



Regional Plan
West Region
Green River and West
Kentucky
Local Workforce
Development Boards
2021-2025

Developing Kentucky's
World Class Talent Pipeline

>
Kentucky Career
Center

WIOA Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan Guidance

July 1, 2021-June 30, 2025

Purpose.

The purpose of this Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan Guidance is to provide instructions to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB's) regarding the development and submission of Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive plans for program years FY 2022 through FY 2025 in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) four-year planning requirements.

A. Commonwealth of Kentucky Workforce Vision and Goals

The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB), in partnership with the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, and numerous partner cabinets, agencies and outside organizations, engaged in an aggressive effort to implement the strategic initiatives outlined in the KWIB Strategic Plan implemented 2018. This plan has served as a blueprint for transforming Kentucky's workforce services, and focused on adapting to the changing needs of employers. The Beshear Administration welcomes the opportunity for continued alignment of Kentucky's education and workforce systems with the goal of establishing dynamic, employer-led workforce development in Kentucky.

The Administration's vision includes:

- Establishing employer collaborative efforts arranged by both region and industry. These groups will examine current and future needs for skills and training, and identify effective talent development systems. The employers will provide information in real time to the workforce system in order to help align resources effectively and efficiently.
- Ensuring career development is an integrated element of government services. To build the foundation for increasing the labor force participation and growing Kentucky's economy. Over the next four years, the Administration will work with the KWIB on a new strategic plan and setting clearly defined goals. These goals will inform subsequent modifications of the State Plan, and achieve the continuing transformation of Kentucky's workforce system through innovative practices. This will enhance sustainable economic and job growth to improve the lives of Kentuckians.

The Department of Workforce Investment (DWI) Goals:

1. Career Pathways and Sector Strategies – Collaborate with business and industry to define career pathways for critical state and regional sectors.
2. Work-Based Learning Infrastructure – Create a state-level framework to facilitate employer engagement in work-based learning, which can ensure consistency in definitions used across the education and training continuum partners regarding definition.
3. Workforce Services Infrastructure Realignment – Continue to evaluate and realign services and support structures to expand on efforts to build a truly customer-centric model at the local level.
4. Data and Performance/Informed Decision Making – Ensure the collection of the right data to inform policy and practice among the partners to create an efficient and effective talent pipeline.

B. Local Comprehensive Plans.

Local Plans serve as four-year action plans to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and to support the State's vision and strategic and operational goals.

The Local Comprehensive Plan sets forth the strategy to:

- Direct investments in economic, education, and workforce training programs to focus on providing relevant education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers;
- Apply job-driven strategies in the one-stop delivery system;
- Enable economic, education, and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training, and education programs; and
- Incorporate the Local Comprehensive Plan in to the Regional Innovation Plan per 20 C.F.R. § 679.540.

Section 108(a) of the WIOA, 20 C.F.R. § 679.00 *et seq* requires local boards in partnership with the appropriate chief elected officials to develop and submit a comprehensive four-year Local Comprehensive Plan to the Governor. It must identify and describe the policies, procedures, and local activities carried out locally that are consistent with the State Plan.

Local Plans, pursuant to WIOA, must align with the State's vision as set forth in the Combined State Plan FY 2022-2025. The Local Plan must also address certain specific provisions as set forth in Section 108 of WIOA. The State provides this guidance to the LWDBs in the formulation of its Local Plans. At minimum, Local Plans must include the provisions in this guidance.

Given the limitations of the pandemic and the restrictions on meeting in large groups set by Governor Andy Beshear, any public meetings should follow CDC and state guidance. We strongly encourage virtual meeting and public notice.

C. Regional Innovation Plan.

Each LWDB and its respective Chief Local Elected Official(s) (CLEOs) must collaborate with the other LWDBs and CLEOs within a respective planning region to also prepare and submit a 4-Year Regional Innovation Plan that is consistent with their Local Plan content and timeframe. The Regional plan should identify opportunities for regional collaboration and innovation, and incorporate priorities and opportunities identified within the Local Plan, guidance from final WIOA regulations and feedback to Kentucky on its WIOA State Plan. Regional Innovation Plans **must be submitted** to the Kentucky Department of Workforce Investment **by April 30, 2021** for their review and feedback before the implementation date of July 1, 2021 (FY 2022).

KY's Regional and Local Workforce Areas:

North Region=Bluegrass LWDA and Northern KY LWDA

East Region=TENCO LWDA and EKCEP LWDA

South Region=Cumberlands LWDA and South Central LWDA

West Region=Green River LWDA and West KY LWDA

Central Region=Kentuckianaworks LWDA and Lincoln Trail LWDA

D. Relationship of Regional Innovation Plan and Local Comprehensive Plan

The regional component of the plan should outline how the region has collected and analyzed regional labor market information and must incorporate the Local Comprehensive Plans for each of the local areas within the planning region consistent with the requirements of the WIOA Rules, 20 C.F.R. Section §679.540(a).

E. Plan Completion, Submission and Approval.

1. **Completion.** All Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) in Kentucky must submit a plan that includes both the regional and local planning components outlined in this guidance. The questions in the guidance must be addressed in the plans in the order in which they are outlined in the guidance. Planning teams may include content beyond these questions.
2. **Submission.** The FY 2022-2025 Regional and Local Plans must be submitted in PDF format electronically to DarleneK.Bussell@ky.gov on or before **April 30, 2021 for initial review by DWI. Any deficiencies identified must be remedied by June 30, 2021.**

Note: The FY 2022–2025 Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan must be sent by a designated single point of contact. If sending Plans by email the subject line should read “(Area name) FY 2022-2025 Regional and Local Plan”.

3. **Approval.** The 4-Year Regional and Local plan submitted will be approved by written correspondence from DWI within the initial 90-day review period. Plans not approved within the initial 90 days can be found deficient for the following reasons:
 - There are deficiencies identified through audits in Workforce Investment activities that the local area has not made acceptable progress.
 - The plan does not comply with WIOA regulations inclusive of the regulations, public comment provisions and nondiscrimination requirements of 29 CFR part 38.
 - The plan does not align with the Kentucky Combined State plan in keeping with the alignment of the core programs in support of the identified state plan strategiesThis is not an exhaustive list of examples

If the plan was found deficient, DWI would issue written confirmation of the specific deficiencies found.

F. Modification Process.

Modifications to the Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan under Final Rules Section 20 C.F.R. §679.530 and §679.580, each LWDB, in partnership with the Chief Elected Officials, must review the Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan **every two years** and submit a modification as needed using the same methods listed above in G-2.

The 2-Year modified plans should be considered by the local area **automatically approved** after 90 days of receipt if there is no correspondence from DWI within the 90-day review period.

Conditions which require a modification to the Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan include:

- 1) Changes in labor market and regional and/or local economic conditions; and
- 2) Other factors affecting the implementation of the plan, including but not limited to; the financing available to support the WIOA Title I and partner-provided WIOA services, LWDB structure, and/or the need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals.

G. Public Comment

The LWDB must make copies of all Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plans, and any subsequent modifications to such plans, subject to no more than a 14-day public review and comment period before submission to the Governor.

Plans should be:

1. Made available to the public through electronic and other means such as public hearings and local news media. This should include an opportunity for public comment of 14 days by members of the public inclusive of representatives of business, labor organizations and education.
2. Any comments that express disagreement with the plan must be submitted to the Governor along with the plan.
3. Information about the plan should be available to the public on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings.

H. Plan Organization

This planning guidance is organized into the following chapters and is designed to address both the regional and local planning requirements of WIOA in one planning document.

- Economic and Workforce Analysis
- Strategic Vision and Goals
- Alignment of Local and Regional Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies
- Program Design and Evaluation
- Compliance/ Performance/Administrative Cost
- Additional Elements

Questions to be addressed in each chapter are identified as Regional (R) or Local (L). Answers to regional questions require the collaboration of LWDB's, CLEO's, and partners within the region to provide a unified regional response. Answers to local questions require a local response.

LWDB name: West Kentucky Workforce Development Board

Regional name: West

Chapter 1: Economic and Workforce Analysis

- A. **(R)** A description of the planning process undertaken to produce the regional plan, including a description of how all local areas were afforded the opportunity to participate in the regional planning process.

The Green River Workforce Development Board (WDB) and the West Kentucky Workforce Board in partnership with the local elected officials and staff to the Boards met, shared data and discussed the regional plan. All local and regional planning efforts were included in the data to obtain a comprehensive view of regional opportunities and challenges. A project timeline is below.

Each board conducted a review separately, and discussions and collaborative meetings occurred amongst local area Boards and staff regarding the joint planning. A regional planning meeting was held with partner agency staff, workforce board members, area employers, chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, economic development entities and institutions of higher education attending. The plan was also brought before the Green River Governing Board and Pennyryle Area Development District, where there was a collective meeting of local officials. The Green River WDB Local Plan and West Kentucky Workforce Board Local Plans were made available for public comment on each local area’s website for 30 days at www.gradd.com and www.wkworkforce.work respectively, and then submitted to the Department of Workforce Investment for consideration by April 30, 2021. After the public comment period, any comments received will be forwarded to the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet for inclusion into the regional plan. **Figure 1**

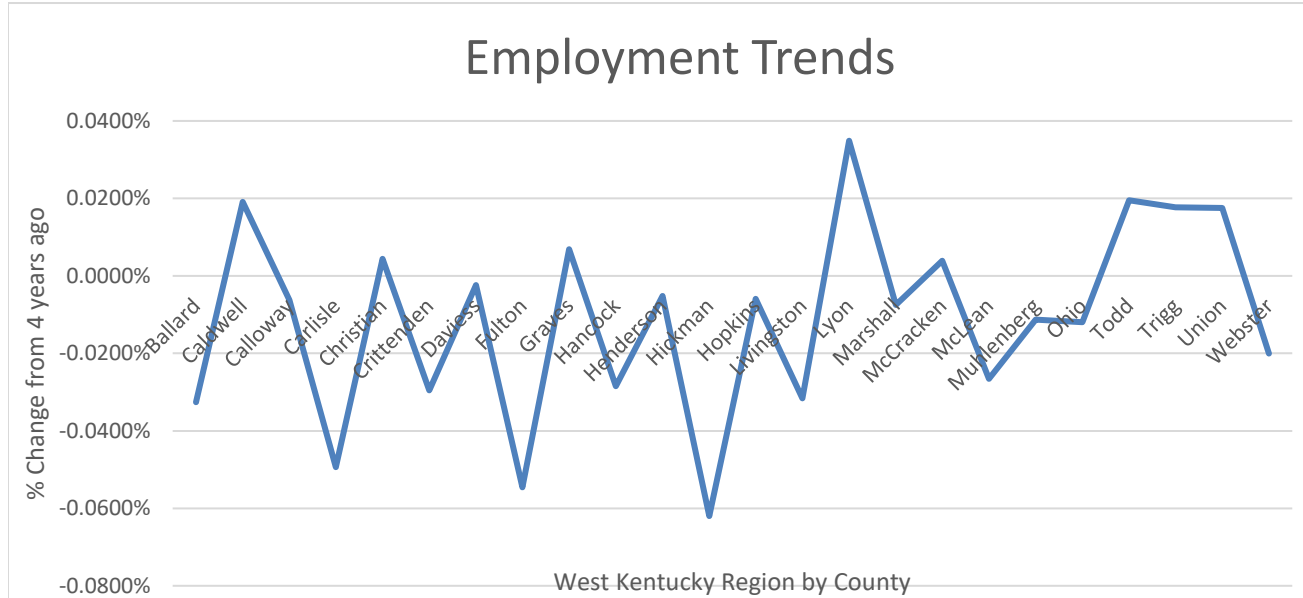
FIGURE 1.

WEST REGION		
PROJECT TIMELINE FOR REGIONAL PLAN		
ACTIVITY	DATE	NOTES
Staff Discussions	03/24/2021	Joint Discussions/Planning
Staff Discussions	03/25/2021	Joint Discussions/Planning
Staff Discussions	04/01/2021	Joint Discussions/Planning
Staff Discussions	04/06/2021	Joint Discussions/Planning
Full WKY Planning Session	04/08/2021	Joint planning with Board and Workforce Partners. Via Zoom at 1:30 p.m. CDT
Staff Discussions	4/13/2021	Joint Discussions/Planning
Staff Discussions to finalize draft	4/19/2021	Review for updates
Regional Plan Draft Release	No later than April 30, 2021	

- B. (R) Provide a regional 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)] and [20 C.F.R. § 679.560(a)]

Industry Snapshot

FIGURE 2.



Source: KY Stats

Occupational Sectors

Wage rates remain an issue regarding the recruitment and retention of labor in the region. However, pay scales are critical to filling and retaining skilled positions in the region, such as chemical engineers, physicians, and nurses and back-filling entry-level positions. Feedback from local employers in a wide range of sectors also point to soft skills and employability concerns (e.g., ability to pass screening requirements) as a significant barrier to hiring needs. Continuing to build partnerships between local workforce boards, employers, educators, and economic development professionals will be critical to increasing the availability of pre-employment training for new entrants to the labor market and increased skills training for incumbent workers. Other specific needs identified by area stakeholders include increasing access to labor market information early in the education pipeline, improving basic communication and math skills, and providing a clear understanding of employer expectations with regard to the workplace essential skills (e.g., professionalism, attendance) that employers seek.

The West Region has identified sectors in our regional planning efforts. Several sectors are shared in both the Green River and West Kentucky as indicated below. **Figure 3**

FIGURE 3. SECTORS IDENTIFIED IN REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS		
	Green West Kentucky River	Green River
Advanced Manufacturing	✓	✓
Agriculture and Food	✓	
Cultural Industries	✓	
Construction		✓

Healthcare	✓	✓
Business and Information Technology		✓
Transportation and Logistics	✓	✓

Source: Green River Workforce Development Board & West Kentucky Workforce Board

In reviewing the industry and wage data for 2020 across the West KY region, Government, Healthcare/Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade industries were the largest sources of employment. This data has been consistent in years past, however the Accommodation/Food Services industry saw an increase of employment in 2020, due to the need and availability created by the COVID-19 pandemic. These particular industries were also the powerhouses of employment opportunities across the state. In contrast, employment opportunities in Government were strongest in West Kentucky, while the Manufacturing industry reigned supreme in the Green River area. Transportation and Admin Support/Waste Management industries also ramped up their employment during the COVID-19 pandemic, as recently laid off workers found themselves in need of stable employment with self-sufficient wages.

The annual wages for the industries mentioned above are fairly consistent across the region. The Manufacturing industry has the highest annual wage overall, between \$54,000-\$59,000. Healthcare/Social Assistance and Government jobs are not far behind. While Accommodation/Food Services jobs seem to be on the rise, their annual wages remain low, at \$15,000 for the region. Utility, Mining, and Company Management industries show the highest annual wages overall in the West Ky region, however their employment numbers across the board are startlingly low. This is especially true for the Mining industry, whose presence and contribution to the regional workforce was so abundant years ago in the area. Recent dislocations and closures of area mines are keenly felt across the region.

