



Workforce Investment Board
OF TULARE COUNTY
Driving Economic Success

2025-2028

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
OF TULARE COUNTY

LOCAL PLAN



Adam Peck, Executive Director



apecck@tularewib.org



(559) 713-5200



TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW		4
A.	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	4
B.	Tulare County Workforce Investment Board (WIB)	4
C.	Local Plans and the WIOA Planning Structure	5
D.	California's Strategic Workforce Priorities	6
E.	Development of Tulare County's WIB's Program Years 25-28 Local Plan	7
F.	Workforce Development System Priorities and Strategies	7
G.	WIB of Tulare County's Value, Focus and Strategies	8
II. WIOA CORE AND REQUIRED PARTNER COORDINATION		9
A.	Coordination with AJCC Partners and WIOA Memorandum of Understanding	9
B.	Partners' Efforts to Collaborate on Co-Enrollment and Case Management	14
C.	One-Stop System's Use of Technology and Other Remote Strategies	16
D.	Coordination of Workforce Activities and Support Services	17
E.	Physical and Programmatic Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities	18
III. STATE STRATEGIC PARTNER COORINDATION		21
A.	Coordination with County Human Services Agency and other local partners who serve individuals That Access CalFresh Employment and Training services.	21
B.	Coordination with Local Child Support Agency and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals That Are Non-Custodial Parents	22
C.	Coordination with Local Partnership Agreement Partners Established in Alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities	23
D.	Coordination with Community-Based Organizations and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Who Are English Language Learners, Foreign Born, and/or Refugees	23
E.	Coordination with Local Veteran Affairs, Community-Based Organizations, and Other Local Partners That Serve Veterans	25
F.	Collaboration with the Strategic Planning Partners to Address Environmental Sustainability	26
IV. WIOA TITLE I COORDINATION		28
A.	Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Digital Technology Skills	28

B.	Frontline Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Cultural Competency and Effectiveness in Working with Individuals and Groups that Have Been Exposed to Trauma	29
C.	Coordination of Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities	30
D.	Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs	32
E.	Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Youth Program	38
F.	Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds and the Competitive Process Used to Award Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities	41
G.	How the Local Board Fulfills the Duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider or Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers	42
V. SYSTEM PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2021 - 2024		44
VI. APPENDICES		47
A.	Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary (Attachment 1)	48
B.	Public Comments Received that Disagree with the Local Plan (Attachment 2)	51
C.	Signature Page (Attachment 3)	51

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and guidance published by California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) and Employment Development Department (EDD), the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County (WIB) has developed this four-year Local Plan covering program years 2025-28, with the Plan's active dates being July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029.

Tulare County has been designated by the Governor as a local workforce development area (LWDA) pursuant to guidelines established under WIOA. Tulare County is one of forty-five (45) local areas in California. With this designation, WIOA Title I Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, and Youth Program funds are provided annually by EDD to serve Tulare County residents and businesses. The local workforce development system is administered by the WIB of Tulare County under an agreement with the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

A. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Passed by Congress with a wide bipartisan majority, WIOA was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the local, regional, and global economy. WIOA represents the most recent iteration of federal workforce legislation that provides funding to states and local areas to administer and operate workforce development programs. WIOA was preceded by the Job Training Partnership Act (active from 1982 to 2000) and the Workforce Investment Act (active from 2000 to 2015).

WIOA promotes accountability and transparency through negotiated performance goals that are made publicly available, fosters regional collaboration within states through local workforce areas, such as the Tulare County LWDA, and supports a nationwide network of career centers, which are branded within the state as America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs) and in the County as Employment Connection.

While the Program Years 2025-28 Local Plan addresses collaboration among many organizations that derive their primary funding from a wide range of federal, state, and private programs, it is WIOA that requires the publication of the plan and that prescribes its core content.

B. Tulare County Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

WIOA requires that a workforce development board be established in each LWDA. In Tulare County, the name "workforce investment board" or WIB is used. The area's chief local elected officials appoint members to the WIB. Locally, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors fulfills this function. Local workforce boards are

business-led and a majority of the WIB's members must come from the business community. Required WIB members also include representatives from labor, education, economic development, and specific federally-funded workforce programs. The chief local elected officials may also select representatives from other groups, such as community-based organizations, to serve on the WIB.

The WIB drives the vision for the workforce system and maintains the critical role of leading and providing oversight for local WIOA programs. WIBs also play a critical role in promoting, sustaining, and growing regional economies. They are responsible for aligning investments in job training, integrating service delivery across programs, and ensuring that workforce investments are job-driven and match skilled workers with employers.

WIOA indicates that development of the Local Plan, along with its associated Regional Plan, is a primary responsibility of the WIB.

C. Local Plans and the WIOA Planning Structure

WIB of Tulare County's Local Plan may be best understood within the context of a three-tiered planning structure envisioned by WIOA that requires development of plans at the state, regional, and local levels.

