Local Workforce Development Board Chair

Name:	Keith Davis		
Title:	Board Chair		
Signature:		Date:	9/30/2022

Modification approved - Regional Chief Local Elected Official/Chief Local Elected Official

Name:	Richard E. Beck, Jr.		
Title:	Regional Chief Elected Official		
Signature:		Date:	9/30/2022

Optional Executive Summary

ES. Each local area may submit an executive summary of their plan, if desired; not to exceed 2 pages in length.

Northeast Indiana Works (NEINW) oversees an 11-county area of northeast Indiana, consisting of Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Grant, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley counties, which make up Economic Growth Region 3 (EGR3). The region houses the second largest metropolitan area in Indiana, the Fort Wayne MSA, and includes both urban and rural communities. This workforce plan describes NEINW's strategy for developing and delivering effective workforce services to individuals and employers in the region. Our highly integrated workforce development system aligns service providers, programs and service delivery models for effective and efficient results. The system is easily accessible, highly functional and aligned with the needs of the region's target populations.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have stagnated economic development in certain industry sectors within the region, and in other sectors has driven growth. It has forced a quicker shift to leveraging new and existing technology as tools to effectively engage individuals and employers in an environment that has changed what we know to be "normal." -It has driven necessary innovation within the system that will support NEINW in meeting the challenge of sustaining a workforce system that promotes talent pipelining, lifelong learning, credential attainment and utilizing data to drive strategy. These strategies will meet the needs of youth and adult populations as we explore the labor market, identify career pathways and pursue a pathway to economic sustainability.

The vision and strategy for this system will include:

- Supporting the "Big Goal": For nearly 10 years, NEINW has collaborated throughout the region to increase the percentage of northeast Indiana residents with high-quality degrees or credentials to 60%. With a target date of 2030, there is much work to do given that the attainment level is currently estimated at 41%. Reaching this goal is critical to developing, attracting and retaining talent necessary for the success of business and growth of per capita income in the region.
- Aligning with and supporting economic development: NEINW is committed to supporting economic development activities by working in close partnership with economic development organizations at both the regional and county levels. This includes continued co-location with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership and the Northeast Indiana Regional Chamber of Commerce, and partnering with local economic development organizations at the county level.
- Strong support of employer customers: NEINW maintains a strong commitment to addressing the skill needs of employers in the region. We view employers as the primary customer of the regional workforce system and know that the development of a regional talent pool will

continue to support and drive growth of the regional economy. There are, and will be, aggressive efforts to support and facilitate employer-driven partnerships within prevalent industry sectors of the region. Through this approach, NEINW will align program and fiscal supports, recruitment tools and strategies, training programs and usage of technology to develop a qualified pool of individuals ~~who that~~ are ready to enter and ascend in the labor market.

- Driving collaboration: NEINW seeks to create greater efficiencies in the workforce system through collaboration by convening regional partners, identifying synergies, aligning fiscal supports and sharing data. We will convene local partners to focus efforts on initiatives that strengthen the workforce system and its benefit to all regional consumers. This includes the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) required partners, local community-based organizations and other federally funded organizations with workforce development initiatives.
- Focusing on youth initiatives: The support of youth initiatives to develop talent is critical in EGR3. Creating sustainable talent pipelines to drive industry sector growth and documenting expertise through credentialing will drive youth efforts. This will lead to a larger talent pool for employer partners to grow and expand their businesses, driving further economic expansion.

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please answer the following questions in 8 pages or less. The Department of Workforce Development has regional labor market analysts assigned for each of the Regions. These experts can assist in developing responses to the questions 1.1 through 1.3 below. **Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an *.**

1.1* An analysis of the economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)]

~~In recent years,~~ Economic Growth Region 3 (EGR3) ~~rebounded from the COVID-19 pandemic with~~ ~~has~~ ~~experienced~~ strong economic conditions for the area, inclusive of having low unemployment, growing per capita wages, and positive net-migration. The regional population is ~~786,969~~ ~~76,048~~ people, accounting for ~~\$46.3535~~ ~~1B~~ in personal income. ~~The sectors of~~ Manufacturing and Health ~~care~~ ~~Care~~ continue to provide the most ample amount of job opportunities within regional industry sectors. EGR3 has been a benefactor of one of ~~the~~ longest running economic expansions in history, dating back to 2009, which lowered unemployment levels to pre-Great Recession figures. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic ~~did~~ temporarily slow ~~ed down~~ this growth, in some instances, catapulting unemployment figures to 20+ percent during spring 2020. The economy quickly recovered as mandatory shut-downs were lifted and provisions of support were established through the implementation of the CARES Act. ~~With that said, there are likely to be unforeseen impacts to economic growth over the next 1-2 calendar years. The region has continued to recover and expand, while experiencing a significant tightening of the available labor pool. While this emergence has slowed overall business expansion, it has also driven an increase in local wages within industry sectors.~~

The top five industry sectors in Northeast Indiana are:

1. Manufacturing
2. ~~Healthcare-Care~~
3. ~~Wholesale-Retail Trade~~
4. ~~Transportation and Warehousing-Government~~
5. ~~Construction-Accommodation and Food Services~~

Of the ~~387,352~~~~47,905~~ workers in EGR3, ~~853,674~~~~917~~ work in the manufacturing sector and ~~54,268~~~~12~~ work in ~~Healthcare-Care~~. Those two industries account for ~~36~~~~9~~% of the overall workforce in northeast Indiana. ~~Manufacturing continues to have a projected growth 2% growth projection through 2028, but will encounter some challenges as nearly 20% of the industry sector workforce are 55 years old, or older, and eligible for retirement within the next decade. Conversely, 10% of all workers in the sector are 24 years old or younger, meaning there are about two times as many workers nearing retirement as there are new to the sector. This imbalance could have long term implications for the manufacturing sector and represents one of the major workforce challenges in northeast Indiana. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, specific employment needs remained steady within the manufacturing sector, with growth projections ranging from 5%—10%.~~

The top five (5) regional industries by location quotient are:

1. Manufacturing
2. Educational Services
3. ~~Healthcare-Care~~
4. Transportation and Warehousing
5. Retail Trade

The top five (5) industries for projected job growth in the region are:

1. Construction
2. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
3. Transportation and Warehousing
4. ~~Healthcare-Care~~
5. Retail Trade

Some examples of these projections include:

- Welders—projected growth of 10%
- CNC Machinists—projected growth of 10%
- Maintenance Technicians—projected growth of 9%
- Machinists—projected growth of 7%
- Supervisors—projected growth of 7%

The average wage of these occupations is well above the local cost of living scale of \$18/hr, coming in at just above \$20/hr.

Within the ~~Healthcare-Care~~ sector, the region projects a need of over 8,000 new workers before 2028, based on a projected growth rate of 15%. The region hosts three large hospital systems; Parkview Health, Lutheran Health and most recently IU Health has entered into the EGR3 market. The region has historically experienced a shortfall in workforce supply to meet the workforce needs of the health care sector, specifically in the areas of ~~R~~egistered ~~N~~urses (~~RN~~), nurses who hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and ~~L~~icensed ~~P~~ractical ~~N~~urses (LPN). Additionally, as technology evolves and demands increase on the health networks due to COVID-19, systems and structures are evolving to create new and increased demand amongst varying technicians, coders, assistants and medical secretaries to go along with the increased demand for nurses. There are currently over ~~300,200~~ open nursing positions in EGR3 now, with projections as follows:

- Registered Nurses – projected growth of ~~2018~~%
- Licensed Practical Nurses – projected growth of ~~1140~~%
- Medical Coders/Secretaries – projected growth of ~~157~~%
- Dental Assistant/Hygienist – projected growth of ~~911~~%

~~While~~ Construction ranks ~~firstfifth~~ on the list ~~in projected job growth due to a ing, there has been a~~ significant uptick in construction projects throughout the region. Allen County has ~~again~~ permitted over \$1 ~~billion~~ in ~~commercial construction~~ permits for ~~three the second years-in-a-row~~ and expects to continue that trend. ~~Economic development attraction and retention efforts are a boon for the construction industry, which has also been supported by strong residential development growth throughout the region. While rising inflation rates and economic uncertainty may slow growth, there remains a strong outlook for the foreseeable future. While there is some variance in future projects due to the potential impact of COVID-19, construction has an average expected growth of 9% with wages that average approximately \$20/hr.~~

1.2 An analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)]

~~Northeast Indiana Works (NEINW)~~ has operated as a demand-driven workforce system for ~~nearlyover~~ ~~150~~ years. NEINW continues to pay close attention to the knowledge and skill requirements of the sectors being targeted and supported. While applicable technical skills remain critical across sectors, employability skills continue to dominate the interests of regional employers. Additionally, when directly engaging regional employers, employability skills are the prioritized attribute. Specifically, employers desire a workforce with the following skills:

- Communication Skills
- Teamwork
- Digital Literacy
- Customer Service
- Work Ethic

Along with the requisite employability skills, there remains a need for both technical skills and certifications across industry sectors. Key data about skill requirements comes from an analysis of online job ads being used by employers in northeast Indiana. From online job ads posted in the ~~secondfirst~~

quarter of 2022, the following insight can be gained about the skill requirements and needs of each sector:

- ~~Manufacturing—employers in this sector are seeking workers with the following technical skills: (1) material handling, (2) lean manufacturing, (3) preventive maintenance, (4) quality assurance and control, (5) CNC machining and (6) AutoCAD.~~
- ~~Health Care—a range of employers in this sector are seeking workers with the following technical skills: (1) working with children, (2) working with the elderly, (3) critical care, (4) working with emergencies, (5) labor and delivery and (6) electronic medical records.~~
- ~~Wholesale Trade—this sector is communicating a clear need for workers with the following skills: (1) quality assurance and control, (2) marketing, (3) preventive maintenance, (4) customer relationship management and (5) lean manufacturing.~~
- ~~Transportation/Warehousing—Employers in this sector are looking for workers with these specific technical skills: (1) quality assurance and control, (2) software management skills, (3) freight management, (4) preventive maintenance, (5) Hypertext markup language and (6) JavaScript.~~
- ~~Construction—workers in this sector are needed with the following technical skill sets: (1) driving an excavator, (2) reading blueprints, (3) marketing and sales, (4) bilingual skills, (5) equipment maintenance, (6) SolidWorks CAD systems and (7) preventive maintenance.~~

- Manufacturing - employers in this sector are seeking workers with the following technical skills: (1) material handling, (2) lean manufacturing, (3) preventive maintenance, (4) quality assurance and control, (5) CNC machining
- Educational Services-- employers in this sector are seeking workers with the following technical skills: (1) working with children, (2) administration, (3) curriculum development, (4) supportive services
- Healthcare-Care- a range of employers in this sector are seeking workers with the following technical skills: (1) working with children, (2) working with the elderly, (3) critical care, (4) working with emergencies, (5) labor and delivery and (6) electronic medical records.
- Transportation and Warehousing - employers in this sector are looking for workers with these specific technical skills: (1) quality assurance and control, (2) software management skills, (3) freight management, (4) preventive maintenance
- Retail Trade - employers in this sector are seeking workers with the following technical skills: (1) customer relationship management, (2) quality assurance and control, (3) marketing, (4) finance

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There are some common themes from these sought-after skill sets that have been communicated by employers through their online job ads. Such common themes would indicate that employers across all sectors are seeking workers with critical quality control skills, basic maintenance skills, advanced technology skills, and customer relationship skills.

