

## West Central Economic Development Region 10 Workforce Plan

### Overview West Central Economic Development Region (EDR 10)

The West Central Illinois Economic Development Region (EDR 10) covers 5,583 square miles and encompasses the nine counties of Local Workforce Area 14. The nine counties include: Adams, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike, Schuyler, and Warren. The most western counties, Adams, Hancock, Henderson and Pike, border the states of Iowa and Missouri. Adams County is included in the Quincy-Hannibal, IL-MO Combined Statistical Area, Hancock County is included in the Fort Madison-Keokuk IA-IL-MO Micropolitan Statistical Area and Henderson County is included in the Burlington IA-IL Micropolitan Statistical Area. The West Central EDR is also part of a Tri-State Region with Northeast Missouri and Southeast Iowa and has been designated by USDA as a Great Region for its community's regional approach to creating economic opportunity and job creation in rural communities. The Tri-State Region also offers unique partnerships and consortium opportunities for the communities served.

The West Central Illinois EDR is located in the heart of the Midwest. The western counties border the Mississippi River. The EDR offers the northernmost port on the Mississippi River for 12-month barge traffic. In addition, the Illinois River borders Brown, Pike and Schuyler counties.

The EDR is a central hub to several major metro (SMSA) areas. Quincy, in Adams County, is at the center of four-lane highways in all directions. The Avenue of the Saints passes just 5 miles to the west and is 4-lane from Canada to the Gulf. Illinois Highway 172 is part of the newly designated CKC (Chicago – Kansas City Expressway) which offers a less-congested alternate route to these popular Midwest destinations. The Knox County Area is served by Interstate 74 running from Indianapolis and the Quad Cities and by Interstate 80 connecting Des Moines and Chicago, in addition, US-34 serves the area as well as US-150.

Seven class-1 rail lines enter Galesburg in Knox County and converge at the BNSF classification yard in Southeast Galesburg. Strategic grade separations within the city allow trains to get in and out of the city quickly and easily without disrupting local automobile traffic. Over 100 trains enter and leave the Knox County community each day. BNSF and Norfolk Southern offer multiple freight trains daily and Quincy also has two daily Amtrak trains to and from Chicago.

The region is within miles of four airports. Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport is approximately 70 miles from Pike County and offers travel to two major airport hubs: Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and Chicago O'Hare International Airport. Galesburg, in Knox County, is conveniently located approximately 45 minutes from both Peoria International Airport and Quad Cities International Airport. Residents and businesses can connect through these two airports with direct flights to more than a dozen cities including Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Minneapolis, and the Phoenix area. Quincy Regional Airport offers flights to St. Louis Lambert Airport and Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

This chapter must discuss how the region has collected and analyzed regional labor market information including the local planning requirements. Additionally, the chapter must demonstrate alignment with education and economic development. Regional teams are encouraged to use the labor market information posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning> that will provide consistency in the data used for regional analysis throughout the state<sup>4</sup>.

**A. Provide an analysis of the:**

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

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

In reviewing and analyzing the labor market data that is available the targeted industries that are also in-demand and will have the most impact on EDR 10, are Health Care, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL), and Manufacturing.

**b. What industries and occupations have favorable location quotients?**

Since EDR 10 is such a rural area it is very difficult to find just one or two favorable location quotients. The favorable quotient in one area may not be the same for all areas. The blue highlights below, show which counties have a favorable quotient for the identified sectors. Trade, transportation and Utilities sector is favorable or neutral (Hancock county) in seven of the nine counties. This is no surprise due to river and train traffic that is available in this area. The second sector, Natural Resources & Mining, has a favorable quotient for six of the nine counties. This is due to the rural nature of the counties and the importance of agriculture. The third sectors with the most favorable quotient are Financial Activities, Information, and Manufacturing. Information is missing data from five of the nine counties.

	Construction	Education and Health	Financial Activities	Information	Leisure & Hospitality	Manufacturing	Natural Resources & Mining	Professional & Business Services	Trade, Transportation & Utilities
Henderson				*					
Warren				*				*	
Knox									
Hancock									
McDonough									
Schuyler				*					
Adams				*					
Brown						*	*		
Pike				*					

Key: Favorable Quotient: Dark Blue Highlights Neutral: Light Blue Highlights Not enough data: \*

<sup>4</sup> For clarity on what resources to use, regions can discuss the most appropriate data to select with their local IDES labor market economist.

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

The industries and occupations that have favorable demand projections based on growth can be found in the chart that is listed below. The area showing the greatest growth is Natural Resources and Mining in six of the nine counties. Manufacturing and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities show the second largest favorable growth in five out of the nine counties. The construction industry is also a growth area.

	Construction	Education and Health	Financial Activities	Employment Information	Growth Leisure & Hospitality	Manufacturing	Natural Resources & Mining	Professional & Business Services	Trade, Transportation & Utilities
Henderson					*				
Warren								*	
Knox									
Hancock									
McDonough									
Schuyler				*					
Adams									
Brown				*		*	*		
Pike				*					

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

Health care and manufacturing are the industries that have the most demand in the region. The reason is that those currently employed in the area are approaching retirement age or leaving the area for other reasons. A sample of those occupations include CNC operators, mechanics, welders, nursing assistants, practical nurses, and truck drivers.

**e. What industries and occupations are considered mature but still important to the economy?**

Retail Trade is the only industry that is considered mature in EDR 10. EDR 10 agrees that classifying Retail Trade as a mature industry is correct and that we do not consider it extremely important to the area due to the number of individuals who are currently doing on-line shopping.

**f. What industries and occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?**

Emerging industries and occupations in EDR 10 are Construction, Utilities, Financial Activities, Professional and Business Services, Leisure and Hospitality, and other services. Leading industries are Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, and Health Care and Social Services. Please see the table listed below:

WEST CENTRAL REGION					
EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR INDUSTRY CATEGORY					
NAICS Title	2016 Employment	Projected 2016 Employment	Net Employment Change 2016-2026	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	98,654	102,915	4,261	4.3%	
Self Employed Workers	4,280	4,211	(69)	-1.6%	0.78
Agricultural Production	7,135	7,205	70	1.0%	5.04
Natural Resources & Mining	415	401	(14)	-3.4%	0.99
Construction	2,822	2,966	144	5.1%	0.63
Manufacturing	9,660	10,247	587	6.1%	1.24
Wholesale Trade	5,862	6,192	310	5.3%	1.64
Retail Trade	11,870	11,641	(229)	-1.9%	1.22
Utilities	301	307	6	2.0%	0.89
Transportation & Warehousing	3,619	3,734	115	3.2%	1.09
Information	1,186	963	(223)	-18.8%	0.68
Financial Activities	4,040	4,169	129	3.2%	0.77
Professional & Business Services	3,843	4,234	391	10.2%	0.3
Educational Services	9,419	9,394	(25)	-0.3%	*
Health Care & Social Services	14,371	16,107	1,736	12.1%	1.18
Leisure & Hospitality	7,935	8,860	925	11.7%	0.79
Other Services	3,761	3,827	66	1.8%	0.93
Government	8,115	8,457	342	4.2%	*

- Leading Industries
- Emerging Industries
- Maturing Industries

Agricultural Production and Utilities are the sectors of greatest employment concentration in this region. Educational services are expected to contract over the course of the projection period. Health Care & Social Assistance is the sector with the highest expected growth rate.