State Plans: Under WIOA, state plans communicate the vision for the statewide workforce development system. WIOA planning requirements aim to foster effective alignment of federal investments across job training and education programs, in order to coordinate service delivery among programs for shared customers; improve efficiency; and ensure that the workforce system connects individuals with high-quality job opportunities and employers. Cross-program planning promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each state. California's PY 2024-27 Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan represents an agreement among the WIOA core program and other partners and serves as the framework for the development of public policy, fiscal investment, and operation of the state workforce and education systems.

Regional Plans: In states such as California, where Governors have established workforce planning regions encompassing one or more LWDA, regional plans are required. Local WDBs within the region participate in a planning process that describes elements such as: analysis of regional labor market data, development and implementation of sector initiatives for targeted industries and in-demand occupations; coordination of workforce services with regional economic development services and providers; and establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements. Along with seven other local areas, the Tulare County LWDA is part of the San Joaquin Valley and Associated Counties Regional Planning Unit (SJVAC RPU), which is one of California's fifteen workforce regions.

Local Plans: The local plan is intended to serve as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate the local area’s job-driven workforce development system and provide a platform to achieve the local area’s visions and strategic and operational goals. Features of the local plan include: coordination among economic, education, and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training and education programs; implementation of job-driven strategies and services through the local career center system; and delivery of education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers.

WIOA requires that local plans be incorporated into the regional plan. Therefore, the PY 2025-28 WIB of Tulare County Local Plan is officially part of the PY 2025-28 SJVAC RPU Regional Plan.

D. California’s Strategic Workforce Priorities

California’s Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan describes the state’s priorities for the public workforce system.

Under the leadership of the Governor and Secretary for the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, California’s vision for the future of workforce development is centered on the establishment and growth of a workforce system that promotes equity, job quality, and environmental sustainability for all Californians. The state is committed to developing a workforce system that enables economic growth and shared prosperity for employers and employees, especially those with barriers to employment, by investing in industry partnerships, job quality, and meaningful skills attainment. One area in which the CWDB pursues these aims is through its “High Road” programming. High Road refers to a “family of strategies” for achieving a participatory economy and society by aligning workforce, economic policy, and different interests with long-term goals of environmental sustainability, high-quality jobs, and a resilient economy. High Road emphasizes the complementary nature of these aims over the long term. In practice, High Road policy builds on areas where the interest of employers (in trained and productive workers), workers and jobseekers (in good quality and accessible jobs), and environmental protection (for a sustainable future for all) overlap to create pathways to high-quality jobs while raising the profile of existing ones.

In consideration of the practical implementation of High Road principles in workforce development policy, the CWDB describes in the current State Plan four distinct “flavors” or styles of intervention. These interventions are directly relevant to High Road projects but also inform, to a greater or lesser extent, all of CWDB’s workforce efforts. They include: (1) lifting all workers to the “High Road;” (2) professionalizing precarious work (i.e., employment that is temporary, non-standard, and insecure, often with poor pay and no protection); (3) democratizing

access to high-quality, middle-skill jobs; and (4) participatory planning for a low-carbon economy.

In accordance with the requirements of WIOA, both the PY 2025-28 WIB of Tulare County Local Plan and the PY 2025-28 SJVAC RPU Regional Plan support the State Plan priorities by:

- Maintaining a dual focus on providing programs and services that meet the needs and support the goals of businesses and job seekers/workers.
- Concentrating on industry sectors which drive growth and prosperity within the local labor market and the regional economy.
- Targeting jobs that offer career advancement opportunities and that lead to positions that pay family-sustaining wages and provide pathways to the middle class.
- Committing to the adoption and implementation of strategies and processes that support environmental sustainability and climate resilience through workforce development.

E. Development of Tulare County's WIB's Program Years 25-28 Local Plan

On behalf of the board, the WIB's management team and staff led the process of developing the PY 2025-28 Local Plan. This process involved reviewing and evaluating existing partnerships, services, and systems and identifying areas that could be strengthened. The WIB, system partners, businesses, and community stakeholders were engaged in the planning process. Completion of the plan took approximately six months, after which it was made available for public review and comment.

F. Workforce Development System Priorities and Strategies

To identify priorities for the WIOA Title I program and for the local workforce development system, which encompasses many local programs and providers, WIB of Tulare County's leadership organized a series of community and stakeholder discussions. These sessions captured input from individuals representing various organizations and interests, including individuals from WIOA core partner programs, economic development, education, and representatives of community-based organizations. As a result of these listening sessions, the workforce system will address the following issues during the period covered by the four-year Local Plan.

