

AJCC Certification Indicator Assessment

The America’s Job Center of CaliforniaSM (AJCC) Certification Indicator Assessment is intended to encourage continuous improvement by identifying areas where an AJCC is exceeding quality expectations, as well as areas where improvement is needed. The Certification Indicators were developed in alignment with Training and Employment Guidance Letter 4-15, California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan (State Plan), and the AJCC Certification Workgroup’s vision for California’s One-Stop delivery system.

The matrix below describes each Certification Indicator using both characteristics of a high-quality AJCC and the overall vision and strategies of the State Plan. Additionally, the Certification Indicators are provided as guidance for the evaluator to use in order to note the assessment of the AJCC’s strengths and continuous improvement opportunities.

The Local Board may establish additional criteria, or set higher standards for continuous improvement than those suggested by the state criteria below.

Local Boards must submit a completed AJCC Certification Indicator Assessment to their Regional Advisor for each comprehensive and/or affiliate/specialized AJCC by November 1, 2021.

Name of Local Board Tulare County Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

Name of AJCC Porterville Employment Connection Center/America’s Job Center of California
AJCC)

AJCC Certification Indicator #1: The AJCC ensures universal access, with an emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment.

US DOL Characteristics of a High Quality AJCC	California State Plan Vision and Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Reflect a welcoming environment to all customer groups who are served by the AJCC. All AJCC staff are courteous, polite, responsive, and helpful to job seekers, businesses, and others who visit the AJCC. Staff are sensitive to the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and are prepared to provide necessary accommodations.b. Ensure meaningful access to all customers. AJCCs must be physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. In so doing, AJCCs use principles of universal design and human-centered design, such as flexibility in space usage, the use of pictorial, written, verbal and tactile modes to present information for customers with disabilities or Limited English Proficiency; providing clear lines of sight to information for seated or standing users; providing necessary accommodations; and providing adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants. AJCCs use assistive technology and flexible business hours to meet the range of customer needs.c. Include both virtual and center-based service delivery for job seekers, workers, and employers. Both methods of delivery support the talent needs of the regional economy, although each may better serve different customers with different levels of service needs at any given time. The system can expand its reach by delivering robust virtual services; and increasing the accessibility of those services through community partners, such as libraries, community and faith-based organizations, and other partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Enabling upward mobility for all Californians including populations with barriers to employment. Workforce and education programs need to be accessible for all Californians and ensure that everyone has access to a marketable set of skills and is able to access the level of education necessary to ensure economic self-sufficiency and security.

AJCC Certification Indicators

- All AJCC staff honor and accommodate diversity and are comfortable and adept in working with all types of individuals, including those with disabilities, cultural differences, and all individuals with barriers to employment.
- The local Equal Opportunity Officer periodically reviews the AJCC's policies, procedures, and facility for accessibility and equal opportunity and then provides recommendations and staff training, where needed.
- The AJCC has a Limited English Proficiency Plan to provide meaningful access for individuals that do not speak English as their primary language and who have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.
- The AJCC uses the principles of universal and customer-centered design to ensure inclusive space and materials are available to individuals regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence, or educational level.
- The AJCC implements the veteran's preference and priority of service requirements.
- The AJCC provides services outside of regular business hours where there is a workforce need as defined by the Local Board.
- The AJCC delivers both AJCC-based and virtual services.
- The AJCC ensures that individuals with disabilities are able to access virtual services in a manner that is comparable to the access available to others.

AJCC Certification Indicator #1: The AJCC ensures universal access, with an emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment.

Assessment of the AJCC's Strengths and Continuous Improvement Opportunities:

Introduction: Both the Baseline and Indicator Assessment portions of the AJCC certification process were completed by an independent evaluator, who applied a bifurcated approach to the review, including: 1) a focused review of each of Tulare County's four America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs); and 2) review of all centers from a system perspective. This approach enabled the evaluator to complete a site-specific assessment of baseline compliance, while recognizing that most of the Indicator Assessment criteria can and should be addressed from a system perspective, based on the fact that, differences in size and on-site partner presence notwithstanding, all centers operate under the same policy structure and deliver the same services. The other notable difference among the Tulare County's four Employment Connections centers is that they are operated by two distinct, competitively procured service providers. Community Services Employment Training (CSET) is the service provider for the comprehensive AJCCs in Visalia and Porterville and the affiliate AJCC in Tulare. Proteus, Inc., the local WIOA Section 167 grantee, is the service provider for the Dinuba affiliate center.

This Indicator Assessment narrative is for the comprehensive Employment Connection center in Porterville. However, except where specifically noted, descriptions apply equally to all AJCCs in the Tulare County network.

Overview: The four AJCCs funded by Tulare County WIB ensure universal access for customers and center staff is skilled and experienced at working with job seekers from diverse backgrounds, including individuals with barriers to employment.

While the Employment Connection center in Porterville, like the other three centers, meets the needs of a diverse community, it also serves a substantial number of customers from the Syrian refugee community that have settled in the area. AJCC managers and staff recognized early on that there would be challenges in serving this population based not only to language and cultural barriers, but also due to this population's general distrust of anything pertaining to "the government." The center arranged for Arabic language translation services and, after achieving successful outcomes with several members of the Syrian community, has gained its trust.

Key Characteristics and Features: The following responses highlight the AJCC system's efforts and capacity to ensure the center and its services are universally accessible.

- A. *All AJCC staff honor and accommodate diversity and are comfortable and adept in working with all types of individuals, including those with disabilities, cultural differences, and all individuals with barriers to employment.***

The population of Tulare County is racially and ethnically diverse, as is Employment Connection's clientele. Staff at Porterville Employment Connection is also diverse, representing the various racial and ethnic groups that characterize the county's overall population. Many staff members are linguistically and culturally diverse, and staff comes from wide range of backgrounds and life experiences. Given the diversity among staff members, they readily accommodate and honor the diversity of the workforce system's clients. Many staff members are bilingual and bicultural, which facilitates their effectiveness in working with AJCC customers who are bilingual. To increase staff's effectiveness in working with clients with one or more barriers to employment, WIB and AJCC leadership have sponsored training on working with job seekers with disabilities, former incarcerated individuals, and others with barriers. As the center's clientele becomes more diverse, staff will continue to meet all job seekers where they are and treat them as individuals deserving of respect and support.

B. *The local Equal Opportunity Officer periodically reviews the AJCC's policies, procedures, and facility for accessibility and equal opportunity and then provides recommendations and staff training, where needed.*

A key function for the WIB's Equal Opportunity Officer is to continuously review new guidance from the state and other sources to identify changes that will affect local policies and procedures. A manual covering all aspects of equal opportunity, including accessibility for individuals with disabilities, serves as the basis for staff training.

C. *The AJCC has a Limited English Proficiency Plan to provide meaningful access for individuals that do not speak English as their primary language and who have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.*

As required by California WIOA policy, Tulare County has developed a Limited English Proficiency Plan that applies to the four Employment Connection center. The plan acknowledges and builds upon the bilingual capabilities of many center staff and describes the various strategies and resources used by the centers to assist individuals who are not fluent in English. Local adult education agencies are key partners in serving customers who are English language learners, and they provide a wide range of educational programs for this priority population, including English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) courses.

D. *The AJCC uses the principles of universal and customer-centered design to ensure inclusive space and materials are available to individuals regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence, or educational level.*

As repeated in response to Indicator 3, item b and Indicator 6, item H, the initial WIOA certification process in which Tulare County's Employment Connection centers participated highlighted the early work that the local workforce system had done with regard to customer-centered design. As WIOA was being implemented, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) was concurrently promoting and encouraging

workforce systems and AJCCs' use of human-centered design theory in structuring programs, developing services, and laying-out facilities. AJCC staff participated in a U.S. DOL-sponsored customer-centered design challenge, through which several changes to customer flow and services at the centers were improved. To keep staff up to date and trained on customer-centered design, in April 2020, former DOL Regional Administrator Virginia Hamilton, provided additional training on customer-centered design, including its application to the delivery of services using virtual platforms. A wide range of customer service training sessions have also been made available for AJCC and partner staff, along with managers and staff from of the WIB.