### Western Illinois Occupations by Sector

#### Healthcare

- Nurses
- LPN (in hospitals)
- Patient Access Staff
- Pharmacist
- Physicians
- Dietitian
- Housekeeping
- Environmental Services

#### Education

- Teachers

#### TDL

- Forklift Operators

#### Manufacturing

- Welder
- Electrical Technician
- Maintenance Mechanic
- Tool Room Operator
- CNC Operator
- HVAC

#### Utilities

- Journeyman
- Line Worker
- Pipefitters
- Engineers
- Engineer Technicians

#### Construction Trades

- Highway Construction
- Carpenter
- Electrician
- Iron Worker
- Laborer
- Millwright
- Operating Engineer
- Painter
- Pipefitter
- Plumber

#### Entrepreneurship

#### Agri-Business

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

The source used to determine the targeted industries and occupations is information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that was provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Illinois Community College Board.

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

In analyzing the supply gap analysis for occupations in the targeted industry sectors, most of the occupations require on-the-job training or completion of a certificate program with fewer occupations requiring an associate degree or higher. The occupations requiring a certificate that are in existing and emerging in-demand are mechanics (both diesel and auto), medical assistants, nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, welders, CNC operators and truck drivers. These certificate programs align with local career clusters and pathways.

**3. Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(2));**

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

Health Sciences is one of the career pathways clusters that will be targeted in West Central Illinois region. This pathway aligns with the in-demand existing and emerging sectors and occupations while fulfilling many of the occupations that are showing a supply gap.

The other career pathway cluster that will be targeted in EDR 10 is Manufacturing, TDL, Agribusiness and Construction Trades. This cluster will cover manufacturing, transportation, distribution and logistics which are targeted sectors, but will also cover construction that is also an occupation where demand is greater than supply. All of these occupations fall under the Thinker Career Path.

**b. What are the skills that are in demand in the region?**

There is a set of common skills that are in demand in the region. Those skills are sometimes referred to as soft skills or essential skills. The skills include active listening, critical thinking, speaking, reading comprehension, and time management. Certain occupations also demand coordination, operation monitoring, social perceptiveness and service orientation. These skills are all part of the Thinker Career Path.

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

The region is fortunate to have three great community colleges, one public university, two private colleges and one private university. Even with the high poverty rate in the area, more needs to be done to reach these individuals and enroll them into the Thinker Career Path and into Learn and Earn programs as well as into some type of education beyond high school.

**4. Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill level of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment<sup>5</sup> (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).**

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

Although the West Central EDR has many geographic advantages, due to the region's rural environment there are various challenges the region faces including: 1) limited access to opportunities geared toward major metro areas; 2) inadequate access to broadband; 3) lack of local community transportation services; and 4) decaying infrastructure. There are three major population centers in the West Central EDR which together share 67.2% of the EDR population- Adams County (30.3%), Knox County (23.1%) and McDonough County (13.8%). The main population centers within these counties are Quincy (Adams County) with a population of 40,587; Galesburg (Knox County) with a population of 31,215; and Macomb (McDonough County) with a population of 19,684.

The southern subregion of the West Central EDR (Adams, Brown and Pike counties) are part of the John Wood Community College District. The central subregion of the West Central EDR (Hancock, McDonough and Schuyler counties) are part of three community college districts-Carl Sandburg College, Spoon River College and John Wood Community College. The northern subregion of the West Central EDR (Henderson, Knox and Warren counties) are also part of three community college districts-Carl Sandburg College, Spoon River College and Black Hawk College.

In 2018, the West Central EDR had an estimated population of 216,417 according to the Annual County Resident Population, June 2019. The West Central EDR's population has decreased by 9,043 individuals from 2013. The West Central EDR's population is continuing to age. In 2018, the region's population 65 and older was 20.5% compared to 2013 when the population over 65 was 18.3%. This is also compared to the state of Illinois whose population over 65 was 16% in 2018 and 13.5% in 2013.

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<sup>5</sup> The term "individual with barrier to employment" means one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, single parents, including pregnant single women, long-term unemployed individuals, and such other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment (WIOA Sec. 3(24)).

According to the American Community Survey, 2017, the average poverty rate in the West Central EDR was 15.1%; higher than the state of Illinois poverty rate of 13.5%. According to the US Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates for 2014, the average poverty rate in the West Central EDR was 15.2% and the state of Illinois was 14.3%. In addition, almost 63% of the individuals below poverty are ages 18-64, and just over 53.4% are female. The chart, found below, compares the percent of the population below poverty in EDR 10 to the state of Illinois.

Percent of Population Below Poverty				
Age	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 64	65+
EDR 10	23.8	16.5	46.8	28.1
Illinois	21	15	29	23

Percent of Population Below Poverty by Education Level			
Less than HS Diploma	High School/ GED	Associates or Some College	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
28.1	14.4	10.6	3.4

Based upon data projections, it is expected that the number of persons living in poverty, or in the low to moderate category, will continue to rise. There will continue to be a great need for skills training and development in targeted and employable fields to move individuals and families out of poverty and into employment opportunities that pay a living wage. Services and employment opportunities must be available to address these gaps.