- Overarching priorities for the local workforce development system, including strategies to better support key customers (i.e., job seekers and businesses) and to strengthen the content and quality of service delivery.
- Strategies to improve workforce development services for individuals experiencing homelessness

- Initiatives and activities to supporting LGBT+ individuals through workforce development
- Improving linkages to workforce services for individuals with mental health needs

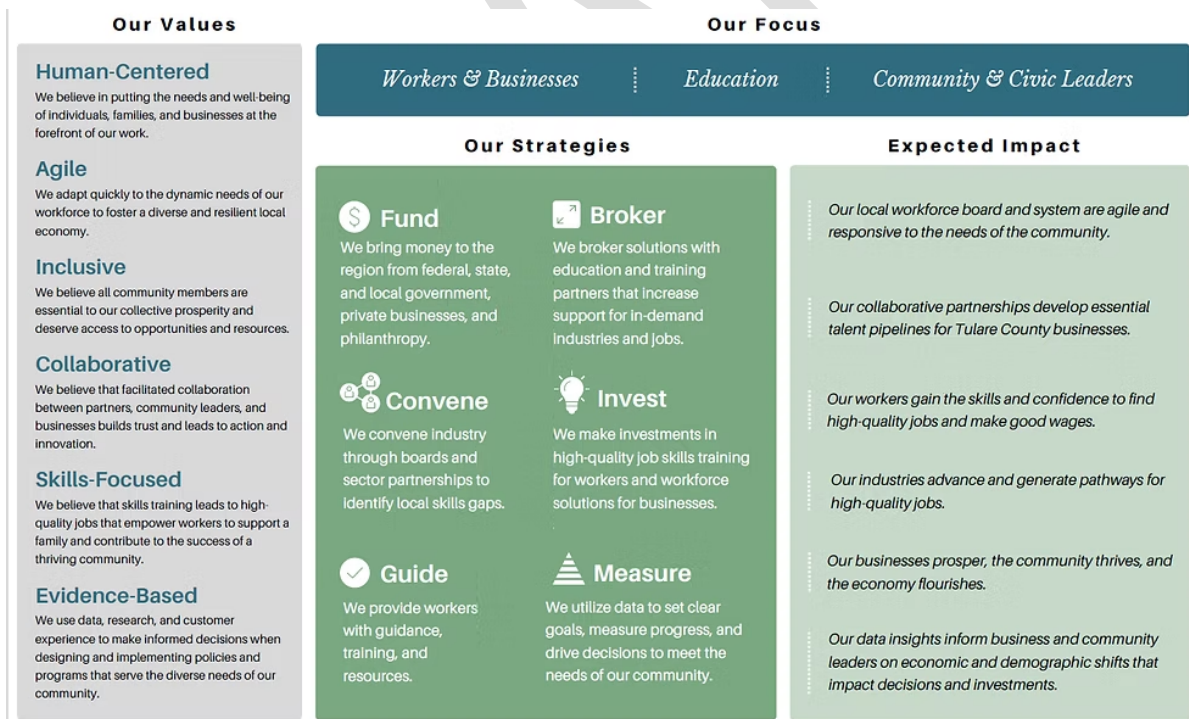
Each of these priority areas and specific stakeholder recommendations are fully described in Section V of the Local Plan.

G. WIB of Tulare County’s Value, Focus and Strategies

To make clear its philosophy and approach to administering the local workforce development system, WIB of Tulare County has articulated the premise for such work as follows:

Too many people are unemployed or in low-wage jobs that don’t sustain their families, and too many businesses have high-quality jobs that go unfilled.

In response to this core issue, the WIB has published the following theory of change model that sets forth its focus, along with its values, related strategies, and expected impacts.



II. WIOA CORE AND REQUIRED PARTNER COORDINATION

WIOA includes requirements for Local Boards to establish a framework for collaboration among state and local programs that are financially supported by nineteen distinct federal fund sources. Six of these programs constitute the four “core partners:” the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs; the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program; the WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Act Program; and the WIOA Title IV State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. The core partners, together with thirteen other federally supported programs, make-up the WIOA-mandated one-stop partners. The WIB of Tulare County has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the organizations managing each federal program at the local level. The narrative that follows describes coordination with WIOA core and other required program partners as prescribed by the Act.

A. Coordination with AJCC Partners and WIOA Memorandum of Understanding

Long before the passage of WIOA, the WIB of Tulare County had developed strong relationships and guidelines for collaboration with most of the state and local agencies that today comprise the one-stop partners prescribed under federal regulations. Over the next four years, there will be many opportunities to strengthen the coordination and alignment of partner services. Some such opportunities are described in the narrative that follows, and others will be identified as the Tulare County workforce system partners continue to work together and collaborate in the months and years ahead.

Overview of Local One-Stop System Partners

Following is a summary of the local /regional organizations representing the nineteen (19) federal one-stop partner programs, with which the WIB had developed MOUs.