AJCC facilities and materials are available to all individuals irrespective of their barriers to employment or vulnerabilities.

E. The AJCC implements the veteran's preference and priority of service requirements.

The WIB has developed a policy on veterans' preference and priority of service. The policy has been implemented by all Employment Connection centers. The AJCCs' Coordination with the Jobs for Veterans State Grant programs is achieved by co-location and or availability of EDD Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff at the AJCCs. Center staff and partners serving job seekers from community locations have been oriented to veterans' services and supports that are provided by these staff. DVOP specialists provide intensive services to veterans and eligible spouses that are designed to facilitate participants' transition into meaningful civilian employment. LVER staff performs outreach to local businesses and employers to advocate for the hiring of veterans.

F. The AJCC provides services outside of regular business hours where there is a workforce need as defined by the Local Board.

Employment Connections representatives can cite multiple examples of services that are provided outside traditional business hours. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Job Fairs and Employer Recruitment Events: Business Services Team members and other staff regularly assists companies with hiring events after hours, including events that take place at the AJCCs.
- Rapid Response Activities: When companies layoff staff due to closure or downsizing, staff and system partners provide orientations to affected employees at their workplaces. Some worker dislocations affect individuals that work shifts outside Employment Connection's traditional work hours. Staff provide orientations and information sessions during both evening and graveyard shifts.
- Attend Student Orientations: AJCC staff frequently participates in orientation events at adult schools to promote AJCC services.

- Promote Employment Connection Centers at Community and Civic Events: Community events of all types are ideal settings to distribute print materials and to speak with potential customers about services offered by Employment Connection and workforce system partners.

Many of the services described above were delivered through virtual platforms throughout the pandemic. Many, however, continued to take place outside regular business hours.

G. *The AJCC delivers both AJCC-based and virtual services.*

In-person, AJCC-based services have been the standard form of service delivery for Tulare County's one-stop system since it was launched more than two decades ago. Employment Connection has long had a strong online presence in terms of providing information about career center services. The public health crisis resulting from COVID 19 caused the local AJCC system to quickly migrate services to virtual platforms. The centers now provide access to enrollment, workshops, recruitment events, and more online via the AJCC website, Facebook, YouTube, and other platforms. Virtual services are continuing to evolve. WIB and AJCC representatives anticipate that even following the active phase of the pandemic, hybrid services (part in-person and part-virtual) will become the norm in Tulare County.

H. *The AJCC ensures that individuals with disabilities are able to access virtual services in a manner that is comparable to the access available to others.*

Working closely with system partners, WIB, on behalf of the AJCCs, continues to assess the accessibility of virtual services for persons with disabilities. For example, the closed captioning of Zoom video conferencing varies in terms of quality and accuracy. System representatives are closely monitoring the accessibility of this and other functions on regular basis to determine the platforms and web services that should be utilized to deliver Employment Connection's virtual content. Auxiliary Aides are available upon request and workshop PowerPoint presentations are emailed to participants for easy follow through.

Summary of Strengths: The areas associated with this indicator for which the AJCC and the overall workforce system have demonstrated the greatest strength, competence, and capacity are the following:

- AJCC staff is comfortable with diversity and is adept in working with all individuals, no matter their background or barriers to employment.
- A Limited English Proficiency Plan is in effect covering all four Employment Connection centers.
- Tulare County's AJCCs use the principles of universal and customer-centered design to ensure inclusive space and materials are available at all centers.
- The AJCCs deliver both center-based and virtual services.

Summary of Areas for Continued Improvement: Review and assessment processes revealed the following areas that may benefit from examination and plans to increase content, efficiency, and/or overall quality.

- WIB and AJCC leadership should continue to assess the accessibility of virtual services for persons with disabilities.

AJCC Certification Indicator #2: The AJCC actively supports the One-Stop system through effective partnerships.

US DOL Characteristics of a High Quality AJCC	California State Plan Vision and Strategies
<p>a. Reflect the establishment of robust partnerships among partners. The AJCC operator facilitates an integrated, colocated partnership that seamlessly incorporates the services of all the AJCC partners.</p>	<p>a. Aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs and services to economize limited resources while also providing the right services to clients, based on each client’s particular and potentially unique needs so as to facilitate skills-attainment.</p>

Quality Indicators

- A system is in place to assess the satisfaction of both colocated and non-colocated partners with the AJCC and its services.
- Both colocated and non-colocated partners believe that the AJCC adds value to their program and their customers.
- The required AJCC partners meet on a regular basis to discuss the One-Stop system and the AJCC’s contribution to the system and make recommendations for continuous improvement.
- The AJCC actively outreaches and provides access to non-colocated partner customers to participate in AJCC-based services, such as workshops and recruitment events.
- An inventory and overview of all partner services is available to all AJCC staff and all AJCC staff has received an orientation to all partner programs and services.
- One-Stop system marketing materials have been developed that overview all partner services for distribution to customers at the AJCC and at all non-colocated partner locations.
- The AJCC’s partner referral process (as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding) is being implemented with a focus on quality referrals that are likely to convert to service.
- Referrals are recorded and a system is in place for partners to follow-through and report progress on referrals made.
- The AJCC connects to the community through multiple community partnerships and community access points.

AJCC Certification Indicator #2: The AJCC actively supports the One-Stop system through effective partnerships.

Assessment of the AJCC's Strengths and Continuous Improvement Opportunities:

Overview: The most notable characteristic of the Tulare County AJCC partners is their engagement with their counterparts. While some partners are more engaged than others, generally, all co-located and remote partners and their participants are meaningfully connected to the system.

Some partner relationships that are unique to or uniquely effective at the Employment Connection center in Porterville include:

- The City of Porterville, which is not only generally supportive of the center, but has worked with staff on special projects such as vetting businesses for assistance under CARES Act funding.
- The Parenting Network, a community-based organization that provides childcare resources, parenting classes, and other services for families with a system-involved parent(s).
- Tulare County Probation Department: The AJCC and Probation share a building making collaboration between staff as simple as walking through a shared door.

Key Characteristics and Features: The following responses highlight the AJCC system's efforts and capacity to develop, maintain, and leverage effective relationships with WIOA core partners, other AJCC MOU partners, State Plan-mandated partner programs (e.g., Child Support Services, CalFresh Employment and Training), and local stakeholders, including community- and faith-based agencies

A. *A system is in place to assess the satisfaction of both co-located and non-co-located partners with the AJCC and its services.*

A wide range of informal processes, from day-to-day communications between site managers and partner representatives to WIB staff-led discussions at system meetings that include all partners, are used to assess the satisfaction of partners with the AJCCs and their services. A product from a previous Continuous Improvement goal was a survey which was distributed to partners by the prior AJCC Operator in 2019. Since then, WIB has now assumed the role as the AJCC Operator and due to the pandemic, a replacement survey or alternative system has not yet been distributed. A survey system that provides a common set of inquiries to all partners would enable a more balanced assessment of satisfaction than the informal processes that are currently in place.

B. *Both co-located and non-co-located partners believe that the AJCC adds value to their program and their customers.*

WIB and AJCC service provider leadership make a strong case that partners recognize the value of the centers to their programs and customers. Partner

engagement with the system is strong. During processes such as the development of the WIOA local and regional plans, Tulare County workforce system partners actively participate in community and stakeholder forums that provide the basis for goals laid in the plans. Input provided during these sessions is almost universally favorable and partners describe ways in which their programs benefit from collaboration with the Employment Connection centers. Benefits cited by partners are frequently connected to the services that their participants take advantage of, such as job fairs, specialized employer recruitment events, workshops, referrals, and co-enrollment in partner programs that are facilitated by AJCC staff. As indicated in the preceding response, implementation of a formal survey or similar process to determine partners' satisfaction would serve to confirm that partners see the value of the AJCCs to their programs.