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

The West Central Region has a somewhat diverse population. Additional target populations statistics for EDR10 West Central provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security are:

**Low Income Indicators:**

- TANF Cases Monthly Average 2017 443
- TANF Persons Monthly Average 2017 1,049
- SNAP Households Monthly Average 16,882
- SNAP Persons Monthly Average 33,349

**Disability Indicators:**

- DHS/DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Program FY 2019
  - Served Age Less Than Age 25 1,011

○ Plan Status Less Than Age 25	560
○ Successful Employment Less Than Age 25	92
○ Served Age 25 and Over	596
○ Plan Status Age 25 and Over	204
○ Successful Employment Age 25 And Over	78

**Foster Care Indicators:**

● DCFS Foster Care 2019 by Placement Type Total	452
○ Foster Care (Dept/Fictive/Private)	184
○ Relative	253
○ Institution/Group Home	15
● DCFS Exiting Foster Care 2019 Age 18 And Over	
○ Cook County	439
○ Downstate	406
○ State	845

**DOC Indicators:**

● Adult Prison Population (Committing County)	833
● Adult Parole Population (Residing County)	564
● Juvenile Justice Detention Admissions	311

**Other Indicators:**

● Migrant/Seasonal Farm Workers (WIOA Eligible)	0
● Single Parents	
○ Male Head of Household, No Wife Present	8,120
○ Female Household, No Husband Present	25,974
● Adult Population at Risk	
○ Age 16 and Over w/out a HS Diploma	11,919
○ Immigrants	992

**B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiative for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii)). Plans must answer the following questions:**

**1. How will the workforce partners convene employers, foundations and regional institutions to help lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments?**

In EDR 10, Economic Development entities convene sector meetings, business/education roundtables and other business partnership meetings. The WIB will host meetings with foundations and regional institutions. EDR staff already have a working relationship with the Community Foundation, the Galesburg Community Foundation, the Tracy Family Foundation, the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, and Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center.



## **2. Identify the established active industry sector partnerships in the region (as defined in Illinois' Next Generation Sector Strategies Guide<sup>6</sup>)?**

The West Central Illinois Economic Development Region agrees with the state of Illinois that Sector-based training programs are one of the most effective ways to positively impact jobseekers and employers by reducing costs and increasing productivity for business while increasing wages and career opportunities for workers. In order to accomplish this, there needs to be strong and clear coordination between education and workforce development partners who are already engaging target industries.

EDR 10 sector partnerships will focus on multiple economic development issues that are relevant to our targeted industries in the region. The sector partnerships will be convened by Economic Development entities and the WIB. A true sector partnership should not only address talent pipeline needs but also provide an opportunity for aligning efforts shared by everyone in the targeted industry.

It is not easy to convene targeted industries in the area due to time constraints of the employers within a sector. With this being the case, EDR 10 will continue to work on the sector partnerships that have already been established. Those sector partnerships are in the area of Manufacturing, Transportation, and Healthcare. Labor market statistics continue to support our efforts in those three areas.

## **3. What other sector-based partnerships exist in the region? If any exist, are they business-led and what is their role in planning?**

Strong partnerships with businesses in EDR 10 focus on equipping employers with the support and tools they need to define in-demand skills and articulate those needs to education and training providers. EDR 10 partners have been working with local businesses and are involved in manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution and logistics sector-based partnerships. Strategies to assure that sector initiatives are on target include hosting meetings in counties to determine if there are additional sector priorities within the nine county West Central EDR.

**Manufacturing Sector Partnerships** includes businesses in Adams, Hancock, Knox, McDonough and Warren counties. These partnerships include economic development, the WIB and educational entities. The purpose of the partnerships is to track the emerging trends and economic impacts facing the industry and local companies. Training and workforce needs are a standing agenda item. Several related activities are hosted by the community colleges.

- Carl Sandburg staff host a monthly breakfast discussion on current employer job and skillset needs.
- Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development  
Talent Connect Knox County (TCKC) is a marketing initiative created by the Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development. TCKC is a coordinated, year-

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<sup>6</sup> Regional team are encouraged to review Illinois' Next Generation Sector Strategies Guide that is posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/network/Pages/SectorStrategies.aspx>

round multi-channel marketing push designed to influence area youth and their parents to engage in Career Technical Education in the community's three core growth industries. Specifically, those growth industries are Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare and Transportation. Through strategic marketing and special events, TCKC will make careers in these three growing fields appeal to high school age youth. The goal for the program is to fill to maximum capacity all of the area's high school and community college training programs for these three industries.

- Manufacturing Expo at John Wood Community College includes local businesses, K-12 educational entities, community service agencies, economic development, universities and John Wood Community College. Employers assist with planning the event, student manufacturing tours and employer presentations.
- Manufacturing Career Day at Carl Sandburg College for sophomores and juniors is held on a yearly basis.
- Center for Manufacturing Excellence/Carl Sandburg College holds an annual welding competition.
- MAEDCO Manufacturing Roundtable includes manufacturing companies with Education, Economic Development and the WIB.
- Tri-State Makerfest  
The annual Tri-State Makerfest is a celebration of Manufacturing, Logistics and Skilled Trades. Twenty-one companies set up interactive displays to introduce students and the general public to their products and services. A special session is held for 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who are bused in from Illinois, Missouri and Iowa high schools. In 2019, over 400 students attended this event. Students tour the John Wood Community College's Workforce Development Center to see demonstrations of the equipment used in the JWCC training programs.
- GREDF Counselor/Teacher Manufacturing Company Tours  
The first event was held in October 2020; counselors and teachers were afforded the opportunity to tour local manufacturing companies to gain knowledge about the academics and skills necessary for students to be successful in the manufacturing environment.

**Healthcare Sector Partnerships** include businesses in Adams, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike and Warren counties. These partnerships include economic development, the WIB and education. The purpose of the partnerships is to track the emerging trends in the healthcare industry as well as training and workforce needs. Currently there are several education initiatives to address the training needs. A new round of health sector meetings will begin this summer. Examples of training initiatives include:

- Hancock County Health Careers Fair for high school students.

- Carl Sandburg College offers a variety of health career pathways to meet the needs of local employers. Students can start with the following courses that will get them into the healthcare sector after completing one semester: Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) offered on both the Galesburg and Carthage campuses; Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) offered on the Galesburg campus; and Phlebotomy courses offered in both Galesburg and Carthage. In addition, Carl Sandburg offers one-year certificate programs including Health Information Management and others. Associate of Applied Science degrees are also offered including Registered Nursing. Dual credit is offered for high school students considering a health career pathway. To meet employer needs for surgical technologists, Carl Sandburg has a cooperative agreement with Illinois Central College (ICC) for students to enroll in ICC's Surgical Technology program after completing prerequisite courses at Carl Sandburg College.
- JWCC sponsors Career, Technical and Health Education Career Expos at local High Schools and outer JWCC campus locations. Focus is on high demand occupations and how secondary and postsecondary education aligns with those regional career projections.

**Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) Sector Partnerships** are currently being formed. The WIB hosted several TDL Roundtables in partnership with economic development entities in Adams, Brown and Knox counties.