Federal Partner Programs	MOU Partner
Title I Adult Title I Dislocated Worker Title I Youth	Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County
Title II Adult Education and Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visalia Unified School District/Visalia Adult School ▪ Tulare Joint High School District/Tulare Adult School ▪ Porterville Unified School District/Porterville Adult School ▪ Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District/Cutler-Orosi Adult School ▪ Farmersville Unified School District Adult School ▪ Proteus, Inc.
Title III Wagner-Peyser	Employment Development Department (EDD)
Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

Title V OAA Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Services and Employment Training (CSET) ▪ SER-Jobs for Progress
Carl Perkins Career, Technical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kern Community College District/Porterville College ▪ College of the Sequoias
Community Services Block Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Services and Employment Training ▪ Proteus, Inc.
HUD Employment and Training	<i>No federally funded programs in Tulare County</i>
Job Corps	San Jose Job Corps Center
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	Employment Development Department
Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)	Tule River Indian Tribe of California
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)	Proteus, Inc.
Second Chance	<i>No federally funded programs in Tulare County</i>
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CalWORKs	Tulare County Health and Human Services (HHSA)
Trade Adjustment Assistance	Employment Development Department
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Employment Development Department
Youth Build	<i>No federally funded programs in Tulare County</i>

WIB of Tulare County has also entered into MOUs with the following public and community partners:

- Porterville Sheltered Workshop (PSW)
- Sequoias Adult Education Consortium (SAEC)
- Ticket to Work, Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE)
- EDD Labor Market Information Division (LMID)
- America Works – Ticket to Work Program
- Root and Rebound
- Schrank’s Clubhouse (mental health services)

Memorandum of Understanding with System Partners

WIB of Tulare County had developed an MOU with all federally funded system partners. The core content of the MOU addresses shared customers, shared services, and shared costs. Tulare County also highlights local workforce system service priorities, which include:

Integrated Service Delivery: A seamless system is presented to the customer.

Customer-Focus: All aspects of service delivery are designed with consideration of customers' needs and interests.

Customer Choice: The system provides a wide array of useful information to assist customers in making informed choices.

Customer Access: The system is designed for universal access, with "no wrong door" to access integrated services.

Community Support: The system promotes and nurtures broad-based community support.

Performance: The system establishes identified outcomes and methods for measuring achievement.

Coordination with AJCC Partner Programs

The following information summarizes how the WIB and the local workforce system collaborate with organizations managing the federally mandated one-stop partner programs.

WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs: The three formula-funded programs are administered by the WIB, and Adult and Dislocated Worker program services are delivered through the AJCCs by contracted career services providers: CSET in Visalia, Porterville, and Tulare and Proteus, Inc. in Dinuba. Youth program services are delivered by designated providers in the following areas:

- Area I – Porterville and surrounding areas (TCOE – SEE)
- Area II – Tulare and surrounding areas (CSET)
- Area III – Visalia and surrounding areas (CSET)
- Area IV – Cutler-Orosi/Dinuba and surrounding areas (CSET)
- Area V – Farmersville/Exeter and surrounding areas (Proteus, Inc.)

WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy: The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of WIOA, is the principal source of federal funding to states for adult education programs. The program focuses on helping adults to increase their basic education skills; gain support in attaining a secondary school diploma or prepare for an equivalency exam; and, for English language learners, improving reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English. The Tulare County education agencies that are WIOA Title II grantees are members of the Sequoias Adult Education Consortium and Kern Adult Education Consortium. The WIB and local career service providers are consortium partners. Coordination comes in the form of cross-referrals between

workforce and education partners, with Title II grantees serving as the primary resource for remedial and basic education and related programs.

WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser: Among all the federal programs with which the WIB collaborates, linkages with Wagner-Peyser have historically been the strongest, as the staff from WIOA and Wagner-Peyser programs have been fully integrated around key functions of the AJCCs. Even with service integration, Wagner-Peyser representatives maintain responsibility for specific services such as coordination of TAA activities and operation of EDD's Youth Employment Opportunity Program. Enhancements to coordination that have been identified as goals for the four-year period covered by the Local Plan include greater collaboration during enrollment and additional cross-training for WIOA and partner staff on all EDD programs and services, including Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Outreach and California Training Benefits.

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation: DOR has staff co-located at the comprehensive AJCCs in Visalia and Porterville. Co-location fosters improved communication and coordination of services. The WIB has two programs with shared consumers between DOR and the WIOA Title I Adult and Youth Programs: Student Training and Employment Program (STEP), which serves youth and provides students with disabilities job readiness training and work experience in a career pathway matching their interests and career goals; and the Equity Target Population (ETP) fund program, which focuses on providing competitive integrated employment positions for adults and disconnected youth. DOR provides a wide range of services for the local workforce system, ranging from interpretation services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals to training for the partners on effectively serving individuals with disabilities. DOR representatives provide professional development training for system partners regarding service needs and strategies for individuals with disabilities. The local DOR manager serves as Chairperson of the Employment Connection Committee, which represents the workforce system partners.