All of this information has significant implications for northeast Indiana. Because employers have been relatively clear about the technical and employability skills they need in workers, regional education,

workforce, youth development and community-based programming must be reviewed to ensure that these critical skill sets are fully embedded into new and existing talent development programming. For NEINW, WorkOne Northeast services (everything from workshops to counseling programs) must be focused on developing these skill sets.

1.3 An analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment and youth. WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)

Per recent Census information, the population of the 11-county northeast Indiana region is ~~786,969~~~~76,048~~, with a projection to increase to ~~815,918~~~~01,642~~ by ~~2026~~~~30~~. Within this overall population count, there are several interesting observations:

- ~~Over 320,000 people (approximately 41%) are 45 years of age or older. Within the workforce, 231,229 people are age 55 or older.~~
- ~~262,895 people are ages 18–44 (approximately 33%). There are 147,578 millennials (ages 25-39) in the workforce.~~
- There is a clear trend toward the aging of the regional workforce. This dynamic has clear implications for the region; there will be fewer workers available to replace baby boomers who retire in the years ahead without adult in-migration

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Population data reveals that the diversity of the regional workforce is stagnant. Recent (2019) Census information indicates that:

- Whites make up ~~86~~~~7~~% of the population
- Blacks make up 6% of the population
- Hispanics make up 6% of the population

In addition to base population information, it should be noted that the number of individuals and families participating in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and food stamp programs continues to be high. In calendar year ~~2021~~~~19~~, an average of ~~677~~~~529~~ families participated in the TANF program monthly. Even more telling, is the fact that there were ~~68,623~~~~3,168~~ households receiving food stamps in calendar year ~~2021~~~~19~~. As employers struggle to locate workers to fill open positions across the region, this large number of public assistance recipients clearly represents a talent-development opportunity for the region, even though it does come with a specific set of challenges for the workforce system.

Another critical regional demographic speaks to educational attainment levels; on this, northeast Indiana continues to improve as a result of regional efforts around the "Big Goal." The following is a breakdown of local educational attainment:

- Less than 9th grade: ~~5.4~~~~2~~%
- Grade 9-12: ~~6.8~~~~9~~%
- High School Completion: ~~33.7~~~~8~~%

- Some college: 20.32%
- Associate Degree: 10.44%
- Bachelor Degree: 15.56%
- Graduate Degree: 7.98-2%

Because 60% of jobs are expected to require a credential or degree by 2030, reaching this goal is critical to developing, attracting and retaining the talent necessary for the success of business and the growth of per capita income in the region. NEINW is committed to supporting the work of the Big Goal and will continue to invest resources into skill development strategies that will increase the number of residents with quality degrees and credentials.

NEINW has also partnered with local economic development entities to devise ways to track regional credential attainment, as they are critical components to our regional occupational clusters. There has been consultation with the Lily Foundation on this subject and that work will carry on, ideally allowing the region to devise an actual metric for industry-recognized credential attainment versus anecdotal data.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Please answer the following questions of Section 2 in 10 pages or less. Section 2 responses should reflect input from members of the local workforce development board and other community stakeholders

Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an *.

2.1 Provide the board’s vision and goals for its local workforce system in preparing an educated and skilled workforce in the local area, including goals for youth and individuals with barriers to employment. As to youth, describe unique goals for in-school youth and out-of-school youth. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

NEINW’s mission is to develop, attract and retain talent. This mission, which has been in place for several years, is an outgrowth of extensive dialogue and work with key regional partners. Included in these conversations were the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership (regional economic development organization), the Regional Chamber of Northeast Indiana (regional advocacy group), the LEDO Council (regional collaboration of county-based economic development groups), the regional Mayor’s and Commissioner’s Caucus, and other similar groups. What has occurred in northeast Indiana is truly transformational – the region has coalesced around the vision of talent development with a full understanding that workforce challenges must be addressed if the region is to succeed economically. While each partner in these discussions has a specific role to play in support of talent development activities, NEINW’s specific contribution to this vision is to develop, attract and retain talent.

To ensure success in achieving this vision, Northeast Indiana Works has established a number of goals that drive and define the local workforce system. These goals include:

1. Operate a demand-driven system
2. Develop collaborative relationships with key partners
3. Use data to inform every decision or investment of talent development resources
4. Identify and share resources to support talent development programming; and

5. Ensure that youth have sufficient support in attaining credentials and accessing the labor market

Goal 1: Operate a Demand-Driven System – NEINW operates under the premise that the employer is the ultimate customer of the workforce system and that a skilled worker is the product that must be delivered. To ensure that employer hiring and skill needs always drive talent development efforts in the region, specific strategies have been developed to convene and facilitate sector partnerships. Sector partnerships – employer-led collaborations that engage educators, workforce and economic development organizations and other critical community-based stakeholders – have been formed in multiple counties across the region. NEINW plays a significant role in supporting each of these sector partnerships and is committed to developing new programming and talent development strategies in collaboration with these partnerships. Currently, sector partnerships exist in support of the manufacturing sector, the skilled trades/construction sector, the health care sector and the insurance sector.

Goal 2: Collaboration – If the region is to successfully address its workforce and talent development challenges, collaboration is viewed as the only road to success. NEINW has established significant partnerships with virtually every component of the talent development system in the region. As noted earlier, northeast Indiana – as a region – has adopted the Big Goal of increasing the percentage of northeast Indiana residents with high-quality degrees or credentials to 60% by 2030. Northeast Indiana Works is fully invested in the Big Goal and has aligned its resources to supporting its attainment. This alignment has been achieved as a result of significant collaborations with employers and employer groups, economic development organizations, high schools, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, adult education programs, postsecondary institutions, elected officials, and a range of human services and youth development organizations across the region.

Goal 3: Be Data Driven – The best decisions are always supported with data. NEINW is 100% committed to reviewing all available data when developing solutions to workforce challenges. The best example of data that can help shape decisions is labor market data. Labor market data is regularly provided by the DWD Labor Market Analyst; however, such data can also be provided directly by employers through hiring/wage surveys, other sector partnership activities, and even through local business service organizations such as economic development corporations and chambers of commerce. Another good example of data that shape decisions is program performance data. This kind of data focuses on individuals being served and the outcomes that are achieved through the delivery of workforce services. Such data can be evaluated to better understand whether or not job seeker and employer services are effective. Northeast Indiana Works understands and is committed to reviewing program performance data as a means of achieving continuous improvement with all workforce activities in the region.

Goal 4: Share Resources for Maximum Impact – While NEINW is fortunate to have resources that support worker training activities in the region, it has become clear that internal resources are simply insufficient to meet the workforce needs of the region. As such, developing funding collaborations with communities, employers, and other organizations that collectively support worker training initiatives is a must. NEINW has, and will continue to, partner with entities for worker training resources and collaborative grant-writing efforts designed to capture resources supporting everything from CTE programming to incumbent worker training. Some of these entities include trade organizations, municipalities, economic development organizations and other community-based organizations.

Goal 5: Ensure that youth have sufficient support in attaining credentials and accessing the labor market — NEINW is committed to engaging youth, and their parents, to ensure they are knowledgeable of regional labor market opportunities. Once they aware of the opportunities available to them, NEINW is committed to providing systems and programs that allow for multiple entrance and exit points to achieve necessary education and leverage the skills learned in the labor market.

2.2 Describe how the board’s vision aligns with and/or supports the strategic vision of Governor’s Workforce Cabinet (GWC) as set out in the WIOA State Plan.

<https://www.in.gov/gwc/files/Indiana%20Strategic%20Workforce%20Plan.pdf>

Indiana’s strategic vision is to create a talent system that affords all Hoosiers equitable opportunities for lifelong learning and increased personal economic mobility and provides employers the talent to grow and diversify their workforce.

We will endeavor to increase intergenerational social and economic mobility by:

- Ensuring quality pathways that provide opportunities for career advancement, personal prosperity, and well-being for all Hoosiers;
- Partnering with Indiana employers and education and training providers to identify and close the skills gap while meeting emerging talent needs; and
- Strengthening Indiana’s economy by aligning programs and funding to meet current and future workforce needs.

NEINW is highly supportive of the strategic vision of the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet (GWC), having had multiple northeast Indiana residents serve on the GWC, including one current board member. Northeast Indiana is a region of collaboration, which is a driver in much of the outlined goals of the state workforce plan, with mechanisms ranging from programmatic collaboration, organizational collaboration and fiscal collaboration. NEINW participates in, and in several instances leads, collaborative efforts in the region, including but not limited to:

- The EWIN Team – a collaboration of all Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in the region
- Adult Education services in the region operate under a collaborative consortium model
- NEINW attends regional Local Economic Development Organization (LEDO) meetings
- NEINW has a relationship with our regional Mayor’s and Commissioner’s Caucus, the Regional Opportunities Council, the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership (regional LEDO), the Regional Chamber of Commerce and several other efforts in which counties have partnered.

NEINW has also driven the development of county-based learning centers, with a physical presence in ~~is~~ nearly all counties within the region, to better pipeline young people into the labor market, align services for adult job seekers and to better leverage fiscal resources. Northeast Indiana was the first area in the state to be designated ~~as~~ a 21st Century Talent Region. Additionally, the workforce

development board serves as an apprenticeship intermediary and has also developed a strong working relationship with all required WIOA partners. Lastly, northeast Indiana was one of the first regions in the state to implement the Jobs for America's [Graduates \(JAG\)](#) program for in-school youth and continues to have one of the largest regional programs in the state.

2.3 Describe how the board's goals contribute to each of the five GWC goals.

https://www.in.gov/gwc/files/Indiana%20Strategic%20Workforce%20Plan_Draft_2.6.2020.pdf

The GWC's strategic plan includes a number of strategies under each goal. While Local boards are required to respond to each goal, they are not expected to address how each strategy under each goal will be implemented. It is up to the discretion of the local board to determine what strategies best fit the local needs.

Goal 1. Focus on meeting the individual needs of Hoosiers. Indiana has created a talent development system comprised of wide-ranging workforce training and education programs. Hoosiers need to be able to find and navigate this often complex system to find the best option that meets their current and often immediate needs, fulfills their aspirations, and equips them with the skills and knowledge for socioeconomic mobility. Career pathways that help diversify the skills and talent within Indiana must be designed and delivered with the individual's economic sustainability and mobility as the focal point. These career pathways will help diversify the skills and talent within Indiana to promote economic opportunities for Hoosiers. We need to ensure that we do not focus merely on programmatic requirements and funding streams, but rather what an individual needs and aspires to in order to be successful. We must include an intergenerational approach to communicating, offering, and delivering services in order to meet an individual's ambitions and current and future economic needs. This system may not look the same for each person, and it may not provide the same resources for each person. It will be customizable to an individual's goals and aspirations in order to achieve social and economic mobility.

