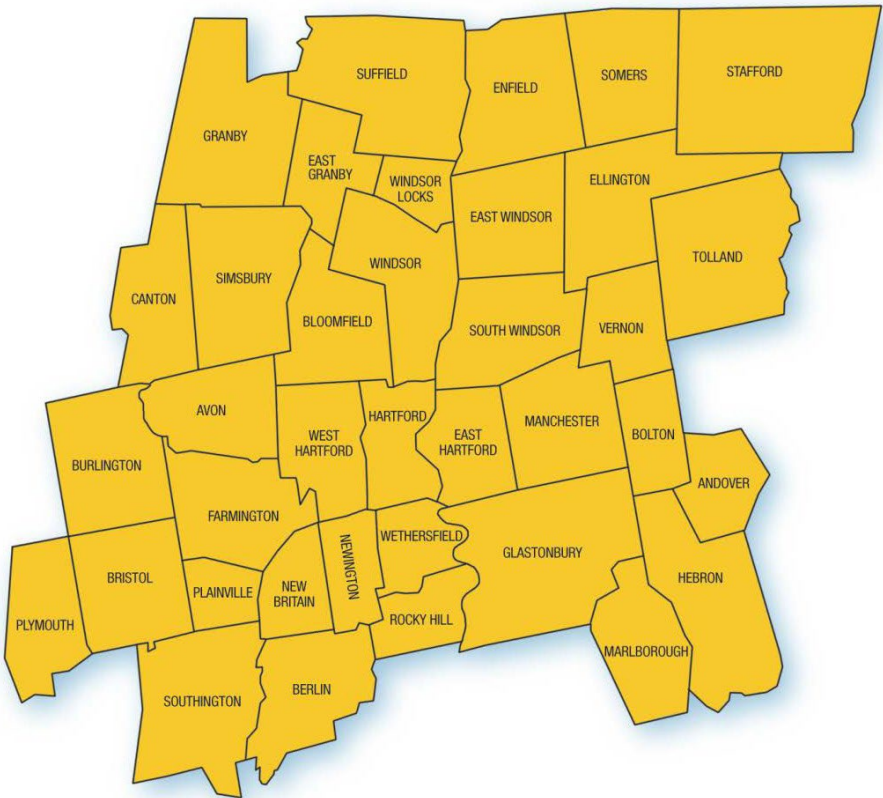




**Capital Workforce Partners  
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Plan**



*Serving 37 Towns and Cities in North Central Connecticut*

**Capital Workforce Partners 2020-24  
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan  
2022 Two-Year Update**

## Overview

The WIOA Plan document has been completed in alignment with the requirements as outlined by the Connecticut Department of Labor (CT DOL) state guidelines. This plan lays out the operating framework from which Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) will implement its strategies. The six key sections of the WIOA plan comprise:

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**Capital Workforce Partners  
WIOA Plan**

## I. Organizational Structure

### A. Chief Elected Official(s) (CEOs)

1. **Identify the chief elected official(s) by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address.**  
See Attachment I – Chief Elected Officials
2. **If the local area includes more than one unit of general local government in accordance with WIOA sec. 107(c)(1)(B), attach the agreement that has been executed to define how the parties will carry out the roles and responsibilities of the CEO.**

See Attachment II – Intergovernmental Consortium Agreement

3. **If applicable, attach a copy of the agreement executed between the CEO (s) and the LWDB.**

See Attachment III – MOU between Chief Elected Officials and CWP.

4. **Describe the following:**

- a. The nomination process used by the CEO to elect the local board chair and members  
*The Consortium shall solicit nominations and make appointments of members to the Corporation's Board of Directors in accordance with federal and state statutory criteria, the Intergovernmental Consortium Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Consortium and the Corporation.*

*The Governance Committee of the Board of Directors shall, along with general purpose business organizations located in the local workforce investment area, forward the names of prospective board members for nomination and appointment to the Board of Directors by the Consortium.*

- b. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expire in a given year;  
*Members of the Board of Directors have previously been elected to one-, two- and three-year terms in order to stagger the terms of Directors. At each subsequent annual meeting, members of the Board of Directors who have been previously appointed by the Consortium shall commence to serve a three-year term and can be re-appointed for multiple terms thereafter with no term limits. Directors shall continue in office until such time as their respective successors have been duly appointed.*
- c. The process to notify the CEO of a board member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee;  
*A director may resign at any time by giving written notice to CWP. The resignation shall take effect at the time specified in the notice, and, unless otherwise specified in the notice, acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Director's membership before the expiration of a Director's term, including a vacancy resulting from an increase in the number of directorships, shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment to membership on the Corporation's Board of Directors. Any Director so appointed shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. At the expiration of the unexpired term, if duly appointed by the Consortium to the Board of Directors, the Director may be appointed to serve a three-year term regardless of the unexpired term which the newly elected director filled.*

- d. The proxy and alternative designee process that will be used when a board member is unable to attend a meeting and assigns a designee as per the requirements at §679.110(d)(4) of the proposed WIOA regulations;  
*In the event that a Director is unable to attend or participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors, such Director may temporarily appoint another person who holds a leadership and/or decision-making position in the entity which the Director represents to attend such meeting. Such designee shall not be counted for the purpose of determining the presence of a quorum at the meeting and shall not be entitled to vote but may otherwise participate in the meeting.*
- e. The use of technology, such as phone and Web-based meetings, that will be used to promote board member participation;  
*Multiple mediums are used to promote interaction and board member participation. These are identified below, and are implemented as needed:*
- *Face-to-face meetings*
  - *Board and Committee materials e-mailed to members in accordance with the by-laws.*
  - *A website link is sent to Board members which houses the Board meeting materials.*
  - *Conference calls are used in addition to face-to-face meetings.*
  - *Digital device use, e.g., iPads, phones, to follow meeting.*
- f. The process to ensure board members actively participate in convening the workforce development system's stakeholders, brokering relationships with a diverse range of employers, and leveraging support for workforce development activities; and leveraging support for workforce development activities.  
*The goal of all Board of Directors members is to encourage the firms and organizations they represent to make meaningful contributions to the mission and goals of the Corporation. Contributions include, but are not limited to, labor, financial or physical resources, advisory or technical assistance and other related in-kind assistance as deemed appropriate and necessary. It is also the goal of all Board members to promote the benefits of diversity in the workplace in all aspects of their active participation as a member of the Board of Directors.*
- g. Any other conditions governing appointments or membership on the local board.  
*All conditions are described above.*

**5. Provide a description of how the CEO was involved in the development, review and approval of the plan.**

The Consortium of Elected Officials has been involved in multiple accretive steps in the development of the plan. They have kept abreast of WIOA Plan activities through a quarterly update at the Consortium of Elected Officials meetings and have been involved in the development of the WIOA plan through regular accretive steps.

**B. Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)**

**1. Provide a matrix identifying LWDB members including the category each member represents.**

See Attachment IV – Board of Directors

**2. Provide a description of how the LWDB was involved in the development, review, and approval of the plan.**

CWP's Board of Directors played a significant and critical role in the development, review, and approval of the plan. In order to gain a context and provide meaningful feedback, CWP committed to the following activities to gain Board of Directors input:

Date	Activity
	Review Goals, Strategies, and COVID-19 Response with Leadership Team
	Meeting with senior team to finalize plan
	Public notice published - comment period begins; plan posted on website
	Public comment period ends
	Plan discussed at One-Stop and Future Workforce Services Committees
5/11/22	Plan discussed at CWP Executive Committee
5/18/22	Plan presented to CWP Board of Directors
	Plan presented to CWP Consortium of Chief Elected Officials
	CWP Local WIOA Plan update submitted to DOL/OWS

**3. Provide an organizational chart for the LWDB and administrative support.**

See Attachment V – Capital Workforce Partners’ Organization Chart

**C. Local Administrative Entity and Grant Sub Recipient**

**1. Identify the administrative entity.**

The administrative entity is Capital Workforce Partners, Inc.

**2. Identify the entity selected to receive and disburse grant funds (local fiscal agent).**

The local fiscal agent is Capital Workforce Partners, Inc.

**D. One-Stop System**

**a. General System Description**

**a. Provide a description of the local one-stop system, including the number, type and location of full-service and other service delivery points.**

The local One-Stop Career Centers are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers and employers. The centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and other employment-related services. Customers can visit a center in person or connect via the Call Center. There are six One-Stop Centers in the North Central Region with an additional satellite site at the Hartford Public Library. The locations are:

- **Hartford:** 3580 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06120  
Comprehensive Center: full co-location with CT DOL, immediate on-site access to DOL programs including Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, Trade Act, and Unemployment Insurance assistance. Scheduled access to vocational rehabilitation services provided by the Bureau of Rehabilitation and the Board of Education and Services for the Blind with onsite staff scheduled on a weekly basis in Hartford and in Enfield. WIOA Title I services offered through scheduled staff hours at Hartford Adult Education Center.
- **Manchester:** 893 Main Street, Manchester, CT 06040  
Affiliate Center: co-located with local Adult Education.
- **Enfield:** at Asnuntuck Community College, 170 Elm St, Enfield, CT 06082  
Affiliate Center: co-located with Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- **New Britain:** 270 Lafayette Street, New Britain, CT 06053  
Affiliate Center: **East Hartford:** at Goodwin University, 417 Main St., East Hartford, CT 06118
- **Bristol:** Tunxis Community College, 430 North Main St, Bristol, CT 06010  
Affiliate Center

- **Hartford Downtown Satellite:** at HPL Hartford Public Library, 500 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06103  
Satellite: Self-directed and online services, extended hours, on-site access to WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker career services. Co-located with local Adult Education programs.

**b. Identify the entity or entities selected to operate the local one-stop center(s).**

Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) was selected as the contractor to deliver services in the local One-Stop centers, with oversight by the CWP One-Stop Services Committee. Career Resources, Inc. was selected as the One Stop Operator.

**c. Identify the entity or entities selected to provide career services within the local one-stop system.**

EDSI provides career services within the local One-Stop system. Services include assessment, career planning and counseling, case management, professional skills workshops, resume and cover letter services, digital literacy training and facilitation of the Individual Training Account scholarship process. Additionally, EDSI provides job placement and job development, and business services.

EDSI is a national workforce development, talent solutions and consulting company. EDSI works with regions, employers, and jobseekers to overcome their most challenging obstacles. It was founded in 1979 and is headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan.

**d. Identify and describe what career services will be provided by the selected one-stop operator and what career services, if any, will be contracted out to service providers.**

All career services are contracted out to EDSI.

**e. Describe the roles and resource contributions of one-stop partners.**

The local One-Stop Career Centers are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers and employers. The centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and other employment-related services. Customers can visit a center in-person or they can connect to the center via the Call Center. Customers can opt to participate in in-person services or virtual services. The one-stop career centers are equipped to provide full service completely virtually if that is a customer's preference or need.

The system includes a business services unit (BSU) which provides business services support to directly serve the workforce development and business needs of the North Central CT business community. The BSU provides job development and places enrolled job seeker customers into full-time, unsubsidized jobs through the provision of job placement services heavily informed by employer relationships and business development efforts.

The partner roles and contributions are:

- CWP provides career services, training, and business services at all six One-Stop centers and at the library satellite and contributes technical support and financial resources to the facilities occupied and utilized by staff delivering WIOA Title I services.
- CT Department of Labor provides career services, training, and business services at the comprehensive center, and contributes technical support and financial resources to the facilities occupied and utilized by staff delivering Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, Veterans, UI and other DOL services.
- CT Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) provides career services and training to jobseekers with disabilities through referral and the Integrated Resource Team process. ADS staff occupy the Hartford and Enfield One-Stop facilities one day each week.
- CT State Department of Education (CSDE) provides adult literacy services through contracts with Title II service providers. CSDE contributes financial resources to support adult literacy assessments for job-seekers, and costs associated with the One-Stop Adult Education position who connects local adult

education providers with the one-stop system. The local Manchester Adult Education program contributes financial resources to the facility occupied by its staff and students in the Manchester One-Stop.

- The CT Department of Social Services (DSS) partners with the one-stop system through the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients. The JFES program contributes technical support and financial resources to the facilities occupied and utilized by staff delivering JFES services. CWP and CTDSS will explore opportunities to coordinate services beyond TANF at the One-Stop sites.

**f. Provide copies of executed Memoranda of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreements**

See Attachment VI

**g. Identify any non-required partners included in the local one-stop delivery system and respective contributions.**

CWP works with several partner organizations beyond those required within WIOA in order to create an integrated and comprehensive approach to the workforce development system. These partners include the four community colleges in the region, the Community Action Agency, and the Department of Corrections.

**b. Customer Access**

**a. Describe actions taken by the LWDB to promote maximum integration of service delivery through the one-stop delivery system for both business customers and individual customers.**

CWP is strongly committed to serving jobseekers who are under-represented or under-utilized in the workforce, including individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, and long-term unemployed individuals. Principles of integrated service delivery are outlined in the MOUs with the core partners: CWP, CTDOL, CSDE and ADS. Integrated service delivery to business customers is implemented through the regional Business Services Team, with its cross-trained staff and shared guiding principles, policies, and procedures.

**b. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing needs of individuals with disabilities.**

- CWP employs a Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) who has lead responsibility for facilitating disability awareness training, ensuring that policies and procedures do not impede access to services for individuals with disabilities.
- CWP coordinates with CTDOL to conduct an annual review of facilities as well as policies and procedures to ensure accessibility and compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act.
- CWP coordinated with the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind, within ADS, for technical assistance to ensure that its website meets accessibility standards.
- The DRC secures outside experts to provide staff training as well as providing some training herself.
- One-Stop centers in the region are equipped with adaptive technology, including:
  - For individuals with physical restrictions: adjustable workstations
  - For individuals with visual impairments: large screen monitor with Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software and customized keyboards
  - For individuals with hearing impairments: a microphone with amplifier for use in workshops, an Ubi-Duo personal communication device, and an ongoing contract with the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services for ASL interpretation services.