- DOT Transportation Scholarship is a scholarship that addresses truck driver shortages in the region. DOT Foods located in Mt. Sterling and John Wood Community College have partnered to offer a Truck Driver Training Scholarship program. The program seeks to fund 10 students for 50% of the tuition needed to complete the program. If a student stays employed for three years with DOT Transportation, the entire tuition amount is reimbursed to the student. The employer is responsible for the entire administration of the program. John Wood Community College provides the training once students have been identified to receive the scholarship award.
- G&M Distributors partners with Western Illinois Works, Carl Sandburg College and Spoon River College to offer a four-week CDL training class in the Galesburg area in order to increase the number of individuals with valid CDLs to fill the employers growing need for truck drivers.

#### **4. What other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?**

The following are additional public-private partnerships that exist in the region that could support sector strategies:

- Community College Advisory Boards – local businesses support program review and curricular updates to ensure programs offered at community colleges are relevant and the skills provided are needed in the workforce
- Hancock County high school career fair

- Pike County virtual job fair
- Industry Showcases for Manufacturing, Healthcare and Trades. This is a hands on experience for students to experience different aspects of the targeted industry
- Speakers in the classroom to let students ask questions in their usual setting
- Class tours of area businesses to see what the workplace setting is like and to meet several different employees to ask questions
- Class trips to a facility such as IMTS or the JUMP Center
- Job shadow connections
- Middle school career fair
- Career Signing Day
- High School Career Fair – Quincy Area Vocational Center and Carl Sandburg College host an annual high school Career Fair. This event is heavily attended by the business community. Students have an opportunity to visit business and educational booths to learn more about in demand workforce skills to secure employment
- WGEM (television/radio) sponsored Job Fair - 40-50 employers host a job fair with a local media outlet. The effort is to highlight head of household employment opportunities in the tristate area
- Work Readiness certificate in Pike and Brown Counties was adopted and implemented to recognize students who demonstrate the soft skills that are desired by employers. Soft skills that are vital to the workforce of tomorrow include: organizational skills, respect, team work, positive attitude communication skills and a strong work ethic. This program is unique in that it is based on the core fundamentals of education, skills and performance as a complete unit
- Galesburg Promise is a public, private partnership between the mayors of each city and the business sectors within each community. Galesburg Promise has a similar tuition funding process for graduating seniors. Warren County has the Sampson Promise, a program similar to the Galesburg Promise program
- Who Run The World – GIRLS! GIRLS! sponsored by Great River Economic Development Foundation
- Business Education Roundtables

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

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

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

Generational difference and misunderstandings of workforce expectations are hindering workforce development activities. Business partners are concerned with limited essential skill development of the youth in our communities. The business partners perceive the Millennial generation as having a feeling of entitlement and a lack of desire for forward progress. One partner commented that our “younger generation needs to learn to present their best self.”

Conversely, an obstacle identified by other workforce partners is that there is a need for workplace policy to be updated to meet the needs of potential employees. Businesses need to increase flexibility in scheduling and employee benefits to attract strong candidates and support employee longevity.

Work-life balance is difficult for many of the potential employees in the EDR. As the region is extremely rural, support systems for working family members is limited. Affordable and accessible childcare is one the largest barriers to potential employees. Traveling to work can also be difficult in a rural setting. Although there is limited public transportation in many of the cities, transportation support between towns and from country settings to towns is unavailable. These two factors make working difficult for many families.

Limited economic growth and declining community resources are causing a great export of talent from our area. It also hinders the area from bringing in new talent. Community leaders and their constituents have been tasked with making our communities richer in diversity and culture. Communities need more than economic development to maintain the current talent and attract new talent; communities need to be welcoming and present a strong quality of life.

It is the responsibility of the community, area and region to support gainful employment opportunities. It is the WIOA partners, business partners and community members’ responsibility to create buy-in of potential employees. This can be done through sharing perspectives on current and anticipated employment climate, continued focus on partnerships, and expanding the pool of influences to generate opportunities.

One of the strengths identified within the region is that there is a “culture of problem solving.” As a region, we need to change our approach from being reactive to the needs set before us to being proactive by implementing forward-thinking skill development and opportunity creation. This will be achieved through career exposure and internship opportunities., focusing on parent/care provider involvement in career exploration with their children, connecting potential employers with K-12 programs, Adult Education programs, and higher education. The focus should also be placed on parent/care provider mentorship within the community and increased interaction with mentors from two and four year institutions. In switching focus to the aforementioned areas, change to a proactive approach can be made.

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

Carl Sandburg College offers a variety of academic programs with stackable levels to provide students with the ability to choose a program that best fits their abilities and career goals. Sandburg representatives meet monthly with workforce and industry partners to better understand the needs of the local workforce and assess alignment between current Sandburg curriculum and workforce needs. As a result of these partnerships, revisions and additions to courses and programs are determined. The physical capacity of the college allows for additional training programs. A strong base of qualified faculty is in place to assist in the development and implementation of new and enhanced training.

Industry partner feedback indicates the need for soft-skill training surrounding teamwork, communication, and career readiness. Sandburg is well-positioned to support this through the Employability Skills Academy program developed and offered in-house to students in academic programs and through community and corporate education.

The Carl Sandburg College’s Career Expo, held every spring, is an excellent way for students and community members to network with prospective employers, learn about their hiring needs and even explore new career paths. Partnerships are formed each year with new businesses looking for qualified candidates in a wide variety of careers with some applicants being interviewed on the spot and, in some cases, leaving with employment.

Employability Skills Academy is a sixteen-hour program, offered through Carl Sandburg College, focused on enhancing student success and retaining employment. The academy responds to the needs of the business sector while, at the same time, the College’s commitment to the standards of quality expected by our community. Upon successful completion, graduates receive a certificate of completion that may be added to their resume/portfolio, which highlights their skills to prospective employers.

Career Counseling services at Carl Sandburg are provided to TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) students. Services are designed to be individualized, with opportunities to small and large group experiences. Examples on services include:

- Student Success Plan--designed during the intake process that includes questions about career and potential resources the student can use for career exploration
- 1:1 career counseling and research throughout the student's time in TRIO
- Career Site visits with professionals in various fields to job shadow/talk with them about their background career path, etc. Visits have covered industries including healthcare, engineering, business, law enforcement, counseling and social work
- Access to Career Cruising and post-assessment review/advising
- Academic advising to ensure that students are taking appropriate pre-requisites for a major in their chosen field when they transfer

Carl Sandburg College hosts Kids on Campus annually. This summer program is for students in grades K-6 and it gives youth an opportunity to have fun while exploring a variety of courses without the pressure of homework and grades. Kids on Campus is open to all students, regardless of academic standing. Instructor teaching credentials are not required; however, expertise and enthusiasm are essential. Area schoolteachers and community members volunteer to be Kids on Campus instructors. High school students are also recruited to assist as volunteers as those involved in clubs and organizations have required leadership or service hours to complete. The Kids on Campus program gives students a chance to complete those hours. Examples of subject areas include: Art, Science, Math, History, English, Writing, Cooking, Astronomy, Health, Physical Fitness, Performing Arts, Adventure and Nature, Geography, Culture and Traditions, Self-Empowerment and Robotics.