NEINW's first step to serve an individual's needs is to ensure there is optimal opportunity for engagement. Currently, NEINW has either a comprehensive or affiliate WorkOne ~~c~~Center facility in each of the 11 counties of EGR3. The offices are strategically-located in learning centers, areas or within buildings that house other services like FSSA, ~~S~~social ~~S~~security, and high traffic areas of our rural communities. In addition to these locations, staff travel to community centers, employer sites and pop-up locations to ensure access for all in need. ~~As a more recent response to the COVID-19 pandemic,~~ NEINW ~~has~~ ~~provid~~~~es~~~~ed~~ virtual and telephonic services, as well as expanding engagement opportunity based on individual circumstance. Additionally, partnerships have been established to provide virtual workshops, training pods, and access to additional resources through the NEINW website.

We also strive to ensure that no individual feels placed in a box or limited in service options. A system of assessments ~~is~~~~are~~ utilized to create individualized service plans regardless of experience within the labor market. Examples of service plans include case management, opportunities for secondary educational attainment for those in need, developmental workshops for employability and life skills, a wide variety of occupational skills training credentials with multiple training providers throughout the region, access to regional labor market information and direct access to employment opportunities. NEINW utilizes this customer information to connect individuals to pathway opportunities based on their customer-

centric needs. This could be done through the design of the service plan construct, by connecting the individual to appropriate and often customized occupational skills training opportunities, by partnering with local partner providers like Adult Education and/or collaborating with area training providers to ensure the availability of in-demand credentials.

NEINW ensures that our local outreach efforts reach those most in need. NEINW utilizes digital, print, and radio platforms, including multiple social media sites, for brand awareness. By leveraging regional partnerships, we also ensure both our urban and rural communities are aware of services for both individuals and employers, often by educating those partners, like LEDO's, local Chambers of Commerce, foundations and community centers, and others, on our services. In 2022, NEINW has attained funds to develop and implement multiple awareness campaigns within the region that promote both workforce development services and industry sector awareness. Additionally, NEINW is collaborating with Greater Fort Wayne Inc to align messaging in these campaigns with an effort to promote industry awareness and interest in neighboring states.

Goal 2. Integrate state systems to facilitate greater access to information, resources, and services for constituents, businesses, state personnel, career coaches or navigators, and case managers. In addition to acquiring skills, education, and jobs that put them on the path to social and economic mobility, constituents also must understand that they have continuous access to the talent development system throughout their working lives. For sustained economic success and personal growth, Hoosiers will need to continually engage with, and pursue, lifelong learning opportunities, which could exacerbate the complexities of this multifaceted system. Indiana must integrate our state and federal resources to help simplify navigation of this system for constituents. Our current program-by-program approach to serving constituents and businesses has resulted in a profusion of program-specific solutions. If the talent development system is to better serve our Hoosiers and improve their lives, we must align and simplify access to this array of resources and services. Strategic coordination of systems and collaboration across state agencies will begin breaking down to better empower our Workforce Development Boards, outreach personnel, and local partners.

Collaboration and system coordination remain foundational to all NEINW efforts. WIOA partners are convened through quarterly meetings to communicate ongoing opportunities for collaboration to both engage individuals and remove barriers to ensure the presence of identifiable career pathways and the ability to continually climb them. The regional adult education consortium meets monthly to coordinate testing site options, keep each other aware of class and office schedules, present occupational skills training opportunities and to ensure all have accurate information on available supports. Vocational Rehabilitation services its' clients at the WorkOne Centers, allowing for seamless transitions between entities and personal handoffs. NEINW also works with employers to ensure that the incumbent workforce is continually skilling themselves up in order to move up career pathways and attain 21st century skills, keeping them employable in today's marketplace. Co-location, along with joint outreach and service provision, continues to be a vital component of the service delivery makeup in the region. Partners include Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, career and technical education organizations, municipal partners, the philanthropic sector, local economic development, regional training providers and others.

NEINW also works with employers to ensure that the incumbent workforce is continually skilling themselves up to move up career pathways and attain 21st century skills, keeping them employable in today's marketplace.

Goal 3. Align programs towards creating a healthy, engaged, and talented citizen. Often, our programs deal with the aftermath of either situational or systematic difficulties. Some government programs perform triage on crises occurring in Hoosiers' lives, rather than curbing the systemic inequities through early intervention strategies. We envision a realignment of our programs to include an emphasis on prevention and early intervention that will elevate opportunities for success. The most vital and entrenched strategy we have for early intervention is our early education and K-12 education systems. By expanding access to early education, we can begin providing advantageous programs to Hoosier children. As our students progress through our educational system, better integration of academic and technical skills and knowledge will provide Hoosiers with more opportunities for future mobility. Our education and workforce programs for adults will focus on finding the right fit for the individual person and equipping Hoosiers with the skills needed for career advancement and longevity. By assisting multiple generations in advancement towards quality health, societal engagement, and preparation for the jobs of today and tomorrow, we can foster an environment where economic mobility is attainable for more Hoosiers.

Prevention and early intervention perfectly aligns with the pipelining system in place in EGR3. NEINW hosts one of the largest in-school Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) programs in the state, with 14 high school programs. In the JAG classes, JAG-instructors develop area youth with a curriculum focused on career exploration, the development of employability skills, academic tutoring and civic engagement through the structured Career Association component, focused on leadership development and active servant leadership. Additional opportunities are presented to students through engagement with employers, colleges and community-based assists through classroom guest speakers, college fairs and onsite college visits. One example of this is "JAG Day" hosted by the Ivy Tech Fort Wayne campus for all EGR3 JAG students. This is a day where departmental staff from Ivy Tech hosts a structured program throughout the day to educate students on credit and non-credit opportunities at Ivy Tech for students to achieve a post-secondary level certification and walk through the process of engagement from starting at the application process through certification attainment. The day also gives students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the campus and available resources onsite.

The BeSomeOne Now program is also available for youth whothat have disengaged from traditional secondary schooling. This out-of-school youth program has been aligned with adult education to ensure the students most in need are being served and connected to resources that will support their completion of a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma and transition into the labor market, as many of the students are living independently. The program also serves as an entry and transitional point for additional services traditionally provided to adults.

Along with these programs, NEINW has partnered with multiple school districts throughout the region to:

- Develop and implement Work Ethics Certification
- Create learning center environments that house adult education, occupational skills training for youth and adults, along with CTE opportunities all in one facility

- Facilitate the engagement of employers at the county level to work with their local high schools to teach students about career opportunities and qualifications for employment
- Work with economic development partners to create tools to teach baseline skills in the two largest employment sectors in the region, Manufacturing and Health ~~care-Care~~
- ~~Worked~~ with the state of Indiana, local employers and CTE sites to create an implementable career pathway in Precision Agriculture that is currently being piloted in Wabash County at the Heartland Career Center

NEINW has continued to develop youth SEAL, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship opportunities. Partnerships, like that with Garrett School Corporation highlight the intersection of SEALs, CTE and registered apprenticeship, and provide alignment for pathways to stackable credentials and entry into the labor pool.

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Goal 4. Maximize state and federal resources through impact-driven programs for Hoosiers. In Indiana, there is a great deal of overlap between the populations served through our various state and federal programs focusing on either social services and/or workforce training. An interdependence of social, medical, and other support services can help Hoosiers overcome employment obstacles. To capitalize on Indiana’s investments into these programs, we must include impact data in our evaluation of successful services. In addition to considering inputs (e.g., attendance and participation rates) and outputs (e.g., program completers and graduates) of these programs, we will also examine the outcomes (e.g., wages and improvement in socioeconomic status). We need to understand the return on investment we earn from each of our programs in order to ensure it is truly impacting the lives of Hoosiers.

Maintaining a data-driven system is a stated goal of NEINW. We strive to ensure access to all programs and to coordinate the fragmented services within the full spectrum of the system for an individual. While NEINW does not drive outputs for other agencies, we have focused on meeting WIOA federal performance expectations and have historically been successful doing so. While meeting performance expectations will always be a goal in northeast Indiana, ensuring that individuals are supported with an aligned system is paramount. Blending agencies and services reduces barriers and meets the needs of individuals ~~whothat~~ only have an interest in ultimately continuing in or returning to the labor market. An example of this is for individuals ~~whothat~~ are dislocated from their employer. NEINW uses a triage approach that connects them to Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and adult education supports where appropriate, and local community resources to create an environment that provides the necessary supports for success, while leveraging co-enrollment opportunities.

NEINW places an emphasis on ensuring return on investment exists for the region. With a focus on credential attainment and per capita income, inputs ultimately drive a thriving community with improved socioeconomic status for those in need of support.

Goal 5. Foster impactful relationships between businesses, community partners, and government agencies. In order to create a more robust talent development system and advance our populous towards economic mobility, the private sector must be a partner to drive training. We need to deepen our current partnerships with engaged businesses and expand our outreach to involve more businesses. Simultaneously, Indiana must increasingly diversify its economy to ensure we keep up with the rapid pace of the global change. The first step is promoting coordinated communication of the state's programs to all Indiana employers so no matter the size or type of business all are empowered to engage. This involves synchronization from state agencies to local regions to ensure our employers know and understand the multitude of state opportunities to engage with the talent development system. Successful business engagement must deliver value to employers, which will require our talent development programs to be more accessible and user-friendly for employers. We must also start to engage with businesses holistically, rather than focusing solely on their current needs. Our ultimate goal is to change the culture of how employers play a role and invest in their own workforce development as opposed to the government steering and telling employers what to do. Our engagement practices will shift employers from simply being the customers of the workforce system to active participants in the creation and implementation of workforce development and wraparound service solutions. Fostering and showcasing business investments in their people will highlight the mutual benefits of the talent development system for both employers and individuals.

NEINW has a long history of partnership with employers, both directly and through agencies, including being co-located with both the regional chamber of commerce and the regional economic development organization, which boosts communication and partnership. ~~In serving more than 1,500~~~~in serving approximately 1300~~ employers on an annual basis, NEINW is ~~con~~tinually adapting to the needs of the employer community and refining the way that we engage and deliver support. One example is the leveraging of CARES Act dollars within the region through the designated Employer Training Grants (ETG) to support the ~~delivery~~~~viery~~ of training commitments in excess of \$10 million. ~~M7.4M, which was the most in the state. In a very short amount of time, 118 employers were engaged with plans to serve 2,065 individuals in EGR3.~~

Sector partnerships also provide~~s~~ opportunities in northeast Indiana in manufacturing, health care and agriculture. This work has assisted in the creation of ~~S~~state ~~E~~earn and ~~L~~earn (SEAL) programs, ~~including~~~~in~~cluding one of the first statewide SEAL programs in the Garrett- Keyser- Butler ~~Community School -~~district, where the district ~~s~~Superintendent serves on the regional ~~W~~orkforce ~~D~~evelopment ~~B~~oard (WDB). NEINW is also heavily involved with the regional building trades association to continue to grow the trades in northeast Indiana, which is a driver of our local construction industry.