**c. Describe how the LWDB facilitates access to services provided through the local delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means.**

There are several technologies available to jobseekers and employers who need to access services remotely. These include:

- A variety of online learning job search and training programs are available through the internet.
- CTHires, the state's online workforce system, is available for online job search, free online training through ALISON, and candidate search for employers.
- CTHires now offers the capability to complete WIOA intake and enrollment 100% virtually by using a secure document upload feature that enables participants to participate in services from their homes at their convenience.
- Center staff are equipped with virtual tools (Teams, Zoom, Webauthor, SplashTop) to be able to effectively provide case management and career coaching services virtually.
- All professional skills workshops facilitated by the AJC staff are offered virtually. Additionally, most trainings facilitated by providers are now offered either fully virtually or in a hybrid model.
- SkillUp CT is offered through Connecticut's five regional workforce development boards using Metrix Learning and 180 Skills as an online learning management system that helps job seekers.

In addition to remote access through online platforms, the One-Stop Adult Education Liaison travels to several adult education centers to provide career services to students on-site. The satellite at the Hartford Public Library was established to expand access through extended evening and weekend hours. The location was selected based on its familiarity and proximity to a number of homeless shelters and halfway houses to encourage individuals with employment barriers to use One-Stop services.

**c. Integration of Services**

**a. Describe how one-stop career centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under this Act and programs carried out by one-stop career center partners.**

CTHires is CT DOL's hub for job development, training, and other career services, implemented in December 2015. Jobseekers and employers, both new and continuing, can use this system. In addition, it is the state's data collection and reporting system, and is designed to enable WDBs to extract data to monitor ongoing performance. It tracks the following programs: Wagner Peyser, Trade Act, and WIOA.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic DOL instituted a new WIOA Pre-Application in CTHires that enables customers to upload documents in a secure manner. Pre applications are sent to the AJC intake team who support customers with intake in the mode of their choosing, in person or virtual. This allows for a streamlined intake process and the capacity to assess eligibility and enroll 100% virtually. Center staff have streamlined this new process of intake which includes: several email and phone outreaches, a system of pre-application tracking and a virtual Career Services Information Session Video.

**d. Competitive Selection of One Stop Operator**

**a. Describe the steps taken or to be taken to ensure a competitive process for selection of the one-stop operator(s). Provide the name of the operator selected and contact info.**

CWP conducted a competitive procurement, beginning with the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) on March 11, 2020. There was one respondent, Career Resources, Inc. (CRI) The submission was deemed responsive, and was accepted by the One-Stop Services Committee, and CRI was selected as the One-Stop Operator by the CWP Board on May 20, 2020. A contract was awarded to CRI for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021; the contract may be renewed annually for two additional years, contingent upon satisfactory performance.

**e. System Improvement**



- a. **Describe the steps the LWDB will take to ensure continuous improvement of the area's one-stop system. The One-Stop Committee closely monitors the operations and performance of the system, and identifies areas in need of improvement, such as factors that delay enrollment in WIOA adult or dislocated worker services.**

CWP is committed to improving its One-Stop system on an on-going basis through staff development, the creation of new techniques and strategies to serve a diverse range of job seekers, and the innovative use of technology to improve and expand services to job seekers, and businesses and to manage program delivery and design. A One-Stop partners meeting convenes on a quarterly basis. The Objectives of this meeting are as follows:

- To know each other and the services available through each system.
- To be an active advisory group to the AJC's service delivery system.
- To ensure our customers in the AJC receive exceptional and comprehensive services.
- To ensure all partners have a clear understanding of the AJC and the services offered.

In response to partner feedback, CWP is implementing a referral-tracking system that will shed light on the quantity and type of referrals that are made to partner agencies so that we can continue to understand how to improve coordinated and cohesive delivery of services.

CWP and DOL are partnering to relocate the comprehensive co-located Hartford AJC. The new Hartford facility has been designed to integrate all partners more fully and ensure that the space, as well as the services are cohesive and easily accessible to job seekers.

## II. Environmental Scan

1. **Provide an analysis of the local area's economic conditions, including information on existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**

CWP focuses on several critical industry sectors to provide employment and training services to assure that businesses in the region get quality workers with in-demand career and occupational competencies. CWP works closely with employers to identify areas of job growth opportunities, skills needed for those jobs, and related training support programs. It uses this knowledge, along with labor market information, to define its targeted sector approach, which is focused on Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, IT/Technology, Transportation Distribution & Logistics (TDL), and Construction/Energy.

The COVID pandemic has prompted CWP to reevaluate its approach to workforce service delivery in this economic environment. It has also resulted in an unprecedented number of dislocated workers. This pandemic has seen more separations within the lower wage, lower educated workgroups, in which communities of color are overrepresented. Through its strategic planning process, CWP has sharpened its focus on middle skill jobs and closing the skills gap.

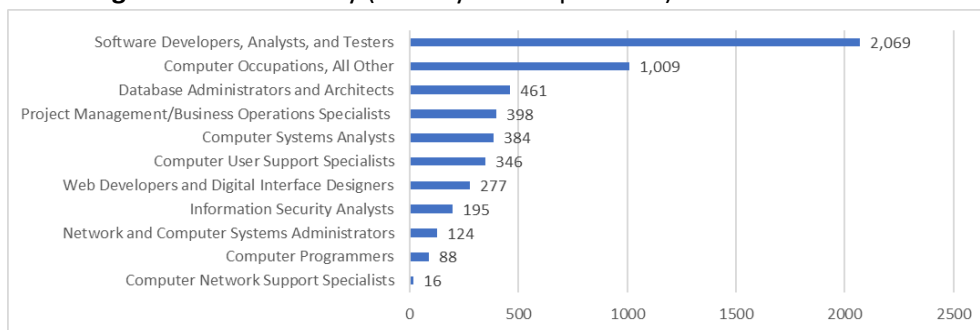
2. **Provide an analysis of the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations.**

CWP, working through Regional Sector Partnership (RSP) frameworks that convene employers and public partners within target industries, has identified key occupations that are both in-demand and accessible to jobseekers, especially pre-baccalaureate individuals. The recent job postings volume for these occupations within the CWP target sectors is presented below:

### IT/Technology

Due to the pandemic, technology and IT systems have become more essential than ever before, transforming the ways we approach fundamental parts of life such as education, employment, and social connection. As a result, software developers, analysts, and testers, as well as computer occupations in general, have been far more in-demand as reflected in IT postings in the past three months, in addition to occupations which maintain and support these systems. IT industry verticals include the Information (NAICS 51) and Professional, Scientific, and Technical (NAICS 54) sectors. The target IT occupations represent over 14% of total Finance and Insurance sector employment and almost 10% of Manufacturing sector employment in CT as of 2021. *Source: EMSI*

**IT Postings – Hartford County (January 2022-April 2022)**

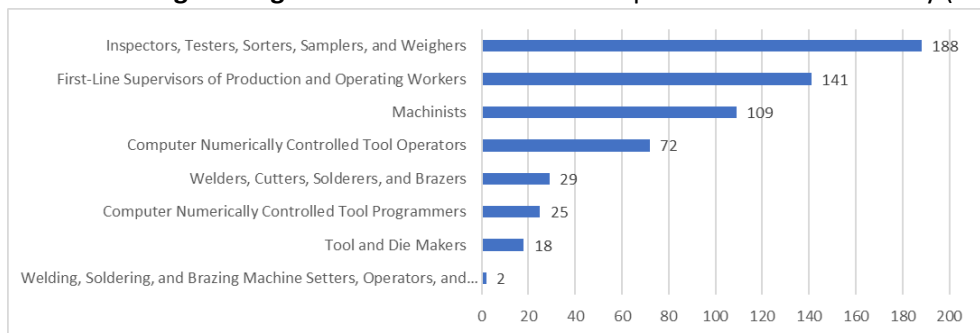


Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

**Manufacturing**

Postings are more evenly distributed in middle skill manufacturing occupations than in the other priority sectors of the North Central Region, with support staff such as inspectors, testers, and sorters comprising most of the demand in the industry. Postings are less abundant than in other priority sectors as well, indicating a consistent demand throughout the manufacturing industry in contrast to more dramatic demand for specific occupations evident in other industries.

**Manufacturing Postings – Middle Skill Focused Occupations - Hartford County (January 2022-April 2022)**

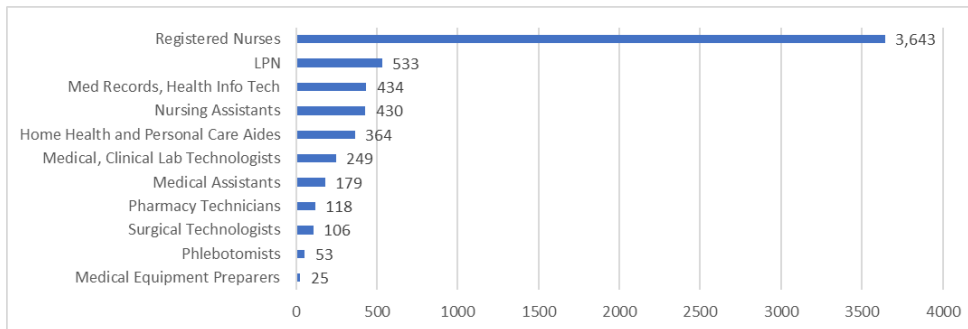


Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

**Healthcare**

The Healthcare industry has experienced dynamic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, with a significant initial increase in worker dislocations related to elective care and the closing of some medical offices. At the same time, there has been a consistent and urgent need for critical and post-acute care workers, especially along nursing pathways (e.g., CNA, LPN, RN).

**Healthcare Postings - Middle Skill Focused Occupations - Hartford County (January 2022-April 2022)**

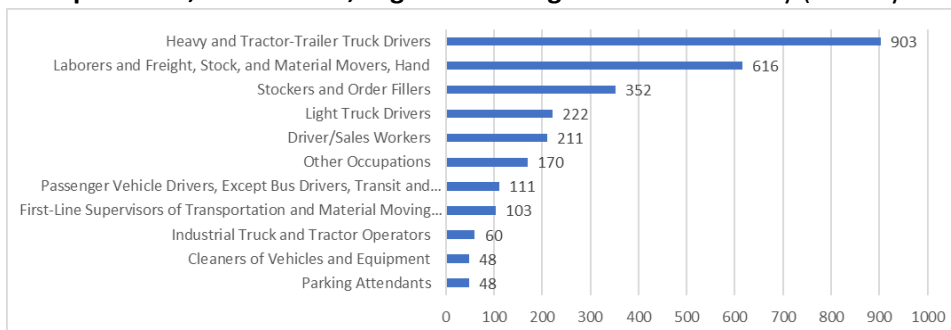


Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

### **Transportation, Distribution, Logistics (TDL)**

Just as healthcare and IT occupations have been uniquely impacted by the pandemic, so has the transportation, distribution, and logistics (TDL) sector through the increased supply chain pressure of distanced retail activities and an unprecedented frequency of orders and shipping. In the previous three months, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers are in notably greater demand, with more distribution and logistics focused occupations following closely.

### **Transportation, Distribution, Logistics Postings – Hartford County (January 2022-April 2022)**



Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

### **Construction**

Within the sector of construction our region experiences significant unionized activity and the use of apprenticeship frameworks to develop new talent. The sector has experienced volatility during the COVID-19 period related to reduced private and public construction contracts and activity, but is expected to show increased demand, especially related to upcoming infrastructure investments.

### **3. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in the region, including employment needs in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**

The chart below identifies the skills most in demand according to jobs advertised in Hartford County as of March 2022. The top 10 skills remain largely the same from March 2020 and have increased in the frequency they are found in postings, with communications still in highest demand. Notable exceptions include the demand for customer support skills which have increased in frequency by 1742% over the course of the pandemic.

### **Top 10 Hard and Soft Skills in Demand – Hartford County (March 2022)**

Skill	Postings in March 2020	Postings in March 2022	Percent Change
Communications	4,794	6,483	35%
Customer Service	3,114	4,360	40%
Management	3,416	4,254	25%

Customer Support	184	3,390	1742%
Leadership	2,058	2,903	41%
Sales	2,244	2,586	15%
Operations	1,791	2,527	41%
Problem Solving	1,528	2,308	51%
Planning	1,290	2,052	59%
Detail Oriented	1,561	1,951	25%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

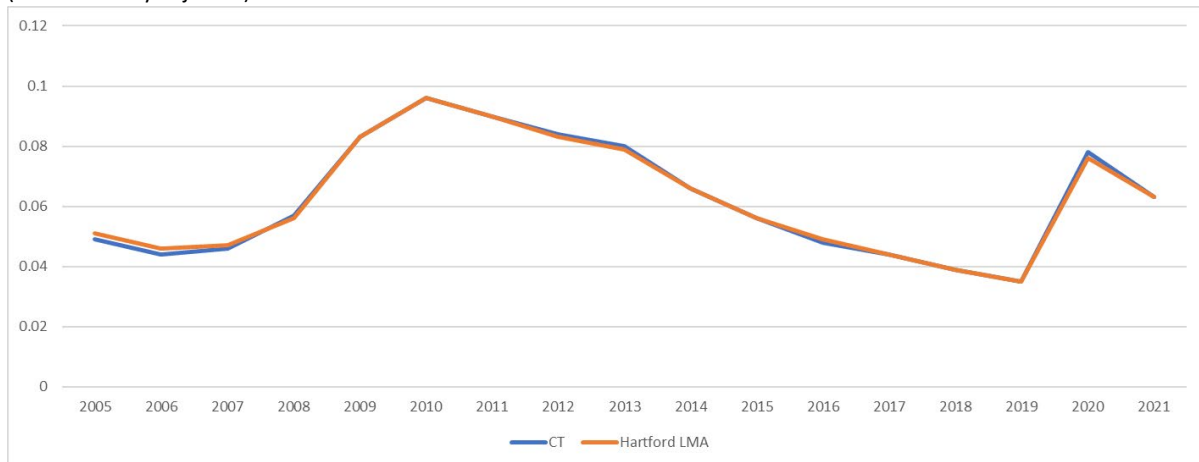
4. Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.

### Economic Environment

Connecticut has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, losing 172,700 jobs in the first year of the pandemic (June 2019 to June 2020) alone. Prior to the pandemic, it had been struggling to replace all the jobs lost from the Great Recession. The unemployment rates gradually fallen since the Great Recession to 3.8% for the North Central WDB region and 3.7% for Connecticut until 2019, but unemployment in the state is steadily returning to pre-pandemic rates with an annual average rate of 6.3% in 2021 for both the state and the Hartford Labor Market Area. In March 2022, the unemployment rate has returned to 4.2% in the Hartford LMA and 4.3% in CT.