Carl Perkins Career Technical Education: Coordination with Carl Perkins-funded career and technical education (CTE) programs is facilitated by the Tulare Kings College and Career Collaborative (TKCCC), in which all public education agencies serving adults participate. Perkins programs are present at the two community colleges in Tulare County (College of the Sequoias and Porterville College) and offer numerous vocational skills training programs, many of which are within fields of study linked to local and regional priority sectors. Coordination is primarily achieved through referrals of job seekers/students between the AJCCs and the colleges' CTE staff. In addition, the WIB facilitates an Industry Engagement Workgroup for the TKCCC partnership.

Title V Older Americans Act: In Tulare County, coordination with the Senior Community Service Employment Program is, generally, seamless, as the career services provider for both of the comprehensive AJCCs and one satellite center, CSET, also administers a SCSEP program. The program is promoted to individuals 55 years and older through the AJCCs and the entire network of providers. CSET has provided cross-training about the program to system partners. This training covered eligibility requirements, program activities, and program outcomes. SER Jobs for Progress also operates a SCSEP

program serving Tulare County and has staff co-located at the Employment Connection center in Visalia.

Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166): The Tule River Tribal Council is the WIOA Section 166 grantee in Tulare County. The tribe's workforce development programs offer many of the same services as the WIB's AJCCs, with primary differences being scale, as the AJCCs are much larger, and offer connections to the full range of system partners. To make information about the local system more convenient and accessible for individuals served by the Tribal Council, the WIB utilizes digital platforms to provide more information, workshops, and services online. The WIB will provide online access to online job listings, along with information on and registration links to AJCC workshops. By making a greater number of services easily accessible to Tule River participants, an increase in co-enrollment is likely.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program (WIOA Section 167): The WIB has long had strong ties with Proteus, Inc., the local Section 167 grantee. Proteus operates the AJCC Affiliate site in Dinuba, where all customers receive a "central intake" to determine eligibility and appropriateness for various programs to maximize and leverage funds. Through co-enrollment in Section 167, WIOA Title I, and other system programs, Proteus offers migrant and seasonal farmworker customers basic career services, vocational training, work-based learning, work readiness training, ESL, GED services, and supportive services. Vocational training includes programs teaching skills for truck drivers, forklift operators, solar panel installers, weatherization, and office automation.

Veterans: Coordination with the Jobs for Veterans State Grant programs is achieved by co-location of EDD Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff at the two comprehensive Employment Connection centers. Center staff and partners serving job seekers from community locations have been oriented to veterans' services and support 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.

Additional information on coordination with EDD's Jobs for Veterans State Grant programs and other veterans-serving organizations and programs is provided in section III.D of this Plan.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Act: TAA is a federal program that provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. The TAA program offers a variety of benefits and reemployment services to help unemployed workers prepare for and obtain suitable employment. Workers may be eligible for training, job search, and other reemployment services. Coordination with TAA generally includes co-enrollment into WIOA, which provides multiple benefits, including TAA funds being used to cover all training costs. AJCC staff and system partners have been oriented to eligibility requirements, program benefits, and

referral procedures to EDD representatives. While still a WIOA-required partner program, TAA is not currently funded within the federal budget.

Community Services Block Grants (CSBG): As is the case with other programs, coordination with CSBG is facilitated by the fact that CSET, the primary career services provider for the local AJCC network, receives CSBG funds. CSET's CSBG program supports the agency's ability to develop and offer services in the areas of employment, education, asset building, housing, nutrition, civic engagement, shelter, emergency services, and disaster relief. It supports coordination of services across the agency's various departments (Community Initiatives, Energy Services, Sequoia Community Corps, Workforce Development, and Low Barrier Navigation Center), facilitating a "no wrong door" approach to customer service. CSBG also supports agency capacity building, strategic planning, and participation in county-wide collaborations that create solutions to the challenges facing Tulare County's low-income residents. Proteus, Inc. uses CSBG grant funds to provide migrant and seasonal farmworkers with emergency support services, such as rental, utility, transportation/gas assistance; citizenship/DACA application fees; work supplies; food; and other services that meet the specific needs of individuals and families. The funds are also used to support classes for underserved communities that focus on citizenship, ESL, Adult Basic Education, and preparing for High School Equivalency exams.

Unemployment Compensation: In the past, coordination with EDD's Unemployment Insurance program was achieved through an onsite liaison function provided by EDD staff. An EDD Customer Service Representative provides support to AJCC customers on a walk-in basis. UI services are now provided primarily online. Employment Connections has implemented a referral system that connects customers to UI resources.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs: Coordination and cross-referrals between the AJCCs and the various TANF-supported programs administered by the Tulare County Health and Human Service Agency (HHS) have been successful over many years. Welfare-to-Work and Expanded Subsidized Employment staff are co-located at the Visalia and Porterville comprehensive Employment Connection centers and Dinuba and Tulare affiliate Employment Connection centers. CalWORKs recipients may be co-enrolled in WIOA and partner programs. The uniquely effective collaboration between WIOA and TANF in Tulare County programs has been the subject of national review and has been recognized for its success in joint service delivery, resource sharing, shared learning among staff, and management of collaboration activities. Section III. A of this Plan describes coordination specific to the CalFresh Employment and Training Program.