Another example of direct parternship with employers is the Skill-Link program. This program allows for customized training curriculum and leverages private dollars, usually provided by the employer, to skill up its existing workforce and create open entry level positions within their organization.

2.4* Describe how the board's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (E)] See WIOA Section 116 (b) (2) (A) for more information on the federal performance accountability measures.

Federal performance accountability success is part of the stated data-driven approach utilized by NEINW. All efforts are made with the federal performance measure-sin mind, which include:

- Unsubsidized employment in the 2nd quarter after exit
- Unsubsidized employment in the 4th quarter after exit
- Median Earnings
- Credential Attainment
- Measurable Skills Gains
- Employer Satisfaction

Performance in these areas ~~is~~are communicated to the local WDB, reviewed and discussed at every regional WDB meeting and made available on the NEINW website. NEINW constantly monitors this performance and makes adjustments to improve wherever necessary. It is our position that everything that we do will ultimately contribute to these performance measures and uplift the region's workforce and economy.

2.5* Describe any additional indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers and the one-stop delivery system in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (17)]

In addition to the established performance metrics, youth and adult career services providers are measured in the following areas:

- The frequency and types of services provided to individuals
- The number of new individuals enrolled in services on an annual basis
- Co-enrollment
- Foot traffic in operational centers
- The number of individuals participating in workshops
- On-~~t~~he Job-Training (OJT) and/or work experience connectivity
- Customer satisfaction

The One-Stop Operator (OSO) is monitored on an annual basis by NEINW. The OSO is monitored in the following areas:

- Linkages of one-stop partners
- Performance tracking
- Execution of local memorandums of understanding (MOU)
- Process mapping to define coordination of services

Fiscal expenditure rates are monitored on a monthly basis across all grants to ensure success. NEINW is designated as the fiscal agent and adult career services provider by agreement of the Regional Chief Elected Official (RCEO). The work as a fiscal agent is conducted by the CFO and monitored by the WDB, DWD and an external auditing firm on an annual basis.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Please answer the following questions of Section 3 in 15 pages or less. Many of the responses below, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. The local board is not required to complete the questions shaded in gray at this time.

Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an *.

3.1 Taking into account the analysis in Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the organizations that carry out core programs (*Core programs include: Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Services, Title II Adult Education and Literacy, Title III Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation*) to align resources in the local area, in support of the vision and goals described in Question 2.1. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

There are economies of scale and synergies associated with partnerships. Involving multiple stakeholders in the design and implementation of solutions fosters the exchange of ideas and resources, increases the likelihood of success, and creates new opportunities. Through workforce development partnerships, employers gain access to skilled workers and training opportunities; training providers gain insight to shape the content and increase the relevance of their offerings; community-based organizations gain access to pathways for their clients; and individual workers are better supported in enhancing their skills, building careers and advancing in their work lives.

NEINW meets monthly with the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, the Northeast Indiana Regional Chamber, the LEDO Council and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to ensure the vision and goals previously outlined are better positioned to be achieved. NEINW has established meeting opportunities with the regional adult education consortium (which also includes Vocational Rehabilitation), Wagner-Peyser and WIOA management staff to ensure ongoing information sharing and increased collaborative opportunities. NEINW also convenes core, required and local partners through quarterly One-Stop Operator meetings. Many of the local offices (by county) already meet to ensure staff and process familiarity, positively impacting services to customers, which ultimately contributes to goal attainment.

Local community-based organizations are also convened through the OSO partner meetings and are included in the regionally developed service matrix, which outlines services, access points and referral opportunities for individuals engaged in the system.

3.2* Identify the programs/partners that are included in the local workforce development system. Include, at a minimum, organizations that provide services for relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs, provision of transportation, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Senior Community Service and Employment Program, Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, and programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (2), (10), (11), (12) & (13)]

Following are identified below are some NEINW partners whose primary goals are to provide workforce development-related services to residents of northeast Indiana.

Career Service Provision (WIOA Title I)

Northeast Indiana Works (includes TAA)

Brightpoint, [Inc.](#)

~~SCAN, Inc.~~

Adult Education Partners (WIOA Title II)

Fort Wayne Community Schools

Marion Community Schools

Learn More Center

The Literacy Alliance

Impact Institute

Carl D Perkins and Technical Education Act Partners

Ivy Tech Community College

~~Indiana University~~ Purdue University Fort Wayne

E&T Community Services Block Grant Partner

Brightpoint, Inc.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Family and Social Services Administration

Pathfinders

[EasterSeals Arc RISE](#)

Wagner-Peyser Services, TAA, UI, JVSG

DWD

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Division of Family Resources

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program

Family and Social Services Administration

National Farmworker Jobs Program

Proteus, Inc.

3.3* Describe efforts to work with each partner identified in 3.2 to support alignment of service provision and avoid duplication of services to contribute to the achievement of the GWC's goals and strategies. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (2), (10), (11), (12) & (13)]

Career Service Provision (WIOA Title I)

WIOA Title I career and training services are provided throughout the [One-stop](#) system. These services are provided to both youth and adults in the WorkOne [Centers](#) as well as community sites including schools, learning centers and other connection points throughout the region with coordination by the OSO.

Adult Education Partners (WIOA Title II)

Many Title II services are co-located in learning and WorkOne [Centers](#) throughout EGR3. A monthly adult education consortium meeting is also held [to](#) coordinate geographic coverage, [and to](#) schedule

alignment and outreach. There is optimized efficiency because WIOA out-of-school youth are co-enrolled in adult education services and WIOA adult services where applicable.

Carl D Perkins and Technical Education Act Partners

NEINW works with our post-secondary educational partners to drive alignment between CTE and post-secondary training and credential opportunities, including the convening of the regional EWIN team, consisting of all regional CTE providers, Ivy Tech, NEINW and the regional economic development organization.

E&T Community Services Block Grant Partner

NEINW partners with regional block grant recipients to engage and deliver services through the regional WorkOne cCenter structure.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation services are integrated into the WorkOne cCenter operations throughout EGR3.

Wagner-Peyser Services, TAA, UI, JVSG

These services are integrated with the WorkOne cCenter operations throughout EGR3.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

NEINW works with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) TANF program through regional IMPACT partners to coordinate service delivery and drive outcomes for individuals.

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program

NEINW works with the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) program through regional IMPACT partners to coordinate service delivery and drive outcomes for individuals.

National Farmworker Jobs Program

Case Management, career advisement, training services and connection to the labor market are integrated into the WorkOne cCenter operations throughout EGR3.

3.4 Identify how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan and state provided criteria. See the [Multi-Year Adult Education Competitive Grant Application \(Request for Application\)](#). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (13)].

Requests for application are distributed by the DWD to all interested partners statewide. Once applications have been received by DWD, regional applications are reviewed by NEINW to ensure coordination of effort and alignment with local planning and communal needs. Upon completion of reviews of all applications, NEINW makes a recommendation to the DWD of award based on this projected alignment of service.

3.5* Describe how the local boards are partnering with economic development and promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (5)]

NEINW is closely aligned with economic development in northeast Indiana, both locally and at the state level. There is an established relationship between NEINW, LEDOs and the IEDC. We have been an integral partner in providing labor market information, training incentives and other “backroom” human resources support (e.g., candidate pooling, assessments, hiring events) that have assisted in the attraction and retention of regional employers. We are co-located with representatives from the IEDC, share office space with the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, and are located one floor above the Allen County economic development entity. We work directly with the other 10 county-based economic development organizations to provide like services, gather workforce survey data, assess employer needs, create data-driven training curriculums and spearhead local sector-based alliances to promote the needs and growth of local industry. NEINW also participates in the monthly LEDO Council meeting, which hosts representation of 10 of the 11 counties represented in EGR3. [Additionally, representatives from NEINW participate in IEDC coordinated “county blitz” visits throughout the region along with the IEDC, local LEDO’s and other community supports to retain existing businesses.](#) Various local efforts have been products of these meetings, such as the opportunity to better engage employers with both educators and high school students, particularly those tied to CTE coursework.

NEINW values the transferrable skills that align with entrepreneurship, such as budgeting, development, networking, skill identification, digital literacy, work ethic and other identifiable transferrable skills that would lend themselves within a particular sector. Development of these skills are promoted and refined internally through readily available workshops, one-on-one advisement, and through partnerships with entities like the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (NIIC), which serves as a small business incubator. The NIIC provides opportunities and advisement from initial growth through the scaling phase in business development, allowing individuals to further vet business ideas, as well as assisting them with site location and occasionally capital investment.

3.6 Describe how the local area is partnering with adult education and with out of school youth regarding business services.

NEINW has long partnered adult education and WIOA out-of-school youth services. We convene all adult education providers within the region through the regional adult education consortium. Additionally, NEINW was one of the first regions in the state to directly tie out-of-school youth services specifically to adult education participants, focusing on that population as “most in need,” dating back to WIA, and strengthening its position with the implementation of WIOA. The board has ensured that the local out-of-school youth service provider is integrated into the adult education provider consortium, ensuring ongoing connectivity between the entities. Both adult education students and participating out-of-school youth, which are often one in the same, are directly connected to business services through provision of labor market information and career pathway education inclusive of the application of credentials, and are directly marketed by the [business service representatives BSRs](#) to transition into the workforce by traditional means or through work experiences, inclusive of work experiences such as [apprenticeships and work experiences paid internships and OJTs](#). NEINW has also specifically funded a Work Experience Coordinator position, focused solely on connecting out-of-school youth participants with employment opportunities throughout the region. [Additionally, NEINW has created an Apprenticeship Coordinator position, which will focus on the development of apprenticeships and engagement of youth participants.](#)

3.7 Based on the analysis described in Section 1.1-1.3, describe plans to focus efforts and resources on serving priority of service populations in the local area, including how this will be managed. Include any other priority populations the local area will focus on.

NEINW targets priority-of-service (POS) populations through multiple efforts, following the Indiana Department of Workforce Development Priority of Service Policy 2019-04. These efforts will focus on targeted marketing to established Census areas that have been identified as high need, focusing the efforts of the in-school and out-of-school youth providers to ensure those who are basic skills deficient are engaged and served and targeting developmental opportunities for entry-level employment for the population. One example is a local pre-apprenticeship program that serves many priority-of-service participants, is held within an identified priority-of-service Census track and prepares participants to transition into apprenticeship opportunities within the local building trades, which is made up of 18 unique skilled trades associations in northeast Indiana. The pre-apprenticeship program also provides the experiential concepts to educate participants in work ethic, the importance of promptness, and a general understanding of workplace expectations within the building and construction trades. It is transferrable to many manufacturing settings. NEINW has partnered with the Northeast Indiana Building & Construction Trades Association to develop this pre-apprenticeship program, and is working with other entities throughout the region to expand both pre and traditional apprenticeship opportunities.