### Unemployment Rate - Annual Average - 2005-2021

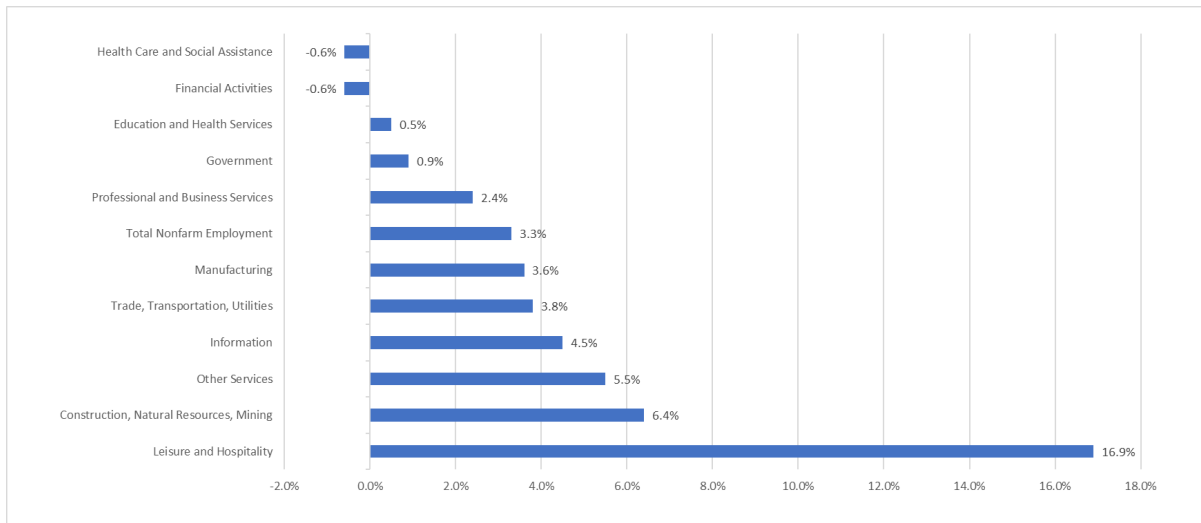
(not seasonally adjusted)



Source: CT Department of Labor

Below is the change in the Hartford Labor Market Area jobs in all industries from March 2021 to March 2022 further demonstrating a recovery in employment since the height of the pandemic. Health care and social activities, as well as financial activities, were the only industries which experienced marginal job losses of 0.6%, while all other industries saw increases in their employment to varying degrees. Employment in the leisure and hospitality industry, which has suffered some of the worst implications of the pandemic, has seen the most dramatic increase of 16.9%. In this one-year period, the unemployment rate has decreased by 3.1 percentage points for both Hartford LMA and Connecticut.

### Percent Change in Employment by Industry in Hartford WDA, Comparing March 2021 to March 2022



Source: CT Department of Labor

### Regional Labor Force

The North Central WIOA Region’s labor force was 544,707 as of 2022. At 28.69%, the North Central WIOA region accounts for almost a third of the state’s workforce, as well as almost a third of its unemployed individuals at 28.79%. From 2020 to 2022, The North Central WIOA Region’s labor force has grown by almost 14,000.

### Labor Force Dynamics – March 2022

	North Central Connecticut	% of Connecticut	Connecticut
<b>Total Population (2020)</b>	1,008,538	27.97%	3,605,944
<b>Labor Force</b>	544,707	28.69%	1,898,714
<b>Employed</b>	521,353	28.68%	1,817,587
<b>Unemployed</b>	23,354	28.79%	81,127
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	4.3%	N/A	4.3%

Not seasonally adjusted

Source: CT Department of Labor

### Workforce Demographics

#### Population

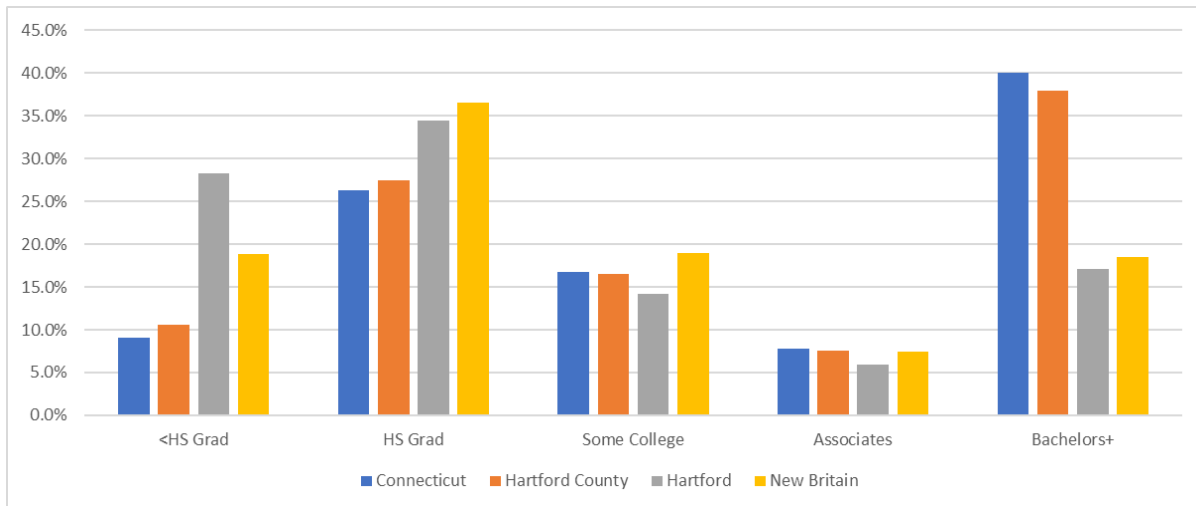
Hartford County’s total population as of 2020 was 899,498. This represents 25% of Connecticut’s total population of 3,605,944.

#### Age Distribution – 2020

The North Central WIOA Region’s age distribution is in line with the state, with approximately 60% of the population aged 20 to 64, 24% aged 0 to 19 and 17% aged 65+. The median age in Connecticut is 41 years which is higher than the nation’s 38 years. The North Central WIOA Region’s median age is higher than the state at 43 years, while Hartford County’s largest cities of Hartford and New Britain have a median age of 32 and 34 years, respectively.

#### Educational Attainment – 2020 (aged 25+)

The North Central WIOA Region is in line with the state in terms of educational attainment; however, some of its larger cities are showing a larger percentage of individuals with less than a high school diploma, and, on the other end of the spectrum, fewer individuals with a Bachelor’s degree or higher.



Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey

### Race/Ethnicity – 2020

Hartford County is in line with the state in regard to the distribution of single races, with White individuals comprising a clear majority of the total population. This differs greatly from the larger cities within the region, such as Hartford and New Britain, with a significantly higher proportion of marginalized or minority populations.

	Connecticut	Hartford County	Hartford	New Britain
<b>White</b>	63.2%	58.2%	12.6%	37.1%
<b>Black/African American</b>	10.0%	13.1%	35.5%	12.5%
<b>Asian</b>	4.7%	5.9%	3.5%	2.5%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	17.3%	18.5%	44.0%	44.0%
<b>Indigenous</b>	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
<b>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	0.03%	0.02%	0.03%	0.04%

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey

### Processed Initial Claims by Industry - North Central Region

Between March 2020 and March 2022, the amount of processed initial unemployment claims in the North Central Region has decreased by 97% from 15,849 to 489. Apart from Information, which has seen the smallest change in initial claims processed at a decrease of 78% in the previous two years, there has been a decrease of at least 90% in initial claims across the board. Retail trade, as well as accommodation & food services, have seen the greatest decrease at 98%, followed closely by health care & social assistance, educational services, and wholesale trade at 97%. Source: CT Department of Labor

### Targeted Population Groups

#### Individuals with Disabilities

Around 12% of Hartford County residents have a disability, including over 46% of the population aged 75 and older. 67,100 individuals aged 18 to 74 have a disability. For the disabled population aged 16 and over, 21.4% are below 100 percent of the poverty level and 10.2% are at 100 to 149 percent of the poverty level, compared to 9.9% and 5.9%, respectively, for the total population (noninstitutionalized).

#### Ex-Offenders

As of April 2022, there were 9,846 incarcerated individuals in CT, down from over 13,000 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 but up 9.6% from 2021. 3,209 individuals are in community supervision (parole, halfway house, etc.). See Attachment VII: Targeted Populations. *Source: CT DOC and CT OPM*

### **WIOA Enrolled Customer Characteristics**

Individuals enrolled in CWP's core American Job Center programs during the 7/1/2020-6/30/2021 program year, including Jobs First Employment Services, WIOA Adult, WIOA Youth, and WIOA Dislocated Worker, were predominantly female and persons of color with females representing 63% of participants and 62% of participants identified as non-white. 25% of enrolled customers were aged 24 years or younger with another 60% aged 25 to 54 years.

### **Young Adults and Opportunity Youth**

Youth and young adults in Hartford County show labor force participation rates of 40.1% for 16-19-year-olds and 76.1% for those aged 20 to 24, compared to rates of 84-85% for older demographics. This corresponds to unemployment rates of 21.1% for those aged 16 to 19 and 10.7% for those aged 20 to 24, compared to rates of 4-5% for older demographics. While 97.9% of the population aged 15 to 17 is enrolled in school, 77.2% of those aged 18 to 19 are enrolled and only 42.7% of those aged 20 to 24 are enrolled. These are lower than the State of CT enrollment rates, which are 81% for those aged 18 to 19 and 47.6% for those aged 20 to 24. Young adults that are not in school and not employed are considered Opportunity Youth, and often face multiple barriers to participation in education and employment. *Source: US Census Bureau*

- 5. Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and employment needs of employers in the region.**

The CWP Board and its stakeholders have identified a need to conduct asset-mapping to identify all of the workforce development resources in the region, and to work toward maximizing coordination and eliminating duplication.

CWP recognizes that the primary providers of workforce development activities in the region are:

- The four community colleges offer numerous credit and non-credit certificate and degree programs across most occupational categories. The strengths of the colleges are solid academic capacity and the ability to develop curriculum and award recognized post-secondary credentials. Weaknesses include the alignment of many training programs with the academic schedule which extends the duration of training when job-seekers need concentrated, accelerated training that will allow them to get back to work quickly. SNAP employment and training is available through the community colleges.
- Goodwin University, a private four-year college, offers a number of short-term certificates in addition to degree programs. The college is structured to meet the needs of working adults. Goodwin accepts a WIOA training voucher as payment in full for all the programs on its ETPL. Eligible individuals currently receiving SNAP benefits can take certain programs at Goodwin University for free, many of which lead to national or state credentials/licensing. SNAP-eligible programs include Bookkeeping, CNC Manufacturing, Human Services, Medical Office Administrative Assistant, Security Guard Certification and Welding Technology.
- Central CT State University and Institute for Training and Business Development offers degree and certificate programs, but these are generally targeted to higher-skilled students.
- Charter Oak State College offers certificate, credential, and degree programs through distance learning. Flexibility and academic recognition are strengths; the need for the student to supply hardware, high-speed

internet, a suitable study environment, motivation, and self-discipline can be weaknesses for some students.

- The regional vocational technical high schools are an under-utilized resource due to very limited capacity to serve adult students. Adult programs in this region are available in Hartford and Bristol.
- Community based organizations offer workforce development services. Their programs are often dependent on inconsistent grant funding; these programs cannot issue credentials directly – trainees must obtain certifications or licenses from other organizations. The strength of the community-based programs is their wrap-around support services.
- Local adult education providers focus primarily on mandated programs – adult basic education, GED instruction, adult high school diploma, English as a second language and citizenship – with part-time schedule. Due to funding constraints, the capacity of local adult education programs to address higher level and occupational skills is limited.
- The Hartford Job Corps Center offers academic and technical training in advanced manufacturing, medical assisting, nursing assisting, and insurance and finance. Strengths are a rigorous training culture, housing on-site for most students, and concentrated investment in all students. Weaknesses are limited capacity to serve non-residents, and lack of services for adults.
- The core partners of the one-stop system are the major providers of workforce development services and are described elsewhere in the plan.

**6. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.**

All MOUs with required partners in place (see Attachment VI).

- In addition to the activities listed above, adult, and dislocated worker employment and training activities are available through the one-stop system.
- WIOA Title I: basic career services available to all eligible adults; individualized career services and occupational skills training through scholarships available to dislocated workers and adults with barriers who meet priority of service criteria.
- WIOA Title II Adult Literacy: administered by CSDE; A MOU is in place with this WIOA Core Provider.
- WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser: universally available career services, labor exchange.
- Trade Act: training and job search assistance available to workers from affected companies and/or employee groups.
- WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation: administered by DORS, including assistive technology, job coaching, working interviews, high reimbursement on-the-job training. An MOU is in place with this WIOA Core Provider. Vocational Rehabilitation staff from both Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and Board of Education and Services for the Blind are on site at two American Job Centers (Hartford and Enfield) on a weekly basis
- Apprenticeship: administered by CTDOL, primarily targeted to manufacturing and construction trades.
- Mortgage Crisis Job Training: training scholarships and job search assistance for homeowners at risk of default.
- Jobs First Employment Services: case management, career services and subsidized employment and training scholarships available to TANF recipients.
- Free to Succeed: employment retention services and career services for ex-offenders.
- Best Chance: contextualized education, occupational skills training and job placement assistance for ex-offenders.

**7. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. The description and assessment must include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities.**



While there are various programs and services for youth in the region, recent asset mapping identified a limited number of career pathway programs leading to middle-skill jobs with sustaining wages suitable for out-of-school youth. Many existing programs focused on one area – youth development, education, or workforce development – and did not provide an integrated pathway approach. Even though all the youth programs mapped offer job readiness training directly or via referral, many times the training does not include specific occupational training or connection to college/postsecondary education. Key findings include:

- CWP invests WIOA funds into youth programs, designated primarily for out-of-school youth.
- Private philanthropy serves a critical role and provides significant resources to leverage public funds and support career programs.
- There is significant variance in mission, structure, and capacity across organizations that serve youth.
- Many programs offer personalized guidance and support to youth, but a smaller number offer internships and other work experiences to participating youth.
- While a number of programs provide education and training, credentials offered are not always related to the most in-demand occupations.
- There are existing employer partnerships across organizations and programs, but there is an opportunity to deepen engagement such that youth are offered a range of work-based learning experiences leading to full-time job opportunities.