Workforce Overview Report for Kentucky Regions

Industry	Employment by Industry			Annual Wages by Industry		
	Kentucky	Green River	West Kentucky	Kentucky	Green River	West Kentucky
All Industries	1,639,754	75,103	135,287	\$48,567	\$43,911	\$43,159
Accommodation and Food Services	120,042	5,132	11,588	\$17,900	\$15,758	\$15,060
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	95,261	3,756	5,600	\$34,320	\$28,786	\$35,128
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8,514	854	1,256	\$41,427	\$38,775	\$37,582
All Government	282,782	11,295	27,294	\$48,671	\$40,651	\$43,436
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	13,258	419	732	\$26,304	\$16,099	\$16,941
Construction	74,100	3,427	7,020	\$56,538	\$50,821	\$54,131
Educational Services	10,318	399	500	\$36,085	\$31,685	\$46,407
Finance and Insurance	69,269	3,677	3,713	\$80,196	\$58,729	\$55,276
Health Care and Social Assistance	229,821	12,403	18,304	\$50,718	\$46,803	\$50,344
Information	18,179	392	1,195	\$62,084	\$42,492	\$55,504
Management of Companies and Enterprises	17,945	145	385	\$108,059	\$73,190	\$74,788
Manufacturing	210,409	15,132	17,959	\$61,331	\$59,373	\$54,730
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	4,460	138	493	\$64,866	\$66,968	\$73,233
Other Services (except Public Administration)	35,450	1,712	2,993	\$36,064	\$35,016	\$37,329
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	72,757	1,648	5,065	\$67,510	\$49,750	\$62,920
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	17,874	604	1,064	\$45,832	\$34,255	\$35,263
Retail Trade	187,759	8,806	18,388	\$29,750	\$27,831	\$27,764
Transportation and Warehousing	99,972	2,288	6,865	\$56,415	\$61,896	\$57,134
Utilities	3,755	162	78	\$94,859	\$83,894	\$93,978
Wholesale Trade	67,639	2,711	4,777	\$66,394	\$60,053	\$52,391

The agricultural hemp market has seen a decline in the West KY region. Companies like GenCanna (Graves County) who started or expanded their business model to include hemp processing back in 2018-2019 have had major financial issues due to the current market for hemp being in a free fall. The economic disruption of COVID-19 had a major impact; however, it is possible that further product diversification will reinstate the hemp industry as a contender in the agriculture sector and its use as a fiber will span across multiple sectors. Murray State's Center for Agricultural Hemp will continue to be at the forefront of research and education for this product in our region. **Figure 4**

- C. **(R)** Provide an analysis of the regional 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.[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)] and [20 C.F.R. § 679.560(a)]

Unemployment Data

Average annual unemployment rates for the West Region have decreased in spite of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the region’s total labor force has declined during this period, dropping from 271,033 in 2018 to slightly less than 270,033 in 2019, a loss of 1000 workers. Census numbers project the trend will continue into 2020. Daviess and McCracken together accounted for more than one-quarter (28.5 percent) of the region’s total labor force in 2019. At 3.8 percent, Henderson and Hancock counties had among the region’s lowest average unemployment rates. McCracken County’s average annual rate of 4.9 percent was slightly above the regional average (4.7 percent) in 2019. Muhlenberg County had the highest percentage of unemployed residents, at 6.2 percent, with Livingston County, Fulton County and Ballard close behind at 5.7 percent. **Figure 5**

FIGURE 5. Average Annual Unemployment Rates

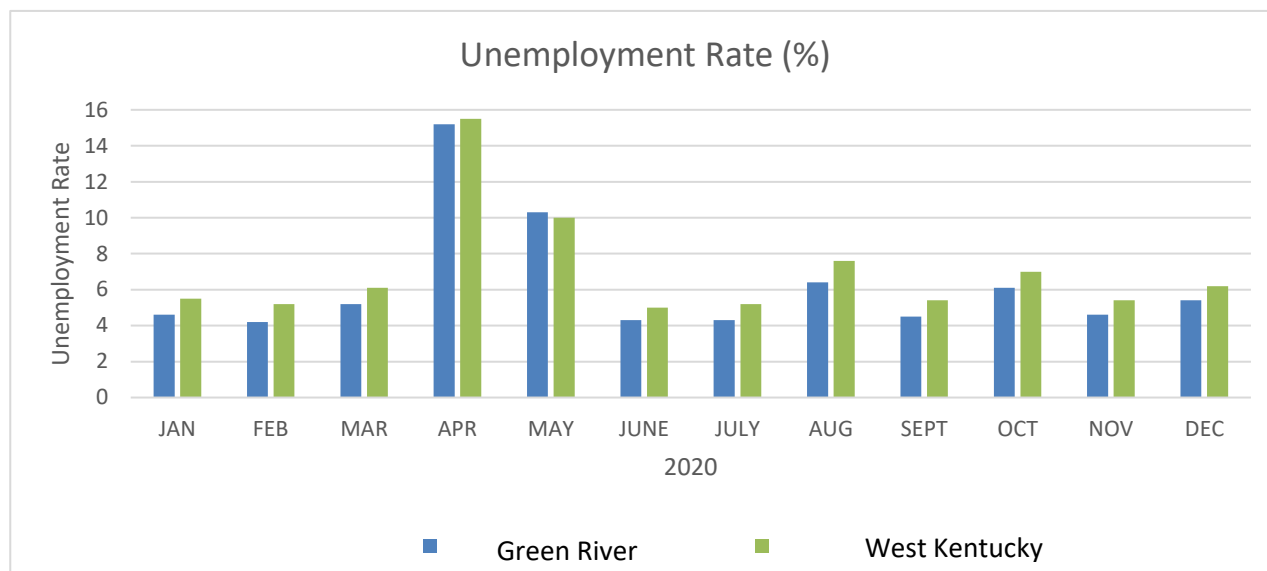
COUNTY	LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)
Ballard County, KY	3,524	3,323	201	5.7
Caldwell County, KY	5,473	5,200	273	5.0
Calloway County, KY	18,799	18,032	767	4.1
Carlisle County, KY	2,235	2,142	93	4.2
Christian County, KY	25,085	23,683	1,402	5.6
Crittenden County, KY	3,810	3,625	185	4.9
Daviess County, KY	47,567	45,730	1,837	3.9
Fulton County, KY	2,058	1,941	117	5.7
Graves County, KY	15,849	15,122	727	4.6
Hancock County, KY	3,994	3,841	153	3.8
Henderson County, KY	22,116	21,270	846	3.8
Hickman County, KY	1,776	1,690	86	4.8
Hopkins County, KY	18,562	17,714	848	4.6
Livingston County, KY	3,669	3,459	210	5.7
Lyon County, KY	3,119	2,973	146	4.7
Marshall County, KY	15,138	14,433	705	4.7
McCracken County, KY	29,258	27,819	1,439	4.9
McLean County, KY	4,233	4,046	187	4.4
Muhlenberg County, KY	10,541	9,890	651	6.2
Ohio County, KY	9,827	9,326	501	5.1
Todd County, KY	5,447	5,232	215	3.9
Trigg County, KY	6,024	5,741	283	4.7
Union County, KY	6,139	5,863	276	4.5
Webster County, KY	5,790	5,556	234	4.0
WEST REGION	270,033	257,651	12,382	4.7
Green River LWA	99,666	95,632	4,034	4.2
West Kentucky LWA	170,367	162,019	8,348	4.9

2019 Averages

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the West Region was 4.7% as of December 2019. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 3.5%. One year earlier the unemployment rate in the West Region was 5.1%. **Figure 6**

Figure 6. Unemployment Rates for 2020



Source: KYSTATS

Rapid Response Services and Regional Coordination

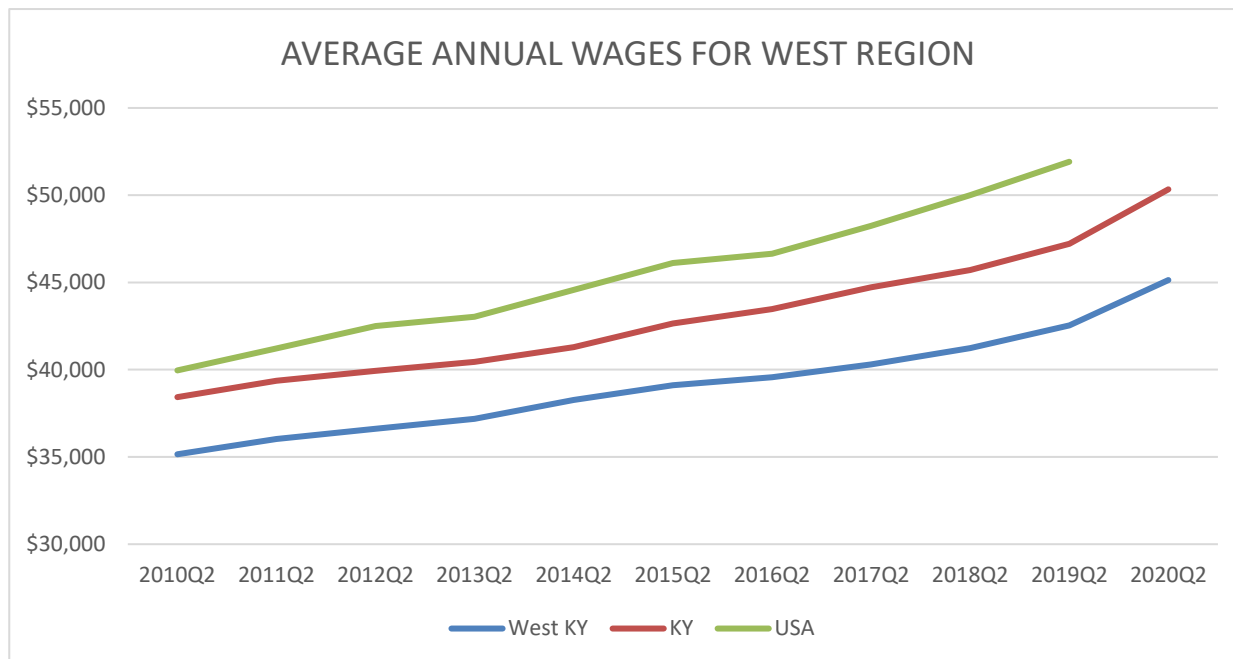
The West Region has experienced and established Rapid Response Teams to oversee and carry out Rapid Response activities in the region. Depending on the location of the impacted employer and their employees, both teams will coordinate to avoid duplication of efforts and in order to provide the best quality of service possible. The teams first jointly discuss available services with the impacted employer and then subsequently notify their team members and local leadership of the plan to respond to the layoff notification. A Rapid Response plan is created to meet the specific needs of the company in crisis, and all staff are emailed the response plan and necessary timeframes. West Region officials, workforce partners, and economic development professionals are contacted regarding the event.

The West Region has faced several dislocations of late, due to the decline of the mining industry and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our facilities draw workers from across the West region. Both local Rapid Response teams continue to do joint rapid response events, across both areas, and provide RR services where the workers can get information close to work or home. The RR Coordinators take turns hosting the RR event, as they share the information with customers. This coordination avoids duplication and allows for more fluid services for the company and workers. For the ease of the job seekers and employers, recent West Region Rapid Response services have been held virtually, with workforce staff and partners providing crucial information regarding unemployment insurance benefits, employment opportunities, and training programs through Zoom or a similar platform. Additional virtual sessions were offered to job seekers to meet as many individual needs as possible. Each session was recorded and posted on the WDB's website, along with links to valuable information mentioned in the session. Follow up mailings were also completed, to ensure that job seekers who had difficulty accessing/utilizing technology received the same information and quality of service. The West Region remains committed to providing customized and tailored resources to our region's dislocated workers and making those resources as easy to access as possible. As our collective labor force continues to decline, it is our mission to get individuals back to work and with the means to provide for their families in these difficult times.

Wage Trends

The average worker in the West Region earned annual wages of \$45,136 as of 2020Q2. Average annual wages per worker increased 1.0% in the region over the last 10 years. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$50,336 in the Commonwealth as of 2020Q2. **Figure 7**

FIGURE 7. AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES FOR WEST REGION



Source: KY Stats.

Educational Attainment

In reviewing the 2018-2019 academic year across the West KY region, the top three majors were Liberal Arts/Sciences (1,158), LPN (975), and Electrician (715). The surge of interest in healthcare and skilled trades most likely has to do with the available jobs in the region and the sustainable wages associated with these careers. By far, the 18–24-year-old population are the predominant enrollees, at almost 6,000. West Kentucky Community and Technical College has the highest number of enrollees, at 3,072. Owensboro Community and Technical College is not far behind, at 1,904, followed by Madisonville Community College at 1,332.

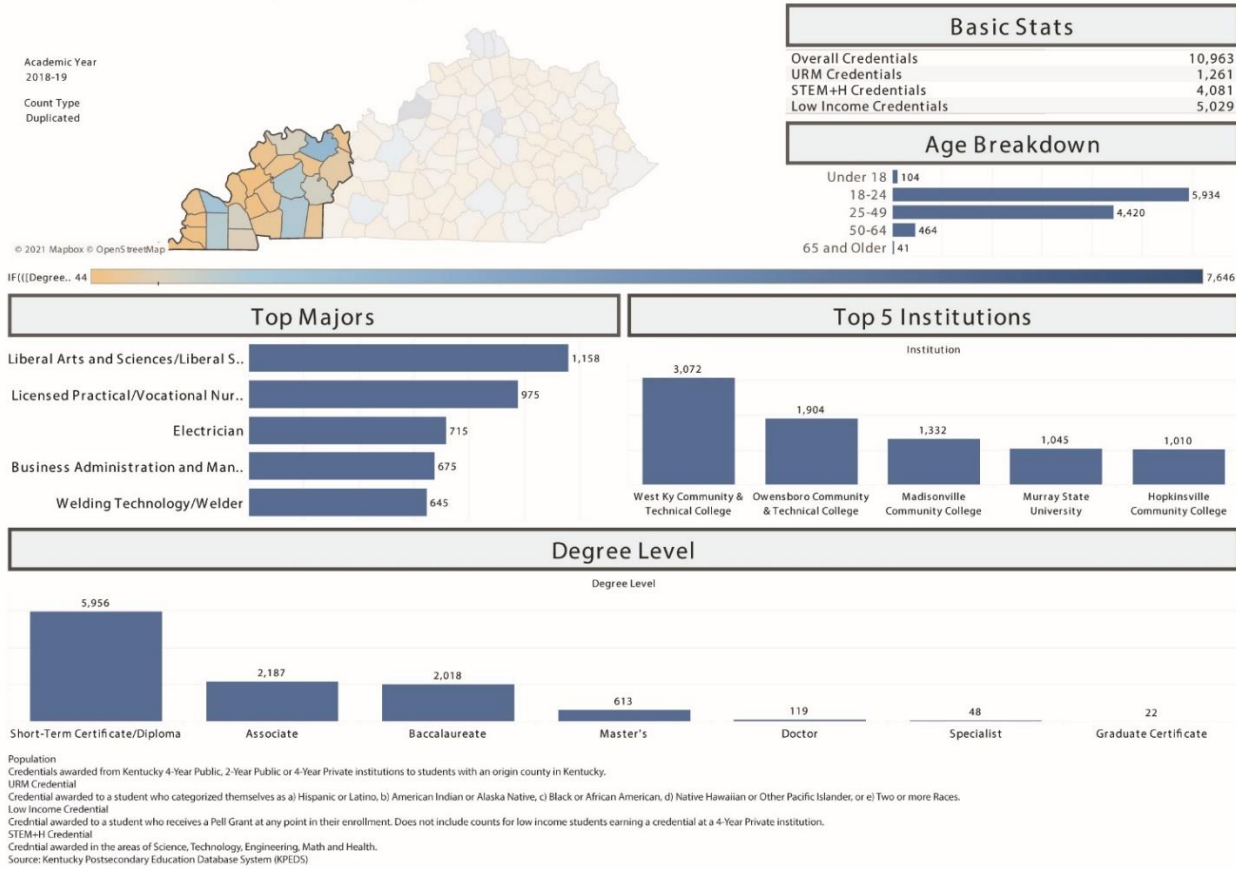
Clearly, the short-term certifications/diplomas are much more desirable by our region’s workforce, with almost 6,000 obtained. To illustrate this point, short term trainings such as CDL Class A, Lineman, Welding are increasingly popular program options in our region’s training institutions, due to the quick turnaround time and students’ ability to find high paying and sustainable employment once necessary credentials are obtained. **Figure 8**

Career and Technical Education is a critical component in meeting the needs of students in academic achievement, career exploration, career preparation and leadership development. It is a viable means to a high school diploma and preparation for postsecondary training and career by including opportunities for students to obtain a strong academic foundation along with career and technical content. Additionally, it supports the Commonwealth’s overall strategy to grow the state’s economy and improve workforce development. This results in the ability to attract new employers and successfully fill jobs statewide with well-educated and highly skilled workers. This is critical, as employers not only seek technically trained

workers, but also workers who are prepared to be on the job in the real world. In the West Region, 71% of CTE completers graduate with an industry certification.