The board monitors priority-of-service enrollment monthly, using data from the DWD MIS to evaluate the percentage of priority-of-service candidates being served. Regional priority-of-service populations align with definitions provided by the DWD and also include individuals who are digitally illiterate, cannot create and/or complete a budget, and do not have the skills required to navigate traditional online job search and/or application tools. These groupings and requirements are outlined in the regional Basic Skills Deficiency definitions, which are embedded into the POS policy.

By using data to drive targeted services areas and delivery models, NEINW ~~cannot~~ focus on engaging populations that are documented as needing services to prepare and sustain within the labor market and reach socioeconomic sustainability. This is also done by ensuring readily available engagement opportunities are in place in every county within EGR3 through WorkOne Centers, itinerant sites and with partner organizations.

3.8* Based on the analysis described Section 1, identify up to three industries where a sector partnership is currently being convened in the local area or where there will be an attempt to convene a sector partnership and the timeframe. Describe how you will be partnering to achieve defined goals.

County-based health-care, manufacturing and skilled trades' sector partnerships have been formed throughout the region. Through a decade of convening sector partnerships across the region, ~~it is~~ has become clear that the most successful model is to identify the common skill needs at the regional level, while focusing on local implementation and execution. In manufacturing and skilled trades, it has been identified that employers are highly motivated to support their own school systems, their own CTE programs, and their own communities. To date, five manufacturing and skilled trades' sector partnerships have been formed at the county level. These include the Adams-Wells Manufacturing

Alliance (AWMA), the Noble County Manufacturing and Education Alliance (MEA), the MadeByMe Coalition in Allen County (inclusive of both manufacturers and skilled trade employers), the Industrial Guild in Steuben County and the Grant's Got Talent initiative in Grant County. [In health care, the three large health-care providers, Parkview Health, Lutheran Health and IU Health all participate in a consortium formed by Northeast Indiana Works, as well as 40+ other regional partners.](#)

Staff from NEINW participate in all sector partnerships and help guide the work of ~~these~~ county-based [or region-based](#) sector partnerships. As a result, existing sector partnerships have coalesced around a number of key workforce and talent development strategies:

- Working with K-12 education systems to directly engage with students to create awareness of and promote career opportunities and pathways in manufacturing, ~~and~~ the skilled trades [and healthcare.](#)
- Working with K-12 education systems to create teacher/counselor externship opportunities.
- Working with CTE programs to develop work-based learning programs for students in manufacturing and skilled trades programs at the high school level.
- As the unemployment rate has continued to drop, sector partnerships are also working with Northeast Indiana Works and LEDOs to develop training programs that focus efforts on skilling-up workers already in the workforce.

These sector partnerships will also be supported by NEINW to ensure that they also tie into the regional agenda to identify strategies for supporting education systems through school visits, internship programs, curriculum input, professional development for teachers/counselors, and assistance with career awareness activities.

[A r](#)Region-wide sector partnerships ~~has~~[ve](#) also been established in ~~health-care and~~ agriculture, but [is](#)are in the early stages of implementation.

As sector partnerships continue to mature in northeast Indiana, the region's long-term vision is to ensure sector partnership are established in each county of the region and to expand beyond the existing partnerships in manufacturing, health-care, and agriculture. Once this is accomplished, the next step will be to further network these employer-led sector partnerships by aligning them around a common regional agenda, common metrics, and similar strategies. It will be true to the collective impact framework utilized in the region. With the regional alignment in place, pursuit of goals and execution of strategies required to achieve them will occur at the county level based on the needs of employers and the sector-based relationships that have been formed in that county. All of these local efforts will be working toward the goal of 60% post-secondary attainment by 2030 in northeast Indiana.

While the critical work of developing and formalizing this network of sector partnerships is occurring, these sector partnerships will also engage in another activity that is mission critical to developing an effective talent development pipeline in the region. In simple terms, these sector partnerships will be

working with educators, CTE districts and workforce/economic development organizations to support the development of true career pathways for students/adults. To do this, a number of agendas will be pursued by the network of sector partnerships:

- Sector partnerships will work with school systems, LEDOs, NEINW and other partners to expand career awareness and career exploration opportunities for middle and high school students;
- Sector partnerships will work with school systems, CTE districts and post-secondary partners to enhance and expand the capacity of the regional education system to deliver the technical training required to support the career pathways that are being developed. In this role, sector partnerships will support curriculum review and development efforts and they will also be directly involved in identifying the needs of these programs.
- Sector partnerships will work with school systems, CTE districts, post-secondary partners and NEINW to identify the specific credentials to be embedded into technical training programs across the region. This will ensure that student/worker skills are validated by a third-party assessment and the region progresses towards its 60% goal.
- Sector partnerships will work with school systems, CTE districts and post-secondary partners to provide work-based learning opportunities to students. There are already a number of work-based learning initiatives underway in the region; through this network of sector partnerships, the number of work-based learning programs will grow in specific support of career pathways in manufacturing and the skilled trades.
- Sector partnerships will work with Northeast Indiana Works, LEDOs and post-secondary partners to develop and offer technical training courses to low/entry wage workers that develop the skills required to move into and through career pathways in manufacturing and the skilled trades. This will be done by offering these technical training programs at CTE locations throughout the region, allowing these workers to take required coursework at a location in their home county.

3.9 A-D

Responses may include the implementation of incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways or utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in 3.1. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (4) (A) & (B)]

Identify and describe the strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:

A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, workforce development programs, in addition to targeted sector strategies.

NEINW utilizes a variety of strategies to engage employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors. The most significant of these strategies is through aggressive relationship-building activities through sector partnerships. NEINW has facilitated seven such partnerships in the region (five in the manufacturing sector, one dedicated to health care and a sector partnership focused on agriculture). In all of these sector partnerships, employers are engaged in developing and executing career awareness campaigns for middle and high school students, developing counselor/teacher externship programs, and developing curricula for adult learners looking to move into or deeper into a career pathway. In total, through these sector partnerships, NEINW has the opportunity to communicate regularly and engage hundreds of regional employers. Relationships with these sector partnerships will continue to be strengthened and additionally leverage NEINW business services representatives to meet their workforce needs

B. Support a local workforce development system described in 3.2 that meets the needs of businesses.

NEINW coordinates several employer events in the region each year that directly engages employers. One such annual event is an employer seminar that typically attracts 70-100 employers in the region. At the employer seminar, a great deal of information about workforce services, labor market trends and programs such as veterans programs and unemployment insurance is shared with attending employers. A second annual event that engages employers directly is a Veterans 1st Hiring Event. Attracting up to 70 employers a year, this annual hiring event has gained a lot of traction in the region and continues to create opportunities for employers to engage with the regional workforce system. Northeast Indiana Works and its' partners will continue to host these annual events as a way of engaging large numbers of employers in one setting. While these events were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, they were still held virtually. There were a number of existing workers that attended the events virtually, opening a new method to serve the existing workforce that had not been previously engaged. [NEINW currently utilizes a hybrid model to events where applicable, to continue expanded engagement opportunities for individuals and businesses that may have barriers to physical attendance.](#)

C. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs.

NEINW has worked diligently to develop strong alliances with regional LEDOs and these relationships are continuing to produce results. For instance, when LEDOs make employer visits, it is now common for them to invite a [business service representative](#) from the workforce system to accompany them. This has resulted in hundreds of new opportunities to engage directly with employers that are expanding, hiring, or in need of workforce assistance. Another example of close collaboration with LEDOs is a newer approach to joint funding of training programs. LEDOs in several counties within the region have access to CEDIT resources to help NEINW develop and implement training programs for employers. NEINW is finding that LEDOs are becoming willing investors in quality training programs that serve their employers.

A similar relationship exists with regional staff from the IEDC. IEDC staff make regular employer visits (including "blitz" days, where several employers are visited in one day) and workforce development staff always participate in these visits. This also puts workforce system staff in front of employers for whom workforce services are often needed. Relationships with LEDOs and regional IEDC staff are very strong in northeast Indiana and this will continue to be an effective strategy for NEINW to engage with employers.

D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

NEINW fully integrated the one-stop system with Unemployment Insurance (UI) programming in 2008. Programs such as RESEA and JFH have also been integrated into the service delivery model since its inception. Orientations for all programs outline the myriad of services available by all One-Stop partners and anyone seeking any UI service is made aware and encouraged to participate. Staff for all WIOA programs are fully integrated and can work with any individual, with the exception of JVSG and RESEA as their funding mechanisms do not allow cross-service.

3.10 Including WIOA and non-WIOA funding, what percentage of total funds would you project will be used for training annually?

NEINW currently projects to expend 18%-20% of all available funds on training annually. ~~For PY20-21, we currently are projected to expend 23% as a result of the influx of CARES Act funds.~~

3.11 If the local board is currently leveraging funding outside of WIOA Title I funding and state general funds to support the local workforce development system, briefly describe the funding and how it will impact the local system. Break down the description by adult, dislocated worker and youth. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, describe any plans to pursue it.

NEINW has been identifying resources beyond WIOA Title I that can support regional workforce development activities. ~~Most recently, the organization received \$184,000 from the Lilly Foundation to support Youth related needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding has been received from the Lily Foundation, the Schwab Foundation, and the Don Wood Foundation.~~

~~Also noteworthy is the fact that two local foundations have become involved in funding workforce training programs, one being brand new to the region in 2021. This foundation, the Don Wood Foundation, will become a large scale funder for workforce system efforts and NEINW is currently in discussion about partnership opportunities.~~ Northeast Indiana Works continues strong outreach efforts to community foundations across the region to explore funding opportunities in support of worker training activities.

Finally, when it comes to generating funding above and beyond WIOA Title I, NEINW is working independently and with community partners like our regional economic development entity, the Northeast Indiana [Regional Partnership](#), to pursue funds to continue to scale up talent efforts in the region. [NEINW](#) will continue to explore new funding engagements as opportunities arise.

3.12 Optional: Describe any collaboration with organizations or groups outside of your local area, interstate or intrastate, and what outcomes you plan to achieve as a result of the collaboration.