Of the programs reviewed, the most comprehensive youth workforce programs are listed below:

Provider	Industry Focus	Type
Human Resources Agency	Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare	College partnership
Opportunities Industrialization Center of New Britain	Healthcare	College partnership
Our Piece of the Pie	Healthcare, Insurance, and Advanced Manufacturing	College partnership
KRA	Advanced Manufacturing	Sector partnership
Forge City Works	Culinary	Provide training

**8. Identify gaps in service based on the above analyses.**

- Services for adults who do not meet priority of service criteria are limited to basic career services in the one-stop system.
- Few providers offer low cost, flexible training, including online training, leading to recognized credentials.
- Few providers offer accelerated, full-time training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials for middle skill jobs.
- Local adult education providers do not generally offer full-time class schedules to meet the needs of adult jobseekers who need to obtain skills and credentials in order to enter employment quickly.
- Registered apprenticeships are not available in the high demand healthcare sector and the emerging demand IT sector.

### III. Local Workforce Development Board Vision, Goals, and Strategies

**1. Identify the vision, goals and strategies adopted by the LWDB in response to the passage of WIOA and how these will affect the preparation of an educated and skilled workforce.**

**Strategy into Action on the Path to the Future**

A focused strategic vision and plan was created in 2017 under the new leadership of CWP. This vision focuses on CWP being the premier organization for workforce development, along with a focus on middle skill jobs in order to close the skills gap. The strategic plan identifies how CWP has readied itself to align to its vision and carry out its mission of leveraging public and private resources to produce skilled workers for a competitive regional

economy in a more strategic manner. It includes over-arching, multi-year strategic objectives for each of the four perspectives of its organization – People, Operational, Financial, Services – that define how it will achieve its vision.

**Strategic Objectives (3 to 5 years)**

Work was conducted to ensure that the core aspects, or perspectives, of CWP’s organization – People, Operational, Financial and Services – are aligned to its Vision. A Strategic Objective was developed for each of the four perspectives. CWP’s Strategic Objectives provide a guiding objective for what the organization will do over the next 3-5 years to successfully achieve its Vision.

Strategic Area	Strategic Objective
People	We will develop and retain engaged and committed talent.
Operational	Continuously improve processes to optimally manage resources and workflow.
Financial	Cultivate an environment that ensures compliance while supporting innovation.
Services	Build the premiere workforce development system to close the skills gap.

With the strategic vision and four operational goals identified, CWP can drive its operational goals aligned to them. These goals are outlined in the following section. CWP is also engaged in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) process at the Board of Directors and Leadership levels to assess and implement cross-goal strategies and policies that will increase and codify DEI processes and outcomes.

**Operational Goals**

**1. Develop strategies for underserved populations.**

Job training and preparation is needed for individuals of all ages, from youth through adult, with the right skills to be successful and gain meaningful employment. Many of today’s job seekers and youth are skills deficient or low-income residents and have the greatest barriers to employment. Support is available to individuals through AJC services, and through other training and employment programs CWP supports and manages. Focus is on individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, and those impacted by the Opioid epidemic with a focus on a commitment to continuous improvement and capacity building. Special attention to COVID-19 recovery strategies for the tens of thousands of dislocated workers will be supported.

CWP workforce development strategies support business and labor in ongoing efforts to address racial and gender gaps in manufacturing, IT/Tech, TDL, healthcare, construction, education, and other sectors. Racial and economic inclusion of the region’s diverse populations is a priority for all CWP Programs.

**Strategies to Support Goal**

North Central Region of Connecticut workers will possess the critical skills and credentials needed to prosper and advance in careers that pay well and allow them to support their families.

- a. Promote expanded implementation of effective integrated employment and training/contextualized learning strategies to improve skills acquisition and employment outcomes for targeted low-skill jobseekers, including adult education students and participants in time-limited public assistance. Expand proven best practices, e.g., Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), as feasible to include additional prospective participants, working closely with businesses/employers in key sectors seeking qualified skilled workers.
- b. Maximize opportunities for success for all individual jobseekers, workers, and youth in North Central Connecticut’s talent pool, promoting innovation, coordination, resource alignment and integrated

service delivery to advance the employability and career prospects for the broadest possible range of customers, including (but not limited to) veterans, dislocated, the long-term unemployed, public assistance participants, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, out-of-school youth, low-skilled adults, limited English proficient, etc.

## **Programs and Activities to Support Goal and Strategies**

### **Adult Workforce Development Activities**

#### ***American Job Center – One Stop Services***

The AJC system is a partnership of organizations, working as a team, to promote a universal approach to providing effective workforce assistance to job seekers and businesses. This assistance includes: Basic career services providing current labor market information to help people make decisions about career pathways and development; match labor market information with solid career assessment for people to help them build a plan that is going to put them on a career pathway; and connecting individuals to one of the career pathway initiatives, i.e., sectors. In the COVID-19 environment CWP supports the safety and protection of One-Stop customers with remote/virtual services, and a protective AJC environment.

#### AJC Guiding Principles

CWP has adopted a set of guiding principles for the AJC delivery model:

- a. The AJC is a demand driven system; Business Services has the capacity to understand business needs and match job-seekers with current openings.
- b. The AJC is the hub of CWP adult programs, with accountability for screening, assessment, and referral of jobseekers to all CWP programs.
- c. Quality and timeliness of assessment and individual career planning is a critical strategy for effective service to diverse populations.
- d. Empower customers seeking services at the North Central AJCs to get back to work quickly through immediate career preparation and placement.
- e. Provide short-term skill development opportunities to a greater proportion of AJC customers through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- f. Maximize the use of technology for training and customer engagement.
- g. Maintain a competitive scholarship application process for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) targeted to programs based on labor market demand.
- h. Maximize resources allocated to serving WIOA enrolled customers.
- i. Retain and expand special initiatives targeted to jobseekers with barriers: persons with disabilities, ex-offenders, the long-term unemployed, public assistance recipients, and people transitioning from homelessness.
- j. Improve alignment, coordination, and co-enrollment between AJCs and other CWP programs and initiatives: Jobs Funnel, Healthcare, IT and Manufacturing Sector Initiatives, and Out-of-School Youth programs; various programs administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CTDSS) - these programs include: TANF, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including the SNAP Employment & Training. (SNAP E&T) program, the Community Services Block Grant, and the Child Support Program.
- k. Establish a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.
- l. Work with SkillUp CT to utilize free on-line training.

Services provided within the AJCs include career coaching, job search techniques, skill and interest assessments, interviewing and networking techniques, referrals to our Business Team and other networks,

access to social media networks, advice and support through peer groups, customized services for individuals, with disabilities, Veterans, former offenders, newly and long-term unemployed, and individuals with unique circumstances, and online Learning Centers.

In January 2020 DOL and CWP partnered with OEC as a pilot to promote their Stronger Families, Stronger Futures program. Community Partners delivered information about this program during the JFES Steps To Success (STS). The goal of this program is to see every family succeed and support every child to develop emotionally, mentally, and physically sturdy. Services provided through this program ensure healthier caregivers and babies, children better prepared for school, children are safer, and families are more self-sufficient.

Contractor and Special Programs staff will provide support to the implementation and delivery of CWP's workforce development programs aligned with the AJC system, including Special Initiatives:

- a. Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program (MCJTP) provides training and job placement to individuals who are at risk of default. AJC staff will promote the MCJTP to customers and refer potential clients to MCJTP program staff. Services include Job Training Scholarships, Financial Literacy, Credit Counseling, and Referrals to other services. The Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program Staff will work in partnership with credit counselors and other support agencies to help improve customer financial standing with lenders.
- b. National Dislocated Worker Grant is a \$5.8 million Federal Trade and Economic Transition grant which enables Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) and the North-Central Connecticut region's American Job Center (AJC) network to address ongoing and emerging workforce and economic challenges by providing training and career services to dislocated workers seeking reentry into the workforce and increasing their skill levels to become competitive for growing or high demand employment opportunities. The initial grant award focused on two sectors, Manufacturing and Health Care, and CWP received a one year, no cost extension until September 2021 and added three additional sectors, Construction, Information Technology and Transportation & Logistics. Under this grant CWP enrolled 710 participants with 403 enrolling in training opportunities.
- c. Connecticut Recovers Opioid Grant - Capital Workforce Partners, in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Labor, was awarded a Connecticut Recovers Opioid grant. A Peer Recovery Navigator is stationed at the Hartford American Job Center. In addition, the Best Chance program provides pre-manufacturing training at Manchester Community College, culinary training at the Chrysalis Center and Customer Service Training at the Center for Latino Progress.
- d. Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative – a \$2.2 million CT DOL grant awarded to CWP to provide Pre-Apprenticeship/credential-based training and supportive services for up to 150 in- school youth and 324 adults/out-of-school youth in the North Central region in the Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Construction sectors over the next four years. Training for this initiative will be contracted to local community colleges, the Ironworkers Local 15, Goodwin University, and several high schools.

### **Customized programs to support underserved populations**

#### ***Ex-Offenders***

Working with ex-offenders on their transition back to the workforce has been an integral part of CWP prior to WIOA enactment. CWP operates several initiatives in support of transitioning this population back to the workforce.

#### Jobs Funnel

The Jobs Funnel was launched as a pilot in Hartford to provide qualified workers opportunities to pursue careers in the construction trades. Jobs Funnels programs now operate in two local workforce areas – north central and northwest – under the aegis of the respective regional WDBs. State-level coordination is provided through the Office of Workforce Competitiveness. State general fund dollars help support Jobs Funnel efforts.

Jobs Funnel services typically include outreach/recruitment, assessment, case management, pre-employment training, job placement, and retention support services. Since their inception, the various regional funnel initiatives have helped to place more than 4,488 individuals in a variety of construction-related jobs, in both union and non-union settings, and in apprenticeships. The average hourly starting wage for participants who have completed the Jobs Funnel training is approximately \$17-21. The Jobs Funnels are an example of innovative public-private partnerships involving employers, labor, community-based organizations, state and local agencies, non-profits, and local funders to address shared objectives.

#### Free to Succeed

Free to Succeed provides retention services, career advancement planning, and support to former offenders. The program, staffed by two full-time Retention Specialists, is housed at the Hartford American Job Center. Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) is able to leverage the resources of the AJC system to provide job training and placement services. Individuals may be referred to Free to Succeed after being placed into employment by AJC job developers, Best Chance and Jobs Funnel staff, and community partners, or they may enter the program directly.

#### I-BEST Second Chance (BEST Chance) program

In 2016 the State of Connecticut chose Capital Workforce Partners as the lead organization to implement the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) Second Chance Pilot as a contextualized learning pilot program in Hartford County to reduce unemployment and recidivism rates among soon to be released offenders and ex-offenders in Connecticut. The goal was to help ex-offenders compete in today's labor market by providing relevant training and support to gain good jobs. Specifically, program goals included: 1) Completion of basic, occupational, and advanced training; 2) Increased earnings and employment; 3) Reduction of recidivism; and 4) Placement and Retention of employment. The BEST Chance Program is based on I-BEST, an evidence-based model, designed to provide vocational education combined with contextualized adult basic education, through a partnership of a dozen organizations supporting this comprehensive program.

#### ***Individuals with Disabilities***

CWP strives to increase the capacity to effectively serve job seekers with disabilities in all programs. The Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) facilitates various disability-related trainings throughout the year and is on hand to provide technical assistance to all program staff and to bring together the appropriate parties for the Integrated Resource Team. CWP continues to partner/collaborate with CTDOL's Office for Veterans Workforce Development, Departments of Rehabilitative Services, Labor, Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Social Services, Department of Developmental Services, Transportation, and various other public and private sector representatives to leverage resources for job seekers with multiple barriers to employment.

#### Ticket to Work Program

Social Security's Ticket to Work Program is a free and voluntary program available to people ages 18 through 64 who are blind or have a disability and who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The Ticket Program offers beneficiaries with disabilities expanded choices when seeking services and supports to enter, re-enter and/or maintain employment. The program increases financial independence and self-sufficiency and reduces or eliminates reliance on disability benefits. Additionally, the program provides work incentives and safety nets for individuals to wean off benefits. CWP's Disability Resource Coordinator provides benefits counseling, to WIOA enrolled job seekers, so they fully understand how work will impact their benefits. Moreover, the savings differential based on earnings and savings from SSA are passed on as a reimbursement to Capital Workforce Partners as unrestricted dollars.

### ***Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)***

#### **Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)**

The JFES program provides employment services to time-limited recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), the state cash assistance program for needy families within the TANF block grant. JFES activities are designed to move the hardest-to-employ recipients rapidly and effectively into employment and toward self-sufficiency. CWP implements its JFES program by providing job search assistance, vocational education, subsidized employment, adult basic education and/or employment-related support services such as transportation and childcare assistance for TANF individuals.

### ***One-Stop Services to Support All Job Seekers***

#### **Scholarships for occupations in demand (Individual Training Accounts – ITAs)**

WIOA scholarships are given to eligible job seekers who are looking for job training in growing occupations. CWP will assign priority to training programs for WIOA scholarship funding based on labor market demand and potential earnings. CWP will analyze the labor market as part of its annual strategic planning process to identify labor market trends and identify occupations in demand in the local labor market. Demand occupations will have the potential for high entry wages (at least 200% of the federal poverty level) and projected growth and/or significant job openings in Connecticut and the North Central Region. To be considered for funding through WIOA, a training program must lead to a recognized credential as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor. WIOA customers will choose from among eligible training providers and programs listed on the State of Connecticut Eligible Training Program List (ETPL) that offer training programs in demand and priority occupations.

### ***Hartford Working Cities Challenge Initiative (HWCI):***

CWP is a partner with Hartford's Working Cities initiative, which is a focused, concentrated, and urgent effort that tackles two economic challenges facing Hartford: poverty and the need for an educated workforce to attract and retain employers to the city and the region. The Hartford Working Cities is a partner with the Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative, and supports youth leadership development, career pathways support and providing outreach to the community for employment and training opportunities.

### ***East Hartford Working Cities Challenge Initiative (EHC):***

Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) is an active partner in *East Hartford CONNects (EHC)*. EHC represents East Hartford's initiative as one of five municipalities participating in the Connecticut Working Cities Challenge, organized by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. EHC's purpose is to assist East Hartford residents with career development and educational resources and to foster community engagement. The initiative's staff

works with residents who are searching for a new job or need assistance navigating available resources in the community.