FIGURE 8. CREDENTIALS FOR WEST REGION

West Kentucky County Profile - Credentials



Kentucky Skills U provides programs to enable individuals to obtain a GED, earn a GED and earn college credit simultaneously, update/upgrade basic skills and learn critical skills and knowledge for transitions to college, technical training and how to get AND keep a job. As a partner in the KCC, Skills U referrals are made by each local area for individuals who are deemed appropriate and would benefit from the services.

The Earle C. Clements Job Corps located in the Green River Area, Union County and the Muhlenberg Job Corps located in West KY Area, Muhlenberg County, both offer career exploration through the MyPace orientation program, career and technical preparation, career and training certification opportunities in health care, CDL training, welding and numerous other skill areas. Both offer high school diploma programs, GED, college and advanced training opportunities. These programs are no cost to youth ages 16-24 who qualify under Department of Labor guidelines. Both offer residential dorms or non-residential programs. Section 121 (6) (1) (B) (i) of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA) includes Job Corps programs as a required partner in the OneStop System.

Data on awards and degrees awarded for credit by area institutions reflects regional demands for healthcare workers and skilled trades' positions are highest. When cross-walked to occupations, the data can be used to illustrate the relationship between the supply of workers graduating from regional institutions and employer demand due to new industry growth and replacement needs (captured as annual openings). This approach presents some limitations and data should be viewed with the knowledge of various inaccuracies.

The most significant of these is that the data excludes graduates of noncredit workforce solutions programs through the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, which can be an essential part of the talent pipeline for some occupations that require a short-term certification. The mapping of occupations to fields of study (CIP Codes) can also be problematic as some fields of study train students for multiple occupations across multiple sectors such as the Liberal Arts and Sciences credential. The comparison does not account for the migration of graduates into and out of the region due to a large military, veteran and military spouse population. It also does not account for the population of students who attend/graduate from training institutions in neighboring states such as Indiana and Tennessee. However, it can provide a starting point for highlighting imbalances and creating solutions for regional employers as they address hiring and recruitment needs. **Figure 9**

FIGURE 9. OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND BY SKILL LEVEL IN WEST REGION

		Occupational Demand by Skill Level in West Kentucky Region				5-Year Forecast		
SOC	Occupation	Current			Unemployed Rate	Total Demand	Employed Growth	Annual % Growth
		Employed	Mean Annual Wages ²	Current Unemployed				
Low-Skill (High School or less)								
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	7,925	\$19,900	1,174	13.4%	7,599	219	0.5%
41-2011	Cashiers	7,308	\$20,800	742	9.6%	6,014	-459	-1.3%
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	7,552	\$25,400	557	7.2%	5,118	-236	-0.6%
Midle-Skill (More than high school, less than four years)								
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,310	\$40,800	295	6.5%	2,345	-70	-0.3%
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	3,180	\$25,800	170	5.1%	1,739	-23	-0.1%
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	4,510	\$59,300	78	1.8%	1,703	-362	-1.7%
High Skill (4 Year Degree or above)								
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3,582	\$84,000	104	3.0%	1,519	-25	-0.1%
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	2,398	\$52,700	109	4.5%	793	-69	-0.6%
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	1,468	\$60,700	33	2.4%	654	-19	-0.3%

Source: JobsEQ®

Data as of 2020Q3 unless noted otherwise

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. Data based on a four-quarter moving average unless noted otherwise.

2. Wage data are as of 2019 and represent the average for all Covered Employment

3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region; data represents a sampling rather than the complete universe of postings. Ads lacking zip code information but designating a place (city, town, etc.) may be assigned to the zip code with greatest employment in that place for queries in this analytic. Due to alternative county-assignment algorithms, ad counts in this analytic may not match that shown in RTI (nor in the popup window ad list).

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D. (R) An analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training in the region. This will include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers in the region. Note: Per WIOA Sec. 108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of the issuance of this guidance).

The most commonly identified strength throughout the region is the level of collaboration among partners, including workforce development, economic development, education, and business. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) plays pivotal role in collaboration with high schools, businesses and other partners in the talent ecosystem.

In addition to regional collaboration, the Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (KY FAME) is highly regarded by stakeholders throughout the region. KY FAME is a joint academic training/apprenticeship model the West Region is using to create a new pipeline of skilled workers to support regional employers. The West region is creating a new pipeline of skilled workers to support regional employers. KCTCS institutions, including Henderson Community College, Hopkinsville Community College,

West Kentucky Community and Technical College, and Owensboro Community and Technical College have local KY FAME chapters.

An additional strength of the region is the number of entry-level workers available to fill jobs that do not require formal technical training. Employers note, if the job seeker can show up for work, the employer can provide the necessary training for a job.

The two most commonly identified challenges within the region are lack of skills (technical and soft) in job seekers and barriers to employment. The lack of critical thinking and problem-solving skills or a desire to work is common in young adults. Communication skills are also key as individuals in any job need to be able to communicate with co-workers, supervisors, and customers.

There is a bit of a stigma in the region around technical jobs and technical training that has cast a shadow on these industries. Across the region there is a need for a career awareness marketing campaign around these types of jobs to show young adults that these jobs are high-paying, in-demand, and do not require high-cost training. Because this void in technical talent exists in the region, employers face limited qualified talent to fill in-demand positions.

The limited availability of good paying jobs in the region has become a challenge for job seekers. Because these jobs are scarce, talent stealing, and job-hopping have occurred more frequently, especially during times of low unemployment. Commonly cited barriers to employment included access to childcare, affordable and/or quality housing, lack of technology/broadband infrastructure, minor offense records, and physical barriers, such as disabilities.

The use of sector-based partnerships has proven to be an effective approach to workforce development. Target sectors identified via planning efforts conducted in the West KY and Green River Local Areas reveal three (3) sectors which are common across the West Region: advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation activities. Though not specifically listed, a focus on professional services growth has also been noted for the West Kentucky Local Area. A number of the demand occupations discussed previously are employed in these sectors, including truck drivers, nurses, and supervisory positions.

Sector-based responses are in progress in the region. The region's community and technical colleges are working with major employers (especially in the manufacturing sector, but also including some healthcare organizations) to address some of the workforce shortages through work and learn models. Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) is an employer-led and demand driven approach for businesses to create and manage talent 'supply chains' by projecting talent needs and aligning those with education and workforce development systems. In Green River, it was recognized there is untapped potential in recruiting females in manufacturing. The Green River WDB, Owensboro Community and Technical College and Unifirst Corporation are partnering to provide an incumbent worker training program specifically for females in manufacturing. While on the job, OCTC provides instruction on-site. Upon completion of the program, the employees will earn an Associate of Applied Science in Industrial Maintenance. The Green River WDB is committed to increasing the talent pool through development and implementation of targeted populations including youth, ex-offenders, recovering substance abuse users, etc.

Riverports have evolved, over time, reflecting greater consideration of economic development. This changing role has been examined through analyzing port authorities in metropolitan regions as they diversify into urban development, but research on the changing role of rural riverports is nascent. The West Region has five (5) riverports impacting local economies.

Owensboro Riverport

The Owensboro Riverport handles Aluminum. Steel. Copper. Magnesium. Zinc. Grain. Fertilizer. Heavy-Lift Project Cargo. Bulk Commodities. Scrap Steel. It is one of three main hubs for aluminum storage in the United States. No matter the product, Owensboro Riverport, with its stable of modern handling equipment, superb facilities, and state-of-the-art information technology systems, ensures the following: Experience. Performance. Excellence. Over 1.1 million tons of cargo are handled annually. Owensboro Riverport recognizes the importance of each and every cargo handled. The Owensboro Riverport's Harbor Road Terminal operation has multiple machines used to move material for every application. The Economic impact is jobs created, jobs retained and millions of dollars in economic activity.



Henderson County Riverport

The Henderson County Riverport easily handles bulk cargos – such as coal, coke, gravel, sand, lime, fertilizers and grains as well as packed products – such as steel pipe, steel wire rod, aluminum, zinc and finished manufactured goods. The goal is to partner with customers to help manage logistics, inventory and fulfillment from origin to destination locally and internationally.

Eddyville Riverport

The Eddyville Riverport was established in 1976 as the Lyon County Riverport Authority, with involvement from Lyon County, the City of Eddyville, and the City of Kuttawa. In 2002, Lyon County and Kuttawa elected to cease participation with the Authority. Following that, the City of Eddyville, by articles of incorporation, formed the Eddyville Riverport and Industrial Development Authority (Eddyville). Combining the industrial development authority and the port operation. The port operation is located adjacent to a natural harbor/bay at river mile 43 on the Cumberland River/Barkley Lake and is the only operating Kentucky public riverport on the Cumberland River. It services as a vehicle in moving agriculture products and limestone products.

Hickman-Fulton County Riverport

The Hickman-Fulton County Riverport Authority has proved to be a vital economic engine. Hickman-Fulton County serves many industries by facilitating the movement of raw materials and finished product as well as providing services to the agricultural community. The port is adjacent to a natural slack water harbor on the Mississippi River, and is the only operating Kentucky public riverport located on the Mississippi River. The vision of the riverport is to be a leader in commercial/industrial development and an economic benefit to its community through leadership, stewardship, and partnership in marine and industrial expansion by focusing on the retention and attraction of businesses and jobs as related to transportation, facilities, future development and the environment, and to be a catalyst for expanding the integration of marine, land, and rail transportation systems in a safe, efficient, economical, and environmentally sound manner while achieving these goals through effective planning, management, and marketing of the port's assets and facilities.

Paducah-McCracken County Riverport

The Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority is a full-service port facility at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers. The Port's facilities are capable of handling a wide range of commodities, including containerized, break-bulk and bulk cargoes, as well as storing cargoes on terminal or in terminal warehouse

facilities. As the hub of the U.S. Inland Waterways, the Port's Central U.S. location near the confluences of four (4) major Eastern U.S. river systems allows shippers to move their goods to over 65% of the U.S. populations and Canadian border within one day's drive. The Port has direct access to multiple blue water Gulf ports and operates Foreign Trade Zone #294, which provides benefits to shippers involved in international trade.

West KY Maritime Industry Training Programs

West Kentucky training providers and non-profits have created training opportunities for individuals interested in pursuing careers in the growing maritime industry.

The Seamen's Church Institute (SCI)

The Seamen's Church Institute is a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit entity. Founded in 1834 and affiliated with the Episcopal Church, the Seamen's Church Institute is the largest, most comprehensive mariners' agency in North America. SCI's Center for Maritime Education provides navigational training to over thousands of mariners each year through similar-based facilities located in Houston, TX and Paducah, KY. The Center for Maritime Education also plays a key role in the Paducah community through its involvement with the River Heritage Museum. The Institute also assists the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the International Maritime Organization. The Center for Maritime Education provides mariners with a safe learning environment to increase their skills, and prepare them to become successful members of the inland maritime workforce.

Inland Logistics and Marine Institute (WKCTC)

West Kentucky Community and Technical College's **Inland Logistics and Marine Institute** in Paducah provides training and education for the logistics and marine industries. As well as providing a location near industry for workforce training, the Institute also houses WKCTC's *Logistics & Operations Management* and *Marine Technology* programs. They also offer Unlimited Radar Observer, Inland Radar Observer, Rivers Radar Observer certifications, as well as Unlimited/Inland Radar and River Radar re-certifications. Students can earn an Associate in Applied Science degree in Logistics and Operations Management or Marine Technology **completely online**, giving them the opportunity to rise above the crowd and expedite their career. Through marine welding, machining, and the most up-to-date software training, the Inland Logistics and Marine Institute is paving the way to expand and grow students' potential.

Kentucky Work Ready Communities

Kentucky's communities are stepping up to the plate when it comes to demonstrating the quality of their workforce and working to improve opportunities for success. The Kentucky Work Ready Community program has the ability to transform a community. It encourages counties to take a credible inventory of the current and future workforce, identify the gaps, and carry out strategies to achieve a more knowledgeable, trained workforce. Through this effort, Kentucky communities can assess their own workforce strengths and follow a process to become certified as Work Ready or Work Ready in Progress. As of March 2021, 12 counties in the West Region were certified Work Ready, with an additional 10 counties certified as Work Ready in Progress. The average workforce participation rate for the West Region is at 55% with the median income just over \$46,000 in the West Region. Work Ready also looks at strategies to improve percentages with degrees. Work Ready Community teams are addressing many of these employer challenges and workforce needs to be sure that students understand the value of certain skills, behavior, attendance, and are aware of the availability of jobs in the West Region. **Figure 10**