NEINW is currently developing a partnership with ASCEND Indiana to leverage its technological tools to both assist employers identifying talent and to also identify ways to incorporate their developed technology into WorkOne [Center](#) activities to better promote individuals already connected to the labor market in career pathways.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Please answer the following questions of Section 4 in 15 pages or less. Many of the responses below, such as career pathways and individual training accounts, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. **Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an *.**

4.1 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs (*Core programs include: Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Services, Title II Adult Education and Literacy, Title III Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation*), will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment and out of school youth. Include referral processes with one stop partners. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (3)]

Northeast Indiana Works has focused on ensuring access is available for all core programs. The WDB has and will continue to ensure that services are readily available in all 11 counties that make up the region. In addition to educating each community about the opportunities available within the WorkOne [Centers](#), Northeast Indiana Works has also worked to establish the provision of adult education services in the majority of WorkOne offices, allowing for direct connectivity, ensuring that out-of-school youth services are directly accessible within the WorkOne centers, and creating referral processes, often direct, for interested individuals. A partner matrix was developed by our OSO to outline services by partner and to designate points of contact for person-to-person hand-offs of individuals, as part of our regional referral process, which also includes:

- Quarterly partner meetings
- A Microsoft Teams database allowing for shared documents amongst all partners
- Partner directory and referral form
- Referral communication procedures

All individuals between the ages of 16 – 24 years old are referred to youth service providers for more age appropriate case management and development opportunities when applicable.

Additionally, Vocational Rehabilitation Services utilizes space within the existing WorkOne centers, better connecting individuals in need of vocational rehabilitation, Wagner-Peyser and WIOA services.

NEINW has also connected directly with entities like Easter Seals ARC of Northeast Indiana to directly engage their customer base in workforce development services while also presenting to the Indiana Association of Persons in Supported Employment (INAPSE) to ensure local vocational rehabilitation staff are familiar with the services available to their constituents through the WorkOne centers.

NEINW strives to ensure that youth and other eligible individuals with barriers have access. This has been accomplished through mobilizing youth staff to connect with individuals outside of the WorkOne centers. This ensures services are readily available in every county within the region, targeting marketing to areas and publications that may be frequented by individuals with additional barriers, and increasing our online and social media presence to better engage by using more popular and current mediums.

Partnership to provide virtual services is ongoing in the region. While there is virtual and telephonic services currently available for WP, Adult, DW and Youth customers, a more robust system remains in development. The COVID-19 pandemic is directly responsible for this innovation in the region, and the expedition of the effort. We have partnered with area libraries to deliver virtual workshops and plan to build on this capacity as we educate our regional community on the opportunities.

4.2 Describe how the local board will facilitate and develop career pathways and utilize co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate. <https://www.in.gov/gwc/2445.htm> [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (3)]

NEINW traditionally co-enrolls individuals in all programs in which they meet eligibility criteria. This integration allows for seamless transitions between programs for individuals seeking services, when appropriate.

Career pathway development continues to be a work in progress in EGR3. A pathway has been established for Precision Agriculture that was the result of work done by NEINW, Heartland Career Center, Ivy Tech Northeast, the Indiana Department of Agriculture and the Indiana Department of Education. The pathway is currently being piloted at the CTE site, Heartland Career Center, in Wabash, IN.

NEINW will continue to utilize the key elements of career pathway system, which are:

- Building cross-agency partnerships
- Engaging employers
- Identifying roles and responsibilities
- Program Design
- Funding
- Policy and Program Alignment

By using these steps, we believe that we will build a robust catalogue for career pathways for EGR3 residents.

4.3 A-E Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area as required by WIOA Sec. 121(e). See below subparts for specific areas that must be addressed. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (A-D)] (4.3 D is a collaborative answer for Regions 5 & 12).

A. Describe the local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted services providers and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (A)]

Staff of DWD, NEINW ~~and~~ Brightpoint ~~and SCAN Inc.~~ all provide services in EGR3. Brightpoint ~~and SCAN~~ provides youth services ~~for~~ in-school and out-of-school ~~youth, respectively~~. While performance expectations and goals are written into ~~each~~ contracts, quarterly meetings are also held to discuss program status, participant data and local labor market information relevant to participants' interests. NEINW and DWD staff are provided regular training and development opportunities in Thursday morning meetings, individual training sessions and during full-day training sessions. A variety of topics are covered, including updates on WIOA legislation, case management techniques, computer skills and labor market information directly from local employers. Office managers ~~for~~ NEINW also attend bi-weekly management meetings to review the local production report (which covers internal key performance indicators), hold ongoing discussions on collaboration, and identify opportunities for process improvement.

B. Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, through the use of technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (B)]

NEINW serves both urban and rural areas within a large geographical region. In addition to three comprehensive offices, there are eight affiliate offices (for a total of one office in each county), allowing for access to services for all individuals within their home county. NEINW also has the ability to mobilize staff when necessary by utilizing laptops and mobile scanners to directly connect with individuals if needed. Out-of-school youth staff also cover all counties within the region, recruiting and taking services to areas where youth gather, along with hosting development sessions at local community facilities. Virtual tools have also been implemented and will continue to be a focus of engagement efforts in the region.

C. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 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. [See WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (C), 29 CFR 38 and DWD Policy 2016-09]

All components of the EGR3 one-stop delivery system ensure equal access to facilities, programs, services and technology for people with disabilities and compliance with ADA mandates. Adaptive technology for hearing and vision-impaired individuals is available in every office, with additional

technology available in the Allen County and Grant County offices to support individuals with a total loss of sight as well as other physical ailments. Equipment is monitored by agencies that advocate for people with disabilities to ensure technology is current and staff are capable of providing assistance with utilizing the technology. Vocational Rehabilitation staff also periodically attend Thursday morning staff training sessions to provide current information to regional staff on methodologies of serving people with disabilities.

All offices are monitored annually for compliance.

D.* Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners agreed to per DWD Policy 2018-04 Memoranda of Understanding and Infrastructure/Additional Costs Funding Guidance. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (D)]

One-stop partners in EGR3 have signed MOU's which outline system services. Because there is a benefit to all partners, costs are shared per the state infrastructure agreement. For many partners, those costs are covered by in-kind support. For those partners that do have staff that are co-located in the WorkOne Center, costs are divided based on FTE basis within each WorkOne Center. The IFA is reviewed annually.

E. Describe how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology enabled intake and case management information system for core programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (21)]

Individuals can access services without entering a WorkOne Center. This became a necessity throughout calendar year 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Case management, workshops, career advising, multiple assessments and tools to share documents and provide electronic signatures are in place for those with the broadband connectivity and the resources to utilize the services.

4.4 An analysis and description of adult and dislocated worker workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and opportunities of such services, as well as the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the needs identified in 1.2. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (D) & 108 (b) (7)]

Adult and Dislocated Worker activities traditionally take place in the WorkOne center. NEINW and its partners not only have capacity to deliver these services but have done so while also consistently meeting federal common measure performance metrics.

Basic Career Services: WorkOne staff provide this level of service to any individual seeking assistance. Services can be delivered through the utilization of pre-prepared labor market information, self-directed development opportunities, skills and aptitude inventories and assessments, utilization of the resource area within each WorkOne center, and available workshops either delivered in group settings or individually with those interested. These services are always available during operational business hours. These services provide significant benefit to many individuals who utilize the WorkOne office. For many, access to timely and relevant labor market information is a significant boost in re-entering the

workforce. The utilization of Indiana Career Connect is a great example of allowing an individual to be served at the basic level, while also equipping them with many tools, ranging from assessments to direct job posting applications, to becoming employed. Basic Career Services also allow for immediate engagement into activity within the WorkOne center and system. This is a significant benefit, as individuals seeking services are more likely to remain engaged or transition to the next tier of service when they feel they are being provided immediate assistance. The weakness of Basic Career Services is that the offerings could be considered limited compared to what is available at the next tier, as well as some services can be accessed independently of expressing needs to staff in the WorkOne center. This can sometimes limit the ability to further engage an individual to sell them on the availability and benefit of additional services.

Individualized Career Services: Individualized Career Services is the second tier of service available to individuals seeking assistance through the WorkOne center. All WorkOne services are employer-driven, but these services are more tailored to individual needs or “client-centric.” Individualized Career Services are delivered after enrollment into WIOA Adult and/or Dislocated Worker programming, and often begin with the development of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), which is a working document that is jointly developed by the staff member and participant. The IEP will document assessment results that are presented to the participant as a component of their individualized services, identify transferrable skills that have been developed over time, and create a plan that could include training support to ultimately assist the participant with entering into the workforce. In EGR3, Individualized Career Services often allow staff to work one-on-one with a person, providing personal assistance with their workforce preparation activities, which include resume development and critique, employer research, interview preparation, job search assistance, and counseling. This tier of service is critical because it is often the tier most utilized by those most in need. An individual with significant barriers is often in greater need of service than what is available at the Basic Career Services level, so Individualized Career Services are a more applicable alternative. Because Individualized Career Services allow a WorkOne staff member to directly work with a participant, ~~it~~ also allows for that staff person to assist in either guiding the participant through or helping them develop a career pathway within their specific field. This is a significant strength of this tier, as participants often only understand entry-level positions without being able to identify an end goal in their career. The largest weakness in this tier is the inability to address the needs and barriers of all participants. Many participants’ barriers are outside the scope of what can be mitigated through services offered within the WorkOne center.

Training Services: Training Services involve the expenditure of funds on a participant to assist them in acquiring skills that will make them more employable. This tier of service is only available to participants who have already received an Individualized Career Service. Training Services include but are not limited to work experiences (including OJTs and paid internships), prevocational training, and tuition assistance for both short-term certifications and traditional two- and four-year schooling. Staff continue to work directly with participants in this tier, providing ongoing guidance and counseling, as well as labor market information and job leads within their field of training. This is significant because the participant is often so engulfed in training that they are unable to continually conduct a strong job search to assist with their employment upon completion of training. The greatest weakness of the training tier is the availability of training. For work experiences, the challenge is identifying employers who are willing to take a risk and hire someone, knowing that person still has a significant learning curve. With short-term training and traditional schooling, the weakness revolves around a limited number of training partners and programs

to assist participants with engaging in training. For this ~~very~~ reason, NEINW often works directly with training providers and employers to create training programs and tailor curriculums.

Follow-Up Services: Once a participant has completed training, utilized additional services to engage in employment and are no longer in need of individualized services, they are exited and move into the follow-up tier. While in follow-up, WorkOne staff continue to work with them – at a minimum quarterly – to ensure they are continuing to hold employment. WorkOne staff are often in contact with exited participants in follow-up much more than quarterly, as we have identified that most people quit their jobs or are fired within the first couple of weeks of employment. Significant staff contact is the greatest strength of the follow-up tier, along with strong relationships with the customers. This is vital to the success of the follow-up tier, which is also a weakness. Because performance measure outcomes are determined during the follow-up period, it makes it critical for communication to continuously happen between the exited participant and WorkOne staff. Many participants do not continue to keep contact once they obtain employment, making it difficult to discern the participant’s needs, as well as internally identify performance measure attainment.

4.5 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities, as described in section 134 (a) (2) (A). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (8)].