C. *The required AJCC partners meet on a regular basis to discuss the One-Stop system and the AJCC's contribution to the system and make recommendations for continuous improvement.*

In coordination with the WIB, the local workforce system's AJCC service providers, partners, and stakeholders have put into place a series of committees that meet regularly, providing the partners the opportunity to share information, address customer input, and work to continuously improve services for job seekers and businesses throughout Tulare County. Regularly scheduled meetings include:

- Employment Connection Committee Meetings, which include representation of managers from center service providers and system partners
- Employment Connection Site Meetings, which include representation from partners co-located at the comprehensive centers
- Integrated Teams Meetings (Welcome, Skills and Talent, and Employment Solutions Teams), including representation of frontline staff/team members
- Team-Specific Meetings, during which members of a specific team from across all centers join on a quarterly basis.

D. *The AJCC actively outreaches and provides access to non-co-located partner customers to participate in AJCC-based services, such as workshops and recruitment events.*

AJCC staff and partners cite myriad ways in which the centers outreach to all partners, including those that are not co-located, about services, activities, and events in which their customers may participate. These include, but are not limited to, the following efforts.

- Through the meeting structured outlined above, partners are informed about regularly scheduled services and special events (e.g., job fairs, recruitments, presentations, workshops) in which partners' customers may be eligible to participate.
- Direct messages are sent to partners by WIB and AJCC staff regarding center activities and events.

- Under non-pandemic circumstances, AJCC staff regularly participates in education and community partner orientations and workshops to promote the centers' services.
- The centers have various resources posted on Facebook (e.g., Job Connect, Training Connect) that inform followers (including partners) about Employment Connection services and events.

It should be noted that, due to the expanded use of web-based services "AJCC-based services" now include workshops, recruitment events, and other activities in the virtual realm that partners' customers can access online.

E. *An inventory and overview of all partner services is available to all AJCC staff and all AJCC staff has received an orientation to all partner programs and services.*

Partners have all provided orientations to their services and PowerPoint slide decks from these presentations are on file so that they can be viewed at any time. The WIB intends to videotape future presentations. An online partner guide serves as an inventory of partners' programs and services.

F. *One-Stop system marketing materials have been developed that overview all partner services for distribution to customers at the AJCC and at all non-co-located partner locations.*

The WIB leads marketing efforts on behalf of the AJCC system and has implemented many innovative and effective approaches to promoting the centers and the partners. For example, Employment Connection marketing materials all carry a QR code that connect customers to the four centers. Social media messaging by the WIB not only promote services of the AJCCs, but also of the system partners. The WIB is currently going through the process to rebrand the Employment Connection. Through rebranding, a workforce system marketing message, campaign, and materials are currently being developed.

G. *The AJCC's partner referral process (as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding) is being implemented with a focus on quality referrals that are likely to convert to service.*

While a description of a basic process for and commitment to referrals is part of the partners' memorandum of understanding (MOU), under the leadership of the WIB, the AJCC service providers and system partners have worked together to develop an electronic referral form (using a google document) which automatically tracks referrals.

H. *Referrals are recorded and a system is in place for partners to follow-through and report progress on referrals made.*

The referral form referenced in the preceding response provides a record of the referral. The recipient is directed to use the form to respond to the referring agency

by providing information, at appropriate intervals, as to whether the referred individual made contact; enrolled in services; and achieved intended outcomes of participation in services. The use of this referral system is being promoted and discussed at meetings of the Employment Connection Committee.

I. The AJCC connects to the community through multiple community partnerships and community access points.

In addition to the four Employment Connection centers, the AJCC system makes use of many community partners' facilities as access points. These are sites where materials are available to promote AJCC services, staff can provide basic information about the centers, and computers are available to connect to Employment Connection's website and online services. Community access points include system partners' facilities, county agencies, community-based program sites, and facilities of the two AJCC service providers, including those located in remote rural areas of the county.

Summary of Strengths: The areas associated with this indicator for which the AJCC and the overall workforce system have demonstrated the greatest strength, competence, and capacity are the following:

- There are multiple regularly scheduled meetings among the partners, all of which support collaboration and provide opportunities for system improvement
- An inventory of the system partners' programs and resources has been developed and this information is easily accessible.
- A structured electronic referral process among the partners has been implemented and regularly evaluated.
- The WIB and the AJCC service providers leverage multiple relationships to establish and maintain community access points.

Summary of Areas for Continued Improvement: Review and assessment processes revealed the following areas that may benefit from examination and plans to increase content, efficiency, and/or overall quality.

- While there is substantial evidence that the partners are satisfied with and value the AJCC and its services, a replacement survey or alternative system such as the one conducted in 2019 should be distributed.
- System leadership should examine opportunities and options to develop a system marketing message and/or materials.

AJCC Certification Indicator #3: The AJCC provides integrated, customer-centered services.

US DOL Characteristics of a High Quality AJCC	California State Plan Vision and Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Organize and integrate services by function (rather than by program); when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having AJCC staff who perform similar tasks serve on relevant functional teams, e.g. skills development team. Service integration focuses on serving all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.b. Use an integrated and expert intake process for all customers entering the AJCCs. Frontline staff are highly familiar with the functions and basic eligibility requirements of each program, and can appropriately assist customers and make knowledgeable referrals to partner programs, as needed and as appropriate given the authorized scope of the program.c. Develop and maintain integrated case management systems that inform customer service throughout the customer’s interaction with the integrated system and allows information collected from customers at intake to be captured. Customer information is properly secured in accordance with personally identifiable information guidelines, and facilitated as appropriate, with the necessary MOU or other forms of confidentiality and data sharing agreements. Data, however, would be shared with other programs, within the One-Stop system only after the informed written consent of the individual has been obtained, where required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Integrated Service Delivery: braiding resources and coordinating services at the local level to meet client needs.b. Customer-Centered Service Design: use of customer centered design to involve frontline staff and customers in the development, prototyping and evaluation of AJCC services, resources, tools, and systems.

AJCC Certification Indicators

- AJCC staff identifies with the AJCC system (and not just their specific program), believes that all AJCC customers are shared customers, and contributes to providing a positive AJCC experience for every AJCC customer.
- AJCC staff have received customer service and customer-centered design training
- AJCC staff is cross-trained in program partner eligibility and services, so they have the capacity to functionally serve customers well.
- The AJCC has clearly identified the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of both functional leaders and the supervisors of program partners and the AJCC has an integrated functional organizational chart.
- The AJCC has a system in place to promptly greet all AJCC customers, identify the reason for their visit and their needs, and connect them to appropriate services as quickly as possible
- The AJCC has developed integrated customer flow procedures that respond to customer need and moves customers seamlessly between AJCC entry and service delivery with as few hand-offs as possible.
- All AJCC colocated partners have identified the Career Services that are applicable to their program and the AJCC has developed methods to align/integrate the delivery of those services.
- The AJCC has establish protocols to co-enroll customers in more than one partner program when there is value to customers and has a strategy for effectively sharing case management when customers are co-enrolled.

AJCC Certification Indicator #3: The AJCC provides integrated, customer-centered services.

Assessment of the AJCC's Strengths and Continuous Improvement Opportunities:

Overview: Tulare County's Employment Connection centers embody the spirit of this indicator. The AJCC system was an early implementer of California's integrated one-stop service delivery model. In addition, as WIOA was being implemented, Tulare County WIB and its AJCCs were among the first to embrace federal human-centered design initiatives and participated in its national design challenge. As noted below, improvement opportunities for this indicator and related criteria center simply on continuing to examine where approaches can be improved.

Key Characteristics and Features: The following responses highlight the AJCC system's efforts and capacity to design and deliver services within integrated settings that are highly customer focused.

- A. *AJCC staff identifies with the AJCC system (and not just their specific program), believes that all AJCC customers are shared customers, and contributes to providing a positive AJCC experience for every AJCC customer.***

Partner staff co-located at the Employment Connection centers feel strongly connected to the AJCCs and participate within an integrated service environment within three teams: Welcome Team, Skills and Talent Team, and Employment Solutions Team. The integrated approach to service delivery highlights for staff that job seekers using the center's services are shared customers.