FIGURE 10. WORK READY STATUS BY COUNTY, March 2021

Work Ready Status Indicator

- Certified Work Ready
- Certified Work Ready in Progress
- Formative Stage

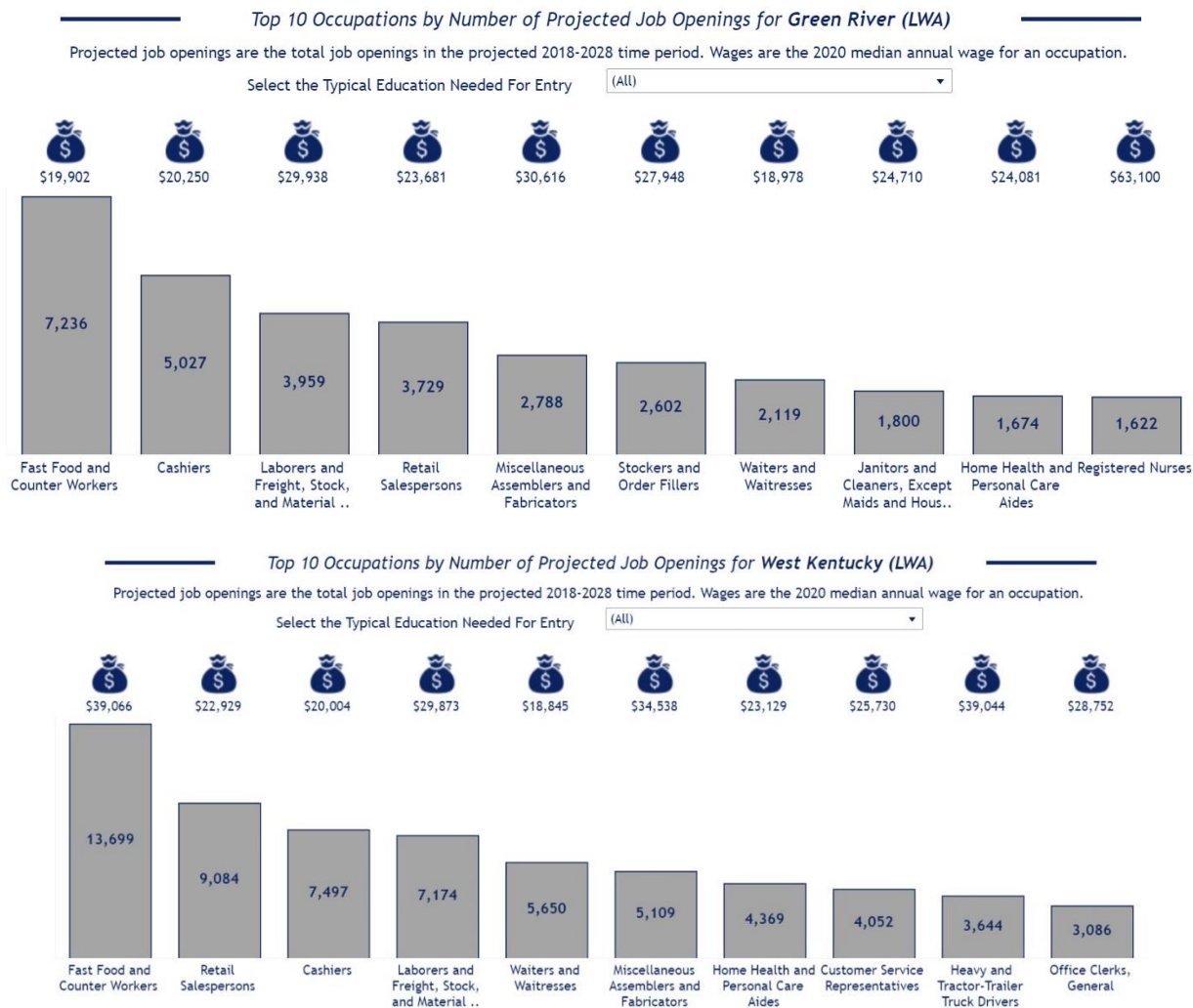
WORK READY STATUS BY COUNTY, MARCH 2021

Work Ready	County	Working Age from 18-65	Workforce Participation Rate	Internet Availability	HS Grad Rate	Some College or Higher	Assoc. Degree or Higher	Vet Pop	Working Age Without HSD/GED	Median Income
	Ballard	21,007	56%	100%	95.3%	52.6%	29%	680	9.5%	\$45,048
	Caldwell	7,785	56%	100%	96.5%	47.2%	25%	678	12.1%	\$44,775
	Calloway	24,859	56%	100%	95.8%	65.5%	29%	1988	7.9%	\$42,273
	Carlisle	2,985	60%	100%	92.9%	42.0%	22%	286	15.8%	\$45,109
	Christian	45,287	56%	100%	92.0%	53.6%	24%	5858	11.3%	\$43,919
	Crittenden	5,518	55%	100%	93.0%	42.7%	21%	612	15.6%	\$45,244
	Daviess	58,933	62%	100%	90.9%	57.7%	33%	6144	9.2%	\$51,673
	Fulton	4,222	46%	100%	96.6%	42.6%	17%	497	19.6%	\$30,114
	Graves	21,924	55%	100%	94.9%	52.1%	28%	1858	11.0%	\$44,043
	Hancock	5,144	61%	100%	92.9%	47.6%	23%	547	13.0%	\$57,217
	Henderson	28,829	63%	100%	91.6%	53.4%	28%	2792	11.4%	\$48,926
	Hickman	2,829	51%	100%	98.2%	40.6%	23%	417	22.5%	\$42,929
	Hopkins	28,785	53%	100%	91.9%	49.6%	28%	2769	11.5%	\$47,170
	Livingston	5,841	50%	100%	94.6%	42.3%	16%	538	13.7%	\$50,839
	Lyon	5,289	52%	100%	98.4%	43.5%	25%	877	12.7%	\$52,528
	McCracken	39,858	57%	100%	91.8%	61.2%	37%	4208	8.2%	\$46,080
	McLean	5,695	59%	100%	95.7%	49.2%	27%	535	13.0%	\$51,861
	Marshall	18,842	61%	100%	95.3%	52.3%	29%	2262	10.4%	\$55,113
	Muhlenberg	19,568	42%	100%	90.3%	39.5%	23%	1755	15.7%	\$43,590
	Ohio	14,226	54%	100%	95.8%	42.1%	19%	1532	13.9%	\$45,564
	Todd	7,295	60%	100%	96.7%	40.8%	21%	681	20.2%	\$44,005
	Trigg	8,384	54%	100%	94.8%	57.8%	29%	1563	11.1%	\$50,536
	Union	9,503	49%	100%	95.7%	39.3%	16%	934	10.3%	\$46,673
	Webster	8,372	58%	100%	92.9%	37.7%	19%	685	15.7%	\$42,119
	TOTAL	400,980								
	Average		55%	100%	94.4%	48.0%	25%	1696	13.1%	\$46,556

Occupational Analysis

As the West Kentucky region attempts to make workforce decisions that will meet the future needs of our workforce, we consider the projected number of job openings and in what particular occupations. It appears that the bulk of occupations represented over the 2018-2028 timeframe will be in retail, food preparation/serving, and material moving. Food preparation and serving occupations topped the list for both local areas, with a little over 7,000 projected for Green River and close to 14,000 for West Kentucky. Healthcare and social assistance occupations such as home health sitters and RNs are not as high as expected, given the current need in our region in these particular fields due to layoffs stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the regional occupational projected demand will be for lower skilled, lower wage jobs across the board. **Figure 11**

FIGURE 11.



Source: KY Stats

Alignment of Local and Regional Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

- D. **(L)(R)** Describe local and regional efforts to support and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5) and 20 C.F.R. § § 679.550-580]

Regionally, both local WDBs have embraced the entrepreneurship initiative. Entrepreneurs and small business owners are the catalyst to economic growth in the region due to the numbers of new hiring opportunities.

As a region, we coordinate with local and regional economic development partnerships, and holding combined BST committee meetings in the future, which will promote businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities as well as develop innovative concepts for the Green River/ West Kentucky Local Areas. The Business Services Teams (BST), in conjunction with the two (2) local workforce boards, are committed to and assist in promoting services to those interested in owning their own business. As the West region shares occupational sectors, and both areas have FAME chapters, the Business service teams coordinate and share

ideas for successful events to assist certain industries, sectors, and participants. Examples include coordination in OJT, hiring events and referrals for training across both local areas. The BST shares that information with the business customer and the KCC staff and DSP shares that with individual job seekers and customers. This collaboration can assist workers throughout the region. The West region also shares several initiatives/grants through our KCTCS partners. The West collaborates and makes referrals to those programs, increasing entrepreneurship and scholarships for CDL and lineman programs. Those resources are shared with KCC customers through the Business service teams and direct service providers.

The Kentucky Small Business Development Center (KSBDC) provides valuable tools to help entrepreneurs make informed business decisions when planning to open a new business. The KSBDC provides clients with access to a network of knowledgeable consultants with various expertise who are working vigorously to ensure small business success. In addition, the KSBDC has a relationship with the Murray State University Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development.

There are two (2) regional universities in the local areas: Murray State University (MSU) and Western Kentucky University (WKU). The seventeen (17) most western counties are connected to MSU and the seven (7) western counties are connected to WKU.

Murray State's Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development provides Western Kentucky entrepreneurs, small businesses and industries with the management consulting, business training and access to business resources needed to compete in today's challenging global economy. The center also seeks opportunities to connect businesses in the region with students through internships, mentorships, project assistance and other engagements. These engagements can provide experiential learning opportunities for students and provide businesses and industries with needed skill sets as well as potential employee identification. The center serves the 24 counties of West Kentucky.

KY Innovation Hubs represent Kentucky's approach to building vibrant, regional innovation clusters across the state and growing the overall economy. This 120-county effort modernizes Kentucky's support for entrepreneurs and high tech, high-growth-potential startups by leveraging each region's unique strengths. The hubs unite universities, established companies and industry sectors, entrepreneurs, business accelerator and incubator programs and many other public and private entities to best serve business founders across the Commonwealth.

KY Pitch is non-profit entity designed to empower innovation, diversity and growth in the commonwealth by allowing students in post-secondary colleges and universities to pitch a business idea to a large audience of investors, community leaders and the general public. There are two (2) divisions of KY Pitch including the exploratory track for those with a concept and the developed track for those with a more advanced plan or current start-up.

In Green River, eMERGING VENTURES provides technical support and start up assistance to entrepreneurs perfecting and maturing their ideas and business concepts. They provide access to services such as financing, business plan development, management consulting and research and development. eMERGING VENTURES offers office space and infrastructure, assistance through the permitting process, advocacy and networking opportunities. SCORE is also dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and succeed.

The GroWest initiative represents a rejuvenated and refocused approach to building vibrant clusters of innovation across West Kentucky and growing the overall economy. It was launched to build partnerships among universities, companies, entrepreneurs, accelerators and incubators, and other public and private entities. Support organizations for GroWest are located in Paducah, Madisonville, and Murray. These include, but are not limited to, Sprocket in Paducah, Kentucky Innovation Station & Movers and Makers in Madisonville, the Murray State University Center for Computer and Information Technology and the Murray

State University Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development. This initiative seeks to create support and expand the ecosystem for tech-based firms.

Each local area has strong entrepreneurial efforts with their respective economic development entities. Moving forward, the West Region will explore opportunities between the local boards and the Business Services Teams to grow small business and entrepreneurial efforts. Local narrative can be found on page 31.

E. **(L) Provide 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)] and [20 C.F.R. § 679.560(a)]**

The West Kentucky Workforce Board (WKWB) is currently seeing a wide variety of positions in our local area that are going unfilled. The positions are across multiple sectors, with manufacturing and healthcare/social assistance being at the top of the list. In healthcare, examples of available positions include CNAs, resident assistants, pharmacy techs, direct service providers, medical assistants, and EVS workers. Naturally, frontline workers have been in extreme demand due to COVID and have unfortunately been in short supply. In the manufacturing sector, a sample of positions include general production workers, product and quality techs, operation techs, machinists, and control techs. Skills for these high demand occupations include communication, IT skills, problem solving, knowledge and understanding of science and math, and require physical stamina and dexterity. Most healthcare positions require a high school diploma or GED, and positions that are more specialized require additional certifications or licenses. For manufacturing positions, a high school diploma or equivalent is preferred, along with experience in product repair and maintenance. Examples of common educational program and credentials that are required for high demand occupations in this area include: AAS in Advanced Integrated Technology (Electrical Maintenance Techs, Utility Tech, Operator), AAS in Health Science Technology (EMT, CMT, Medical Coding, Substance Abuse Recovery Coach), and Class A CDL (OTR Truck Driver, Lineman Apprentice).

Prior to the pandemic, employers were having issues filling skilled positions. Now we are seeing job losses start the decrease and full-time employment increase. However, we have not retained the employment levels prior to the pandemic. Many individuals have health concerns in going back to work and consider the workplace a potentially dangerous environment, or they have childcare or transportation related issues where it is difficult to maintain a full-time position. Additionally, individuals receiving full unemployment benefits may not be in desperate need of a job at this time. To combat this, regional employers are continuing to build partnerships to find new sources of skilled labor to fulfill their needs. The Purchase Area Health Education Consortium works to connect high school students with medical fields and encourage internships. In addition, effective collaborations with Fort Campbell and our Tennessee Workforce partners to connect soldiers separating from service, veterans, and military spouses with employment opportunities are available in West Kentucky. Efforts are also underway to focus training and re-training funds through a National Dislocated Worker Grant to assist local dislocated workers, transitioning military, and spouses. These non-traditional approaches are proving successful for some employers, especially in the manufacturing industry. The local area has articulated career paths in agriculture and tourism, as well as raising awareness of opportunities in the maritime industry and construction since they were identified by employers as needs, in the local area. Our partnerships in West Kentucky between the Workforce Board, employers, educators, Chambers of Commerce, and economic development

professionals continue to be a critical component in the creation of innovative programming and initiatives to increase re-entry into our area's workforce.

Wage rates remain problematic when it comes to recruitment and retention in West Kentucky. Feedback from local employers in a wide range of sectors reference soft skills issues, such as attendance or the inability to pass a drug screen, as a significant barrier to hiring. Our continued partnerships with community stakeholders are critical to increase the availability of pre-employment training for new entrants to the labor market and skills training for incumbent workers.

As of March 2021, nine WKWB counties were certified Work Ready, with six certified as Work Ready in progress. In addition to the "work ready" efforts, sector-based employment, GED plus, and talent pipeline efforts are also in progress in the region. The region's colleges are working with major employers, workforce boards, and chambers to address some of the workforce shortages through the Kentucky FAME (Federation of Advanced Manufacturing Education) program, Kentucky State Chamber Project Talent Pipeline Management (TPM), Youth Programs, Work Ready Skills Initiative programs, GED Plus, scholarships, and more. BST staff assist TPM, in our local area. Kentucky Chamber staff are also invited to participate in BST meetings and Workforce Board meetings.

Job posting data from our Business Service teams, KY STATS, and Jobs EQ is supplied to workforce staff, which shows employer openings across our area's sectors and real time information on certification and skills that are sought after and desired by West Kentucky employers. This greatly assists in providing re-employment and work-based learning placement referrals, based on an individual's transferable skills.

Chapter 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

- A. (L) Describe the local board's strategic vision and goals to support regional economic growth and self-efficiency. Include goals in preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). Also, include as applicable a description of any plans to generate new strategic vision and goals in the coming year and indicate the timeframe for such activities to occur. Strengthen to the extent possible goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)] TEG 7-20

The local area implemented a revised strategic planning goal alignment project in March 2018 to better align with the four core goals of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) "Kentucky Work Ready: An Urgent Call to Action" strategic plan and the action items from regional planning. Currently, the WKWB has a unique opportunity to address our local area's vision and goals for the future, in the midst of a workforce climate that is currently plagued by the pandemic and prior Trade impacted dislocations in late 2019-early 2020.

The Board understands the necessity to link workforce education and economic development. However, many of the funds under WIOA have eligibility restrictions and limitations that only focus on a small number of the population that may require new skills or upgraded skills. Even with the USDOL emphasis on work-based learning, the Board could not provide funds to place all individuals in industry regardless of the eligibility. Therefore, the challenge is to expend the funds in the most strategic way that impacts the total workforce system to best meet the needs of business/industry; this is not an easy solution, as many other areas have

identified. In order to utilize all the members of our potential workforce, including individuals with disabilities and individuals in need of self-sufficiency, the system must strive to leave no one behind, at a time when workforce demand is stretching beyond the available numbers of individuals engaged in the workforce.

Our vision and goals are fluid, as employment trends change and the method in which we provide services to our employers and job seekers adjusts based on the current economy and individual need. Our area has chosen to approach this period as a means to revamp current procedures in order to increase program efficiency and to return as many job seekers, especially those with employment barriers, to the workforce as quickly as possible. We remain aligned with our vision and goals, and dutifully continue our mission to lay the groundwork for a resilient local workforce. The continued future regional economic development planning effort, with WIOA high demand sector focus, will even take us further outside the rural, diverse economy of our 17 western most counties of Kentucky as we seek these workforce system solutions, as well as regional and state solutions, as a team.

The WKWB vision and goals are provided below:

VISION: To provide an integrated system of quality employment information and training services to businesses and individuals through collaborative efforts of our workforce partners and service sites.