John Wood Community College's (JWCC) Manufacturing Expo is held every fall in conjunction with Manufacturing Month. The college partners with Great River Economic Development Foundation, Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois and West Central Region for Employment System #240 to bring several hundred high school students to John Wood Community College's Workforce Development Center where students learn about our career and technical programs and career opportunities available to them. This is also a tremendous partnership opportunity with local employers. Students learn about local manufacturing companies through on-site tours as well as booths at the Workforce Development Center that showcase company products. All high school students in the John Wood district are invited, as well as high school students in the neighboring tri-state area.

JWCC's Career Services offers a variety of workshops to the public including Career Cruising, Interview Stream and general interviewing and résumé tips. The department also takes appointments to work with individuals one-on-one in these areas. Career Services is a major contributor in the bi-annual WGEM Career Fair held on the Quincy campus and generally presents one of the workshops available to attendees.

JWCC Career Services collaborates with Adams County Career Guidance Team and other agencies. JWCC holds office hours bi-weekly at the Quincy Workforce Center as an on-site service to locally unemployed citizens and presents monthly workshops on soft skills for the Department of Human Services clients.

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

The in-demand industries in the region include health care, transportation, distribution and logistics and manufacturing. Working in collaboration with business and service organizations throughout the area, students' advancement efforts are supporting the in-demand occupations by the implementation and execution of Bridge/Integrated Education and Training. The focus of these efforts is to allow students to complete Health Care, Manufacturing, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics bridge courses and successfully transition to post-secondary education.

The Business Service Teams provide services delivered by the WIOA partners that assist employers in:

#### **Recruitment and Hiring:**

- Applicant recruitment
- Business and/or industry-specific recruiting events
- Assistance in writing job descriptions
- Taking and electronically posting job orders
- Screening, Selection and Referral
- Online access to resumes
- Use of facilities for recruitment and interviewing

#### **Training Assistance:**

- Analysis of employee education and training needs
- Training program development
- Incumbent Worker training
- Adult Basic Ed/General Equivalency Diploma/English as a Second Language for employees (on or off-site)
- Work-based learning such as internships and apprenticeships

#### **Information:**

- Workforce and other labor market information
- Human resource consulting
- Tax credit information
- ADA, EEO and other workplace compliance information
- Unemployment Insurance information
- Lay-off aversion



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

Training programs in the area have the capacity to meet the skills necessary for the job seeker to obtain employment and enter the workforce. However, to retain employment there are many challenges. In addition to the challenges previously mentioned such as rural transportation and childcare other challenges included the ability to sustain a regional workforce; lack of soft skills; need to “grow” your own workers (keeping younger workers in the community; and being work ready, i.e., passing drug tests).

Innovative solutions included providing additional intern sites for young workers; going to schools to share information about regional workforce opportunities; enhancing advertising of workforce opportunities within region. Comments have been incorporated in the goals, strategies or activities within the regional plan.

During the coming years, the WIB will continue to work with substance abuse partners to strengthen the communication with Economic Development entities, and continue to share intelligence gained from them with WIOA partners.

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

All WIOA Partners are meeting to develop tactics to achieve the goals selected by partners during the Service Integration Self-Assessment. Partners are meeting each month in Quincy, Galesburg, and Macomb. The Quincy One-Stop Operator and Individual partners are on schedule to improve service integration in the coming year. Details of the partners specific service integration activities are listed below:

- Improving Customer Service
- Customer input drives service design for job seekers, employers, and system customers
- Cross-training (resource training) on program information occurs among staff
- Career Pathway strategies drive service delivery and collaboration efforts among partners
- Communication occurs across one-stop partners
- Coordination of Business Services

**B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). Plans must respond to the following questions:**

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

EDR 10 has many varied agencies helping in providing supportive services. Those agencies include:

- Department of Human Services - childcare, elder care, food
- DHS/Division of Rehabilitation Services - transportation, dental, glasses, medical supplies, physicals, assistive technology
- Workforce Offices of Western Illinois - transportation, childcare, elder care, dental, glasses, software & supplies required for training, vehicle insurance
- Regional Offices of Education - child care, jump drives, transportation, training supplies
- Western Illinois Regional Council and Two Rivers Regional Council CSBG - food pantry, shelter, clothing and utility assistance
- Community Colleges - transportation, special needs accommodations, counseling
- Child Care Resource and Referral and West Central Child Care Connection - financial assistance for childcare
- Quanaa and Housing Authorities - housing assistance
- Salvation Army - emergency housing, food assistance
- Goodwill - employment workshops, basic computer training
- Bella Ease/Teen Reach - transportation, employment assistance

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

When looking at supportive services, EDR 10 attempts to work collaboratively with all local resources in virtually all our program components in order to eliminate the likelihood of service duplication. We look at the service delivery system, analyzing the internal and external resources available to deal with the identified problems. LWA 14 will continue to develop supportive service policies in place that promote coordination among community providers.

All mandatory partner staff may make and receive referrals. A standard referral form has been developed and is available to be utilized by the partners. The form is initiated by referring partner staff and returned by referral recipient partner staff for tracking purposes. LWA 14 staff periodically check with the partners on value of the referral process and to track utilization of the process. This review of the referral process will also identify areas that are not being met by the partners current supportive service policies.

Carl Sandburg College takes great pride in the support services offered at the College. Students in the Galesburg area have free access to the Galesburg Transit System on a year round basis. Bus ridership has greatly increased since the implementation of this program. In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Disability Support at Carl Sandburg College seeks to make the classroom equally accessible to students with disabilities by providing students with tools and accommodations intended to remove barriers imposed by their unique disabilities. Accommodations are available to all students, whether they attend the Galesburg campus, the Carthage campus, the Annex, online or as dual credit students. Classroom accommodations can be arranged via a Letter of Accommodation, drafted with Academic Support staff, at any point throughout the semester for students with

documented disabilities. Letters of Accommodation are individualized in order to provide students with the unique supports they need, while also considering class and program requirements and competencies. The Academic Support office additionally provides resources and guidance, accommodated testing, and equipment loans (including laptops and tablets, assistive technologies like handheld video magnifiers and smart pens, and scientific and graphing calculators); Academic Support partners with DRS to arrange disability testing and secure funding for students with disabilities, participates in the local Transition Planning Committee (intended to help high school students transition to college or work after graduation), attends high school IEPs to facilitate guidance toward college enrollment, and makes regular referrals to the campus Tutoring Center, housed in the same office.