- B. *AJCC staff have received customer service and customer-centered design training.***

The initial WIOA certification process in which Tulare County's Employment Connection Centers participated highlighted the early work that the local workforce system had done with regard to customer-centered design. As WIOA was being implemented, U.S. DOL was concurrently encouraging workforce systems and AJCCs' use of human-centered design theory in structuring programs, developing services, and laying-out facilities. AJCC staff participated in a U.S. DOL-sponsored customer-centered design challenge, through which several changes to customer flow and services at the centers were improved. To keep staff up to date and trained on customer-centered design, in April 2020, former DOL Regional Administrator Virginia Hamilton provided additional training on customer-centered design, including its application to the delivery of services using virtual platforms. A wide range of customer service training sessions have also been made available for AJCC and partners staff, along with managers and staff from of Tulare County WIB.

- C. *AJCC staff is cross-trained in program partner eligibility and services, so they have the capacity to functionally serve customers well.***

The MOU among the system partners describes their agreement to provide cross training. AJCC staff and system partners have received training on each other's programs and services, including eligibility requirements, of mandatory partners and eligible stakeholders. The AJCCs utilize an integrated service delivery model, under which service providers, EDD, and other partners participate together on teams, thereby increasing staff's ability to provide basic information and services beyond the scope of the programs they represent.

- D. *The AJCC has clearly identified the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of both functional leaders and the supervisors of program partners and the AJCC has an integrated functional organizational chart.***

An integrated functional flow chart, incorporated in the Partner MOU, clearly illustrate the roles of the teams described in response to item A (above). The chart specifies that, at any time, a wide range of partners may be present in the center and participate on the teams. While teams are typically led by service provider or EDD supervisors, they can be led, by any partner representative designated by the Site Manager, who is employed by the service provider.

- E. *The AJCC has a system in place to promptly greet all AJCC customers, identify the reason for their visit and their needs, and connect them to appropriate services as quickly as possible***

The Welcome Team stationed at the reception area of the AJCCs promptly and efficiently greets all customers, using a triage approach (particularly for new customers) to determine what services, resources, or staff they should be directed to. Customer's sign-in using the VOS greeter system.

- F. *The AJCC has developed integrated customer flow procedures that respond to customer need and moves customers seamlessly between AJCC entry and service delivery with as few hand-offs as possible.***

Customer needs are addressed by the three integrated service teams. The integrated functional organizational chart, described above, outlines the process used to move customers efficiently between services. Employment Connection's emphasis on customer-centered services ensures that customer wait times are minimal, information is readily accessible, and that there is no wrong door. Staff on any team, performing any function is capable of and available to always assist customers.

- G. *All AJCC co-located partners have identified the Career Services that are applicable to their program and the AJCC has developed methods to align/integrate the delivery of those services.***

An "Employment Connection AJCC Partners and Services Matrix" highlights the basic and individualized career services of all partners and where the services are

provided. Services are integrated wherever possible. The matrix has been incorporated in the Partner MOU.

H. *The AJCC has established protocols to co-enroll customers in more than one partner program when there is value to customers and has a strategy for effectively sharing case management when customers are co-enrolled.*

Within the WIOA Title I program, the WIB has published guidance on co-enrollment of individuals ages 18 through 24 between the Youth and Adult Programs. Co-enrollment among the system partners is an extension of the referral process. Participants may be referred among the partners to access services not available from the referring partner program. Follow-up by the referring agency confirms where co-enrollment takes place. For individuals co-enrolled in two or more programs, case managers will communicate to coordinate service delivery.

Summary of Strengths: The areas associated with this indicator for which the AJCC and the overall workforce system have demonstrated the greatest strength, competence, and capacity are the following:

- The WIB, its network of Employment Connection centers, and the overall workforce system partnership show significant strength and serve as an example to California's AJCCs in all the foregoing areas.

Summary of Areas for Continued Improvement: Review and assessment processes revealed the following areas that may benefit from examination and plans to increase content, efficiency, and/or overall quality.

- Overall, continuous improvement goals concerning this indicator simply require that the WIB and the AJCCs continue to evaluate their effectiveness in terms of service integration and custom focus and make improvements wherever opportunities are identified.

AJCC Certification Indicator #4: The AJCC is an on-ramp for skill development and the attainment of industry-recognized credentials which meet the needs of targeted regional sectors and pathway.

US DOL Characteristics of a High Quality AJCC	California State Plan Vision and Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improve the skills of job seeker and worker customers. AJCCs offer access to education and training leading to industry-recognized credentials through the use of career pathways, apprenticeships, and other strategies that enable customers to compete successfully in today’s global economy. b. Value skill development by assessing and improving each individual’s basic, occupational, and employability skills. c. Balance traditional labor exchange services with strategic talent development within a regional economy. d. Create opportunities for individuals at all skill levels and levels of experience by providing customers as much timely, labor market, job-driven information and, choice as possible related to education and training, careers, and service delivery options, while offering customers the opportunity to receive both skill-development and job placement services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Career Pathways: enabling of progressive skills development through education and training programs, using multiple entry and exit points, so that each level of skills development corresponds with a labor market payoff for those being trained or educated and results in industry-recognized credentials. b. Earn and Learn: using training and education best practices that combine applied learning opportunities with material compensation while facilitating skills development in the context of actual labor market participation. c. Supportive Services: providing ancillary services like childcare, transportation, and counseling to facilitate program completion by those enrolled in training and education courses. d. AJCCs as an access point for programs that provide for “demand-driven skills attainment.” From this perspective, AJCCs will be operated as an “on ramp” or “gateway” to the “Regional Sector Pathways” programs either built-out or identified through the regional planning process described above. e. AJCCs will continue to provide the full array of Career Services and function as labor exchanges but there will be much greater emphasis on treating AJCCs as an access point for education and training services for those who want and need it.

AJCC Certification Indicators

- All AJCC staff (i.e., the staff of all colocated partners regardless of staff position or program) value both skill development and employment outcomes and know how they can promote and contribute to both.
- All AJCC staff knows the regional target sectors, can identify regional sector career pathways, and can understand what those mean in terms of providing services to customers.
- The AJCC has skill development and training opportunities for customers at all skill and experience levels.
- The AJCC has robust training services and staff assists customers in accessing and enrolling in these services, including career pathways, integrated education and training, workforce preparation, work-based learning, and apprenticeship.
- AJCC staff are committed to and competent in helping customers navigate career pathways that result in industry-recognized credentials.
- The AJCC does not implement a “sequence of service requirement” for training and does not have cumbersome entry steps that prohibit easy access to education and training that leads to industry-recognized credentials.
- The AJCC ensures that supportive services are available to customers, as appropriate, to facilitate participation in training services.
- The AJCC strives to increase the number and percentage of all AJCC customers receiving skill development and training services resulting in industry recognized credentials.

AJCC Certification Indicator #4: The AJCC is an on-ramp for skill development and the attainment of industry-recognized credentials which meet the needs of targeted regional sectors and pathways.

Assessment of the AJCC's Strengths and Continuous Improvement Opportunities:

Overview: The AJCC system in Tulare County operates under an ISD model and, as such, there is a team that is uniquely devoted to assist job seekers with the identifying training opportunities that will prepare them for demand jobs and careers in promising sectors of the local and regional economy. An array of training programs and models are available to support job seekers in preparing for employment and in earning industry-recognized credentials required for various positions.

The Employment Connection Center in Porterville works closely with Porterville Adult School, as it is one of the most accessible sources of training for residents. Portville College, part of the Kern Community College District, is another critical local resource for training.

Key Characteristics and Features: The following responses highlight the AJCC and the workforce system's efforts and capacity to serve as an effective on-ramp to skills development.