- **Goal #1:** actively engage employers to drive West Kentucky's workforce development system and provide opportunities for employers to reach job seekers.
 - BST staff continue to focus their attention on employer engagement and providing them outlets for recruitment to fill their open positions. Currently, in-person job fair events are limited, however virtual events are being utilized to get employers and job seekers connected. Board staff also assist employers in outreach, using our Career Center Facebook pages and local WKWB Facebook page. BST staff also spread word about open positions through their BST meetings with workforce and community partners and their partnerships and communications with local Chambers and economic development professionals.
- **Goal #2:** Align with national programs and integrate P-12, adult education, and post-secondary education to provide lifelong opportunities in West Kentucky that prepare individuals for the rapidly shifting realities of work in the future.
 - Our local Job Corps Center, located in Muhlenberg County, are our partners in the Career Center in assisting the young adults in our region. Muhlenberg Job Corps Center teaches young people the skills they need to be employable and independent, so they can become successful in the workforce or further their education. They offer work-based learning opportunities to students, in order to link the career technical training they receive at the center with practical, on-the-job activities. MJCC students can currently receive training in the following areas: Welding, Heavy Construction Equipment Mechanic, Certified Nurse Assistant, Clinical Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Heavy Equipment Operations, Heavy Truck Driving, and Material Handling and Distribution Operations. These programs align perfectly with our local area's high demand sectors, and graduates from the MJCC programs will enter our workforce area with the skills and knowledge to be successful. Staff often give presentations before the Board regarding Center activities.
- **Goal #3:** Increase West Kentucky's workforce participation by identifying employment opportunities and removing barriers to targeted populations.

- The Pennyrile Area Development District received the Department of Defense – Office of Economic Adjustment grant to assist Ft. Campbell efforts. First Lady Jill Biden’s interest in military spouses is already playing a pivotal role at Ft. Campbell. There are approximately 400-500 soldiers transitioning monthly from Ft. Campbell into the local job market. Veterans and military spouses can bring unique leadership qualities and a high work ethic that is revitalizing and invigorating to an employer who is struggling with their current employees’ lack of initiative or inability to come to work. The local area and career centers have actively engaged with employment and transition activities, committees, and support of this particular population.
- **Goal #4:** Focus resources on the most effective initiatives and improve the return on our workforce investment.
 - Our area has joined the movement in assisting those recovering from opioid addictions in re-entering the workforce. In 2019, 2 liaisons from EKCEP, who are aligned with the Career Center, were assigned to our area to assist with this population. Referrals are made from recovery treatment facilities to these liaisons, who then work with the individual to find gainful employment. They play a role in our BST team, Reentry Council, etc. A regional Opioid Summit was held in Hopkins County in February 2020, where experts from the medical community, second chance employers, and individuals provided information regarding opioid addiction and its impact on individuals and the workforce. The goal of this event was to open the eyes of the attendees and to encourage employers who attended to become “second chance” employers or “transformational” in their approach to hiring.
 - Numerous expungement events have been held in the West KY area, to assist individuals who hold prior convictions, which are preventing them from re-entering the workforce. There is a group called the Western Kentucky Reentry Council, which holds a local chapter in Christian County and McCracken County; the Council’s main objective is to reintegrate individuals of the justice-involved population back into our local communities through advocacy, economic support, and local resources. Members of the Council are involved in workforce events in our area and provide needed resources to aid this population. Board staff also head up the Right Choice Program, which is designed to give non-custodial parents the opportunity to accept their financial responsibilities by offering assistance and ways to enhance employment efforts for them to financially support their child or children.
- **Goal #5:** Continue to enhance and grow Work Based Learning opportunities and programs in our area in order to better track performance accountability measures.
 - In July of 2020, the WKWB received COVID-19 National Dislocated Worker Grant funding in response to the major dislocations and layoffs in our area, and from that, a program called Employment Recovery was established to assist workers negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Services include short-term training opportunities in high demand jobs, temporary employment to assist with humanitarian relief, and a wide range of supportive services based on individual need. This program’s emphasis on work experience assists our area’s job seekers, while also providing our employers with a pipeline of eligible workers.
 - BST staff oversee the On-the-Job Training program, which provides the employer with an individual who is ready and willing to work, while compensating the employer for lost production time and other training costs. To date, we currently have 149 individuals participating in On-the-Job Training with our local employers. This is the highest number we have had in the program since it was established. Employers in our area are turning toward On-the-Job Training as their need to fill open positions strengthens, and job seekers who are struggling with virtual learning

are seeing this program as a viable option to receive employment and training directly from their employer. Performance measures are known immediately, as we work with the employer to make sure the individual placed with them continues to be successful.

- The Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (KY FAME) is a company-sponsored partnership of regional employers who share the goal of creating a pipeline of highly skilled workers. In our area, we have active chapters through Hopkinsville Community College and West Kentucky Community and Technical College. BST staff collaborate with these programs and assist in program development.

B. (L) Describe how the local board’s vision and goals relate to the Commonwealth’s goals, initiatives and priorities as outlined in the WIOA State Plan.

As referred to in the previous narrative, the WKWB serves the 17 western most counties of the region, providing policy development and coordination of partnerships in workforce development in support of economic development for the region. The vision is to create a skilled and competitive workforce through a comprehensive delivery system to support the economic growth of Kentucky. As such, the WKWB wears many hats. The WKWB serves as a liaison between employers in the business, industry, and public sector and individuals in order to make workforce needs known. The WKWB also promotes and provides strategies and solutions to motivate individuals to continue their education and improve their work skills, while assisting in the development of new training programs to benefit our region’s workforce. The WKWB also conducts planning, oversight, and analysis of local workforce development programs through the local Career Centers.

As mentioned, the overarching goal of our local system will correlate with Kentucky’s “WORKSmart” Plan and the updates in the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) approved “Kentucky Work Ready: An Urgent Call to Action” strategic plan. Please see goals outlined below:

KWIB Goal #1: Actively engage employers to drive Kentucky’s workforce development system.

West KY Goal #1: actively engage employers to drive West Kentucky's workforce development system and provide opportunities for employers to reach job seekers.

KWIB Goal #2: Align and integrate P-12, adult education, and post-secondary education to provide lifelong opportunities for Kentuckians that prepare them for the rapidly shifting realities of work in the future.

West KY Goal #2: Align with national programs and integrate P-12, adult education, and post-secondary education to provide lifelong opportunities in West Kentucky that prepare individuals for the rapidly shifting realities of work in the future.

KWIB Goal #3: Increase Kentucky’s workforce participation by creating opportunities, incenting workforce participation and removing employment barriers for Kentuckians.

West KY Goal #3: Increase West Kentucky’s workforce participation by identifying employment opportunities and removing barriers to targeted populations.

KWIB Goal #4: Focus resources on the most effective initiatives and improve the return on our workforce investment, utilizing data to constantly improve workforce development in Kentucky.

West KY Goal #4: Focus resources on the most effective initiatives and improve the return on our workforce investment.

West KY Goal #5: Continue to enhance and grow Work Based Learning opportunities and programs in our area in order to better track performance accountability measures.

As we look at the strengthened alignment of education, workforce, economic development, and the workforce delivery system, we can never forget our focus on the customer, either the business or the individual, in order to direct our services to their needs. The Board will continue to lead its local workforce region regardless of dwindling resources, changing Federal leadership, and through uneven economic growth; it's our responsibility to do so. The local Board will look toward state leadership, current initiatives and goals, agency contributions, and seek creative solutions to leverage funds among partners to reach those goals.

There have been discussions, partnerships, and efforts to expand the Kentucky Career Center (KCC) and add cross-cabinet partnerships to find a more holistic approach to addressing the individual and the needs of the employer. The WKWB has been and continues to be an active partner in the evolving workforce transformation and talent delivery, as well as KCC services, to better serve the region, citizens, and businesses.

C. (L) Describe how the local board's vision and goals take into account an analysis of the strategies in working partnership with the other entities that carry out the core programs, and the required partners in the alignment of resources.

As previously referenced, the local area is continuing to analyze and revise strategies based on available data, changes in the local region, employer needs, and workforce supply/demand. The WKWB will continue to review its vision and assure goals and metrics align with the sectors and strategies identified in the data, state plan, strategic plan, KWIB plan, while also updating this local plan, regional plan, and strategic plans as needed. The currently stated vision and goals align with the goals and strategies of key partners and coordinating agencies. The WKWB vision and goals are provided below:

VISION: To provide an integrated system of quality employment information and training services to businesses and individuals through collaborative efforts of our workforce partners and service sites.

West KY Goal #1: actively engage employers to drive West Kentucky's workforce development system and provide opportunities for employers to reach job seekers.

West KY Goal #2: Align with national programs and integrate P-12, adult education, and post-secondary education to provide lifelong opportunities in West Kentucky that prepare individuals for the rapidly shifting realities of work in the future.

West KY Goal #3: Increase West Kentucky's workforce participation by identifying employment opportunities and removing barriers to targeted populations.

West KY Goal #4: Focus resources on the most effective initiatives and improve the return on our workforce investment.

West KY Goal #5: Continue to enhance and grow Work Based Learning opportunities and programs in our area in order to better track performance accountability measures.

We now have two Cabinets at the state level who serve as partners: the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet and the Commonwealth of Kentucky Labor Cabinet. The Education and Workforce Development Cabinet oversee apprenticeship programs, WIOA programs, and the KWIB committees and functions. Local workforce boards have a presence on local committees of the KWIB. The Labor Cabinet oversees Wagner-Peyser activities, Trade program activities, and unemployment insurance services. Unemployment in-person services are just now returning to the career centers, as individual cases were so high in number.

In addition to the WKWB's Right Choice program, board and state staff assist with the Drug Court grant serving Muhlenberg County and the Kentucky Office of the Court's grant in McCracken County.

Currently, there is regular input from local officials, partner agencies, chambers of commerce, education, economic development, Veterans, Ft Campbell partners, sector group representatives, and others identified through the strategic planning process including sector sessions. These groups, along with the extended network of KCC partners and the collaborating state groups/educational institutions, have all attempted to position their activities, initiatives, and goals within the broad framework of the KWIB initiatives. The local area and region have supported and aligned to Kentucky's strategic plan through implementation of the KWIB's initiatives and continues to partner with state agencies, across cabinets and with organizations in these areas.

Chapter 3: Alignment of Local and Regional Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

- A. **(L)** Describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment in order to provide services. Include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b)(1)(E); H. R. 803—442.1. This should also include a descriptive overview of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker, Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another.

Note: The six core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Skills Uthe Kentucky Adult Education and Literacy program, Wagner-Peyser Programs and Vocational Rehabilitation. The elected partner plan programs are: Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers, Jobs for Veterans State Grants and Unemployment Insurance.

The WKWB is a non-profit, 401 (c)(3) organization and incorporated entity responding to training needs, economic development efforts, and workforce development programs throughout the western Kentucky region. The Board is responsible for bringing the partners together to develop the local plan/regional plan. The WKWB oversees the Kentucky Career Center (KCC), also known as the One Stop Career Center System in the local area, in conjunction with local elected officials. The WKWB has undergone extensive strategic planning, surveyed employers, education, sector groups, and convened focus groups to determine what services they want and need. It is important that the Board carefully examine the area, data, and its vision, implement services and strategies to be in line with those discoveries, and examine the investment, programs, and corresponding policies. The WKWB will also determine if a change is necessary for high demand sectors and training priorities as new data is released by the Kentucky Center for Statistics, Census, or another agency.

In western Kentucky, the workforce system partners include the following:

- WIOA Title I programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers, Trade, and Youth,
- Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act - Career and Technical Education and Postsecondary Vocational Education-Provided through KCTCS and other postsecondary education institutions,
- Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation,
- Title II Adult Education — Kentucky Skills U – Office of Adult Education,

- Kentucky Career Development Office (CDO) representing these required partners: Veteran’s services, Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser Act and Trade/TAA,
- Title V - Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP),
- Job Corps,
- KTAP, TANF and SNAP, Kentucky Department for Community Based Services,
- Kentucky Farmworkers Program,
- Audubon Area Community Services - Kentucky Works,
- Senior Employment Services - Goodwill,
- “Right Choice” Program,
- Commission of Native American Affairs,
- Community Services Block Grant Programs including “Fresh Start”,
- Re-Entry Councils and Second Chance Programs,

as well as Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO), businesses, the WKWB, Direct Service Provider (DSP), One Stop Operator (OSO), Business Service Teams, Chambers, schools, Work Ready Community Committees, economic development, Fort Campbell Strong, Northern Middle Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board, and other community agencies.

Other required duties of the WKWB include:

- Convening, brokering, and leveraging system stakeholders to develop the local plan. The WKWB is trying to identify non-federal expertise/resources to support workforce development activities.
- Convening and engaging employers in concert with other entities to promote business representation on the board, support utilization of the business services workforce group system and engage in workforce investment activities, meet business needs, support economic growth, and develop/implement proven/promising strategies to meet the skill needs and expand employment and career advancement in in-demand industry sectors or occupations.
- Leading implementation of career pathways with secondary and postsecondary education.
- Leading efforts to identify, promote and disseminate proven/promising strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers and jobseekers including individuals with barriers to employment.
- Developing strategies to use technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, and workers and jobseekers.
- Conducting program oversight for the career center system.
- Negotiating/reaching agreement on regional/local performance with CLEOs and the Governor.
- Selecting one-stop operators, providers of youth activities, eligible providers of training services and providers of career services (DSP).
- Coordinating activities with education and training providers, including adult education and literacy, Carl Perkins and the Rehabilitation Act.
- Developing a budget for the local board consistent with the local plan and the duties of the local Board, subject to the joint approval of the chief elected officials and the WKWB.
- Assessing annually the physical and programmatic accessibility of KCC in the local area.

The Pennyriple Area Development District is the sub-recipient/fiscal agent for the WKWB and the Purchase Area Development District is the DSP. The staff hired under the Direct Services contracts provide the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services through the career centers. The Purchase Area Development District is currently the OSO.

Key stakeholders in the region include the WKWB, WIOA required core partners, WIOA recommended partner agencies, other KCC partners, business leadership, chambers, economic development, and local elected officials. The WKWB has worked with our partners, cooperated and collaborated through consortium agreements and memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to operate and manage the Career Centers. Financial arrangements negotiated for KCC infrastructure and resource sharing are developed, and the infrastructure funding agreements finalized as a part of the MOU. As the KCC and its activities transition with WIOA and employer needs evolve, the WKWB will continue to build relationships. By further reducing siloes, barriers to service, and avoiding duplication, the centers can provide superior services to all customers.

- B. (L) Describe how the LWDB, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable and stackable). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]**

In spring of 2021, Kentucky has started to reopen person-to-person services for unemployment insurance and many other partner agencies continue to offer services virtually. We are aware COVID will impact us as we continue to lean on technology and more individualized approaches, and we will see a transition in our workplace and see a change in some career pathways. We also believe this focus on technology might open some barriers for individuals with disabilities because people will not be mandated to go through offices. This may also assist individuals with childcare issues or single parents as they are able to work remotely. As previously mentioned, the WKWB works with core partners, KCC Partners, OSO, DSP, and other community agencies to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for all eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, through collaboration and leveraging resources of core programs and partners. This communication and coordination of resources is key in maximizing customer service delivery and efficiency. KCC services and workshop offerings are shared among the agencies. Available offerings and funding are reviewed to ensure customers are receiving the most up to date information and appropriately allocated to help the most-in-need individuals overcome barriers and return them the workforce quickly. Efficient service, co-enrollment, and partnership allow agencies to maximize resources and serve more individuals. The KCC staff will review current LMI data and available jobs with customers to encourage development of high demand career pathways, including short-term and long-term career planning with stackable credentials. Examples of common educational program and credentials that are required for high demand occupations in this area include: AAS in Advanced Integrated Technology (Electrical Maintenance Techs, Utility Tech, Operator), AAS in Health Science Technology (EMT, CMT, Medical Coding, Substance Abuse Recovery Coach), and Class A CDL (OTR Truck Driver, Lineman Apprentice).