B. Partners' Efforts to Collaborate on Co-Enrollment and Case Management

WIOA emphasizes coordination among partner programs, including the use of resources from two or more programs to address the needs of individuals enrolled in WIOA and other publicly funded programs. To access a broad range of resources, individuals eligible across various fund streams may be co-enrolled in multiple programs. WIB of Tulare

County and system partners understand the value of strategic co-enrollment of workforce system customers in more than one program when distinct resources are required to address the full range of services and support needed by a job seeker to meet his/her goals. In pursuing co-enrollment, system staff is careful to avoid duplication of services across fund streams, ensuring that each program into which an individual is enrolled provides unique services.

Co-Enrollment Initiatives and Strategies

Tulare County has implemented several initiatives and strategies to support strategic co-enrollment of job seekers with core, one-stop, and broader system partners. These include:

Coordinated Eligibility and Intake: A “Partner Guide” was developed so that staff at each partner agency could easily identify when a participant may be eligible for and able to benefit from more than one program. Staff representing all partners have been oriented to the guide and the various resources it describes. The guide serves as a catalog of the one-stop partners, services, and eligibility requirements.

System Coordination via The One-Stop Operator Function: The AJCC Operator/OSO function is responsible for on-going training, supporting communication within and among sites, delivering staff training across all agencies, and promoting consistent, coordinated, and quality service. In its Operator role, the WIB ensures that the partners convene regularly. AJCC staff meet bimonthly (Employment Connection Colocated Partner Meetings) and the system partners meet quarterly (Employment Connection Committee). The meetings, along with day-to-day communications, provide a platform for discussing shared customers, co-enrollment, and coordinated case management. In addition, onboarding training, which provides an overview of the local workforce development system, is offered monthly.

Coordination of Referrals: The system partners have developed a streamlined referral process with the implementation of a common referral form. An electronic version has been implemented. A structured and effective system to refer customers between providers is foundational to successful co-enrollment.

Clearly Defined Responsibilities: Each partner is responsible for making appropriate referrals, providing sufficient documentation for the participant files, and tracking referrals. Referrals, and resulting co-enrollment outcomes, are reported to the OSO monthly.

Cross-Training: The WIB’s and the local workforce system’s commitment to cross-training helps support common case management. The WIB leads system-wide cross-training efforts. Each one-stop partner developed a slide deck providing an overview of its services, resources, and program eligibility requirements. The presentations are cataloged and remain available for refreshers and onboarding of new staff.

Shared Case Management

Within the integrated model to service delivery that the WIB adopted more than a decade ago, teams comprised of staff representing various organizations, programs, and fund streams work together to customize services for individuals. In addition to WIOA Title I programs, programs represented by the integrated services teams include, but are not limited to, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIOA Title II), STEP, Readiness for Employment through Sustainable Employment & Training (RESET), Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership grants, National Dislocated Workers Grants (including Quest, which serve agricultural workers, and a Severe Winter Storm project), the Environment Cleanup Opportunity Project, and programs funded by a U.S. Department of Commerce Good Jobs Challenge grant. As a result of staff efforts to tailor services to individuals' needs, many participants receive services from more than one program. Members of the integrated services teams communicate about service strategies and coordinated case management for co-enrolled customers. Staff schedules regular meetings to discuss strategies, services, and outcomes. Through the use of CalJOBS, WIOA staff documents the progress of co-enrolled individuals.

C. One-Stop System's Use of Technology and Other Remote Strategies

Tulare County is home to cities, towns, and rural communities. While well over half of the county's more than 450,000 residents reside in the three largest cities, a significant portion of the population is based in very small towns and remote locations across Tulare County's 4,800 square miles. The WIB ensures that workforce system services are available to all county residents and businesses, no matter their location.

Services to Remote Locations

The WIB strategically provides access to services for Tulare County residents through four AJCCs which are located in Visalia, Porterville, Dinuba, and Tulare, thereby covering a fairly large portion of the county. The centers all have ample parking and access to bus stops within walking distance, making them accessible for individuals traveling from any part of the county to receive services. However, the WIB's objective is that individuals in remote locations should be able to access services without having to travel long distances from their communities. Remote towns and communities of the county include Allensworth, Alpaugh, Cutler, Ducor, Earlimart, Exeter, Farmersville, Goshen, Ivanhoe, Lemon Cove, Lindsay, London, Orosi, Pixley, Richgrove, Springville, Strathmore, Sultana, Terra Bella, Three Rivers, Tipton, Traver, Woodlake, and Yettem.