Sandburg employs two faculty counselors. These individuals are available to provide short term services to students. Appointments are available to discuss academic issues, stress, and related topics. Sandburg has a partnership with Bridgeway to refer students for longer term needs and any situation beyond the scope of campus services.

Sandburg employs a student success coach to monitor the Starfish Retention System as well as do follow up with students. This individual also monitors trends in attendance and works with faculty as well as students to increase student success.

John Wood Community College support services will provide a wide range of intensive services to assist learners in pursuing their educational goals. John Wood provides services to help students succeed in the classroom, find resources to afford college, transfer to a four-year college or university and explore career options. Tutoring, disability services, cultural activities, degree planning and test preparation are just a few opportunities available to help students succeed at John Wood.

John Wood has a Disability Services Coordinator on staff to ensure we provide appropriate resources and support services which will ensure students with disabilities the opportunity to competitively pursue a college education. In addition, disability services assist other college departments in providing access to services and programs in the most integrated setting possible.

John Wood Community College offers professional counseling services to provide personal support with the goal to promote social, academic, and career success in all students. It provides a safe place and someone to talk with about college and life experiences, overcoming obstacles, engaging in student life activities and improving student success. All Personal Counseling Services are free to all enrolled students.

Included in John Wood Student Services Department is Academic Talent Search (ATS) and Upward Bound. These are Federal TRIO programs funded 100% by the Department of Education. The programs are dedicated to assisting students in identifying and maintaining healthy academic habits from elementary through high school. Our goal is to ensure that students have access to the tools and resources available to be successful in higher education. We assist students in pursuit of various programs of study, including vocational & trade schools, business schools, two & four year colleges, and universities.

Spoon River College is committed to providing support services to ensure students within our region have access to transportation. Macomb SRC students also have access to Go West Transit, operated through Western Illinois University. Go West transports to areas of high public demand including the SRC Macomb Campus.

Spoon River College provides support services to ensure that qualified students with documented disabilities have equal access to all educational opportunities offered by the college. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Spoon River College does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities, and provides reasonable accommodations to assist students in accessing the college admissions process, courses, and activities. The disability support services office at Spoon River College coordinates with the Division of Rehabilitation Services and assists with accommodations to the classroom environment for students with documented disabilities.

To increase access to support services and further identify students with mental health needs, Spoon River College employs a counselor. The counselor, who has earned advanced professional degrees and is licensed by the State of Illinois, works with students who may experience (but not limited to) stress, depression, anxiety, trauma, relationship issues, and academic struggles. SRC Counseling Services provides free, brief, confidential, accessible, and professional therapy directed at helping students succeed in the college environment. When specialized long term services are needed, the counselor assists in making a referral to off-campus professionals.

The Student Success Coach serves as an advocate to make sure that students are aware of all services, including academic support and college and community resources so that students have every opportunity to be successful in pursuing their educational goals. The Success Coach is available to discuss student concerns such as work, childcare, housing, transportation, time management or other personal matters that interfere with academic performance. The Success Coach can help identify possible solutions or refer students to the appropriate resources within the region.

The Western Illinois Regional Council-CSBG agency is very involved in collaborating with other resource groups to keep pace with the changing needs of our clients within its five- county service area of Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren. This is accomplished by participation in each of the five counties' inter- agency monthly meetings, which brings all county service organizations together to discuss the needs of the area's population. Staff is also active in the Continuum of Care Consortium, Illinois Housing Task Force, WIOA Partners, IHDA Office of Housing Coordinating Services Advisory Committee, and with the local United Way Emergency Food & Shelter boards.

The analysis of resources and service delivery shows that CSBG funding is coordinated with other public and private resources, which maximizes the efficient use of our resources to serve the low income. This means increased case management services, leveraging of funds, technical assistance, and counseling services are provided with each of the CSBG components.

The WIRC-CAA utilizes its five-county outreach program to collaborate with dozens of other groups to better serve our clients. Linkages are ongoing so that when people are assessed at intake, referrals are made to connect clients with essential services. For example, the “Loaves and Fishes” organization (a food pantry comprised of a group of local churches) refers clients to us who need vital services such as shelter, clothing and utility assistance. This group refers their unserviceable clients to the WIRC-CAA for our services and for our organization to utilize our large referral base to link these clients to various supportive services, such as employment training and educational opportunities.

In our five county regions of Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, and Warren there exists a network of social service agencies which provide programs and services targeted towards low-income citizens. The social service networking within the region allows for greater coordination of services to meet the clients’ multiple needs. The prioritizing of the CSBG program components is accomplished by considering the internal and external resources available and how we can work most collaboratively to effectively serve the client population.

Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials provides services through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Services include: Rental assistance, school supplies, 2 food pantries, the REACHOUT CENTER (thrift store), Christmas basket project, toy drive for grandparents and parents at Christmas time, programs for at-risk youth that include scholarships for post-secondary schooling, and a referral system to other needed services. Brown County United Way and Schuyler County United Way grants provide emergency assistance to households such as but not limited to car repairs, medication, utility assistance, and food; both of these grants are administered through CSBG. We also provide services to the homeless population with a hotel/motel voucher program Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity grants provide Weatherization services and utility assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Emergency Furnace program and reconnect services. Also Ameren Illinois grants are available to assist with a utility bill payment program and Warm Neighbors Cool Friends.

Regional Office of Education # 33 programs will follow state and federal rules and regulations to provide support services to students utilizing grant funding. Adult Education support services include Social Work Services, Assistive and Adaptive Equipment, Student Transportation, Guidance Services, Assessment and Testing, Volunteer Literacy Services, Career Counseling and Transition Services.

Agencies providing support services to adult learners eligible for enrollment in Adult Education program are invited to be members of the Area Planning Council which identifies services currently being offered to this population, produces a plan for the continuation of these services, identifies populations not being served, and instructional and support services not being offered, and develops a plan for providing services to meet identified gaps in service.

The Workforce Office will be the last provider of services. If a support service is needed or required for the participant to continue or complete training, support services may be provided if

it is determined no other agency can provide that service. All support services are provided at the lowest possible cost via comparison bids or sole provider situations.

If public transportation is not available/practical, mileage reimbursement will be offered at the current Federal privately owned vehicle rate per mile for Workforce programs, Trade, and 1 EC participants. Workforce programs will not be the first source for funding.