Individuals seeking services are co-enrolled, as appropriate, in core programs. The benefit to co-enrollment and common performance is that there is greater communication among partners and less duplication of efforts. When adults and dislocated workers are co-enrolled, they receive more information about educational opportunities, wrap-around services, and are able to access multiple KCC activities. This approach encourages individuals to move toward long-term success by completing a postsecondary credential or industry-recognized certification. Co-enrollment also allows partners to leverage resources, while also providing a more comprehensive service delivery strategy that meets the demands of the most in need customers with several barriers to employment.

The focus on sectors, high demand jobs, and career pathways aligns education, career and technical education, training providers, and workforce development programs. It allows the KCC to meet the skill requirements of employers in high-demand occupations, while offering students, job seekers and workers the skill needs to succeed in available jobs. The KCC Business Service Team (BST), in partnership with the state team from the Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services (OEAS), work closely to meet the needs of employers. It is the BSTs responsibility to speak to businesses on the ground, to determine the skills that are necessary to obtain jobs and the skills necessary for employees to maintain employment. Many of these skills include simply showing up for work and being willing to learn; these soft skills are consistently discussed at employer site visits and local SHRM meetings. Soft skills preparation is often handled through workshops or Ky Career Edge, a career exploration tool with various modules that job seekers can utilize to prepare them for the workforce. In addition to soft skills, most high demand jobs in this area require a high school diploma or equivalent, basic knowledge of math and science, the ability to physically lift material and maneuver equipment, and computer/IT skills. Specific certifications are required depending on the position itself. KCC BST works with employers and education providers to facilitate development of high demand short-term career pathways and apprenticeships for customers to select (such as the FAME or apprenticeship program) as an alternative to traditional classroom training. Our area has active FAME chapters through Hopkinsville Community College and West Kentucky Community and Technical College. The goal is to link academic credits and credentials with a seamless system of career exploration, preparation and skill upgrades, and to provide multiple entry and exit points spanning secondary, postsecondary, adult and workplace education.

In July of 2020, the WKWB received COVID-19 National Dislocated Worker Grant funding in response to the major dislocations and layoffs in our area, and from that, a program called Employment Recovery was established to assist workers negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Services include short-term training opportunities in high demand jobs, temporary employment to assist with humanitarian relief, and a wide range of supportive services based on individual need. This program assists our area's job seekers, while also providing our employers with a pipeline of eligible workers.

The WKWB works closely with its partners to improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate, portable certification, or stackable credential) as noted in WIOA. To better understand the occupations in local high demand sectors, individuals are provided LMI data and counseled by KCC Career Coaches. The LMI data regarding available opportunities allows them to make an informed decision regarding their occupational path and a better understanding of future trainings available, based on their short and long-term career goals. KCC Career Coaches will encourage their customers to look at job descriptions for the positions they are interested in applying to, to make sure they have the skills and certifications required for the job. KCC Career Coaches engage with their customers in multiple areas, including discussions on certifications needed to obtain the desired job, wage rates, available job openings, and future employment trends.

- C. **(L) Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies and services that are and will be used to:**
- 1. Meet needs and facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies;**
 - 2. Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;**
 - 3. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs;**

4. **Strengthen linkages between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance programs; and**
5. **Increase competitive, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities**

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 initiatives, use of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A) and (B), and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

1. The WKWB utilizes the local KCC BST for outreach, as well as meeting the needs of local and regional employers. The BST staff review LMI data, assisting the Board in making informed decisions regarding which sectors should be targeted. Whether through SHRM groups or plant managers meetings, local economic development, or Chambers of Commerce, the BST strives to be where the businesses are doing business, to facilitate and engage employers. The WKWB, in cooperation with KCC partners, value employer interaction and are constantly gathering data on the needs of the employers and sectors. LMI helps the local area see the big employment picture, but local employers sharing their day-to-day needs help the KCC target needed skills to enhance our local communities and build a stronger regional workforce. It is critical to include all levels of employers, from small employers to large high-demand industries. The WKWB engages their business members, economic development groups, regional employers, OEAS staff, and Chambers for direction and input, whether in focus groups, workforce surveys, wage surveys, or training/skill analysis. Hiring events, job fairs, KCC events, training and workshop planning are based on employer recommendations, as well as customer feedback. Employer input is necessary for job seekers to choose a stable career or occupation.

2. The WKWB local area has worked for years to align and streamline services in the region, while building and strengthening services for businesses. Under the guidance of a business led focused board, BST staff members spend time in the community reaching out to employers. The strategies have been developed to best meet the needs of employers and are revised as necessary. The area continues to analyze the regional needs and identify potential strategies to best serve the specific workforce or sector needs of the region. The WKWB will continue to refine sector strategies as the needs of the labor market change, based on new data.

3. The WKWB has developed a strong partnership and working relationship with every economic development agency in each of our 17 counties. The BST is composed of KCC and workforce partners, including economic development professionals. BST membership includes staff from the WKWB, CDO, KCTCS, Kentucky Farmworker's Program, regional and community economic development groups, Adult Education- Skills U, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). The BST regularly communicate to discuss individual employer needs, sector needs, or community economic development needs. Staff are often asked to present information to prospects, at local economic development leadership's request. BST staff is requested to attend/present at local hiring events, job fairs, program offerings, Work Ready Community Meetings, TPM Events, workforce and community activities, Chamber events and committees, and SHRM/PIMA support. The WKWB utilizes their strong relationship with economic development, core partners, and chamber memberships when reaching out to others in our region.

4. Historically, the WKWB and the Kentucky CDO have been strong partners in the KCC system. With the reorganization, some Career Centers no longer exist in the region. It is important to note that we did not have unemployment insurance activities in Career Centers when unemployment was being hit hard in the spring of 2020. Now in April of 2021, we are starting to see the return of in person UI services to career center locations. Career Center hub locations in Hopkinsville and Paducah are opening back up to the public after being shut down due to COVID-19, by appointment only, however career center affiliate sites in our area will remain closed

to the public, due to not having CDO staff on site at this time. We are unsure how further workflow or relationships will develop because we have not moved past to the immediate response of the pandemic. Staff communicate by phone, email, and virtual platforms in order to best assist customers and make necessary referrals. WIOA DSP staff share outcomes following training programs, such as on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship, youth, incumbent worker or customized training programs with CDO and KCC Partner staff. BST staff are represented by multiple agencies, including CDO. These collaborative partnerships allow a flow of information for co-enrolled participants and efficient referrals across agencies.

5. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has been an integral partner in providing career center services to individuals with disabilities. Career center staff work with OVR staff to provide support for appropriate occupational support (if necessary) to prepare the individual for competitive and integrated employment opportunities, appropriately aligned with the customer's interests, strengths, and abilities. Many customers are able to find employment with career services alone. However, if a customer needs additional assistance or special services, OVR is consulted for testing, counseling, and recommendations (e.g., OJT hours and appropriate worksite accommodations) for co-enrolled participants. OVR Blind services staff also have a presence in the regions' KCCs as needed, to better coordinate services for participants.

D. (L)(R) Describe local and regional efforts to support and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5) and 20 C.F.R. § 679.550-580]

(L) Entrepreneurs and small business owners are the catalyst to economic growth in the region. The WKWB is involved in multiple partnerships to encourage small businesses in the region, including the Kentucky Small Business Development Center, which has a relationship with the Murray State University Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development, GroWest, Mission Vision Partners, local community business incubators, and economic development efforts. Whether making referrals, providing contact information, sponsoring or participating in regional entrepreneurial events, the WKWB is committed to small business growth and economic development initiatives.

WKWB staff put together packets with a listing of local and state assistance available to assist local entrepreneurs. This information packet is available at regional Rapid Response sessions and in the KCC. There is also collaboration with those local economic groups, which have special entrepreneurial programs. Entrepreneurial activities are also available through each of the competitively procured youth contractors, as one of the 14 youth program elements. The western Kentucky region is also home to an annual Regional Entrepreneur Conference, for entrepreneurs in all stages, and their service providers.

Paducah Economic Development has a strong entrepreneurial effort entitled "Entre Paducah". It was founded as a means to help entrepreneurs gain the access to services that will allow their ideas and dreams to become both tangible and successful. Entre Paducah connects entrepreneurs and small business owners with organizations in the region that provide a beneficial service to them. Paducah is also home to Sprocket, an Innovation Lab that's mission is to connect entrepreneurs to resources that help them start and grow companies. They also specialize in growing talent for local tech enabled companies and startups. During COVID, Sprocket manufactured personal protective equipment for hospitals, nursing homes, law enforcement, and private individuals across Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri. In August 2020, Sprocket formally launched and announced their partnership with Codefi. In Cape Girardeau, Codefi honed a strategy that mixes culture building with investment, workforce training, and programming that resulted in the creation of 50 startups, 180 jobs, and \$30 million investment in that community. Codefi began that same programming in the Paducah region. In October 2020, Sprocket hosted Entrepreneur Roundtables at the Paducah Chamber of Commerce. Sixty-two

Paducah entrepreneurs, business owners, and community leaders met the founders of four tech companies who relocated to Cape Girardeau in 2020 through a program called 1ST\$50K. Paducah will launch its own 1ST\$50K in 2021. A West Kentucky Innovation Challenge, funded in part by a Small Business Development Grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will award up to \$200,000 in innovation development service grants to turn tech-based business ideas into reality. Innovators living in the following counties will be eligible for these funds: McCracken, Livingston, Ballard, Hickman, Fulton, and Carlisle.

Hopkins County also has a robust entrepreneurial presence. In Madisonville, there is co-working space called the Innovation Station, where members can rent space and collaborate with other business owners. This space is also the office headquarters for Madisonville-Hopkins County Economic Development. There are multiple entrepreneurial themed events held at the Innovation Station, including Entrepreneurial Happy Hours, which is a speed-networking event for local business owners. During COVID, these events and other workshops geared toward business startups were held virtually; at least two entrepreneurial themed workshops are conducted on a monthly basis. Madisonville-Hopkins County Economic Development also created a community space of makers, crafters and inventors in Madisonville called Kentucky Movers and Makers; this is where entrepreneurs, business owners, or anyone interested can go to utilize special tools and equipment such as 3D printing, engraving, welding, woodworking, to enhance their business or for use on a special project. It is a community geared toward makers, crafters, and inventors. Two community classes or trainings are held on-site at the Maker Space each week. Recent events have included topics on Hand Lettering 101, Wood Shop 101, Cookie and Cake Decorating, and Embroidery.

In 2020, the well-known 1 Million Cups program was rebranded and became known as Innovate + Caffeinate. In our region, the Hopkins County Chapter and the Murray-Calloway County Chapter joined forces and provided these sessions virtually and on a weekly basis during the height of COVID. A meet up is being planned for June 2021. The GroWest initiative represents a rejuvenated and refocused approach to building vibrant clusters of innovation across West Kentucky and growing the overall economy. It was launched to build partnerships among universities, companies, entrepreneurs, accelerators and incubators, and other public and private entities. Support organizations for GroWest are located in Paducah, Madisonville, and Murray. These include, but are not limited to, Sprocket in Paducah, Kentucky Innovation Station & Movers and Makers in Madisonville, the Murray State University Center for Computer and Information Technology and the Murray State University Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development. This initiative seeks to create support and expand the ecosystem for tech-based firms.

E. (L) Describe the type and availability of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The WKWB serves WIOA eligible youth ages 16-24 (including youth with disabilities) through the KCC, contracted youth providers, self-service activities, school systems, Ft. Campbell partnerships, partner referrals, local agencies, Community and regional colleges. Core and workforce partner agencies under WIOA, as well as local agencies, help provide needed youth elements and referrals for service. Youth, based on their individual needs and interests, are served at the KCC or referred to the contracted youth providers for services. Outreach, eligibility, assessment and intake are performed through a joint effort among WIOA Direct Services staff, procured youth contractors and the KCC staff to best serve the youth population and meet individual needs of the youth.

Youth program activities are awarded via a competitive procurement, review and negotiation process. The WKWB will follow the fiscal agent's procurement policy (including federal and state guidance) in competitively securing youth services within the 17 counties of the western Kentucky region. The WKWB contracts with the competitively procured entities to provide youth services as described in the scope of work. Youth served shall meet the WIOA criteria as specified in the Act. A minimum of 75% of the funds will be allocated to program activities serving out-of-school youth. The local area encourages work-based learning (WBL) and targets at least 20% of funding for work experience and other WBL activities, with contractors asked to place at least 40% of contracted participants in WBL. By providing WBL experiences with private and public sector businesses, the youth will gain valuable experience and workplace essential skills that are crucial to obtaining and retaining unsubsidized employment in the future. The WKWB youth policies and procedures align with the state policy and target services aligned to achieve performance goals and benefit the youth participants.

The youth contracts each detail how that contractor will provide services, the offerings available, and how each of the 14 program elements themselves, through a referral or a partnership will be provided. All youth contractors must make all 14 elements available as a part of their programs and describe in their RFP (contract scope of work) how they will provide each element and the available services, if selected to serve youth. Contractors are encouraged to partner with existing local, state, or national entities that can provide program element(s) at no cost to the LWDB. The 14 program elements represent a variety of services to be provided based on the individual's objective assessment and ISS and all must be made available to each individual. Some services may overlap across multiple program elements. The 14 elements are:

- Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, Dropout Prevention Services
- Alternative Secondary School Services or Recovery Services
- Work Experiences- Work Based learning to include work experience, internship, on the job training, job shadowing, summer employment, or pre-apprenticeship
- Occupational Skills Training
- Education Offered Concurrently With Workforce Preparation and Training for a Specific Occupation
- Leadership Development Opportunities
- Supportive Services
- Adult Mentoring
- Follow-Up Services
- Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
- Financial Literacy Activities
- Entrepreneurial Skills Training
- Services That Provide Labor Market Information
- Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities

Any referral for the youth to receive an element from another source, such as OVR, will include the contractor following up with the youth and agency, to assure the youth received all the services intended, and were successful with that referral. Services and referrals, as well as partner services, will assure youth obtain assistance overcoming any barriers to employment.

- F. **(L) Describe how the LWDB coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and to avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]**

The WKWB works closely with local education providers and the WKWB Youth Committee to align services and make appropriate referrals. Boards of Education, Murray State University, and the three area Community Colleges are a part of WKWB meetings and share updates with staff and KCC. The WKWB has been working closely with all secondary, post-secondary education programs/activities, Career and Technical Education, area technology centers, adult education, and community projects to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services ensuring that we take full advantage of all funds.

The WKWB BST staff participate in the KY FAME, GED Plus, Apprenticeship, Career Pathway Projects and Accelerating Opportunity (AO) initiative, encouraging the KCC to make referrals to the programs. These efforts focus on creating effective pathways to credentials for low-skilled adults, in order to earn the credentials needed to get a family sustaining job, reform how education is delivered to adults. By integrating basic skills education with technical training, while providing wrap around services that include instructional and career supports for adult learners, more low skilled adults can re-enter the workforce at family sustaining wages. The WKWB is actively engaged with the TRACK program in Christian County, as well as efforts to increase occupational skill levels for young adults in the River counties. The partnerships with local industries and the colleges have been invaluable in opening up new training opportunities in the area.

While engaging in “Work Ready” Community projects with local counties, workforce and BST staff are involved in initiatives to raise educational completion levels and assist adults in returning to school. The WKWB also works with the Kentucky Career and Technical Education initiative to identify high demand sectors as well as refinement/alignment of the program offerings to current sector needs in the area technology centers. Todd County, in partnership with Hopkinsville Community College opened the Todd County Career Path Institute to bring occupational training closer to home for rural residents.