A. *All AJCC staff (i.e., the staff of all co-located partners regardless of staff position or program) value both skill development and employment outcomes and know how they can promote and contribute to both.*

Service providers and partners who staff the AJCCs understand that it is the local workforce system's responsibility to assist job seekers in preparing for and securing jobs. Customers seeking services from the Employment Connection centers come from all backgrounds with all levels of education and experience. Some customers may have existing skills to qualify for well-paid positions but need the center's assistance to identify job opportunities and prepare for interviews. Some may be new entrants to the workforce or returning workers that need to train in skill areas that will qualify them for employment. As such, some participants will first achieve outcomes resulting from skills training and credential attainment before they achieve their employment goals, while others will secure employment with having participated in training.

B. *All AJCC staff knows the regional target sectors, can identify regional sector career pathways, and can understand what those mean in terms of providing services to customers.*

The regional target sectors were adopted nearly five years ago as part of the Central Valley's PY 2017-20 Regional Plan. Since that time, and for some time before the plan's publication, Tulare County WIB's Business Services Team and AJCC staff have been focused on supporting businesses in key industries that drive the local economy. One of the best strategies for doing so is to ensure that all staff who assist job seekers have a strong understanding of the labor market,

priority sectors, career pathways, and demand jobs within target industries. To increase staff knowledge in these areas and their effectiveness in assisting job seekers, the Business Services Team has created labor market profiles focused on jobs in six key industries. Career Technical Education (i.e., career pathway) profiles have been developed as a companion resource. Staff has been trained in how to utilize these profiles, which are slated for updates on a yearly basis, to inform their work to support job seekers in connecting to training and jobs in priority sectors.

C. *The AJCC has skill development and training opportunities for customers at all skill and experience levels.*

As indicated in response to item A (above), Employment Connection customers include individuals with all levels of experience. In recognition of the diversity of customers' training needs, a wide range of training is available. For customers who need basic skills training, adult education programs provide remedial coursework, high school diploma programs and equivalency exam preparation, and ESL training. Employment-related skills training programs on the eligible provider list range from entry-level training to courses offering advanced skills that enable experienced workers to return to work or qualify for advancement opportunities. For some fields, including healthcare, a range of available courses exists at the beginning, middle, and advanced levels. AJCC and WIB staff have experience working with job seekers and businesses on work-based learning models for positions ranging from those that pay entry-level wages to ones that address skills gaps for positions as advanced as Mechanical Engineers. A variety of work-based learning options are available, including work experience, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships.

D. *The AJCC has robust training services and staff assists customers in accessing and enrolling in these services, including career pathways, integrated education and training, workforce preparation, work-based learning, and apprenticeship.*

The previous response identifies the wide array of opportunities that are available to address the range of needs experienced by AJCC customers. Across the county, adult education programs are a frequent provider of programs that prepare job seekers for employment, as is College of the Sequoias, along with private and community-based training agencies.

E. *AJCC staff are committed to and competent in helping customers navigate career pathways that result in industry-recognized credentials.*

As described in response to item B (above), the Business Services Team has developed and provided training to AJCC staff on labor market profiles that focused on jobs in six key industries. Staff also have access to corresponding Career Technical Education (i.e., career pathway) profiles. Using these tools, along with knowledge acquired through training and experience, AJCC staff can assist customers in navigating career choices and training opportunities.

- F. The AJCC does not implement a “sequence of service requirement” for training and does not have cumbersome entry steps that prohibit easy access to education and training that leads to industry-recognized credentials.**

As required by WIOA, the AJCC does not implement a sequence of service requirement for customers to access training. For customers needing to develop skills and earn credentials to qualify for employment, Employment Connection staff attempts to facilitate their enrollment into training as quickly and efficiently as possible.

- G. The AJCC ensures that supportive services are available to customers, as appropriate, to facilitate participation in training services.**

AJCC staff orients applicants to the full range of services available to individuals enrolled in WIOA, including supportive services. Determination of the need for supportive services may be based on several factors, including an individual’s employment and career goals, training and career development activities, and barriers to participation. WIOA participants have access to a wide range of services to support them during their participation in WIOA programs and services. Among these are assistance with: transportation (e.g., bus passes, mileage reimbursement, other transportation services necessary for training or employment interviews), childcare, health services, legal assistance, housing, interview attire, work clothes, work tools and other job-related items, tests, and other services necessary for individuals to obtain/retain employment or participate in career and training services. Support services can be funded from several sources, including the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Programs and those available from partner programs and community-based resources.

- H. The AJCC strives to increase the number and percentage of all AJCC customers receiving skill development and training services resulting in industry recognized credentials.**

Tulare County WIB carefully tracks training expenditures to ensure that required levels are met in accordance with state policy. The number of job seekers that annually participate in skills development activities is based on the results of individual assessments to determine the needs of customers. Other factors, such as economic conditions, including those resulting from the pandemic, can also affect the number of job seekers choosing to enroll in training programs that lead to credentials. These factors aside, there is an upward trend in the number of individuals enrolling in skills training. A focus on vulnerable populations, the availability of special grants, co-enrollment opportunities with system partners and stakeholders, and changing needs of the marketplace all seem to be contributing to this trend. Moving forward, the WIB will track year-to-year rates of participation in skills training.

Summary of Strengths: The areas associated with this indicator for which the AJCC and the overall workforce system have demonstrated the greatest strength, competence, and capacity are the following:

- Staff assist customers in accessing a wide range of training and employment-related services and value both skills development and employment outcomes.
- Staff understands the regional target sectors and related career pathways.
- The AJCCs have training opportunities appropriate to all skill and experience levels.
- A range of training program and models, including both didactic and work-based programs, are available to assist job seekers to prepare for promising careers.
- Employment Connection staff are committed to and competent in assisting customers in navigating career pathways that result in industry-recognized credentials.

Summary of Areas for Continued Improvement: Review and assessment processes revealed the following areas that may benefit from examination and plans to increase content, efficiency, and/or overall quality.

- Beginning in PY 2021-22, the WIB should track year-to-year rates of participation in skills training.

AJCC Certification Indicators #5: The AJCC actively engages industry and labor and supports regional sector strategies through an integrated business service strategy that focuses on quality jobs.

US DOL Characteristics of a High Quality AJCC	California State Plan Vision and Strategies
<p>a. Design and implement practices that actively engage industry sectors and use economic and labor market information, sector strategies, career pathways, registered apprenticeships, and competency models to help drive skill-based initiatives.</p> <p>b. Develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.</p> <p>To support area employers and industry sectors most effectively, AJCC staff identify and have a clear understanding of industry skill needs, identify appropriate strategies for assisting employers, and coordinate business services activities across AJCC partner programs, as appropriate.</p> <p>This includes the incorporation of an integrated and aligned business services strategy among AJCC partners to present a unified voice for the AJCC in its communications with employers.</p> <p>Additionally, AJCCs use the forthcoming performance measure(s) on effectiveness in serving employers to support continuous improvement of these services.</p>	<p>a. Regional partnerships: building partnerships between industry leaders, workforce professionals, education and training providers, and economic development leaders to develop workforce and education policies that increase job quality and support regional economic growth.</p> <p>b. Sector strategies: aligning workforce and education programs with leading and emergent industry sectors’ skills needs.</p> <p>c. Fostering demand-driven skills attainment: workforce and education programs need to align program content with the state’s industry sector needs so as to provide California’s high road employers and businesses with the skilled workforce it needs to compete in the global economy.</p>

AJCC Certification Indicators

- All AJCC staff has high-knowledge of the regional economy, labor market conditions, business talent supply chains, and the needs of high-growth sectors and high road employers.
- The AJCC focuses on quality jobs by actively promoting targeted sector opportunities and high-demand occupations to all AJCC customers
- The AJCC promotes systems and partnerships that connect workers to high-quality jobs or entry-level work with clear routes to advancement.
- The AJCC has a defined strategy in place to regularly seek and capture employer advice in the design and delivery of demand-driven services for job seekers.
- The AJCC is an integral partner in the implementation of the Local Board's integrated business services strategy and seeks to minimize redundant employer contacts while maximizing access to system-wide, integrated business services.
- The AJCC offers a wide range of AJCC-based services for employers including referral of qualified candidates, on-site recruitment, pre-employment testing, skill verification, and hiring and training subsidies.
- The AJCC consistently seeks feedback and satisfaction data from businesses on the delivery of business services and applies the learning for continuous improvement.