### **Adult Literacy**

Capital Workforce Partners, working with 35-40 adult education providers in the N. Central CT area is collaborating to support the Capital Area Adult Literacy Network, focusing on workforce development programs and adult education providers accentuating efforts to strengthen coordination between workforce development and adult education. The group is focused on several priorities, which include 1) systems development supporting referral, cross-enrollment, tracking, and learner on/off-ramps; 2) community of practice and learning activities to share and standardize best practice curriculum, assessments, resources, and instructional assets; and 3) partnership enhancements including connectivity to the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, Regional Industry Sector Partnerships, and the CT Office of Workforce Strategy.

## **2. Improve access to recognized post-secondary credentials.**

Ensuring preparedness for and access to post-secondary credentials is vital in career pathways development for at-risk in school youth (ISY) as well as OY - youth disconnected from education and employment - as they open doors to educational attainment and careers. By focusing on the whole person in relation to their post-secondary education and career development, as well as ensuring access to educational and career pathways, collaborative efforts among partner organizations afford these individuals pathways to success.

### **Strategies to Support Goal**

Connecticut's young adult job seekers will be equipped for postsecondary success and given access to career opportunities in order to become productive contributors to a vibrant and competitive state economy and in their communities. Detailed strategies include:

- a. Focused supports on the whole youth in order to support them through life challenges that negatively impact their success of reaching post-secondary goals, accomplished through the creation of performance measures that align with post-secondary success and barrier reduction.
- b. Promoting development and implementation of aligned career pathways strategies as an integral feature of industry partnerships and sector-based initiatives, with multiple on-off ramps for participants of varying skills and abilities, leading to employer-valued/validated credentials and certifications. Career pathways are equally valuable for adult jobseekers and young people, including students and out-of-school youth.
- c. Leveraging relationships with North Central region school districts and resources, to support at-risk in school youth as an OY prevention.
- d. Expand the pre-apprenticeship pipeline for WIOA youth through partnerships with area community colleges and universities as well as industry sector partnerships
- e. Developing of pathways for at-risk in-school and out-of-school youth, leading to certifications and credentials that enhance their viability in the job market. Build on and expand the OY coordinated career pathways model to help targeted out-of-school youth acquire valuable post-secondary credentials and get a job.
- f. Build out employer base and sector partnerships that focus solely on youth population and provide technical assistance and training to employers around positive youth development strategies for retaining a young workforce.

### **Programs and Activities to Support Goal**

#### **Adult Programs**

### On-the job training (OJT)

OJT is a work-based learning strategy which allows an employee to gain the knowledge and competencies required of a specific job while performing meaningful work with an employer. Training is supervised by the employer and takes place in their normal work environment. A typical feature of OJT is a reimbursement to the employer to offset the costs associated with providing OJT. Upon satisfactory completion of the training, the employer is expected to retain the individual as a regular employee without receiving further training reimbursement.

### H-1B CT-WHISP

The H-1B Connecticut Workforce & High-Tech Industry Skills Partnership (CT-WHISP) Grant Program is a four-year, \$10 million grant to invest in training for key sectors of the U.S. Economy running from February 2021 – January 2025. Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) is one of the nineteen Grant recipients, who will focus on upskilling the current workforce and training the workforce of the future for critical industries such as IT and advanced manufacturing. This grant is in partnership with the other four workforce boards in Connecticut and is targeted to serve 2086 individuals statewide and 440 in the North Central Region. Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) in partnership with the American Job Center (AJC) network, regional IT and manufacturing employers and regional IT and manufacturing training providers are using innovative training strategies and training delivery methods to provide individuals in our communities with the skills necessary to succeed in middle and high-skilled H-1B occupations. Training models will include a broad range of virtual/hybrid/classroom skills training, on-the-job training, and incumbent worker training. During the first year of this grant statewide, 41 participants enrolled in skills training, 37 participants have been enrolled in incumbent worker training and 1 has enrolled in on-the-job training.

### Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative

The Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative (ACI) is a four-year Connecticut bond-funded initiative promoting Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programming. CWP was awarded \$2.2 million in 2020 to implement Pre-Apprenticeship and credential-based programming in the Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Construction sectors. These programs were organized in partnership with the Connecticut State College & University (CSCU) system, Goodwin University, and other partners, serving both adults and youth. The ACI grant enables CWP to leverage the American Job Center (AJC) network to provide enhanced Pre-Apprenticeship training opportunities for recipients of AJC services leading to either Registered Apprenticeship enrollment or unsubsidized employment. During year one of this initiative, 147 participants received Pre-Apprenticeship or Registered Apprenticeship training with 87 earning credentials and 29 gaining employment.

### Tech Talent Fund

CWP received two awards from the CT Department of Economic & Community Development's Tech Talent Fund to implement IT/Tech sector-focused, credential-based training programs. Tech Talent Fund programming has been implemented with two IT training vendors: Year Up and Merit America. In the Year Up program, 29 customers entered training and 27 have completed and obtained credentials. In the Merit America program, 147 customers have enrolled in training and 96 have obtained credentials, to date.

## **Youth Programs**

### WIOA Youth Programs

- a. CWP invests WIOA funds into programs delivered by community-based organizations serving about 200-225 youth annually, including new participants and participants carried forward from the prior year.



- b. Private philanthropy serves a critical role and provides significant resources to leverage public funds and support career programs.
- c. All programs offer personalized guidance and support to youth, basis skills remediation, postsecondary readiness activities, and internships and other work experiences to participating youth.
- d. CWP is building on existing employer partnerships across organizations and programs to deepen engagement such that youth are offered a range of work-based learning experiences leading to full-time job opportunities.
- e. Providers access support and guidance from CWP staff including the Disability Program Navigator to prepare youth with disabilities to enter education and work.
- f. CWP is enhancing WIOA Youth services within the AJC through the WIOA Youth Liaisons. WIOA Youth Liaisons will serve an active caseload serving WIOA Youth who are suitable for AJC services.
- g. CWP is remodeling WIOA Youth program to remain competitive with workforce post-COVID-19 such as, increasing paid work experience wages.

WIOA Youth funds offer Opportunity Youth the chance to enter integrated, streamlined career pathways resulting in positive education and employment outcomes. In 2021, CWP initiated a procurement process that built on the previously established career pathway framework. The procurement sought programs that incorporate hands on learning and paid work experience as a central component to education and training and employer participation from design through implementation.

<b>Contractor</b>	<b>New Youth to be Registered</b>	<b>Industry Focus</b>
Hartford Public Library	20	IT
Human Resources Agency	20	Allied Health
OIC of New Britain	20	Allied Health
Our Piece of the Pie	45	Allied Health, Manufacturing
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	

Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative

Capital Workforce Partners is the backbone organization for the Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative (HOYC), a collective action effort to improve the life outcomes for the almost 5000 Opportunity Youth (OY), ages 16-24, in Hartford who do not have a high school degree or who have a diploma but are not in school or working. HOYC complements the One Stop system and WOIA Youth programming facilitated by Capital Workforce Partners to increase access and supports for Opportunity Youth. HOYC OY strategies emphasize: (a) empowering youth leaders, (b) enhancing and expanding effective career pathways, (c) using RBA to inform decision-making, assess progress, and improve methods of evaluation, and (d) engaging in policy and systems alignment to scale up and sustain this work.

Navigation Tool for Young Adult Training and Employment Services

In response to an identified, systemic need for coordination of and navigation to employment and training resources, and in-line with a commitment to eliminating the duplication of projects and services through increased collaboration, The Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative (HOYC) and Hartford Generation Work (Gen Work) have developed the Training and Employment Navigation Tool in partnership with the United Way 2-1-1 service system. This coordinated tool operates as a screener to better connect individuals ages 16-29 to programs that meet their unique needs and eligibility, and can be found on the HOYC, United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, and United Way 2-1-1 websites with HOYC and Generation

Work branding. HOYC and Gen Work are continuously working on optimizing the functionality of the tool, updating the services available within, as well as increasing its exposure and use, largely through outreach efforts to partner agencies, youth groups such as the Young Legends, and the Hartford community.

#### Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP)

SYELP is a regional summer employment program that runs from June to August, with funding through the State Departments of Labor and Aging & Disability Services, the City of Hartford, and Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. It places an average of 1100 youth per year in subsidized employment opportunities. SYELP is organized into three tiers of work-based learning, designed to provide competency development and work-based experiences to youth ages 14-21 at all levels of job readiness.

#### Hartford Work Based Learning Network

The Hartford Work Based Learning Network (WBLN) is comprised of twenty-five organizations who are dedicated to helping Hartford school-aged youth develop critical hard and soft workplace skills necessary for post-secondary education and/or career. The WBLN evaluates WBL program participants on 12 competencies, ranging from general professional skills to problem solving/critical thinking skills to teamwork/collaboration skills. The competencies help assess areas where youth show strong skillsets and areas where students need to improve. The WBLN is currently focused on improving how Hartford youth are evaluated in WBL programs. This will be achieved by re-working the evaluation rubrics through using a process known as a Results-Based Accountability Framework (RBA). The Network is also working with Jobs For the Future (JFF) who will be providing consultation to the WBL on metric development, community employer relationship building and relationship development with other WBL networks outside of CT. The Network is also developing a website to highlight WBL youth testimonials, general WBL updates and plans to include an inventory of WBL programs available to Hartford youth.

### **3. Collaborate regionally with partner organizations and employers to align programs and cultivate sector partnerships for in-demand industries.**

CWP has focused on several critical industry sectors to provide employment and training services to assure that businesses in the region get quality workers with the right set of career and occupational competencies. It works closely with employers to identify areas of job growth opportunities, skills needed for those jobs, and related training support programs. It uses this knowledge, along with labor market information and local employer partnerships to define its targeted sector approach which is focused on IT/Technology, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, TDL (transportation, distribution, and logistics), and construction/energy. CWP partners with many workforce and education stakeholders, economic development, and state agencies to coordinate business engagement.

CWP's Regional Sector Partnership (RSP) strategies and activities have been coordinated in partnership with the CT Office of Workforce Strategy, which is implementing the Governor's Workforce Council Strategic Plan including a high priority for RSP development in critical industries. The RSP models emerging through this collaboration drive business-led agendas supported by employers and workforce, education, government, and economic development stakeholders.

#### **Strategies to Support Goal**

Strategies to support this goal are focused on Hartford area businesses – particularly those in key industry sectors that drive economic growth – to have access to the skilled, talented employees they need to

compete effectively, prosper, and create new and rewarding jobs and career opportunities for Hartford area workers. Detailed strategies include:

- a. Promotion and implementation of business/employer-led industry partnerships focusing on targeted sectors. The focus of these partnerships will be on high-priority, high-value, high-demand sectors and occupations.
- b. Promotion of effective implementation of sector-based initiatives in targeted sectors intended to address employers' priority needs, building on the achievements of existing successful sector initiatives. Strategically connect qualified jobseekers produced by the workforce system to job opportunities with businesses/employers benefitting from public investments, to strengthen the link between workforce development and economic development strategy.
- c. Implementation of a coordinated business/employer services model through the AJC One-Stop system, engaging coordinated participation by a broad array of partners and stakeholders, to address business customer's workforce needs, consistent with the "single point of contact" model principles.
- d. Implementation of a robust labor market information system to support effective workforce system planning, including insight and intelligence from businesses and employers, to promote data-informed and data-driven decisions about program strategy and related investments.

### **Programs and Activities to Support Goal**

CWP offers training in the private sector through its grant-driven initiatives. These grants are supported by, and worked in conjunction, with the AJCs.

### **Capital Area Pipeline Partnership**

Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) convenes the Capital Area Pipeline Partnership, a unique regional employer-led "partnership of partnerships" representing leaders of sector-specific partnerships and associated strategic partners driving strategy and action in to develop a regional pipeline of job-ready talent to meet employers' demand for skilled workers, support business growth and promote workers' financial security. CAPP partners include: Advanced Manufacturing Employer Partnership; Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Health; Jobs Funnel Construction and Transportation Partnership (Jobs Funnel); Capitol Region Council of Governments; Connecticut Business and Industry Association; Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; MetroHartford Alliance; United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut; Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford; Connecticut General Assembly Leadership; Municipal Economic Development Officials.

### **Healthcare**

CWP's Healthcare sector mission is to support building a skilled workforce in hospitals, community-based care, and facility-based care while addressing front line workforce challenges of skill development, retention, and advancement. CWP's Healthcare initiative with hospitals, community-based healthcare organizations, and long-term care providers builds a demand-driven workforce.

### *Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Health (MACH)*

The Metro-Hartford Alliance for Careers in Health (MACH) is an industry sector partnership, convened by CWP, with the mission of identifying and responding to workforce development policy issues for entry level and middle skill positions in the healthcare industry. MACH is an employer-driven, employer-led table that meets quarterly to address the workforce needs of healthcare institutions in North Central Connecticut. Members support strategic initiatives that bridge the gap between training programs and job placement efforts, ensuring that healthcare providers have access to a highly qualified workforce.

The MACH partnership is further developing and supporting workforce pipeline efforts to prepare qualified entry-level workers for job placement in healthcare. The need for short-term training in industry-based certificate programs is critical for regional healthcare employers. New efforts are also underway to prepare community health care workers and those in other occupations to qualify for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities. *MACH receives funding from Workforce Solutions, a funders' collaborative.*

### ***Advanced Manufacturing***

CWP's focus with respect to the region's advanced manufacturing sector is to coordinate skills enhancement and career advancement cement opportunities to develop the skilled talent needed by manufacturing employers. Efforts emphasize training incumbent workers and jobseekers for careers in key strategic technology-oriented growth occupations in aerospace, biomedical technology, fuel cell development and other time-sensitive production priorities of the regional defense supply chain of small-medium size manufacturers. To support its advanced manufacturing objectives CWP works closely with manufacturing industry associations such as the Aerospace Components Manufacturers, New England Spring and Metalstamping Association, CT Tooling and Machining Association, and ManufactureCT. Other key partners include the Connecticut Office of Apprenticeship Training (CTDOL) and the economic development strategies of Advance CT.