Some of the workforce system's strategies for getting services to remote communities include:

Outreach from Base Locations: From the four AJCCs, staff devise and implement outreach strategies to inform individuals and businesses in remote communities about WIOA and other system services. These efforts include establishing and maintaining relationships with organizations in the targeted communities, including public agencies, community organizations, churches and faith-based agencies, and local businesses.

Experience has shown that local organizations and sites that are familiar to the community are effective in promoting workforce services. Making flyers, posters, and other printed materials available at these locations helps to build name recognition and familiarity with workforce programs. CSET is the career services provider at Visalia, Porterville, and Tulare one-stop centers and is also the Community Action Agency for Tulare County. Given the AJCC sites it manages, along with its other work, CSET targets remote communities including Pixley, Earlimart, Cutler, Exeter, Farmersville, Woodlake, Goshen, and Lindsay. Proteus, which is the Career Services Provider at the Dinuba Center and has offices throughout Tulare County, including sites in remote communities, such as London.

Mobile “Pop-Up” One-Stops: Staff will regularly travel to remote communities to meet with interested individuals and customers. Pop-up meeting locations are set-up at partner facilities and other public sites, such as libraries to make services locally available. Proteus has a mobile unit that enables the organization to bring services to remote communities.

Technology Support for Remote Access

Over the last several years, WIB strategies for reaching people in remote communities have increasingly been built around the use of technology that connects people to the internet. However, such strategies are still evolving as many individuals do not always have access to technology. Three issues exist that the WIB is working with system stakeholders and others to address: broadband access; availability of hardware; and residents’ digital literacy skills. Progress is occurring in all three areas but is slower than ideal. The WIB and our education partners are ramping up digital literacy training, especially for those requiring basic technology skills that will enable them to effectively use web-based services.

Significant 2024 public grant awards to Tulare County communities to expand broadband access and internet services will enable many thousands of individuals to access the workforce development system’s digital services. Through a combination of federal grants from the California Public Utilities Commission, more than \$45 million is available to provide internet access for households in rural communities, including Alpaugh, Culter, Dinuba, Earlimart, Kingsburg, Pixley Sultana, Terra Bella, Traver, and Tipton.

D. Coordination of Workforce Activities and Support Services

For many WIOA participants, engagement in training, career exploration, job search, and other program activities would not be possible without financial and other forms of support. By definition, support services are resources that enable participation in workforce development services. Therefore, WIB of Tulare County, subcontractors, and partners delivering services through the AJCC make every effort to ensure that the individual needs of each participant are identified and that appropriate resources are deployed to address these needs.

Determining Participants' Needs for Support Services

During an initial assessment, 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 a participant has selected, and barriers to participation. Following an initial needs assessment, staff continues to evaluate each participant's need for support. The staff assesses needs at different phases of participation to ensure that unique needs are addressed as they arise.

Leveraging and Deploying Support Services Resources

WIOA participants have access to a wide range of supportive services to assist them during their participation in WIOA program 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, 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 Worker Programs into which participants are enrolled. In addition, WIB of Tulare County is frequently awarded funds under special grant programs from state and local funding sources, such as the City of Visalia ECO project, which provides supportive services similar to WIOA. Tulare County HHS provides a wide range of supportive services to individuals receiving cash assistance. These services include transportation assistance, childcare, interview attire, work clothes, and other items necessary to obtain and retain employment or complete a training program. Tulare County's community action agency, CSET, also provides a wide range of support through various funding resources. These include programs to provide individuals with energy assistance, rent or mortgage assistance, and income tax preparation services, among others.

Staff members providing direct services to job seekers are familiar with community resources to address supportive service needs. Case managers make certain that, when referring a customer to a third party for support, they provide a warm hand-off. Staff makes referrals to public and community-based agencies by making direct contact and arranging for AJCC customers to meet with specific partner staff that will assist them with support services. Case managers record support services needs, resources identified to meet these, and referrals to providers.

E. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

WIB of Tulare County has long made accessibility for persons with disabilities a priority for the AJCCs and the local workforce system. The WIB's use of a four-part approach to ensure that our services meet all accessibility requirements as well as qualitative priorities

that we have established for serving individuals with disabilities and customers representing other vulnerable populations. The WIB's approach includes:

1. Ensuring that management and staff have a clear and comprehensive understanding of federal and state regulations and requirements about accessibility and provision of services for persons with disabilities.
2. Development and implementation of local policies on accessibility, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity (EO) requirements and goals.
3. Implementation of services and resources to meet the needs of this target population.
4. Making certain that WIB and AJCC staff, along with system partners, are informed and trained in best practices for serving and meeting the employment needs of persons with disabilities.