AJCC Certification Indicators #5: The AJCC actively engages industry and labor and supports regional sector strategies through an integrated business service strategy that focuses on quality jobs

Assessment of the AJCC's Strengths and Continuous Improvement Opportunities:

Overview: The business services function, including principal engagement with industry and labor representatives, resides with the WIB. The WIB's Business Services Team is supported by staff at the AJCCs that connect job seekers to appropriate employment opportunities. The Business Services Team also act as the principal liaison to sector partnerships and organizations that increase access to jobs for AJCC customers. The local workforce system's integrated approach to service delivery enables the Business Services Team to track and record business contacts, thereby reducing redundancy.

Porterville center staff collaborate with the WIB's Business Services Team to ensure that the needs of local businesses are addressed. Employment Connection staff have developed positive relationships with businesses such as Champion Homes, a local builder, for which the AJCC has brokered new employee training. The center also assists employers by hosting recruitment events for companies such as Walmart Distribution Center and Eagle Mount Casino.

Key Characteristics and Features: The following responses highlight the AJCC system's efforts and capacity to effectively engage with businesses in key sectors, while concurrently collaborating with core, one-stop, and other partners in efforts to coordinate and integrate outreach to and communications with businesses in and around Tulare County.

A. *All AJCC staff has high-knowledge of the regional economy, labor market conditions, business talent supply chains, and the needs of high-growth sectors and high road employers.*

In taking on the role of primary business service provider for the local workforce system and the AJCCs, Tulare County WIB has also assumed responsibility for keeping Employment Connections staff and partners well informed about the regional economy, labor market conditions, the talent needs of local businesses, and priority sectors. The Business Services Team meets these obligations by providing significant information, resources, and training to AJCC and partner staff. A monthly Workforce Data Newsletter, summarizing critical economic and labor market information, is distributed throughout the system. A data hub on the board's website enables AJCC representatives and others to request customized data sets. Labor market profiles (described in response to Indicator 4) add further to staff knowledge, as does training provided through meetings of the Employment Solutions Team in which AJCC staff participate.

B. *The AJCC focuses on quality jobs by actively promoting targeted sector opportunities and high-demand occupations to all AJCC customers.*

Center staff, system partners, and WIB staff that comprise the Employment Solutions Team make a strong case that their efforts are focused on good jobs that pay self-sufficiency wages, are in growth sectors, have high-demand, and offer opportunities for wage increases and career advancement. Some opportunities also provide a range of employment benefits, such as jobs in the public sector and those for which a collective bargaining agreement is in place. The WIB maintains relationships with organized labor entities, such as the IBEW, to connect job seekers to high-paid jobs in construction, manufacturing, and related fields.

Currently, there is no standard definition for job quality or agreement on what characteristics define a “quality job.” It may benefit the workforce system in Tulare County to define the features and characteristics of such jobs and whether variations to this definition may exist based on unique circumstances.

C. *The AJCC promotes systems and partnerships that connect workers to high-quality jobs or entry-level work with clear routes to advancement.*

The WIB’s Business Service Team, along with their counterparts at the AJCCs, develop and maintain relationships with many organizations that contribute to the workforce development system’s ability to connect customers to good jobs. Organizations and individuals that support the workforce system’s ability to create opportunities for job seekers include:

- Business champions: Within Tulare County, there are many businesses that have been long-term customers of the workforce system, and which see themselves as partners and readily share insight with and advise the system. Some of these champions include current and past members of the local board.
- Business-serving agencies: The WIB works closely with local chambers of commerce and other business-serving organizations (including organizations embedded in local government) to identify the needs of local companies, including small businesses.
- Sector partnerships: The WIB launched and continues to lead a Healthcare Advisory Board, which includes representation by a cross section of businesses in this industry. The WIB is also a partner of the South Valley Industrial Collaborative, which focus on manufacturing and logistics.
- Organized labor: As indicated in the preceding response, on behalf of the AJCCs and the entire workforce system, the WIB works with labor unions, particularly those representing the skilled trades, to connect to employment and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Education partners: Through strong relationship with Sequoias Adult Education Consortium, which includes the community college, the workforce system can immediately connect businesses’ training needs to organizations capable of developing responsive course content.

D. *The AJCC has a defined strategy in place to regularly seek and capture employer advice in the design and delivery of demand-driven services for job seekers.*

The partnerships and relationships described in response to item C (above) are those that provide the board with industry intelligence, business insight, information on trends, and curriculum development capacity that enable the Tulare County workforce system to provide business-responsive, demand-driven services for job seekers.

- E. *The AJCC is an integral partner in the implementation of the Local Board's integrated business services strategy and seeks to minimize redundant employer contacts while maximizing access to system-wide, integrated business services.***

As part of its responsibilities as the system's primary business services provider, the WIB's Business Services Team utilizes a google form to capture information on business contacts. This information is then exported to a Business Impact report that identifies and provides a basis for tracking businesses that have been contacted and by whom. All partners are encouraged to participate in this information gathering and tracking process. These processes contribute to a reduction in redundant employer contacts.

- F. *The AJCC offers a wide range of AJCC-based services for employers including referral of qualified candidates, on-site recruitment, pre-employment testing, skill verification, and hiring and training subsidies.***

AJCC-based services for business customers include, but are not limited to, recruitment events for individual companies; job fairs to recruit for multiple companies (include events that concentrate on one or more of the region's targets sectors); and processing, screening, and testing of candidates. Businesses may use the centers to conduct individual candidate interviews or for meetings. The events of the pandemic have demonstrated to the workforce system and business alike that nearly all the services that are provided at the Employment Connection centers can also be offered through virtual means, based on the needs and preferences of business customers. These online activities include job fairs and other hiring events. The WIB's business services team is also experienced at bringing services, such as needs assessments and support for developing work-based learning programs, to business where they operate. The workforce system's success in maintaining positive and productive relationships with businesses throughout the county is largely attributable to making services flexible and easily accessible.

- G. *The AJCC consistently seeks feedback and satisfaction data from businesses on the delivery of business services and applies the learning for continuous improvement.***

The WIB has developed a series of five surveys to assess the satisfaction of businesses with services they receive. However, the return rate on these surveys has decreased over time. Business Services representatives recognize the current

survey system may need to be revised to reach a wider group of customers and yield a more responses.

Summary of Strengths: The areas associated with this indicator for which the AJCC and the overall workforce system have demonstrated the greatest strength, competence, and capacity are the following:

- WIB and center staff demonstrate strong knowledge of the regional economy, local labor market conditions, and the key industries.
- The local workforce system leverages a wide of relationships to connect job seekers with good jobs.
- Sector partnerships, advisory groups, and business leaders share industry intelligence and advise the local workforce system on services needed to prepare candidates for work.
- The WIB Business Services Team is recognized by AJCC service providers and partners as having a leadership role in business outreach and in managing business contacts.
- A wide range of services is available to businesses at the AJCCs, online, at company facilities, and in the community.

Summary of Areas for Continued Improvement: Review and assessment processes revealed the following areas that may benefit from examination and plans to increase content, efficiency, and/or overall quality.

- Working with AJCC service providers and system partners, the WIB should examine opportunities to develop or adopt a definition of “quality job” that would be commonly recognized by stakeholders throughout Tulare County.
- The WIB should assess the effectiveness of its current system to survey businesses’ satisfaction with services provided and consider whether a revised tool and process would elicit a higher response rate and reach a greater number of business customers.

AJCC Certification Indicator #6: The AJCC has high-quality, well-informed, and cross-trained staffing.