### ***Advanced Manufacturing Employer Partnership (AMEP)***

The Advanced Manufacturing Employers Partnership (AMEP) is an employer led consortium that supports initiatives to grow and enhance the manufacturing talent pipeline for aerospace and other manufacturers in North and Central Connecticut. It is a prime venue for manufacturing employers to come together to share ideas, express challenges, and influence workforce development initiatives. AMEP has a core focus on the manufacturing talent needs of advanced manufacturing employers, primarily aerospace in support of the supply chain of small-medium size manufacturers centered around Pratt and Whitney. Each quarterly meeting brings together speakers on current topics such as apprenticeship, manufacturing innovation, and workforce forecasting. Participating employers have first-hand access to state and federal programs that offer financial support aimed at helping businesses succeed and grow. *AMEP receives funding from Workforce Solutions, a funders' collaborative and is convened by the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT).*

### **IT/Technology**

#### ***Capital Area Tech Partnership (CATP)***

Capital Workforce Partners co-convenes the Capital Area Tech Partnership (CATP) with the MetroHartford Alliance using the Next Generation Sector Partnership model. CATP comprises around 40 IT/Technology companies in North Central CT. Since first convening in the spring of 2021, CATP businesses have identified talent pipeline gaps as the most critical and constraining challenges in the Metro Hartford market. This stark reality has prompted many firms to rethink their talent sourcing strategies and consider non-traditional populations, providing a significant opportunity to drive equity and justice-based workforce development initiatives. To simultaneously address multiple facets of the issue, CATP businesses are leading three workgroups: INSPIRE, Building Student Interest in Tech Careers; BUILD, Aligning Postsecondary Supply with Industry Demand; and HIRE, Elevating Skills-Based Hiring Practices.

### **Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (TDL) Sector Partnership**

Launched in February 2022, Capital Workforce Partners convenes the TDL regional sector partnership. This partnership will engage business leaders in addressing common barriers to the competitiveness and sustainability of North-Central CT's growing TDL sector including but not limited to hiring and training, employee retention, and job quality.

*The TDL Sector Partnership receives funding from Workforce Solutions, a funders' collaborative.*

### **Construction/Energy**

CWP's construction sector initiatives will enhance and develop a workforce which is equipped with the necessary skills to enter and advance in construction/energy occupations.

#### Jobs Funnel

The Jobs Funnel is a pre-apprenticeship program for job seekers interested in the construction and energy sectors. It is a coordinated system of outreach and recruitment, assessment, case management, pre-employment preparation, job training, placement, and retention services with strong partnerships with the Building Trades and minority contractors in the region. Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) convenes the Jobs Funnel Advisory Committee, which oversees the development and implementation of partnership opportunities with key stakeholders to lead efforts in all regional Jobs Funnel activities. This includes strategies for jobseekers' training and placement in the construction industry sector. The committee's guidance will ensure that the North Central Region's Jobs Funnel initiatives enhance and develop a workforce which is equipped with the necessary skills to enter and advance in the state's construction and related green industry sector.

#### *CT Women Can Weld Program*

The North Central Region Jobs Funnel Program under the administration of CWP has partnered with the Ironworkers Local 15 Apprenticeship Training Program for the delivery of the "CT Women Can Weld Program". The CT Women Can Weld Program is a 10-week course designed to introduce participants to welding, and it is offered to females residing in the State of CT. The program provides 320 hours of instruction through a combination of hands-on and classroom instruction. Upon completion, the females have the option of applying into the various building trades registered apprenticeship training programs.

#### **4. Continue to build out resources and engagement of business customers.**

A job-driven public workforce system contributes to a strong, growing economy by responding to the workforce needs of regional and local businesses to ensure positive employment outcomes for the employer and the job seeker. CWP's employer engagement plan supports that vision by creating a strategy that will build a seamless cross-program environment driven by employer needs. The plan emphasizes partnerships with employers above transactional relationships, seamless coordination of services offered by various partners, consistent communication and marketing efforts, and staff development.

#### **Business Engagement Strategies to Support Goal**

- a. Sector Partnerships: Partnerships, including CATP, MACH, AMEP and the TDL sector partnership, ensure that CWP's work is business driven. They inform our outreach strategy, are a core network of business customers and strong advocates of the workforce systems. CWP will continue to evaluate emerging and changing industry sectors for opportunities to establish new sector partnerships.
- b. Regional business services team coordination: CWP and AJC business services representatives, sector coordinators, and staffing specialists comprise a larger regional business services team that provides coordinated services to employers through various youth, adult, and specialty programs. CWP staff will

- co-chair the regional business services coordination team, including partners from the American Jobs Centers, Department of Labor, Adult Education sites, DORS, the Community Colleges, the Department of Economic and Community Development, youth programs, and various community-based organizations.
- c. Capacity Building. Maintain partnerships with various chambers of commerce and local economic development partners to reach additional small and medium sized businesses, maintain an important communication channel with local business communities, and increase capacity to promote job fairs, hiring and recruitment events, candidate screening and referral services, and similar activities. Perform research on web-based resources that can be offered at no cost to businesses.
  - d. Technology and Evaluation: Fully utilize and align ETO and CT Hires to integrate business services with job seeker and case management functions. These platforms will track business profiles, services delivered, recruitment efforts, referrals, job placement, job retention, position fill rates, and allow management of relationships and contacts.

These efforts will include CWP staff and its core network of partners, including the AJCs and the Department of Labor.

#### **5. Measure/report on programs and services to ensure transparency/accountability.**

It is essential that the workforce system generate data (targeted labor market information and program/strategy- specific information) and analysis that has strategic value to inform effective planning and policy development. CWP will use its cross-program data framework initiative to focus on improving and aligning data collection and outcome measurement across all of CWP's adult, youth, and employer services, leading to better informed program results. In addition, CWP uses its data-driven labor market information to help focus its resources on those industries and occupations most in demand.

#### **Strategies to Support Goal**

- a. Build a data repository to house data points from multiple programs; data extraction will be used to evaluate program outcomes and effectiveness, both within and across programs.
- b. Develop evaluation capabilities within CWP to identify program strengths and weaknesses through use of multiple methods and make mid-course corrections where necessary.
- c. Create and document the methodologies used to evaluate and report performance at the subcontract/service provider level and publish these methodologies early in the program year.

#### **Programs and Activities to Support Goal and Strategies**

##### **CTHires**

CTHires is CT DOL's hub for job development, training and other career services implemented in December 2015. Jobseekers and employers, both new and continuing, can use this system. In addition, it is the state's data collection and reporting system. CTHires enables WDBs to extract data to monitor ongoing performance. CWP has developed the capacity to extract and analyze CTHires data to assess WIOA contractor performance, to identify technical assistance needs, to make course corrections, and to inform decision-making.

##### **Efforts to Outcomes (ETO)**

Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) is CWP's online data collection and program management system. ETO is used to supplement CTHires data with real-time indicators, and as the sole data collection and reporting system for all CWP programs not supported by CTHires. ETO gives CWP the capacity to custom-design data collection

tools to capture participant and employer characteristics, specific service strategies, and outcomes that feed the performance methodologies and align with funder requirements.

### **Cross-Program Data Framework**

The creation of a cross-program data framework is a strategic objective adopted by the CWP Board. The cross-program data framework is the structure and process of data management and performance measurement within CWP. Framework components support data collection, aggregation, analysis and reporting across multiple programs and systems, including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

CWP uses data for internal and external monitoring and reporting. The frequency of each depends on the program need or organizational request. Monitoring includes process tracking and aspects of quality assurance, such as completeness, accuracy, validity, and timeliness. Within the cross-program data framework, standard methodologies have been developed to support consistent and replicable performance measurement of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs at the contractor level. Similar methodologies will be developed for other CWP programs.

### **Workforce Impact/Cost-Benefit**

CWP completed a cost-benefit/ROI study of CWP's programs and services, and its regional economic impact, through the engagement of Economic Modeling Specialists International (Emsi). CWP's overall cost benefit was 1.53, meaning that for every dollar invested in CWP, CWP returned \$1.53. Through this study and related efforts, CWP plans to develop the foundational components an in-house model to simulate Emsi's methodologies and results.

## **2. Describe the process used to develop the LWDB's vision and goals, including a description of the participants in the process.**

CWP's goals are designed to support the development of career pathways, and to improve services and outcomes for the most vulnerable workers — low-income adults and youth who have limited skills, lack work experience, and face other barriers to economic success. The goals also focus on expanding education and training options that help the region's residents to access good jobs and advance in their careers. The goals are also guided to address racial and economic inclusion of all of the region's diverse populations.

CWP has a wide range of committees and community partnerships which support feedback loops and inputs to the organization's vision and goals. CWP Board is over 50% composed of business representatives and is composed of all major WIOA core partners and community representatives and adopts and supports the organization's goals and strategies. CWP's One Stop Committee, Future Workforce Services Committee and other committees all provide review, input and adoption of critical organizational goals. The Consortium of Chief Elected Officials meet quarterly to review and update the WIOA plan and strategies. CWP's goals are consistent with its vision. CWP's vision was formulated with input from CWP's Development Committee with input from the Executive Committee and brought to the Board of Directors for review.

## **3. Describe the local area's strategy to work with entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals established by the local board.**

See page 34, 35 - Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Literacy, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

See page 6 - Partner Roles and Contributions

See pages 18, 23, 26 – Goals 1, 2, 3 - Programs and Activities to Support Goals under each Goal.

**4. Describe service strategies the LWDB has in place or will develop that will improve meeting the needs of customers with disabilities as well as other population groups.**

See page 34 – Vocational Rehabilitation

See page 6 - Partner Roles and Contributions

**5. Describe how the LWDB’s goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures to support economic growth and self-sufficiency.**

CWP’s goals are closely aligned with federal performance accountability measures.

- Goal 1: Improve employment outcomes for underserved populations – related to positive entered employment and earnings outcomes for adults with barriers and out of school youth.
- Goal 2: Improve access to recognized post-secondary credentials – related to increased credential rates.
- Goal 3: Collaborate regionally with partner organizations and employers to align programs and cultivate sector partnerships for in-demand industries – related to employer satisfaction and positive job-seeker outcomes.
- Goal 4: Continue to build out resources and engagement of business customers.
- Goal 5: Measure/report on programs and services to ensure transparency/accountability – related to tracking performance for continuous improvement.

**6. Indicate anticipated local levels of performance for the federal measures.**

CWP intends to negotiate WIOA performance levels that recognize the target populations served, a substantially larger number of enrollments into basic career services under the Adult program, and economic conditions in the region. For this plan, anticipated local levels of performance (PY21) for the primary indicators are:

<b>Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>	
Adult	71.5%
Dislocated Worker	78%
Youth	76.5%
<b>Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)</b>	
Adult	69.5%
Dislocated Worker	77.0%
Youth	73%
<b>Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>	
Adult	\$5,200
Dislocated Worker	\$8,800
Youth	\$3,200
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>	
Adult	70.5%
Dislocated Worker	70.5%
Youth	72.5%

**7. Describe indicators used by the LWDB to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.**

All CWP service provider contracts include performance metrics that are tied to the region’s WIOA performance goals and to CWP’s vision for quality service delivery. The contractor performance goals for PY 20 are shown in the charts below and will be aligned with the region’s negotiated performance targets.



### Adult Contractor Goals

Performance measures will be calculated quarterly according to the procedures detailed below.

### Schedule

Measures will be calculated quarterly and also cumulatively for the program year. Quarterly reports will be generated 30 days after the end of the quarter, on approximately the following dates (subject to change):

- 10/30/22, 1/30/23, 4/30/23, 7/30/23

### WIOA Measures

<b>Performance Requirements for Contract Compliance – Level 1 Goals</b>	<b>Goal FY22</b>
WIOA Employment Rate at Exit	78%
WIOA Weekly Earnings at Exit	\$620
ITA Credential Rate (measured 30 days after completion)	72%
Online Training Credential Rate (measured 30 days after completion)	72%

The second level of performance is a set of benchmarks that measure progress toward CWP’s strategic vision of closing the skills gap and placing job seekers into employment at self-sufficiency wages. Contractor will be eligible to earn performance incentive payments for meeting these goals per a specified performance schedule.

<b>Performance Benchmarks for Incentive Payments</b>	
<b>WIOA Payment Benchmarks</b>	<b>Goal</b>
WIOA Employment Rate at Exit	80%
WIOA Weekly Earnings at \$670 at Exit	40%
ITA Credential Rate (measured 30 days after completion)	77%
Online Training Credential Rate (measured 30 days after completion)	77%

### Youth contractor goals

Performance under this contract will be evaluated based upon the following:

- 100% of contracted number of youth to be served will be enrolled into the WIOA Youth program by the end of the third quarter of the program year
- 100% of youth who are vulnerable or in crisis within at least one domain in ETO’s life domain profile will be referred to a supportive service for each vulnerable or in crisis domain within two weeks of the ISS update
- 80% of youth will achieve a measurable skill gain for each program year they are enrolled in a training activity
- 80% of newly enrolled youth will begin an approved sector-based training within 90 days of their participation date
- 80% of youth who finish an approved sector-based training during the program year will receive a corresponding credential
- 40% of active participants will receive work experience by 3rd quarter of program year.
- 70% of the budgeted participant wage and fringe line item will be expended by the third quarter of the program year
- 80% of youth exited within the program year will be placed in education, advanced training, apprenticeships, or unsubsidized employment at exit
- 40% of youth who enter unsubsidized employment or apprenticeships, and are not enrolled in post-secondary education, will earn a wage of \$13.00 or more at closure

- j. 100% of required follow-up will be completed and documented within the required quarter
- k. 70% of respondents at exit will report feeling that their WIOA experience positively impacted their career opportunities according to the WIOA Youth Exit Survey

## IV. Coordination of Services

### 1. Coordination with Partner Programs and Services

**Describe how individualized career services will be coordinated across programs/partners in the one-stop centers, including Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Literacy activities and TANF. Specify how the local area will coordinate with these programs to prevent duplication and improve services to customers.**

To avoid duplication of services to customers, and better serve customers who have need for multi-agency support, CWP establishes Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with partner agencies to define roles and responsibilities.

#### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

CWP employs a Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) who leads coordination of services for individuals with disabilities and implements project activities to improve education, training and employment opportunities and outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits.