Workforce staff are kept “in the loop” regarding the creation of new programs by KCTCS, and these relationships encourage secondary and post-secondary providers to make cross-referrals to the KCC. Madisonville Community College has expanded their program offerings to include short-term training options such as Lineman, CDL Class A, and Welding, which have been popular options for students in our area. In March 2021, MCC announced the launch of an aviation training program, the first of its kind in the KCTCS system. This was created in partnership with Madisonville-Hopkins County Economic Development and the City of Madisonville. The helicopter flight training program will be housed at the Madisonville Regional airport; fixed wing training will be offered at the Muhlenberg County Airport. As students advance through the program, they will be able to earn academic certificates and ratings from the Federal Aviation Administration for private pilot, instrument pilot, commercial pilot and as certified flight instructors for both fixed wing and helicopters.

WKWB BST staff are also asked to participate in educational events, such as L.I.F.E, a reality store for middle school students and Career Day events at local middle and high schools. Staff often present to local Chambers, service groups, and local education partners regarding workforce topics such as career preparation, where to find jobs, employment barriers, and the importance of soft skills. These events have been halted over the past year, due to COVID and having to follow social distancing protocol.

- G. **(R)** Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area including facilitating childcare, transportation and other appropriate supportive services for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The West Region has determined it is not feasible to coordinate supportive services at this time, due to the difference in the funding levels for each local area. The region has shared information regarding available resources for supportive services to widen the options for individual customers.

H. (L) Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local One-Stop Delivery System, maximizing coordination of services provided by DWI merit staff and the LWDBs contracted service providers to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The WKWB, OSO, and DSP will continue to partner with core WIOA partners, DWI merit staff, and local partners in order to provide quality services in the area career centers. Through March 2021, our area's career centers were closed to the public due to the pandemic. Career center locations have started opening back up, by appointment only, to assist individuals with unemployment insurance issues. This area has built strong relationships among partners over the years to overcome the lessening resources, while still maintaining quality service in serving our customers. Communication is the key to avoiding duplication and efficiently serving our joint customers. By working together, reducing duplication, and coordinating efforts across all partnering agencies, customers receive the quality services they have come to expect. The WKWB supports and is involved with the state and KWIB initiatives as a western Kentucky Career Center team effort with our core and career center partners. The WKWB in coordination with DWI merit staff and partners from core programs provides joint training for career center staff on Trade, Rapid Response, KEE Suite, Business Services, Salesforce/KIBES, new initiatives, new policies, case management practices, and KCC services.

WIOA training focuses on the identified sectors and current LMI. In addition to providing individualized career services, training service and follow-up, WIOA staff will focus on providing comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of workers, which may include the following:

- diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools for career goal identification,
- in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals,
- development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of information about the eligible training providers (as described in proposed § 680.180),
- group counseling and individual counseling, including career planning,
- short-term, pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training,
- internships and work experiences that are linked to careers,
- workforce preparation activities,
- financial literacy services,
- virtual career exploration tools through programs such as Career Edge,
- out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance, and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

I. (L) Describe how the local board will collaborate with SkillsU, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11) and WIOA Sec. 232. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)] This will include a discussion of how the Local WDB will carry out the review of local applications

submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA sec. 107(d)(11) (A) and (B) (i) and WIOA sec.232. Adult Education and Literacy grant review training and process oversight to be provided by the Kentucky Office of Adult Education.

WIOA identifies Adult Education and Literacy as one of the core partners in the career center system. Adult Education continues to be an invaluable partner in the region, assisting with career center customers, as well as state and local initiatives. Adult Education has been an onsite partner in several of the career centers over the years, however, recent funding reductions have reduced Adult Education's presence in the centers. Their service has also been reduced and heavily impacted by the pandemic. They have recently started opening back up to in-person services. The coordination between WKWB and Adult Education on projects and assistance provided to customers has changed many lives. Additional coordination can only magnify that assistance and increase performance. The local area looks forward to additional dialogue, planning, and implementation of additional strategies. Adult Education feels this planning must start at the state level, since they design the proposal process for service providers.

The WKWB selected volunteers to read, review, and evaluate the Adult Education proposals and work with Adult Education to review local applications for providing adult education and literacy activities under Title II for the local area. Staff provided information for WKWB members on the additional alignment details to help them determine whether such applications were consistent with the local plan, initiatives and performance rates. The WKWB provided Board feedback and recommendations to the state. They provided a review of the proposal and how on the provider(s) could better align with/promote KCC services and sectors and the plan.

J. (L) Please describe the direction given by the Governor and the local WDB to the One-Stop Operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services that will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individual who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134 (c)(3)(E).

The CDO Priority of Service policy requires that at least 50% of all adults served in career and training services are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and/or individuals who are basic skills deficient. This priority assists low income, under-employed adults in gaining the skills needed to obtain employment, return to work or advance their career, and opens new entry level positions for youth. The WKWB had implemented Adult income thresholds prior to WIOA, so the policy falls in line with current efforts. The KCC partners and state staff discussed how to assure all partners had data entered for co-enrollees, not referred to WIOA, to reflect their income status.

K. (L) Please describe how the Kentucky Career Centers are implementing an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by One-Stop Partners.

The WKWB and KCC are using an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system (Focus, KEE Suite, and Salesforce/KIBES) to track and share communication and service levels of common participants and employers. This system allows staff to serve individuals as they arrive and quickly see what services have been provided. Customers are able to receive services from wherever they are, and with Skype and Zoom, customers can get their questions answered by subject matter experts at any location in the local area without having to travel to a specific location or KCC. Websites have been upgraded, social media used to share hiring events and job fairs, and the new case management system allows customers to do job search and receive services on their phones. Customers are also able to utilize the Career Edge program for career exploration, which is another useful virtual tool, as in-person career services are still unavailable.

Chapter 4: Program Design and Evaluation

- A. **(L)** Describe the One-Stop Delivery System in the local area including:
- 1. The local board's efforts to collaborate with employers, to provide continuous improvement of business services and to operate a "Job-driven" delivery system.**
 - 2. The local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers services, including contracted services providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]**
 - 3. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the One-Stop Delivery System in remote areas, using technology and other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]**
 - 4. How entities within the One-Stop Delivery System, including One-Stop Operators and One-Stop Partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, if applicable, 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. Also, include how the LWDB will providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]**
 - 5. Provide a description of the process used by the local board, consistent with subsection (d), to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the Local Plan, prior to submission of this plan. Local Areas are expected to provide accessible meetings for individuals with disabilities in this public hearing component.**
- 1. The WKWB is committed to continuous improvement of its business services and to operate a sector focused "job driven" career center system. Through active communication with employers and involvement in SHRM, PIMA, Chambers, economic development and Work Ready Communities, the BST is aware of the needs of employers and strives to be even more responsive. Through monthly BST meetings, webinars, conference calls, regional trainings and planning discussions among partners, the WKWB continues its collaboration with employers and core partners to develop stronger employer relationships. As the Board strengthens its sector-based partnerships, and job driven efforts based on the LMI, business feedback, and the regions' planning process, creative solutions to meet workforce needs are developed and implemented to assist employers.**
 - 2. The WKWB will strictly adhere to the WIOA eligible training provider's requirements and the State's policy on eligibility of training providers. The WKWB understands that providers will have a system of reporting their performance so an appropriate review of their performance can be available to staff and customers selecting a training provider. The local area may remove providers that do not meet local performance goals. High demand sectors, corresponding occupations and job openings are required for training selections. Contracted training providers have been selected through the review process in which a statement of need with supporting documentation is required to address employment/ occupational needs in the area. Reporting, reviewing, and monitoring of the contracted providers is ongoing. Prior year performance is submitted in the state system for the year prior before any consideration of future funding is made. The state implemented a revised eligible training provider's application and process that is in place under WIOA.**

The WKWB complies with this online process and utilizes the state system to assure that accredited Providers who meet required performance are the ones on the ETPL.

3. The need for technology and easy access for career center services has increased greatly during the pandemic. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, customers have been able to complete eligibility criteria and appointments regarding training with a Career Coach over the phone, which has increased the amount of job seekers we have been able to serve, in addition to providing a quick turnaround for eligibility completion and training approvals. It has also made it possible to deliver services more economically and efficiently, as it has greatly reduced unnecessary staff travel between centers. Each Career Coach has been provided a cell phone specifically for work calls, where job seekers can contact them regarding services.

The career center's website, the state's website, phone, and social media availability allows access from remote areas. We also continue to utilize newspaper, TV, radio interviews, and social media to release information about events, job fairs, services and job openings in our area. In the event of recent closures and layoffs, the WKWB has offered Rapid Response services for job seekers virtually, providing all of the necessary information regarding registration in FOCUS, UI benefits, and supportive services with the help of our partners through Zoom or a similar virtual platform.

4. At the time of the review of the application for certification as a Kentucky Career Center, each submitting center was required to submit supporting documentation of their compliance with Section 188 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. The reviews were completed by OVR, citing their recommendations for improvement or upgrade to existing state facilities. These reports are on file with the Department for Workforce Investment and/or the Kentucky CDO. In each application, it was noted that the assistive technology previously provided by OVR for the resource room was obsolete. It was stated OVR would look into appropriate repairs or replacements with staff training on how to use and provide appropriate customer assistance. To date, the Cabinet has not addressed these issues.
5. The plan is posted online, notices are sent out on social media, board members, and interested persons receive notification of the opportunity for public comment.

B. (L) Describe the local board's assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(7) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580].

The WKWB has made available all applicable WIOA employment activities, career services, and training services. The career center staff offer services to clients based upon assessments. For employment activities, the Board has identified, at a minimum: direct referral to jobs, co-enrollment, career assessment, individual employment planning, LMI data, workshops, and referrals for outside services/to agencies with specific services.

Currently, our local market is brimming with job opportunities, however it is often difficult finding employees with the necessary skill set. In order to close that skill level gap, available training includes: individualized occupational training (ITA), on-the-job training (OJT), incumbent workers training, transitional jobs, customized training, KY Fame, apprenticeships, work experience, and other alternative work-based learning and training services as training options for customers. Additionally, many employers are citing problems with "soft skills," such as attendance, poor attitude, and lack of communication. The WKWB is encouraging KCC Career Coach to counsel with the local job seekers using Kentucky Career Edge, a career preparation tool that has numerous

modules and tools that go over methods to get hired and stay employed. The WKWB will continue to promote and highlight work-based learning opportunities under WIOA guidance.

C. (L) Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580].

The WKWB continues to follow the state policy on the implementation of Rapid Response services and activities. All Rapid Response activities are conducted by local staff with the understanding that state staff is available for assistance. The WKWB has an experienced and established local Rapid Response Team to oversee and carry out Rapid Response activities in the region. The local area first coordinates available services with the impacted employer and then subsequently notifies local team members and local leadership of the plan to respond to the layoff notification. Staff developed and follow a local Rapid Response plan and determine the needs and services of the company and the employees for the session. All staff are emailed the response plan and necessary timeframes. Local officials and local economic development professionals are contacted regarding the event.

As mentioned previously, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rapid Response activities for several employers were conducted most recently on a virtual platform, with partnering agencies participating and providing all of the necessary information to the affected workers. The local area documents all activities, assures procedures are followed, and data is entered in the system as requested. The state Rapid Response team is notified of all layoffs in the region and is the recipient of all original WARN notifications.

D. (L) Provide a description and analysis of youth workforce activities including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. Describe strategies the LWDA will use for increasing the WIOA minimum Out-of-School Youth expenditure rate to 75 percent. Provide information on types of work-based learning activities planned for youth. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

As detailed in Chapter 3, part E, the WKWB serves WIOA eligible youth ages 16-24 (including youth with disabilities) through the career center system, contracted youth providers, self-service activities, school systems, Ft. Campbell partnerships, partner referrals, local agencies and regional colleges. The WKWB has been moving toward serving more out-of-school youth over the last few years. Prior to WIOA, the funding priority determined by the Workforce Board was already over 60% for out-of-school youth services obligations.

The WKWB recently decided to extend the contracts for our current contracted youth providers for another year, and the contractors are currently working to develop a budget for their 4th year of procurement. As they have been continuously affected by COVID, the Board felt that this would give the contractors the ability to serve as many youth as possible in our region. Youth served shall meet the WIOA criteria as specified in the Act, Regulations and guidance. A minimum of 75% of the funds shall be allocated to program activities serving out-of-school youth. The local area encourages work-based learning (WBL) and targets at least 20% of funding for work experience and other WBL activities. Youth contractors have pledged to do additional WBL through paid work experience (up to 500 hours each), internship (up to \$5,000 each) and job shadowing (up to 80 hours). The local area is working with regional business leaders to stimulate interest in on the job training, pre-apprenticeship programs, and other out of school youth services. The local area is assisting the local colleges with KYFAME programs, as well as the school system with TRACK, WRSI Initiatives and other internship-based programs.

The required 14 Program elements are made available, as a part of all contracted programs selected to serve youth. Any referral processes for the youth will include follow-up with the referral to assure the youth receives all the services intended. Services and referrals, as well as partner services, will assure youth have the opportunity to be successful by helping them overcome any barriers to employment.

E. (L) Describe local board actions to become and remain a high-performing local board, consistent with the factors developed by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB).

The WKWB submitted original base-line documentation in the initial year Kentucky organized its program under the KWIB's initiative. The WKWB consistently performs its duties to remain in line with the criteria developed by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board. The WKWB is committed to excellence in its local/regional role as the convener and broker for workforce development in the region. This local area has consistently met and exceeded USDOL performance having never failed any performance standard- a benchmark not achieved by several of the local areas with this designation. The WKWB will still strive for continued performance and a high return on its investments plus Board leadership initiatives. Kentucky's High Performing Board process was organized under WIA but the continuation of the certification process lapsed as of June 30, 2015, so it is was not a valid process at the time of the plan.

The Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) Dashboard is an interactive tool designed to display near real-time workforce information for Kentucky's 10 LWDA's. The dashboard features an interactive map that illustrates LWDA performance and rankings establishing a foundation for understanding strengths as well as challenges facing LWDA's throughout the commonwealth.

F. (L) Describe how training services will be provided in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G), the process and criteria for issuing individual training accounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)] This should include how contracts will be coordinated with the use of Individual Training Account's and how the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs.

All adult, dislocated worker and/or out-of-school youth that seek services from WIOA, through the KCC system, will have access to individualized career services and training services depending on their individual needs and assessments. There is no sequence of services mandated under the federal statute.

WIOA Career services may include at a minimum:

- Determination of program eligibility;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation regarding services available;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes (including skills gaps) and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services;
- Job search and placement assistance and in appropriate cases, career counseling, including:
- Provision of information on high demand industry sectors and occupations; and
- Provision of information on nontraditional employment; and
- Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, such as providing information and referral to specialized business services not traditionally offered through the one-stop system;
- Provision of referrals to and coordination with activities with other programs and services within the one-stop system and/or other workforce development programs;
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible

training providers of training services, youth providers, career and technical education providers, adult education providers, and providers of vocational rehabilitation services;

- Provision of information in formats that are usable by and understandable by customers regarding local area and one-stop performance;
- Provision of information in formats that are usable by and understandable by customers relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance;
- Referral for supportive services or assistance, as appropriate;
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment assistance;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial assistance;
- Services, if determined appropriate, in order for an individual to obtain/retain employment, consisting of:
 - Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skills levels;
 - Diagnostic testing;
 - In-depth interview and evaluation to identify employment barriers and goals;
 - Development of an individualized employment plan;
 - Group counseling;
 - Individual counseling;
 - Career planning;
 - Short term prevocational services;
 - Internships and work experience linked to careers;
 - Workforce preparation activities;
 - Financial literacy services;
 - Out-of-area job search assistance and/or relocation assistance; or
 - English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs
 - Follow up services for up to 12 months.