**C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vii)). Plans must answer the following questions:**

**1. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?**

Economic development organizations participating in regional planning include:

- Great River Economic Development Foundation
- Hancock County Economic Development Corporation
- Henderson County Economic Development Corporation
- Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development
- Macomb Area Economic Development Corporation
- Pike County Economic Development Corporation
- Grow Rushville
- City of Monmouth Community and Economic Development Department
- City of Mt Sterling.
- EDA Economic Development Districts administered by Two Rivers Regional Council and Western Illinois Regional Council

Employers from the following growth sectors have been active participants in regional planning efforts:

- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics
- Members of the WIB's Business Engagement Task Force

WIOA Partners have been active participants in developing the plan:

- Carl Sandburg College
- Department of Employment Security
- Department of Human Services
- DHS Division of Rehabilitation Services
- John Wood Community College
- John Wood Community College Adult Education
- National Able
- ROE #33 Adult Education

- Two Rivers Regional Council
- Western Illinois Regional Council
- Western Illinois Works

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

No organization that was asked to participate refused to assist in this regional plan.

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

All partners are contributing to the MOU infrastructure, service delivery and systems delivery costs as shown in the Resource Cost Sharing Agreement.

### CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES – REGIONAL COMPONENT

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

**A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth (§ 679.560(a)(5)). Describe how this aligns with the State of Illinois’ vision and principles (page 1).**

The local vision of West Central EDR 10 is to foster a region-wide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and business to ensure West Central Economic Development Region has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the state and global economy.

This vision statement aligns with the State of Illinois’ vision statement by regionally addressing the economic needs of individuals and businesses via resources that can foster both a regional and Statewide workforce development system that ensures Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy. West Central EDR 10 will apply the State’s guiding principles to our regional economic strategies and augment the vision statement.

The Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois has adopted the guiding principles in order to prepare an educated and skilled workforce. The WIB priorities include meeting the workforce needs of business, alignment of programs with career pathways, and preparing job seekers for the today’s and tomorrow’s jobs.

Across the country, communities continue to face challenges in linking job seekers to gainful employment. Innovative solutions are needed to address the skill shortages facing the west central Illinois economy. The Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois is uniquely positioned to advance systemic workforce development initiatives and has long been successful in this endeavor. In order to expand career opportunities for youth and adults throughout the West Central Economic Development Region (EDR), the WIB will focus its efforts in assuring that all individuals, no matter where they may be on the west central Illinois workforce pipeline, have access to multiple career information and/or services.

In order to guarantee that the West Central EDR has a pool of workers readily available to employers, the WIB will continue to analyze future needs of employers, both regionally and locally. To ensure that all in-demand occupations are being addressed and that there is integration and collaboration of services among partners, the WIB will develop a workforce plan for each county within the West Central EDR.



**B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators (§ 677.155(a)(1)).**

*West Central Illinois Goals and Strategies*

*Goal 1: Workforce Development Partners will be united around regional clusters*

The WIB has identified the regional clusters that the partners will prioritize during the upcoming years. Those clusters are: Transportation, Distribution and Logistics, Manufacturing, Health Care, and Construction Trades and Agribusiness. Career Pathways and Sector Partnerships are two inter-related strategies that will be utilized to coordinate a strategy around the regional clusters. The WIB will continue to spearhead initiatives that bring together employers and training providers, working closely with the community colleges to secure support for short and long-term training programs that meet the region's expressed goals. By developing appropriate career pathways that include assessments, training curricula and compatible work-based learning opportunities, the workforce system can prepare structured sequences of activities that will fully prepare youth and adult jobseekers for successful employment.

*Goal 2: Prepare workers in the Western Illinois Economic Development Regions for a career*

Structured work-based learning experiences such as On-the-Job-Training (OJTs), paid and unpaid internships and work experience will supplement education and training courses when possible. In addition, the WIB will promote incumbent workforce training in support of short-term, skills upgrade training for regional employers to remain competitive in their industry or economy and to retain a skilled workforce in the region. Increasing apprenticeship opportunities will continue to be a key retention strategy.

One of the primary impediments, for the potential workforce in the EDR, to overcoming employment barriers is obtaining career technical skills. To assist in the development of occupational skills, services will be enhanced by systematically involving the educators in the public schools and in Adult Education programs in the process of building foundational skills. Existing youth services will be improved by working with employers through sector partnerships. This employer centered needs-approach will enrich youth services by providing unique and direct access to private sector employer opportunities. With strengthened youth services around industry sectors, employers will be able to connect to a wider pool of qualified out-of-school youth and offer internship opportunities for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

The WIB will work with system partners to align workforce development and education programs and resources while ensuring that each partner established goals will be met.

Goal 3: *Coordination between job seekers and employers*

The WIB will prioritize training services for in-demand occupations, increase the capacity to assess and screen individuals based on employer criteria, facilitate the development of training programs for in-demand occupations and gather information from employers that confirm the critical skills employees need to enter and be successful in today's workforce.

To ensure the proper mix of educational, training and support services is available to all members of the community, workforce will continue to engage education and training providers, economic development and private sector WIB members in program planning. In addition, specific communication and outreach strategies will be developed that target individuals most at need for services including basic skills deficient individuals, returning citizens and individuals with disabilities. The WIB will continue to identify potential funding resources and revenue streams to expand its capacity to deliver services and align its human capital to the current and emerging economy.

Goal 4: *Communicate throughout the region and globally, in partnership with economic development, the workforce quality and career opportunities in western Illinois*

The WIB will continue to align members of all partner business service teams to ensure that businesses are being served by the entire WIOA system while establishing the continuum of service between all partners. The WIB will also continuously improve services by developing protocols to learn from and respond to business needs, provide leadership to address current and future business needs and trends and evaluation of services through a customer surveys.

There will be a multi-faceted action plan that connects the region's communities to workforce development services and resources.

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

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

EDR 10 will continue to utilize the Economic Development entities in western Illinois to assist with the outreach to the business community, including small business and in-demand sectors. The WIB's Business Engagement Task Force will guide this process.

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

Employers throughout the region will be surveyed to determine current and future needs, industry trends, and local and regional partnership opportunities. Sector initiatives will be designed after reviewing the survey responses and feedback from local sector meetings. Illinois Department of Employment Security Labor Market Information and the Business Engagement Task Force will guide the survey content. In addition, information from the Perkin's Self - Assessment and Business Retention & Expansion visits conducted by the Economic Development entities will be incorporated into the survey content, process and report.

The Quincy Workforce Center, an American Job Center, has formed a business services team that meets regularly and coordinates business outreach. Galesburg and Macomb partners will form business services teams in 2020.

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

Coordination with Economic Development Entities will continue to be strong. Activities requiring the business community participation is planned in partnership with and often led by the numerous economic development entities.