The regional One-Stop system has strong partnerships and collaboration among key agencies; service coordination through an Integrated Resource Team; integrated services and resources, including blended, braided, and leveraged funding and resources. Integrated Resource Teams address individual needs and provide increased support for jobseekers with disabilities. An MOU is in place and Vocational Rehabilitation staff (ADS) are on site at the One-Stop weekly. A Partnership Plus agreement is in place, with ADS, for Ticket to Work Beneficiary referrals to the AJC.

#### **Adult Education and Literacy**

CWP has established a One-Stop Adult Education Liaison position in its One-Stop career services contract. The liaison provides career and labor market information as well as orientation to the services available on-site at the comprehensive and affiliate centers. An interagency referral process is in place that includes a release of information, streamlining information sharing in particular CASAS scoring. Adult Education providers are active participants in the One Stop Integration meetings. An MOU has been signed between CWP and DOE.

The CTDOL Deputy Commissioner and the JFES Unit Director have been very involved in the state's 2Gen Initiative. As a result, the CTDOL JFES unit is looking at the entire JFES program through the 2Gen lens and is pursuing a number of enhancements to the program that are in the spirit of 2Gen.

- **Family Centered Coaching:** The CT DOL Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) Unit is partnering with the Connecticut Association for Human Services for (1) 2-day training session on the topic of Family Centered Coaching. The training was held on October 21, 2019 and October 29th at the DOL Central Office in Wethersfield. The trainees include approximately 35 individuals, including the staff in the DOL Jobs First Employment Services Unit, representatives from each of the 5 Workforce Development Boards and some of their front-line Jobs First program supervisors.
- **Implementation of Financial Literacy Workshops for JFES participants:** The CT DOL has partnered with the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) to provide the "Money Matters" financial literacy workshop to all JFES participants within 90 days of being granted Temporary Family Assistance (TFA),

Connecticut's cash assistance program. The workshops are facilitated by CAHS volunteers and are held in all of the AJCs across the state. The goal of the workshop is to help JFES participants take steps toward financial empowerment.

- In April 2022 CWP launched a JFES Multigen program that offers a wholistic and family-centered approach to training and support. Participants enrolled in this program are parents and caregivers who will attend Customer Service training in the evening hours, accompanied by their children. Evening programming consists of a family style meal followed by training for the adults, and educational activities and tutoring support for the children. The program also features a certified Social Worker who provides counsel and support to participants and their families. Successful participants will obtain an NRF credential and will be placed in employment.

CWP is an integral partner and the convening organization for the Capital Area Adult Literacy Network, an adult literacy collaborative. The Network envisions a regional adult literacy system that offers: 1) An enhancement and strengthening of an integrated adult education and workforce training system; 2) A coordinated continuum of literacy services that can meet the education and training needs of all adult learners; 3) Connections to and support from “wrap-around” services such as childcare, counseling, and other social services; 4) Career pathways that lead to well-paying jobs with sustainable wages; and 5) Coordination, communication, and collaboration among all providers of adult literacy services, employers and business leaders.

#### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – CWP’s Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)**

The CTDOL Deputy Commissioner and the JFES Unit Director have been very involved in the state’s 2Gen Initiative. As a result, the CT DOL JFES unit is looking at the entire JFES program through the 2Gen lens and is pursuing a number of enhancements to the program that are in the spirit of 2Gen. See also: Family Centered Coaching and Implementation of Financial Literacy Workshops for JFES participants under Adult Education and Literacy on page 34.

CWP’s JFES program is coordinated with the CT DOL and Department of Social Services (DSS). The JFES program provides employment services to time-limited recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), the state cash assistance program for needy families within the TANF block grant. JFES activities are designed to move the hardest-to-employ recipients rapidly and effectively into employment and toward self-sufficiency. The JFES program is fully integrated into the One-Stop system; the One-Stop contractors, EDSI, serve both TANF and WIOA customers. JFES career services include case management, job search assistance, vocational education, subsidized employment, adult basic education and/or employment-related support services such as transportation and childcare assistance.

CWP and CTDSS will explore opportunities to coordinate services beyond TANF. CTDSS delivers a wide variety of services to children, families, adults, people with disabilities and the elderly, including health care coverage, food and nutrition assistance, child support services, independent living services, energy assistance, and program grants. (See Attachment VIII for goals specific to CTDSS TANF and JFES program).

## **2. Coordination with Economic Development Activities**

**Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with economic development activities.**

CWP works closely with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and CT DOL in support of their state-driven programs, e.g., Incumbent Worker Training. CWP also fosters relationships with local economic development agencies to respond to the needs of employers that are, or are considering, locating or expanding in towns within the region. Services might include customized recruitment activities or job fairs targeted to employers receiving financial or administrative assistance from DECD or a town.

CWP works with the Governor’s Workforce Council and Industry Partnerships to support linking workforce development to various economic development growth opportunities. CWP is a lead stakeholder involved in the CRCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Implementation Committee. CWP also works with regional Chambers of Commerce to engage area business needs around workforce development. CWP’s Capital Area Pipeline Partnership (CAPP) also engages several economic development organizations including AdvanceCT, MetroHartford Alliance, and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology in its work. CWP also engages DECD through the One Stop/AJC business services unit, with DECD, DOL and CWP supporting employer engagement.

**3. Coordination of Education and Workforce Development Activities**

**Describe how the LWDB will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.**

CWP plays a variety of roles, e.g., leader, convener, backbone and/or supporter, relative to education and workforce investment activities carried out in the region by numerous organizations, which frequently include local adult education providers, the regional education council, community colleges, regional vocational technical high schools, and community-based organizations.

CWP works with the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) to develop partnership work around employment and training programs, including pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, individual training accounts and other workforce development strategies. CWP works closely with the community colleges in the region, namely Asnuntuck, Capital, Manchester, and Tunxis, holding regular leadership meetings with the college deans to ensure training and courses align with employer needs and are labor market driven. The Enfield One-Stop Center is located at Asnuntuck Community College, and the Bristol One-Stop Center is co-located at Tunxis Community College. The East Hartford AJC is located on the campus of Goodwin University.

CWP works with local school districts on the Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP), pre-apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs, including working with school-based counselors and staff in the Hartford Public Schools and other districts. CWP also works with the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) around pre-apprenticeship and other work-based learning systems. In addition, it collaborates with the region’s technical high schools to offer post-secondary vocational training courses. CWP is the backbone for the Hartford Work-Based Learning Network and supports the Governor’s Work-Based Learning Committee. CWP supports targeted dual-track education and training programs through its career pathway work and out-of-school and in-school youth employment programming.

**4. Coordination of Transportation and Other Supportive Services**

**Describe how the LWDB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.**

In the North Central region, workforce transportation resources have been invested in subsidies for public bus service. Payment for transportation for individual workers or jobseekers is based on need and is provided by CWP via WIOA funds. CWP also secures private funds to provide supportive services to specific target populations, including ex-offenders and individuals experiencing homelessness. CWP adult programs support transportation vouchers and bus passes for participants in need of transportation. CWP WIOA youth programs provide transportation.

**5. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services**

**Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the state employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.**

CWP and CTDOLE are co-located at the comprehensive One-Stop center and have a strong working partnership that promotes a seamless operation, enhancing access to program services and long-term employment outcomes for both job seekers and employers. Programs and services are integrated where feasible by jointly serving common customers, supporting interagency in-service training, and providing information and services that most directly meet the customer's needs. Wagner-Peyser services are overseen by the local Job Center Director, who is a member of the CWP Board and One-Stop Committee and meets regularly with both CWP and WIOA Title I contractor staff to ensure that service provision is coordinated and effective.

The MOU between CWP and DOL documents an agreement to coordinate the delivery of services and activities to:

- Jointly promote the coordinated delivery of services through program integration, when feasible and joint planning at the state and local level.
- Coordinate resources and programs to ensure a streamlined and efficient workforce development system.
- Promote information sharing and coordination of activities to improve the performance of the One Stop/AJC system in part through the use of data access agreements.
- Promote the development and implementation of a more unified system of measuring program performance and accountability.

Both organizations agree to coordinate services in the implementation of a workforce development system that:

- Is committed to a customer focused comprehensive delivery system.
- Ensures the needs of adults, youth, and dislocated workers, and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, are addressed, including access to technology and materials, are made available through the One-Stop/AJC system.
- Works towards aligning intake, case management and job placement services in an effort to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.
- Develops collaborative relationships with a network of other agencies and partners in the local/regional area.

## **6. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy**

**Describe how the LWDB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II in the local area, including a description of how the local board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232, the review of local applications submitted under Title II.**

CWP works with and supports adult education programs in coordination with CSDE supporting projects using Title II, WIOA funds. CSDE conducted a new competition in April 2017 with CWP supporting several adult education providers who applied for and were awarded funding to offer training programs which aligned with their local workforce development boards' identified industry sectors. Certification programs include manufacturing, health occupations and other occupations. CWP utilizes an AJC Adult Literacy Coordinator and the Capital Adult Literacy Network described in 5.1 as the vehicle for coordination of Adult Education activities. CWP will continue to coordinate with the Connecticut Department of Education to ensure that the workforce development board is included in future Title II procurement process.

## **7. Cooperative Agreements**

**Provide a description of the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA section 107(d)(11)) between the local board or other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29U.S.C 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit administering programs carried out under Title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross-training staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration and coordination.**

CWP will work with CT DOL and DORS to replicate the cooperative agreement(s) in place at the state level.

## V. Description of Program Services

### 1. System Description

**Identify the programs that are included in the system and how LWDB will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment in provision of services.**

- American Job Center – One Stop Services: AJC system is a partnership of organizations, working as a team, to promote a universal approach to providing effective workforce assistance to job seekers and businesses.
- Through the AJC system, jobseekers are connected to the core partner programs including Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans’ Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and TANF Employment Services.
- Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans’ Employment Services are coordinated and aligned through the Comprehensive AJC and the shared online case management system, CTHires.
- Vocational rehabilitation services are coordinated and aligned through the Disability Resource Coordinator who leads staff training, the Integrated Resource Team process and VR counselors are on site on a weekly basis.
- Adult education services are coordinated and aligned through, the One-Stop Adult Education Liaison, and participation by CSDE staff on the One-Stop Committee and CWP Board.

TANF employment services are coordinated and aligned through the Jobs First Employment Services Program and the regular regional partnership meetings; SNAP Employment and Training, Child Support and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) services will be coordinated and aligned.

Jobseekers are connected to other CWP programs through the AJC, including:

- CT Workforce & High-Tech Industry Skills Partnership (CT-WHISP): A \$10-million statewide grant targeting the IT and Advanced Manufacturing sectors with an emphasis on entry-level technical IT training for the un/under-employed and Incumbent Worker Training for the current Mfg. workforce.
- *Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program (MCJTP)*: a training and job placement program open to individuals who are at risk of default.
- *Best Chance*: a state-funded contextualized education and training program for ex-offenders.
- *Jobs Funnel*: a pre-employment/pre-apprenticeship program for individuals interested in construction and energy-related trades.
- *Opportunity Youth Career Pathways*: programs funded through WIOA include contextualized learning and occupational skills training in CWP’s target sectors: healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and energy.
- *Non-Custodial Parent Program*: funded by CT DOL to support non-custodial parents who are mandated to participate in services by the Judicial office. CWP facilitates enrollment in training and other soft skills training and job services to increase participants capacity to provide financial support for their children.

### 2. Sub Grants and Contracts

**Provide a description of the competitive process to be used to award subgrants and contracts in the local area for WIOA-funded activities and the services to be made available.**

CWP will adhere to the policies contained in the CWP Standard Operating Procedures for Procurement and Contracting as approved by the Finance & Audit Committee and Board of Directors. CWP uses a competitive Request for Proposal process to solicit and select providers of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services, and awards cost reimbursement contracts that include performance accountability measures.

CWP strives to have the highest quality standard of business practices. These procedures and subsequent revisions and updates reflect CWP's commitment to procuring quality and cost-effective goods and services while adhering to state and federal laws and regulations and protecting the public and private investors' trust. To ensure that the appropriate goods and services are obtained in a fair, uniform, cost effective and efficient manner that is compliant with the applicable provisions of State and Federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, CWP Table of Authorities and CWP's procurement policies and procedures.

**3. Expanding Access to Employment**

**Describe how the local board, working with 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, including 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 recognized postsecondary credentials.**

CWP's one-stop service delivery model is designed to maximize co-enrollment in WIOA Title I and Title III (Wagner-Peyser), and in other education and training programs that meet individual customer needs, such as WIOA Title II and local adult literacy programs, WIOA Title IV and other vocational rehabilitation programs, apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training, post-secondary middle skill certificate programs, and state and privately funded employment and training programs.

CWP has adopted a career pathways model as the strategic framework for its plan. CWP has created a strategic career pathway framework for its core work; its operational programs will be implemented based on this framework.

- The career pathways system will provide a continuum of skill development aligned with documented employer needs; individuals will progress along the pathway toward the goal of achieving middle skill jobs.
- CWP's career pathways system provides opportunities to a wide array of jobseekers, including those with disabilities, low income/low-skilled individuals, dislocated workers, ex-offenders, and opportunity youth.
- Through this framework, CWP will build a coordinated workforce system that aligns services among community, local and state resources to prepare jobseekers with the necessary skills to ensure that employer workforce needs are met.

**4. Key Industry Sectors**

**Identify how the LWDB plans to better align its resources to support and meet the training and employment needs of key industry sectors in the local area. Describe policies adopted or planned for aligning training initiatives and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to sector strategies and demand occupations.**

CWP continually uses analytical tools (Economic Modeling Specialists International – Emsi -, CT DOL, and Burning Glass) to analyze industry and occupational trends to identify targeted in-demand industries and occupations. This data and analysis are used in its annual ITA review to assist in determining where to guide ITA applicants and where to focus CWP resources. In addition, CWP produces quarterly one-page occupational overviews which identify occupations focused on middle skills, as well as openings, earnings, education levels among other attributes, and other industry-focuses analyses.

## **5. Industry Partnerships**

**Describe how the LWDB will identify and work with key industry partnerships where they exist within the local area, and coordinate and invest in partnership infrastructure where they are not yet developed.**

CWP has used the analytical tools mentioned above to define its focus on the healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT/Tech, TDL and construction/energy sectors. Industry partnerships have been convened as described in Goal 3 on page 26. Through these partnerships, CWP works with employers to identify areas of job growth opportunities, skills needed for those jobs, and related training support programs. It uses this knowledge, along with labor market information and local employment data to define its targeted sector approach which is focused on healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT/Tech, TDL, and construction/energy.