US DOL Characteristics of a High Quality AJCC	California State Plan Vision and Strategies
<p>a. Train and equip AJCC staff in an ongoing learning process with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to provide superior service to job seekers, including those with disabilities, and businesses in an integrated, regionally focused framework of service delivery. AJCC staff are cross-trained, as appropriate, to increase staff capacity, expertise, and efficiency. Cross training allows staff from differing programs to understand every program and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations so that all staff can better serve all customers. AJCC staff are routinely trained and are keenly aware as to how their particular function supports and contributes to the overall vision of the local board.</p> <p>b. Staff the center with highly trained career counselors, skilled in advising job seekers of their options, knowledgeable about local labor market dynamics, aware of available services inside and outside the AJCC.</p>	<p>a. Certification criteria will include an assessment of professional development and staff capacity building.</p>

AJCC Certification Indicators

- The AJCC has regular staff meetings with all AJCC staff (i.e. the staff of all colocated partners regardless of program) to build relationships, provide updates on center activities, and discuss strategies for AJCC improvement.
- Partners have agreed to provide training to all AJCC staff on a regular basis.
- There is a capacity building and/or professional development plan for staff and partners.
- All AJCC staff has received training on the services of One-Stop partners, eligibility for those services, and the process for referring customers to partners.
- All AJCC staff has received training on how to use labor market information to help customers identify career pathways and develop in-demand skills and credentials and find jobs.

- All AJCC staff has received training in how to effectively assist customers in registering with CalJOBS and how to match customers to available jobs.
- All AJCC staff has received training on serving individuals with barriers to employment, including customers with disabilities.
- All AJCC staff has received training on providing excellent customer service and customer-centered design.
- All AJCC staff has received training on sector strategies, career pathways, job quality and high road training partnerships.

AJCC Certification Indicator #6: The AJCC has high-quality, well-informed, and cross-trained staffing.

Assessment of the AJCC's Strengths and Continuous Improvement Opportunities:

Overview: Leadership of the Tulare County workforce system is committed to developing and maintaining a well informed and effective team of professionals throughout the WIB's network of AJCCs and across the system. Making training available to service provider staff and system partners is key strategy to promote staff development, as is regularly convening staff and stakeholders to discuss operations and identify opportunities to strengthen service delivery. The WIB invests in its employees, AJCC service providers, and partners by ensuring that information is readily available and that resources are committed to continuously improve stakeholders' effectiveness in serving job seekers and local businesses.

Key Characteristics and Features: The following responses highlight the AJCC system's efforts and capacity to develop and sustain a well-trained and effective workforce, including both AJCC staff and employees of co-located and other system partners.

A. *The AJCC has regular staff meetings with all AJCC staff (i.e. the staff of all co-located partners regardless of program) to build relationships, provide updates on center activities, and discuss strategies for AJCC improvement.*

In coordination with the WIB, the local workforce system's AJCC service providers, partners, and stakeholders have put into place a series of committees that meet regularly, providing the partners the opportunity to share information, address customer input, and work to continuously improve services for job seekers and businesses throughout Tulare County. Regularly scheduled meetings include:

- Employment Connection Committee Meetings, which includes representation of managers from center service providers and system partners
- Employment Connection Site Meetings, which include representation from partners co-located at the comprehensive centers
- Integrated Teams Meetings (Welcome, Skills and Talent, Employment Solutions Teams), including representation of frontline staff/team members
- Team-Specific Meetings, during which members of a specific team join on a quarterly basis.

This response reiterates text provided in response to Indicator 2, item C.

B. *Partners have agreed to provide training to all AJCC staff on a regular basis.*

Using the committee structure described above, on a rotating basis, the MOU partners and other local system stakeholders, such as Tulare County Mental Health, have provided cross training on their programs and services, including populations they target and effective practices for serving these individuals.

C. *There is a capacity building and/or professional development plan for staff and partners.*

Following the prior rounds of comprehensive and affiliate AJCC certifications, WIB staff, in collaboration with AJCC service providers and other system partners, developed a staff development and training plan. The last such plan was implemented in 2019, after which the impact of the pandemic delayed efforts to renew the plan. WIB leadership will work through the Employment Connection Committee to develop and implement a new plan for 2022. This plan will, in part, incorporate training that is being coordinated throughout the Central Valley by the Regional Organizer.

D. *All AJCC staff has received training on the services of One-Stop partners, eligibility for those services, and the process for referring customers to partners.*

As stated in response to item B (above), AJCC staff and system partners have received training on programs and services, including eligibility requirements, of mandatory partners and eligible stakeholders. Information from these sessions is recorded. Working through the Employment Connection Committee, a structured referral system has been designed and is being implemented.

E. *All AJCC staff has received training on how to use labor market information to help customers identify career pathways and develop in-demand skills and credentials and find jobs.*

Tulare County WIB has developed profiles summarizing career pathways and skills and credentials associated with in-demand jobs within regional and local target sectors. Training has subsequently been provided to Employment Connection center staff and system partners.

F. *All AJCC staff has received training in how to effectively assist customers in registering with CalJOBS and how to match customers to available jobs.*

The ability to register clients into CalJOBS, utilize its job matching functions, and take advantage of its full range of features is central to the AJCC's ability to effectively serve job seekers and operate programs. All staff has received training in CalJOBS. As training is needed for new staff, it is scheduled.

G. *All AJCC staff has received training on serving individuals with barriers to employment, including customers with disabilities.*

In recent years, the Tulare County WIB has received several non-formula grants that are focused on services for vulnerable populations. Given state and local priorities for serving vulnerable populations, several specialized training sessions have been held to increase AJCC and partner staff's effectiveness in serving individuals with barriers to employment. Among these have been:

- Windmills training on serving individuals with disabilities, which was provided by DOR representatives
- Mental Health First Aid
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Fresh Start Training on serving previously incarcerated and justice-involved individuals

As many of the workforce system partners and local stakeholders have expertise in dealing with vulnerable populations, cross training hosted by the Employment Connections Committee has included additional content on serving individuals with one or more barriers to employment.

H. All AJCC staff has received training on providing excellent customer service and customer-centered design.

As stated in response to Indicator 3, item B, the initial WIOA certification process in which Tulare County's Employment Connection Centers participated highlighted the early work that the local workforce system had done with regard to customer-centered design. As WIOA was being implemented, U.S. DOL was concurrently encouraging workforce systems and AJCCs' use of human-centered design theory in structuring programs, developing services, and laying-out facilities. AJCC staff participated in a U.S. DOL-sponsored customer-centered design challenge, through which several changes to customer flow and services at the centers were improved. To keep staff up to date and trained on customer-centered design, in April 2020, former DOL Regional Administrator Virginia Hamilton provided additional training on customer-centered design, including its application to the delivery of services using virtual platforms. A wide range of customer service training sessions have also been made available for AJCC and partner staff, along with managers and staff from of Tulare County WIB.

I. All AJCC staff has received training on sector strategies, career pathways, job quality and high road training partnerships.

Through a combination of local training (including training by WIB business services staff) and sessions made available through regional training funds, AJCC and partner staff have received training on sector strategies and career pathways. Both topics were at the forefront of national and statewide efforts in 2015 to move the workforce system forward during the transition from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to WIOA. When, in 2017, the San Joaquin Valley and Associated Counties (SJVAC) Regional Planning Unit (RPU) published its Regional Plan, highlighting the region's target sector, efforts again accelerated around training staff on the sectors, strategies to engage with industry, and pathways programs to prepare job seekers for careers in these sectors. While the WIB and the Employment Connection centers have not yet hosted training for staff and partners on job quality or high road training partnerships, training on these topics has been scheduled by the Regional Organizer as part of a series training topics being rolled out across the region in PY 2021-22.

Summary of Strengths: The areas associated with this indicator for which the AJCC and the overall workforce system have demonstrated the greatest strength, competence, and capacity are the following:

- The system has implemented a series of structured committees and meetings through which managers and staff representing the WIB, AJCC service providers, MOU partners and other system stakeholders come together to share information and work toward system improvements
- AJCC staff and partners have been and continue to be cross trained on the program, services and strategies of all system partners.
- Training and resources have been developed to support staff's understanding of career pathway programs and related credentials, thereby enabling them to guide job seekers in their choices about careers and training.
- AJCC staff remains up to date on skills related to customer service and customer-centered design.