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

Illinois Department of Employment Services will continue to participate in Rapid Response activities in the region. In addition, IDES shares information and services available from all partners with UI claimants and has partners either present or be available for one-on-one meetings with Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) participants.

- **To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§ 679.560(b)(4)); and**

#### *Community College Programs*

Carl Sandburg College is currently creating an entrepreneurial certificate in an academic/credit bearing setting is currently underway. They are collaborating with a local economic development partner to offer a series of community education courses during the spring of 2020 which will cover multiple topics related to entrepreneurship

John Wood Community College works with their advisory committees as well as conducts regular visits to our industry partners to identify the education and skills required for the workforce. Advisory committees help us ensure that our training programs and curriculum are relevant to adequately prepare the workforce for jobs of today. Industry partners range from large corporations to microenterprise facilities. Many of our educational programs offer the skills necessary to promote entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Spoon River College program in Small Business Management offers a mix of transfer and career courses for the student interested in business and entrepreneurship. The program may also fulfil a niche for the small business entrepreneur to gain skills needed to be successful in the development of a new business. The program is designed to provide students with a background in business organizations and operations, as well as management training necessary for advancement to supervisory positions in small business. The Small Business Management program offers an Associate in Applied science degree with embedded certificates. This program is part of the Business Management & Administration career cluster.

#### *Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program*

The Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities program is a yearlong course designed to introduce ambitious high school students to local businesses and entrepreneurs. Throughout the year students meet with local businesses, learn from guest speakers, participate in a class business, write business plans and start their own business. This program operates in Hancock, Knox, McDonough, and Pike Counties. Adams, Brown, and Schuyler Counties will begin this program in the fall of 2020.

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

Funds are designated for incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, and apprenticeship programs. Economic Development entities will lead in the implementation of industry and sectors strategies. These strategies will be developed after the business survey has been completed. The WIB supports the efforts of secondary and post-secondary education's efforts in career pathway initiatives. West Central Illinois EDR 10 staff work with manufacturing organizations, organized labor and other local entities to meet the needs of local and regional employers and will coordinate with bordering states and local workforce areas.

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

The WIB will work to build a regional network of partnerships to develop and implement outreach strategies based on an analysis of regional labor market factors, sector trends, hiring challenges, and potential solutions for business partners. Three WIB regional strategies are:

- use information about clients' needs, challenges, history, and practices to offer effective assistance and workforce solutions, as applicable;
- serve as a liaison amongst employers, area economic development organizations, and education providers; and,
- create partnerships with local educational and training providers, employers, and CBOs to implement apprenticeship programs and other work-based learning opportunities.

Internships are embedded in a variety of programs at the three community colleges (Carl Sandburg College, John Wood Community College and Spoon River College) in the area and those without look for opportunities for students to gain work-based experiences through job shadowing, industry tours, and in-class visits from industry representatives. The colleges work with advisory committees to gauge the need for required internships as well as opportunities to offer alternative work-based experiences for students.

Apprenticeships are an important part of our regional strategy. Although the region has not been overly successful to date, the Business Service teams will continue to promote and develop apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships.

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

The Carl Sandburg College's Institutional Effectiveness Department reviews programs annually to ensure programs meet the needs indicated by labor market data as well as advisory committee surveys and feedback. Program review processes provide the opportunity to seek avenues in which educational programs can be created or revised to allow for a prompt entry into the workforce. John Wood Community College and Spoon River College have a similar process.

Where possible, the region will try to combine shorter training programs with on-the-job training. In addition, there will be an increased effort to work the community colleges internship component of the various approved training programs. The goal is to assist job seekers in obtaining a career in as short of time as possible.

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

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

Partners have been working with local businesses that are involved in manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution and logistics sector-based partnerships. The WIB acts as a neutral convener and has launched each sector partnership by featuring a manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution and logistics industry key speaker at quarterly Board meetings. In addition, meetings will be hosted in each of the nine counties of EDR 10 to determine if there are additional sector priorities based on data that will assist the region in making additional informed decisions.

Economic Development entities will play a leading role in coordinating workforce development and education partners. The Economic Development entities and Chambers of Commerce will

work with the WIOA partners in strengthening their business services to maximize their effectiveness while minimizing any duplication of services.

- **Expanding career pathway<sup>7</sup> opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.**

Carl Sandburg College, John Wood Community College and Spoon River College work closely with its advisory committees consisting of agency, industry, secondary, and post-secondary partners to identify pathways to careers and determine industry sought credentials. Where the opportunity exists, credentials are embedded into programs. For credentials obtained externally post program completion, training is geared toward preparing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain such credentials. A similar process is also utilized by the other two community colleges in the region.

In order to expand career pathway opportunities, the regional partners will collaborate to increase program capacity by reducing duplicative services, building programs at greater scale and leveraging the efficiencies created by a stronger alignment of system resources. Partners will work together with employers to expand bridge and stackable credentials programs to support a broad spectrum of jobseekers looking for career progression and link work-based learning approaches such as apprenticeships, internships and on-the-job training programs that meet industry demands. The WIB will continue to spearhead initiatives that bring together employers and training providers, working closely with the community colleges to secure support for short and long-term training programs that meet the region's expressed goals. By developing appropriate career pathways that include assessments, training curricula and compatible work-based learning opportunities, the workforce system can prepare structured sequences of activities that will fully prepare youth and adult jobseekers for successful employment.

- **Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs.**

To ensure the proper mix of educational, training and support services is available to all members of the community, the WIB will continue to engage education and training providers, economic development and private sector WIB members in program planning. In addition, specific communication and outreach strategies will be developed that target individuals most in need of services including basic skills deficient individuals, ex-offenders and those with disabilities.

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<sup>7</sup> The [State of Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary](https://www.isac.org/pace/cp_dictionary_11-13-18_final.pdf) is available at [isac.org/pace/cp\\_dictionary\\_11-13-18\\_final.pdf](https://www.isac.org/pace/cp_dictionary_11-13-18_final.pdf).

Community Colleges maintains a strong working relationship with social agencies, area regional offices of education, and k-12 partners within its district to assist diverse populations in locating support services needed to obtain an education and succeed in the workforce. By understanding the external resources available through each partner, students are referred to a variety of services available including training related to language skills, tuition assistance, childcare assistance, transportation assistance, and employability skills.

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

The region will continue to utilize labor market information provided by the US Department of Labor, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), regional industry sector studies and other labor market data to continue to provide information to employers and job seekers.

As the state develops the data infrastructure that will integrate labor market information with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems as well as aligning the integration of economic development and labor market information resources that will support regional planning, regional sector partnerships, career services and labor market information for employers and jobseekers, EDR 10 will participate in state sponsored training to better understand labor market projections and the state longitudinal data system.