Rapid Response services are led by the NEINW business services team. The team director serves as the singular point of contact for economic development organizations in the region and also manages responses to WARN notices. Employers are immediately contacted when a WARN is filed to coordinate Rapid Response sessions. Frankly, because of our direct engagement with regional employers, these plans are often underway prior to a WARN being filed. Regional Rapid Response sessions often include:

- A Rapid Response orientation
- A TAA orientation
- An overview of UI services
- An overview of WorkOne services
- Workshops covering resume development, cover letters and skill identification
- On-site hiring events

4.6 An analysis and description of the type and availability of youth workforce activities for in school youth, including youth with disabilities. If the same services are offered to out-of-school youth, describe how the programs are modified to fit the unique needs of in-school youth. For each program, include the following: length of program and availability/schedule (i.e. 2 weeks in July); % of youth budget allocation; WIOA program elements addressed by the program, with specific focus on how the 5 new elements have been incorporated; desired outputs and outcomes; and details on how the program is evaluated. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the needs identified in 1.2. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (9)]

The EGR3 in-school youth program is the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program. It is the only in-school youth program funded in the region and accounts for 46% of the annual WIOA Youth allocation. The EGR3 program is also currently supported with funds identified by the state of Indiana and DWD to support the size of the EGR3 program. There are 14 active programs in the region, all of which follow their respective school calendars, with activities internally developed by the in-school youth service provider during summer months and additional times when school is not in session. JAG in EGR3 is a class taken at each school for credit. The JAG program addresses all 14 of the WIOA program elements with the exception of "alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services." JAG serves young people with barriers to success. The more barriers to success that a young person might have, the more he or she is considered at risk of graduating from high school or having a successful transition from school to an entry-level job that leads to a career. Targeted youth are those most at risk of leaving high school before graduating, unable to complete requirements for a high school diploma, or unable to experience a smooth transition from school to a career (with or without postsecondary education). JAG is not for everyone; it is for students who possess significant barriers to academic (high school diploma or Indiana High School Equivalency Diploma (HSE)) and career success (securing an entry-level job leading to a career).

JAG specialists recruit and interview students interested in the program. Once in the program, participants are assessed, taught leadership and employability skills, exposed to various careers and career pathways through field trips and guest speakers, and engaged in team-building activities and civic engagement through the internal JAG Career Association, which is structured like the larger student government body but specific to JAG participants. A standard of model services is used to develop in-school participants to work toward WIOA common measure performances as JAG national goals, which are:

- 90% Graduation rate
- 80% Positive Outcome rate
- 60% Employment rate
- 60% Employed in Full-Time Job rate
- 80% in Full-Time Placement rate

In addition to providing services to achieve these performance measures and goals:

- JAG participants must receive a minimum of 120 contact hours;
- For all sites, 20% of JAG classroom activities per school year must include guest speakers and/or field trips with area businesses;
- All JAG participants must register with and submit a resume in IndianaCareerConnect.com;
- For all sites, 10% of JAG classroom time must be spent on community service monthly;
- 85% of seniors will have a PINpin and complete the online FAFSA by March 1 annually;
- 85% of seniors will have completed two postsecondary applications by May annually;
- 85% of seniors will have taken the ACT, SAT or other post-secondary/certification assessment by May annually;
- 100% of JAG sites will participate in a college fair by May annually; and
- 100% of JAG sites will have visited a college campus by May annually.

All of the new elements are embedded in the JAG program. Financial literacy is done through budgeting exercises and partnership with local banks. The in-school youth service provider also incentivizes students by matching up to \$100 in a new bank account. Entrepreneurial skills training and labor market information are addressed by guest speakers, trips to the WorkOne centers when possible, and in some cases the student's high school curriculum. One current JAG site is a CTE location that not only equips students with industry-recognized short-term credentials, it also provides them with insight from and connectivity to small business owners who can provide firsthand accounts of what is required to be a successful entrepreneur in northeast Indiana. This also happens with guest speakers at the other 13 JAG site (one site hosts two programs). The last new program element, "activities that help youth prepare and transition to postsecondary education and training," is embedded throughout the standard JAG curriculum and model service categories. The JAG program is a significant school-to-work program in northeast Indiana. It addresses needs for the future workforce participants, many of whom are facing barriers and unsure of their next step after high school. Weaknesses of the JAG program are that it is limited with respect to regional geographic coverage and there is only capacity to run programs for existing juniors and seniors in high school.

4.7 Identify how successful the above programs have been and any other best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (9)]

The local WIOA out-of-school youth program is the Be SomeOne Now (BSON) program. This program specifically focuses on high school dropouts. EGR3 determined that high school dropouts were the category of youth most in need several years ago and began focusing programming on this demographic. Currently, 54% of the WIOA Youth allocation will fund ongoing BSON activities annually. The BSON program operates on a 12-month cycle and focuses on re-engaging eligible out-of-school youth in adult education environments while providing additional developmental services specific to:

- Identifying their motivation
- Coping with change
- Professional etiquette
- Developing their 30-second story
- Decision making/Entrepreneurial mentality
- Networking/Group dynamic
- Interviewing
- How to keep a job
- Financial literacy

Opportunities for work experiences are also an integral component of the out-of-school youth program, typically implemented through paid internships and on-the-job trainings.

Many out-of-school youths have undocumented disabilities. Another integral component of the program is identifying these potential barriers through a battery of assessments — including the Test for Adult ~~Adult~~ Basic Education (TABE); Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS); GRIT inventory; the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI); and the Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey (ACES) — and creating a

plan to remove identified barriers through programming or partnership with local partners. This population is strongly encouraged to pursue short-term postsecondary training as well to better equip themselves to be employable upon completion of the program.

The desired outputs and outcomes of this program are to meet the WIOA Common Measure Performance Standards for out-of-school youth while also empowering and instilling confidence in the youth participants. The program has a strong emphasis on identifying barriers and mitigating them. The major weakness is similar to that of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers in that once the participants complete the program and find job placement, they rarely stay in contact, which can impact performance documentation.

4.8 Describe process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. Include a description of the process and criteria used for issuing individual training accounts. If training contracts are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (19)]

NEINW utilizes a DWD Labor Market Analyst to create an annual regional “hot jobs” or in-demand occupation list, utilizing the same criteria used for the state “hot jobs” listing. In addition to this listing, eight employment sectors that project high growth and high wages within the region have been identified. Those sectors are:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- ~~Healthcare-Care~~
- Information Technology
- Transportation/Logistics
- Finance (including Insurance)
- Wholesale Trade
- Construction/Building Trades
- Agriculture

NEINW will ensure that only training services leading to certifications and careers within either the regional hot jobs or that can be tied to the identified employment sectors are financially supported. NEINW works directly with employers and training providers to vet training curriculum, tailoring curriculum to the needs of local employers when possible. Northeast Indiana Works will continue to work with area employers to create local sector alliances, allowing for collective feedback and ongoing evaluation or regional programming.

All supported training is listed on INTraining, the DWD eligible training provider list. When a participant is interested in training services, they are advised of the options available on INTraining and encouraged to find a provider that best fits their interests and circumstances. All payments to partnering providers are done through individual training accounts (ITAs) and paid via invoice from the provider, with the printed voucher from the DWD MIS acting as the payment commitment on Northeast Indiana Works’ behalf.

4.9 Describe how Jobs for Hoosiers and RESEA activities are coordinated and carried out in the local area and how these activities will be incorporated into WIOA programming.

Reemployment Eligibility & Assessment (RESEA) and Jobs for Hoosiers (JFH) programs (described below) engage with unemployed Hoosiers at the fourth week of their claim and include: UI eligibility review, claimant-centered labor market information, referral to a self-directed job search, and an orientation to the full range of WorkOne services. Each program requires the participants register on ICC and take self-assessments to help determine if the customer is on a career path that will lead to a high-wage, high-demand occupation.

RESEA participants will receive all of the mandatory RESEA program requirements and complete an Individual Reemployment Plan (IRP), which will assist them in their job search needs. Part of this plan is to determine which workshop would benefit the customer the most to attend in the next four weeks. Each participant must attend at least one workshop, but many customers would benefit from multiple workshops. Staff will discuss the benefits of these workshops with the customer, with the goal that the customer will attend workshops that will build their skills to make them more appealing to employers. Customers will receive individualized counseling, including labor market information that will show the customer the labor market trends in their career field in our region. The customer will come in two weeks after the orientation to meet with a staff member to review how the customer's job search activities are going. This is a great opportunity for staff to speak to the customer again about the career pathway that the customer is on and if the customer has all the skills necessary to attain employment in their desired field or if the customer has considered training options to help build their skills. There are many training options for customers, such as OJTs, short-term training, and completing a degree. Many of them may be funded by WIOA. If the customer is interested in more in-depth career services or training services, they will be enrolled into WIOA services for more individualized assistance. The participants will be required to submit work search and activity logs for four weeks after orientation. If the participants file for a 15th week of UI, they will be brought back into the office to be re-engaged to review their job search activities and current skills.

JFH is a fast-track program that provides information on the vast re-employment services available through the WorkOne centers statewide. These participants will come in for a one-time orientation and receive information about the labor market and job searching assistance.

We plan to continue providing an overview of the full range of WorkOne services to all participants of these programs to encourage them to use our services to build their skills and assist them in attaining a job that is high-paying and in demand. We recommend all JFH participants attend workshops and access our basic and individualized services.

4.10 Describe strategies to engage workers and employers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and how services will be provided.

Workers and employers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic have been served both by all of traditional means as well as virtually. NEINW has varied between direct in-person and virtual and/or telephonic services throughout the 2020 calendar year. Many meetings are held via the Zoom platform while some are still being held in person, as many of the business and individuals that we serve were deemed essential. A stringent and OSHA compliant safety protocol was developed and implemented, and continues to be followed. Workshops ~~were~~ ~~have~~ ~~are~~ ~~being~~ done virtually and NEINW ~~has~~ created training pods for staff, individuals and employers to assist their efforts.

Next Level Jobs funds were utilized in the region to train workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, work experiences were created and ~~funds~~ training funds were utilized to support impacted individuals and train existing workers on new technologies and process to assist in keeping them employed during the pandemic.

Section 5: Compliance

Please answer the following questions of Section 5 in 12 pages or less. Most of the response should be staff driven responses as each are focused on the organization's compliance with federal or state requirements. **Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an ***.

5.1 Describe any competitive process planned to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under WIOA Title I. State the names of current contracted organizations and the duration of each contract for adult, dislocated worker and youth services. Attach contracts as Exhibit 1. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (16)]

NEINW does not contract out adult and dislocated services. In EGR3, career and individualized services are provided for by NEINW staff. Staff are cross-trained with DWD staff, ensuring that customers are served in the most efficient and well-rounded manner as possible.

NEINW issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) for entities to provide ~~Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act~~ (WIOA) Title I Youth Services (both for WIOA In-School and WIOA Out-of-School participants) to help youth with barriers be successful academically, and access job training and post-secondary level opportunities to gain knowledge and the skills required to enter into high-wage career pathways. These services are to be made available to youth residing in the counties of LaGrange, Steuben, Noble, DeKalb, Whitley, Allen, Wabash, Huntington, Wells, Adams and Grant. The intent is for proposing organizations to demonstrate innovative programming that would provide services to youth between the ages of 16 and 24 that fit all eligibility criteria as defined by the WIOA, incorporating the required 14 program elements listed within the act.