## **6. In-demand Training**

**Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate.**

CWP continually uses analytical tools (DOL, US Census Bureau, Emsi Burning Glass, etc.) to analyze industry and occupational trends (skills, openings, earnings, education levels, etc.) to identify targeted in-demand industries and occupations. Labor market data is then contextualized and validated through industry sector partnerships and business engagement activities on a regular basis to inform ITA and sector-based training. These data and analyses are used in CWP's recurring ITA reviews to assist in determining where to guide ITA applicants and where to focus CWP resources.

## **7. Employer Engagement**

**Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to: a) facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs; b) support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area; c) better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and d) strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.**

CWP has created an employer engagement plan that supports the vision of a job-driven workforce system by creating a strategy to build a seamless cross-program environment driven by employer needs. This effort will include CWP staff and its core network of partners, including the AJCs and CT DOL. The plan emphasizes partnerships with employers above transactional relationships, seamless coordination of services offered by various partners, consistent communication and marketing efforts, and staff development.

### **Business Engagement Strategies to Support Goals**

- **Sector Partnerships**: Partnerships, including CATP, MACH and AMEP, ensure that CWP's work is business driven. They inform our outreach strategy, are a core network of business customers and strong advocates of the workforce systems.
- **Regional business services team coordination**: CWP and AJC business services representatives, sector coordinators, and staffing specialists comprise a larger regional business services team that provides coordinated services to employers through various youth, adult, and specialty programs. CWP staff will co-chair the regional business services coordination team, including partners from the AJCs, CT DOL, Adult Education sites, DORS, the Community Colleges, the Department of Economic and Community Development, youth programs, and various community-based organizations.
- **Capacity Building**: Maintain partnerships with various chambers of commerce and local economic development partners to reach additional small and medium sized businesses, maintain an important communication channel with local business communities, and increase capacity to promote recruitment



fairs, hiring events, and training resources such as On-the-Job training (OJT) and Incumbent worker training (IWT). Perform research on web-based resources that can be offered at no cost to businesses.

- **Technology and Evaluation:** Fully utilize and align ETO and CT Hires to integrate business services with job seeker and case management functions. These platforms will track business profiles, services delivered, recruitment efforts, job referrals, job placement, job retention, position fill rates. and allow management of relationships and contacts.

## **8. Priority for Services**

**Describe the local policy and procedures that have been established to give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services in the Adult program.**

CWP is strongly committed to serving jobseekers who are under-represented or under-utilized in the workforce, including individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, and long-term unemployed individuals. It is CWP's policy to grant priority for individualized career services and training services funded with Title I Adult funds to:

- Recipients of public assistance
- Other low-income individuals
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient
- Individuals with a disability whose own income meets the low-income criteria, regardless of total family income
- Ex-offenders
- Veterans and spouses of certain veterans as defined in the Jobs for Veterans Act will have priority over non-veterans when all other criteria are met

See Attachment IX – Adult Priority of Service, and Attachment X – Dislocated Worker Priority of Service

## **9. Training Services**

Describe how training services will be provided, including, if contracts for training services are to be used, how such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs.

Training services are provided through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). CWP uses a competitive scholarship process to award ITAs. Factors considered in awarding ITAs include: 1) Labor market demand for selected occupation; 2) Alignment of applicant's interests, aptitudes, existing skills, and educational and employment background with selected occupation; 3) Applicant's demonstrated readiness to complete training and commitment to search for and accept employment in the selected occupation; and 4) Veterans' priority. CWP does not plan to contract for training services at this time.

## **10. Customer Choice**

**Describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.**

WIOA customers will choose from among eligible training providers and programs listed on the State of Connecticut ETPL that offer training programs in demand occupations as described in this policy. The current list of priority occupations will be provided to potential scholarship applicants. Customers are informed of the ITA process through a special informational workshop, STYLE: Skills Training for Your Lifelong Employment. A customer may select any WIOA-approved education and training program if he or she meets all other criteria relating to initial and subsequent eligibility for such educational and/or training services. Individuals seeking WIOA funded assistance have the freedom of "customer choice" in selecting the training program that best fits their personal and career needs as determined through the North Central scholarship process.

## **11. Individual Training Accounts**

**Describe the process and criteria for issuing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).**

- a. Describe any ITA limitations established by the board.

It is CWP policy to award ITAs through a competitive scholarship process, and to limit ITAs to programs that offer training and credentials in occupations in demand in the North Central region's labor market. The maximum funding for each scholarship is \$7,500 effective July 1, 2015. The funding limit is subject to review and revision by the CWP One-Stop Services Committee.

CWP maintains a list of demand occupations eligible for ITA funding. This list is based on the labor market analysis conducted as part of CWP's annual strategic planning process; it will be updated annually. Occupations with projected growth and/or significant job openings and starting wages equivalent to at least 200% of federal poverty level are placed on the list. CWP assigns high and moderate priority to each occupation based on the potential wages and the levels of projected growth and/or job openings. WIOA customers will choose from among eligible training providers and programs listed on the State of Connecticut ETPL that offer training programs in the occupations on the list described in this policy.

The eligibility criteria for individuals are:

- Eligible for WIOA Dislocated Worker or Adult program; Adults must meet priority of service.
- High school graduate (including GED holder).
- Passing score on scholarship application.
- The factors in the scholarship application include: 1) Priority ranking of occupation selected by applicant; 2) Alignment of applicant's background, transferable skills, aptitudes, and interests with the occupation/industry; 3) Applicant's awareness of the occupation/industry; and 4) Applicant's readiness to enter, remain in, and complete training.

**b. Describe any exceptions to the use of ITA.**

Exceptions to the use of ITAs will be made when there is substantial, simultaneous labor market demand for a particular occupation that cannot be met by a provider or program currently on the ETPL.

**12. Enhancing Apprenticeships**

**Describe how the LWDB will enhance the use of apprenticeships to support the local economy and individuals' career advancement. Describe how job seekers are made aware of apprenticeship opportunities in the area's career centers.**

CWP supports CT DOL's statewide apprenticeship training program on a regional basis. These efforts support CWP's focus on training and development leading to self-sustaining wages on a career pathway. CWP has significantly built upon its apprenticeship work within its Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative programming, conducted with \$2.2 million in support from the CT DOL Office of Apprenticeship and Training. This initiative will provide pre-apprenticeship and industry credential-based training over the next four years in the North Central region, with 150 in-school youth and 140 adults to be trained in the Manufacturing sector, 124 adults to be trained in the Healthcare sector, and 60 adults to be trained in the Construction sector.

**13. Other Program Initiatives**

**Describe the services to be provided that may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies career pathway initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other initiatives in the support of the board's vision and strategic goals.**

See Goals and Strategies - Section III

**14. Service Provider Continuous Improvement**

**Describe the LWDB's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted services providers and providers on the eligible training provider list.**

CWP is committed to improving its One-Stop system on an on-going basis through staff development, the creation of new techniques and strategies to serve a diverse range of job seekers, and the innovative use of technology to improve and expand services to job seekers, and businesses and to manage program delivery and design. CWP will work with CT DOL on review and evaluation of training provider performance and the provision of technical assistance to ETPL providers. CWP meets regularly with contracted services providers to promote and share best practices and supports membership in and credentialing by professional associations for contractor staff.

#### **15. Youth Program Design**

**Describe the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in §681.460 of the proposed WIOA regulations are to be made available within that framework.**

CWP contracts with community-based organizations that can provide the 14 WIOA youth service elements either directly through the contractor (provider) or through a referral to a partner agency. This is the foundation of CWP's Career Pathway Model which ensures wraparound supportive services to meet youth needs regardless of where they are in their training process. CWP partners with organizations that employ high-quality youth development staff with experience in positive youth development. CWP will also implement a required number of yearly professional development training hours based on the 14 elements for all WIOA Youth staff. The WIOA youth service elements are also included in each contract and monitored for compliance via our data management system and regular check-ins by CWP staff.

- a. Definition of the term “a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.” Describe how the local board defines whether a youth is unable to demonstrate these skills well enough to function on the job, in their family, or in society and what assessment instruments are used to make this determination. 20 C.F.R. §681.290.**

CWP defines a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society as a youth that scores at or below a 235 on the CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems) reading scale and at or below a 235 on the CASAS math scale. See Attachment XI – Youth Priority of Service

- b. Definition of “requires additional assistance.” Describe how the local board defines the term “requires additional assistance” used in determining eligibility for WIOA-funded youth programs.**

Additional assistance due to one of the following: youth of color who is a child of a single parent, youth of color who is a child of parents without postsecondary education, young victim of violence/assault or exposed to violence/assault, young expecting fathers, and young male of color.

#### **16. Rapid Response**

**Provide a description of how the LWDB will coordinate workforce development activities in the local area with rapid response activities.**

Representatives from the One-Stop Centers' career services provider, EDSI, work closely with their CT DOL counterparts as part of the Rapid Response Team. The Rapid Response Team conducts, prior to layoffs, “Early Intervention” sessions where employees can learn about unemployment benefits, job search assistance, and training opportunities.

## **VI. Response to COVID-19**

**Please address the following in response to the COVID -19 public health emergency.**

- 1. Describe the economic and workforce impact this event has had on your local area.**

The COVID pandemic has forced CWP to reevaluate its approach in this economic environment and workforce delivery. It has also resulted in an unprecedented number of dislocated workers. This pandemic has seen more

separations within the lower wage, lower educated workgroups. Increases in academic disengagement at the secondary school level have also been shown through absenteeism rates. While the current labor market does not show the same dramatic unemployment figures as in the initial pandemic period (Spring/Summer 2020), increases in cost of living are significantly impacting CT workers and jobseekers, especially low-to-middle wage earners.

The shortage of childcare supports that has arisen due to the pandemic has created a gap in job seekers' abilities to secure offsite employment. In addition, some individuals, in the short term, have opted to remain unemployed as unemployment benefits outweigh the benefits of employment. This is adding challenges to recruitment and placements as some dislocated workers are not currently actively seeking employment.

**2. Describe any new service delivery strategies and partnerships you have implemented or have plans to implement following this crisis.**

- Implementation of the AJC Call Center to assist both job seekers and employers.
- Virtual intake and enrollment using the WIOA Pre-application in CTHires to enroll new participants.
- Virtual information sessions and orientations.
- Virtual Career and Job Readiness Services to assist current WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers.
- Creation of an emergency jobs board on CWP website to supplement employers' efforts to recruit through CT Hires and other channels to rapidly reconnect job seekers to open positions.
- Creation of workshops and resources to support job seekers in preparing for virtual/online interviews.
- Solicitation of support from private funders for additional resources to support mental health awareness and clinical services for program participants, youth in particular.
- CWP is holding Virtual Recruitment events in coordination with the AJCs. The events include pre-interview preparation workshops for job seekers delivered by the CWP business services team.

CWP is a member of the Capital Region Council of Government (CRCOG)'s Recovery Committee, supporting COVID Recovery strategies. In addition to this CWP is working with the Governor's Workforce Council to support the COVID Recovery responses including youth, opportunity youth, dislocated workers, and other priority populations. See next section for a further description.

**3. Describe any new related training and supportive services needs you have identified in your region and highlight any plans to address these needs.**

Through its business services staff, CWP has implemented weekly virtual Healthcare, Manufacturing, and IT orientation information sessions to job seekers. CWP and a number of municipalities, community-based organizations, and educational providers are working to support related workforce development needs for community health workers, public service workers and other occupations. The focus of CWP efforts would be local Opportunity Youth populations and those recently dislocated from employment due to the pandemic, who would serve in a variety of multi-purpose roles related to public health and community vitality. Working with the Governor's Workforce Council, CTDOL and other stakeholders, CWP and these partnerships have successfully been working on several initiatives, including:

The COVID-19 Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) Program

CWP will work with the Connecticut COVID-19 Disaster Recovery efforts to address COVID related needs by training and deploying unemployed Connecticut residents to perform clean-up and sanitation jobs, provide humanitarian assistance services, and perform jobs that promote social distancing. The COVID-19 Disaster Recovery DWG will work to curb the spread of COVID-19 by promoting contact tracing and appropriate social distancing practices and ensuring that public buildings are properly cleaned and sanitized.

Governor’s Summer Youth Employment Initiative, CARES Act, 2020 (CAYEP) to Address the Health Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Vulnerable Populations

CWP received funds from the Governor’s Summer Youth Employment Initiative, CARES Act Youth Employment Program, a youth workforce initiative supported by federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds. This program is aligned with local WIOA plans, local health sector strategies and the State in developing the future workforce while addressing the pandemic response. Youth ages 16-24 will be served.

CT CARES Workforce Training Innovation Fund

CWP supported several skills training programs including manufacturing, healthcare, construction, financial and IT sector-based offerings to support the high number of dislocated workers getting back into the workforce. The first CARES Skills Training Act involved a six-month set of training programs, which was informed by the Regional Sector Partnerships in Healthcare, Manufacturing, and IT, among others.

CWP Youth Programming

CWP Youth Programming has been utilizing virtual and remote training and case management to support COVID related activities. This includes partnerships with Year Up’s Career Labs and local providers who are also partnering with various customized remote training options. New COVID related mental health support and other support services are being utilized.

**4. Describe the steps and partner coordination that will be taken to reopen the American Job Centers in your region to staff and customers.**

The North Central region remained flexible and responsive to the needs of the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. American Job Centers closed to the public at the height of the pandemic, in March 2020. PPE and cleaning supplies were purchased, and a sanitizing schedule was established for each site. In July 2020 AJC sites were reconfigured to ensure social distancing and install protective equipment (i.e., plexiglass). In August 2020, all AJC sites were re-opened in a hybrid model, no more than 50% of staff at one time, to ensure minimal exposure and continued services. Since that time, the AJC has maintained the flexibility to respond to the evolving pandemic, as necessary. In times when COVID risk is low, AJC sites are staffed up to 100% and fully operational. In times of COVID surge, center staff drop to hybrid scheduling to reduce the risk of exposure.

AJC staff are equipped to provide 100% of all AJC services virtually and will continue to remain flexible to meet the needs of customers. Virtual services will remain in place permanently as we have noted the value this expanded service model provides to our customers. CWP will continue to coordinate with community and college partners and remain nimble and collaborative in the face of the evolving pandemic.