Summary of Areas for Continued Improvement: Review and assessment processes revealed the following areas that may benefit from examination and plans to increase content, efficiency, and/or overall quality.

- While an annual training plan for the AJCCs was established and executed in PY 2019-20, the challenges of pandemic subsequently sidetracked the development of a new plan. Although training for AJCC staff and partners has continued throughout 2021 and 2022, WIB and AJCC leadership should work together to develop a plan for calendar year 2022 and beyond.
- The WIB should ensure that all AJCC staff have the opportunity to participate in training sessions on job quality and high road training partnerships that are being organized in the Central Valley by the SJVAC Regional Organizer.

AJCC Certification Indicator #7: The AJCC achieves business results through data-driven continuous improvement.

US DOL Characteristics of a High Quality AJCC	California State Plan Vision and Strategies
<p>a. Use common performance indicators to ensure that federal investments in employment and training programs are evidence-based, labor market driven, and accountable to participants and taxpayers. Center performance is transparent and accountable to the communities and regions served; data entry staff are trained and understand the importance of data validation, data collection processes, and the importance of accurate reporting.</p> <p>b. Develop and implement operational policies that reflect an integrated system of performance, communication, and case management, and use technology to achieve integration and expanded service offerings.</p>	<p>a. Certification criteria will include an assessment of the way the AJCC will use data for continuous improvement.</p>

AJCC Certification Indicators

- The AJCC contributes to the achievement of WIOA performance indicators for all core program partners.
- The AJCC reports to the Local Board on an ongoing basis the number of customers served, the types of services provided, and the outcomes of those services.
- The AJCC operates in a cost-efficient manner and the resources invested are justified by the results.
- The AJCC has a system in place to collect satisfaction data from individuals and employers using the AJCC’s services.
- The AJCC has a system in place to capture and respond to specific customer feedback, complaints, and compliments.
- The AJCC regularly reviews and analyzes performance, customer satisfaction, and service data and develops specific plans for AJCC service improvements.
- The AJCC regularly identifies areas of needed technical assistance to improve business results and taps available resources to obtain needed assistance.

AJCC Certification Indicator #7: The AJCC achieves business results through data-driven continuous improvement.

Assessment of the AJCC's Strengths and Continuous Improvement Opportunities:

Overview: The Porterville Employment Connection funded by the Tulare County WIB benefit from a system-wide approach to data-driven performance management and system improvement. The AJCCs collect a variety of data on participants served, services provided, the outcomes of such services, and customer satisfaction with services. Data is then reviewed by center and system leadership. This analysis provides a basis for improving services, as needed, and enables the centers to operate in cost efficient manner with the limited resources that it has available.

Key Characteristics and Features: The following responses highlight the AJCC system's efforts and capacity to meet system goals and bottom-line results using data and information to continuously improve systems, processes, and services.

A. *The AJCC contributes to the achievement of WIOA performance indicators for all core program partners.*

The AJCCs are responsible for achieving goals leading to attainment of the measures under the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs that they operate. WIOA Title I program goals are also supported by the center. While the WIB and the Employment Connection Centers have not established a structured plan to support all core partners or others in their achievement WIOA performance measures, there are many ways in which the WIB and the AJCCs contribute to the capacity of the programs to meet these measures. Among these are the following:

- The extensive business outreach efforts of the WIOA Title I-funded system create relationships with companies across the county that lead to job opportunities for customers of all system partners.
- All job orders identified by the WIB and AJCC service providers are provided to Wagner-Peyser (WIOA Title III) staff, thereby becoming available to a much larger pool of candidates, including potentially, customers of all core partners.
- The Employment Connection Committee enables sharing of strategies, including those pertaining to services and performance, which can be applied to all partner programs; and
- Co-enrollment of participants across multiple program and funds streams lead to performance outcomes that can be claimed by all partners providing services.

B. *The AJCC reports to the Local Board on an ongoing basis the number of customers served, the types of services provided, and the outcomes of those services.*

Using data generated by activities of the Employment Connection center, WIB leaderships reports service levels and performance outcomes to local board members on a quarterly basis.

C. *The AJCC operates in a cost-efficient manner and the resources invested are justified by the results.*

The WIB annually approves the budgets of AJCC service providers and review of expenditures is ongoing. These processes ensure that centers are utilizing funds efficiently and in ways that will provide the best results for customers. Evidence indicating that expenditures are justified include the large number of job seekers served by the system and the local area's annually meeting or exceeding all performance goals.

D. *The AJCC has a system in place to collect satisfaction data from individuals and employers using the AJCC's services.*

Surveys are used across the AJCC system to secure feedback from job seekers on the services they receive. To identify the services that customers are responding to, surveys are broken out by categories, such as resource room, career services, training, and workshops. As described in response to indicator 5, the WIB intends to revise methods and processes for securing feedback from business customers.

E. *The AJCC has a system in place to capture and respond to specific customer feedback, complaints, and compliments.*

In addition to maintaining a formal grievance and complaints procedure that is distributed to and signed by customers, the WIB and the AJCCs have implemented effective processes to respond to customer comments of all types. When customers provide feedback that requires a response, the AJCC Site Manager will contact the commenter directly by phone or email or assign a team leader to this task. To address the increasingly common occurrence of comments on social media, WIB staff privately communicate with commenters.

F. *The AJCC regularly reviews and analyzes performance, customer satisfaction, and service data and develops specific plans for AJCC service improvements.*

Performance and service data are regularly reviewed at both the center and WIB staff levels and are discussed during regular site meetings, addressing any improvements that may be needed. In addition, customer satisfaction ratings are reviewed by WIB and AJCC management and are addressed in various ways. Management may take direct action or matters may be brought before the Employment Connection Committee or another work group. Managers may also assign improvement analysis or projects to specific staff or teams. The AJCC and the partners could likely benefit from adoption of a structured process to review, analyze, and seek improvements on satisfaction issues raised by customers.

G. *The AJCC regularly identifies areas of needed technical assistance to improve business results and taps available resources to obtain needed assistance.*

On behalf all four centers within its network of AJCCs, WIB identifies where outside support may be needed and engages qualified organizations and individuals to provide support in areas, including, but not limited to, marketing and branding, web design, IT, and strategic planning. Technical assistance on operational issues often takes the form of staff training. In addition, the service providers contracted to operate and manage the Employment Connection centers may engage technical assistance to support their organizations across a wide range of areas. Such assistance may benefit AJCC operations and services as the providers' system and processes become more efficient.

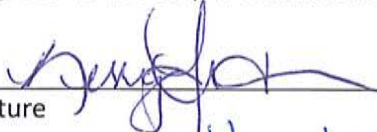
Summary of Strengths: The areas associated with this indicator for which the AJCC and the overall workforce system have demonstrated the greatest strength, competence, and capacity are the following:

- The AJCC system provides a wide range of services that enable all local workforce system partners to achieve skills attainment and employment-related goals, including the WIOA performance measures.
- On a quarter basis, system leadership reports to the workforce development board regarding the centers and the system's service levels and performance outcomes.
- The Tulare County workforce system operates in cost efficient manner, serving large numbers of job seekers, while consistently meeting performance goals.
- Center management and system leadership have implemented effective processes to respond to all types of customer feedback.

Summary of Areas for Continued Improvement: Review and assessment processes revealed the following areas that may benefit from examination and plans to increase content, efficiency, and/or overall quality.

- System leaders should examine opportunities to revise and expand the process used to collect satisfaction results from business customers, thereby gathering broader input from the business community about the services they receive from the workforce system.
- Center leadership should consider options for the development and implementation of a structured process for analyzing customer feedback and implementing program, service, and performance improvements. The "Plan-Do-Check-Act" cycle may be a useful strategy.

By signing below, the Local Board Chair attests to the **AJCC's Certification Indicator Assessment** and agrees to develop a continuous improvement plan with target dates with the AJCC.



Signature



Name

Chair, Tulare County WIB

Title