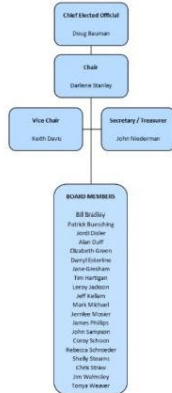
The youth RFP was issued in spring 20~~22~~~~19~~ for services beginning July 1, 20~~22~~~~19~~ for PY20~~22~~~~19~~-23~~20~~. The RFP was sent to organizations on the NEINW's bidders list, as well as being posted on NEINW's website and DWD's website. Proposals were reviewed and scored by a committee. The final decision on who would be awarded a contract was determined by members of the NEINW board at the June 20~~22~~~~19~~ board meeting.

Northeast Indiana Works currently contracts with Brightpoint to provide in-school youth JAG services at 13 high schools throughout northeast Indiana. NEINW also contracts with ~~Stop Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN)~~ Brightpoint to provide services to out-of-school youth residing in all 11 northeast Indiana counties. ~~They are contract is a~~ are 2-year contracts with a renewable third-year option.

5.2 Provide an organization chart as Exhibit 2 that depicts a clear separation of duties between the board and service provision.

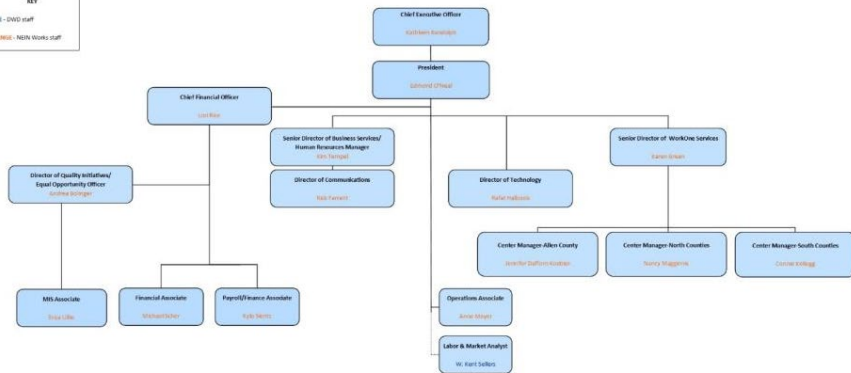
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Northeast Indiana Works Board of Directors



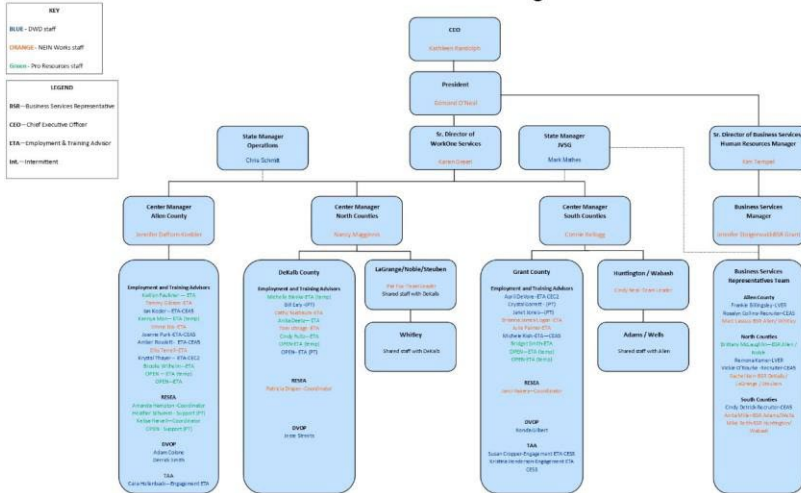
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Northeast Indiana Works Administrative Staff Organizational Chart



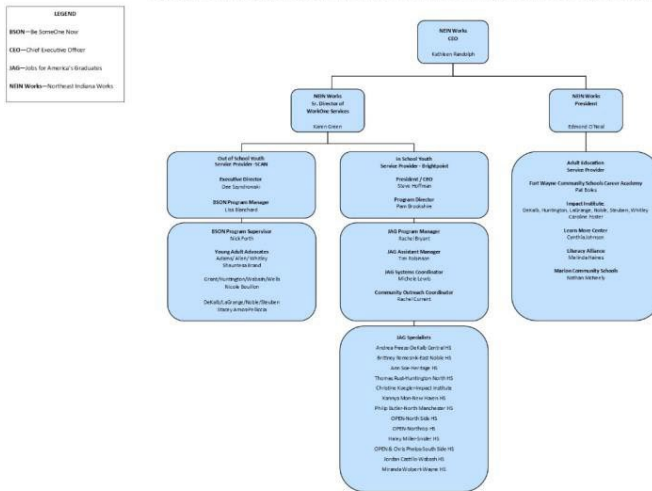
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Northeast Indiana Works Staff Organizational Chart



12.15.2020

Northeast Indiana Works Service Providers Organizational Chart



12.15.2020

5.3 Describe any standing committees or taskforces of your Local Board, including the role and scope of work of your youth committee (or youth representatives on the WDB if you do not have a committee).

Northeast Indiana Works as the WDB has one standing committee: Executive Committee. The Executive Committee performs all traditional board governance executive committee functions.

5.4 Provide the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for WIOA within the local area.

~~Andrea Bolinger~~Erica Lillie
 Northeast Indiana Works
 P: 260.469.4319318.2349
 E: ~~ABolinger@NEINWorks.org~~ELillie@neinworks.org

5.5 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds as described in WIOA Sec. 107 (d) (12) (B) (i) (III). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (15)]

Northeast Indiana Works

5.6 Indicate the negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (17)]

See attachment NEINW negotiated performance measures are outlined below.

REG 03	Local Negotiated Levels of Performance					
	PY22 and PY23					
	Adult		Dislocated Worker		Youth	
	PY22	PY23	PY22	PY23	PY22	PY23
Employment 2Q	81.30%	81.30%	79.85%	79.85%	75.00%	75.00%
Employment 4Q	80.05%	80.05%	79.90%	79.90%	83.10%	83.10%
Median Earnings	\$7,405.50	\$7,405.50	\$7,910.50	\$7,910.50	\$3,610.00	\$3,610.00
Credential Rate	70.00%	70.00%	64.00%	68.10%	77.30%	77.30%
MSG	60.00%	61.00%	60.00%	63.00%	65.00%	65.00%

5.7 Provide a description of the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Department of Human Services' Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (14)]

See attachment

5.8 Describe the process for getting input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d) and providing public comment opportunity prior to submission. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plans. If any comments received that represent disagreement with the plan were received, please include those comments in Exhibit 3 attached to this Local Plan. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (20)]

NEINW believes that feedback is a critical component to the development of its local workforce plan. NEINW has published its local workforce plan on its website. NEINW also notified local elected officials, post-secondary educators, economic development leaders, adult education providers, and other workforce development partners, about the plan, encouraging all to provide plan feedback. Feedback will be submitted through a special Northeast Indiana Works email address: neinworks@neinworks.org.

NEINW did not receive any written comment on the local plan as of the conclusion of the feedback period.

5.9 Describe the board's process, frequency and schedule for monitoring adult, dislocated worker and youth services, including who conducts monitoring visits for your agency, training these staff receive on monitoring or site evaluation, and a listing of all upcoming planned or scheduled monitoring visits, all forms used during the review process and in Exhibit 4 attached to this Local Plan. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (22)]

NEINW's fiscal team conducts on-site monitoring of all contractors annually and performs monthly desktop monitoring. The Northeast Indiana Works Youth Director conducts annual JAG site visits and intermittently monitors program activity for BSON activities. A Northeast Indiana Works MIS Specialist conducts weekly reviews of new WIOA enrollments and performs quarterly WIOA Youth file reviews.

Regional monitoring was recently completed and is currently in process for youth services providers for the current program year. Monitoring for the regional One-Stop Operator is scheduled for April 202~~3~~⁴ and is planned to be implemented in the spring of each program year.

Monitoring staff have attended trainings hosted by WIPFLI and the U.S. Department of Labor, specific to monitoring, OMB training and grant management. Monitoring forms for the Adult and Dislocated Worker populations are the same.

5.10 Describe your professional development plan for all youth staff, including the frequency, type (in-person, self-guided, web-based, etc.), and topics addressed.

NEINW meets with all youth providers quarterly, allowing opportunities to discuss professional development needs on a real-time basis. NEINW has created and provided training guides to youth providers, conducts file reviews on a quarterly basis and in-person trainings intermittently throughout the program year. NEINW will provide annual training and management information system updates, WIOA guidance and interpretation. Training topics include but are not limited to:

- New hire onboarding
- LinkedIn training
- ICC topics – as needed based on ICC functionality
- MIS and data validation
- Youth provider program information
- Tornado drill/emergency plan review/~~f~~ire drill
- WIOA and Indiana State Performance
- Cultural awareness
- MSFW
- Internet safety and SPAM
- Assistive technology
- Inclusive language/bias pods
- EEO and non-discrimination
- Usage of multiple assessment tools
- Available services from partner community organizations

Youth service providers have monthly and quarterly training sessions to address the topics listed above as well as any unaddressed needs as they arise. [The m](#)Majority of these sessions are done in -person or via an electronic person.

5.11 Provide a list of all local policies. Copies of documents are not required at this time but may be requested later.

See attachment on the next page:

DWD Memo 2020-05
Attachment B - Program Participants for PY20

In addition to policies and interim guidance memos published by DWD, Northeast Indiana Works adheres to the following local policies:

- *Access to Public Records*
- *Assessment and IEP*
- *Case Notes*
- *Conflict of Interest*
- *Computer and Information Security*
- *Dress Code*
- *Grievance Procedures*
- *Inclement Weather*
- *Monitoring*
- *Nondiscrimination*
- *Work-Based Learning and On-the-Job Training*
- *Participant Drug Screen (*NEINW will not require drug screening for training activities unless required by the sector, employer and/or training partner)*
- *Participant Payment*
- *Procurement*
- *Record Retention*
- *Risk Assessment*
- *Severance*
- *Smoke & Tobacco Free*
- *Weapons*
- *Workshops*
- *Youth Eligibility*
- *Youth Incentives*

	Program Participants	Program Funding (WIOA)	Additional Funding (State)	Additional Funding (Federal)	Total Budget	Budget per Participant	Explanation (Optional)
WIOA Adult							
Dislocated Worker							
Youth (In School)							
Youth (Out of School)							
ABE							
WorkINDiana							
Wagner-Peyser							
Veterans (Overall)							

Each program should reflect all participants enrolled, regardless if they are co-enrolled in another program. Explanations of projections are encouraged.