Training services may be used to provide services to eligible adults, dislocated workers and out-of-school youth, who:

- After an interview, evaluation/assessment and career planning have been determined to:
- Be unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to a higher wage from previous employment;
- Need training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages compare to or higher than wages from employment;
- Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.
- Select programs of training services directly linked to employment in the local area, planning region or another area to which he/she is willing to commute or relocate;
- Are unable to obtain or require additional grant assistance;
- Are determined eligible in accordance with the priority system;
- Maximize customer choice in selection of an eligible provider.

Training services under WIOA may include:

- Occupational skills training, including non-traditional;
- On-The-Job training;
- Incumbent worker;

- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction;
- Training programs operated by the private sector;
- Skill upgrading and retraining;
- Entrepreneurial training;
- Transitional jobs;
- Job Readiness;
- Adult Education and Literacy activities; and
- Customized training.

Individual training accounts (ITA) will be utilized for occupational skills training services as determined in WKWB policy. KCC WIOA DSP staff complete the assessments, determination of training need, and detail the six training criteria in case notes. Staff document the need for training and submits the request for approval. The training approval tab in KEE Suite is completed and is approved/denied by designated Direct Service Provider (DSP) administrative staff. An obligation for training services is also developed. Currently the Board has established a limit of \$15,000 for the training costs, waivable only by the WKWB Director, based upon individual case. Budgeting information is captured for two (2) years (for planning purposes only) depending upon the training term. The training agreement identifies roles and responsibilities of each party.

Chapter 5: Compliance/Performance/Administrative Cost

(Responses below should focus on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements.)

- A. **(R)** Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and Workforce Investment's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. Also, include other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration and coordination. WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14).

The MOU delineates the efforts and services provided by all partner agencies and describes how services will be made available through the KCC.

- B. **(R)** Describe the establishment of the administrative cost arrangement including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate for the region.

The West Region has determined that it is not appropriate to consider pooling administrative costs at this time, due to the fact we have found no reduction in administrative costs. Arrangements for pooling funds to pay for WIOA administrative activities have not been developed because of this reason. The state system, Workforce On-Line Reporting for Kentucky (WORK) System, tracks all system costs by agency and by grant.

- C. **(R)** Describe the establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate on and reach an agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region.

Each local area will continue to negotiate performance goals with the state and will remain ultimately responsible for ensuring performance meets or exceeds the agreed upon goals. Certainly, each of the local areas can learn from one another regarding strategies and efforts to meet or exceed its own local standards. WIOA brought several new performance standards, the change in state case management systems has had some reporting and data collection issues. Once the state is able to fix the system issues, it could be advantageous for the regions to continue to train and strategize together.

D. (L) Identify the local grant recipient of Title 1 responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

The Pennyrile Area Development District has been awarded the contract as the fiscal agent/local grant sub recipient under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by the West Kentucky Workforce Development Board and the local officials. The contract was awarded through a competitive procurement process per the direction and approval of the Department of Workforce Investment.

E. (L) Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes, as well as the process for sole-sourcing, used for procuring goods and services within the local area. This includes but is not limited to the process used to award funds to a one-stop operator and other sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker and youth services. [WIOA Sec.108(b)(16)]

Guidance within the Uniform Administrative Requirement at 2 CFR 200, Office of Budget and Management Circulars (OMB) and the Kentucky Revised Statute, KRS-45A, is being utilized in the contracting and procurement processes along with the fiscal agent/sub recipient procurement policy. Under normal procurement activity, the local workforce development Board will develop a request for proposals and procurement outline utilizing the above references as cited. The state reviews and approves the Direct Service & OSO RFP Process. The request for proposal letters, application packets and proposal guidance shall be made available to potential providers. The fiscal agent/sub recipient shall maintain a list of potential service providers for the local workforce area composed of currently contracted service providers, area coordination agencies, community-based organizations, local educational agencies, educational institutions and others providing a written request for such inclusion. The potential service provider file includes current WKWB service providers, mandated coordination/linkage agencies, public agencies, and requests from private vendors. With the adaptation of procurement announcements on websites, we experience more immediate access and a broader potential distribution than under just mailings to a list.

The WKWB will maintain its accountability and the transparency actions already incorporated in the current processes. The fiscal agent/sub recipient, Pennyrile Area Development District (PADD), is a subdivision of local government as identified in the Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS). Procurement processes of the Pennyrile ADD will allow it to contract with other state related agencies such as community colleges, state universities, school boards, etc., without competitive procurement when expedient, and allowable. In all cases noted above, the principles of high demand occupations and industry needs, adherence to training provider listings, review of budgeting and cost analysis, and oversight principles would be applicable in the award of funds. Transparency shall be a principle applied to all funding awards regardless of funding source or method of award.

The WKWB and its program review committee through its normal proposal selection process under the procurement policies, directives, regulations and the WKWB procurement process outline shall accomplish the selection of service providers. This process includes the application of the WKWB's established restrictions and review for programs as outlined in the request for proposals. The WKWB Executive Committee may also function

with the same authority as the full WKWB in making procurement decisions or in the selection of service providers when the action would expedite procurement.

The request for proposals informs the potential service provider that the application narrative must adhere to the identified target groups, occupational needs, performance criteria and program policy shall be identified and noted in the request for proposals. The program selection criteria shall be issued to the service provider as an adherence guideline in the request for proposals. The WKWB, through its subgroups or committees, may impose specific policies or priorities providing the proposal applicants have been provided the opportunity to conform to any newly applied law, policy or procedure after proposal receipt.

The Purchase Area Development District has been awarded the contract as the Direct Services Provider (DSP) of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by the West Kentucky Workforce Development Board and the local officials through June 30, 2021. The contract was awarded through a competitive procurement process per the direction and approval of the Department of Workforce Investment.

The Purchase Area Development District was also awarded the contract as the One Stop Operator (OSO) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by the West Kentucky Workforce Development Board and the local officials thru June 30, 2021. The contract was awarded through a competitive procurement process per the direction and approval of the Department of Workforce Investment.

Selection of the new service providers shall be updated as soon as the decision is made based on the demonstrated effectiveness of the agency or organization in delivering comparable services on the basis of meeting performance goals, cost, and quality of service and identified need. Programs with past results as 1) relating to performance criteria, and 2) years of program experience, shall be required to provide information to the WKWB, its review committee and any subgroup(s) consulted for funding consideration as to the demonstrated effectiveness of past program efforts. The staff shall prepare a recommendation to the Board for consideration after proposal review. The WKWB, or the Executive Committee, may also review and evaluate, and/or terminate any existing program regarding the conditions of selection for continued funding under criteria outlined in the request for proposals.

Criteria that may be considered by the WKWB to be utilized in the selection of service providers shall be referenced in the request for proposals are potentially as follows:

- No occupational skills training program proposal shall be entered into by any participant unless the levels of skills in the program are approved by the WDB.
- Acceptable proposals must demonstrate a reasonable and justified expectation of reaching USDOL performance criteria, as may be negotiated by the Governor with the local WDB and the local officials.
- Service providers shall demonstrate ability of the agency to delivery comparable or related services at a reasonable cost while meeting performance goals and providing quality training.
- Targeted or special populations served by a proposed training program must be consistent with the targeted groups identified by the local WDB.
- Priority consideration will be given to proposals demonstrating services at a competitive training cost per participant.
- Assurance must be given by the applicant of adequate fiscal and program management capabilities.

- Funds cannot be used to duplicate facilities or services already provided by coordinating agencies available in the local area from Federal, state, or local sources unless it is demonstrated that an alternate would be more effective or more likely to achieve the performance criteria and/or requirements of the Act.
- If applicable, a review of the past performance of an applicant's programs under previous federal/state employment and training programs will be considered but will not cause these programs to have preference over one without prior experience.
- Consideration shall be given to the unemployment rate of the proposal's area to be served as compared to the other local or state unemployment figures.
- Coordination and linkage plans must be addressed by the program applicant with special consideration given to referral to support services as deemed appropriate.

Documented review activities are referenced in the request for proposals. The request for proposals shall target multi-staff rating sheets with aggregate scores provided to the WKWB review committee. Allowability of cost is reviewed per applicant, on a per person basis by the application of reasonable, necessary, and allocable cost principles to the projected proposal budgets. Price comparisons are given with cost analysis performed by the staff as well. Existing programs are reviewed by the WKWB with specific comments in any problem areas of performance, filled slots, expenditures, or operations. All information on existing programs is passed along to the review group. This procurement process promotes a full and open competition by publicly announcing all requests for proposals processes and encouraging competition with specified requirements for review as outlined in the request for proposals guide/WIOA law. The procurement process as briefly outlined within the Guide accompanying the request for proposals application packet notes the following:

- A clear and concise description of information to be provided in the response.
- Required documents to be submitted and reviewed prior to proposal review.
- Background information requirements on the agency as it may relate to administrative ability and expertise in the area.
- Outline of the LWDA's review process plus examples of some of the review forms relating to competitive cost/price areas.
- Conflict of interest and nepotism definitions and review policies within the LWDA.

The WKWB has a written Conflict of Interest Policy regarding the actions of the WDB membership during the proposal review process. The local WKWB staff also adheres to specific guidelines during the request for proposal process as outlined in the WKWB policies. For example, once the request for proposal is issued, staff shall no longer discuss possible project collaboration and funding scenarios except during a specified negotiation session in which a minimum of two staff participate with the potential provider after the review of the proposal. The fiscal agent/sub recipient has a "Code of Ethical Conduct" which includes specific statements relating to the staff's actions during any procurement process. Review teams are also being requested to sign a conflict/confidentiality statement prior to review activity.

The WKWB shall adhere to the appropriate method of procurement as outlined in the Act and Final Regulations depending on the service or item being procured and its purchase price. Due to the WKWB encompassing a rural area with limited providers competing for services, proposal requests may be issued but some may result in being non-competitive based on the response or lack thereof. Non-competition may exist due to the fact that only one local entity in a county or area to be served may be interested in providing services in the rural areas. In such instances, established documentation of provider ability, past experience, and technical evaluations of the proposals are utilized. Historical procurement response numbers are available for reference. The procurement policies of the fiscal agent/sub recipient allow contracts with state agencies (if otherwise

allowable) without competitive procurement processes but the reasonableness of cost is reviewed in a non-competitive process. Small purchase procedures, as outlined in the procurement policy or state price contract items, are most often used for items purchased by the local WDB, the fiscal agent or its subcontractors.

A required budget is available from each potential provider for analysis. Under performance-based contracting, any profit arising from the program operation will be outlined and noted by line item in the budget for staff review and comparison. The local WDB may limit profit to a maximum of ten percent (10%) with approved amounts normally below this limitation and based upon the local reasonableness' tests. Units of local governments shall only be paid under a cost reimbursement basis for services as noted under the regulations and in the contract. The required line-item budget submitted with the proposal provides for a detailed review for staff to ensure that charges shall be made in accordance with the allowable cost category and limitations as outlined in the Act and Regulations. Only those contracted, reasonable, allocable and allowable costs may be charged under the contract/subcontract.

The local WKWB shall maintain a reliable oversight system. Each contracted service provider receives a technical assistance visit within the first 45 to 90 days of operation, with a full monitoring visit occurring later in the contract period. This may be omitted if the entity has been a previous service provider. Desktop reviews and on-site monitoring consider contracted training expectations including enrollment levels, training activity, performance, and expenditures among other requirements as noted in the subcontract or regulations. Specific contract provisions are included to meet the required contract elements as outlined in the Law, Final Regulations or guidance. The basis of payment is also included in the contract and previously outlined in the proposal request. Contract administration issues are outlined not only in the contract language but also in the local WKWB's "Forms and Procedures Manual" of which all training subcontractors receive a copy. The results of this oversight system allow the local WDB to modify contract amounts based on expenditure levels and participant service levels. Corrective action on serious contract issues or violations can result in contract modifications or terminations.

Contract provisions shall be included by the local WDB to ensure that the procured service, method of payment, duration of contract, and compliance with the specific WIOA law and regulations. Assurances of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity are also required items. The grievance protest procedures regarding a procurement decision by the WKWB are outlined in proposal guidelines. The policy states that any grievance or complaint relating to the procurement process shall be addressed in writing to the WKWB Program Review Committee Chairman who shall then address the issue with the full Review Committee. There is a two week response time for the complaint to be acknowledged by the complaining party. No complaint shall be addressed to the full local WDB unless it is the choice of the Program Review Committee or the Executive Committee to do so.

Extensive records and documentation shall be maintained on each potential provider submitting a proposal for review. An original proposal and each successive proposal submitted after negotiations, or upon discussion with the review committee, are maintained. Notes are maintained by staff relating to requested revisions, negotiation discussions, and reviews of submitted materials. All of these items become a part of the procurement file. Extensive material is also printed as a part of the review committee packet to show the evolution of the proposals and any issues reviewed by staff. The local WDB has the responsibility of ascertaining the legal contracting availability/status of potential providers. The local WDB obtains and maintains completed forms from all potential providers regarding their status pertaining to federal contracting requirements.

- F. **(L)** Describe the indicators currently used or intended by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providersthe one-stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

Note: This description may include when, how and by whom the indicators are being employed and if the measured performance and effectiveness are used in a continuous improvement process.

The fiscal agent/sub recipient is the Pennyrile Area Development District. The Fiscal Agent is monitored and audited annually with the work papers reviewed by the state auditor. There are annual audits, state monitoring by various state agencies, local desktop reviews, sub-contractor monitoring and continuous oversight of the programs to ensure the required program activity and scope of work are fulfilled by the fiscal agent, DSP and OSO. Contracted entities are monitored a minimum of annually to ensure appropriate service. The measures for Youth program contractors are negotiated and tracked quarterly and annually, as available, to determine contractor effectiveness. The LWDB staff randomly reviews participant files and performs quarterly file reviews to make sure the DSP staff are following local policy.

The WKWB met or exceeded all federal measures under WIA. The WIOA measures negotiated for adult, youth and dislocated worker programs are still being baselined. There are some reporting and performance errors due to the new cross cabinet systems in place. The state is currently working to correct the performance data pulled from KEE Suite and redesign what is available in reports. As KEE Suite is corrected at the state level, data pulls and reports available will more accurately align with the PIRL and TEGs. The WKWB, DSP, OSO and CDO have joint trainings with the local KCC staff and partners to review performance measures, outcomes, and how KEE Suite and Salesforce/KIBES data entry affects the center and is reflected in state reports.

We the undersigned attest that this submittal is the Regional and Local Plan for our Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) and certify that this plan has been prepared as required and is in accordance with the applicable Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan Guidance.

Local Workforce Development Board GREEN RIVER BOARD CHAIR	Chief Local Elected Official GREEN RIVER
Name: Karen Cecil	Name: Al Mattingly
Title: Chair, Green River Workforce Board	Title: Daviess County Judge Executive
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Local Workforce Development Board WEST KENTUCKY BOARD CHAIR	Chief Local Elected Official WEST KENTUCKY Pennyrile Counties
Name: Jackie Jones	Name: Steve Tribble
Title: Chair, West Kentucky Workforce Board	Title: Christian County Judge Executive
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Chief Local Elected Official WEST KENTUCKY Purchase Counties	
Name: Todd Cooper	
Title: Ballard County Judge Executive	
Signature:	
Date:	

See additional page if more than one Chief Local Elected Official or Local Elected Official signature is required.

Local Elected Official	Local Elected Official
Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Local Elected Official	Local Elected Official
Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:
Signature:	Signature:
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Local Elected Official	Local Elected Official
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