WIB Policies and Monitoring Protocols

The WIB's detailed procedures (*TUL17-05 Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures*) cover a full range of critical topics, such as accessibility requirements; reasonable accommodation and reasonable modifications for individuals with disabilities; use of service animals; and mobility aids and devices. The WIB incorporates requirements into our subrecipient agreements. In addition, EO posters in English and Spanish informing customers of their rights are located in all facilities. Registered customers sign a document indicating that they have been informed of their equal opportunity rights and responsibilities and how the discrimination complaint process works.

The WIB has developed detailed guidelines (*TUL17-08 Oversight and Monitoring for Nondiscrimination and EO Procedures*) for oversight and monitoring of contractors to ensure compliance with the requirements of applicable federal disability nondiscrimination law, including Section 504, Title II of the ADA of 1990, as amended, and WIOA Section 188, concerning individuals with disabilities. It includes a Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedure Guide. The WIB reviews with subrecipients an EO monitoring tool that is based on the State's tools for assessing compliance with WIOA Section 188 Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity. WIB staff annually conducts on-site visits to all subrecipients to assess EO compliance.

Technology Resources for Persons with Disabilities

WIB and AJCC leadership and staff continuously evaluate AJCC facilities and resources to identify opportunities to further enhance accessibility for customers with disabilities. Among the technology resources and other forms of support that have been implemented at one or more of the AJCCs are:

- UbiDUO, which provides communication assistance for individuals with hearing impairments.
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreting Service

- TTY Telephone Relay
- LCD Magnifier
- JAWS (Job Access with Speech)
- Zoom text (magnifier/reader)
- Dragon Naturally Speaking

Information and Training for Staff and System Partners

DOR is a co-located partner within the local one-stop system and has served as a valuable resource for assisting all AJCC staff in understanding the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and best practices for service delivery. DOR representatives have provided “Windmills” training for center staff. This high-impact attitudinal training program focuses on the unique employment needs of individuals with disabilities. Training will be ongoing to ensure that all staff has up-to-date knowledge and that new staff is well informed about services for customers with disabilities.

DRAFT

III. STATE STRATEGIC PARTNER COORDINATION

In 2018, the State completed and published a biennial modification to California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan for Program Years 2016-19. Within that modification, the California Workforce Development Board identified several new strategic partnerships with state-level agencies and initiatives. Guidance issued by the State Board in 2018 to local boards regarding two-year modifications to their PY 2017-20 Local Plans required that boards pursue these partnerships within their jurisdictions. Descriptions of four state strategic partnerships have remained part of all subsequent iterations of WIB of Tulare County's Local Plan. Guidance published by EDD and CWDB in 2024 added two new mandatory state strategic partnerships. The WIB's current and planned coordination with these partners is also described within this section.

A. Coordination with County Human Services Agency and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals That Access CalFresh Employment and Training Services

The development of WIB of Tulare County's two-year modification to our PY 2017-20 Local Plan coincided with the implementation of a CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) pilot program in the county. The WIB, AJCCs, and the overall workforce system have been connected to the program since its inception.

Workforce System Linkages to CalFresh Employment and Training

CalFresh E&T is administered by the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). In early 2019, HHSA entered into an agreement with CSET (which serves as the career service provider for three local AJCCs) to pilot a third-party CalFresh E&T program targeted to the General Assistance population. Participation is voluntary.

CalFresh Employment and Training Program Design

The CalFresh E&T model developed by CSET offers two distinct approaches for participants: job search and work-based learning.

Job Search: Under this model, participants attend workshops where, in addition to learning about job search strategies, they have access to an array of current job leads. Workshops emphasize soft skills and prepare participants to not only perform well in interviews but to succeed within work environments.

Work-Based Training: This model uses on-the-job training (OJT) as a method to offer participants both training and exposure to the world of work. After staff assesses and identifies training needs, they work with participants to pinpoint work-based learning activities that hold promise for imparting the skills most needed by participants.

Under the CalFresh E&T program model, the above strategies are linked to training by Sequoia Community Corps, which offers work-based and hybrid programs in various

trades, including construction, solar, weatherization, urban forestry, recycling, electronic waste collection, oil collection, and recycling education.

Current Collaboration

HHSa continues to administer the CalFresh Employment and Training program, contracting with CSET. Based on assessment results, individuals opting to participate in the program may be referred to an Employment Connection center to apply for WIOA Title I services and enroll in an approved occupational skills training program.

B. Coordination with Local Child Support Agency and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Who Are Non-Custodial Parents

Discussions between the WIB and representatives of the Tulare County Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) took place in 2018 to support the development of the WIB's biennial plan modification built upon an existing, long-standing relationship between the two organizations. Prior to these discussions, DCSS referred non-custodial parents (NCPs) on its caseload to the workforce system for assistance with job search and employment. While some successes were achieved, those being referred often did not take full advantage of WIB services for a variety of reasons, including distrust of public agencies and concerns about engaging in employment from which wages could be garnished.

Initial Plans for Structured Coordination

During the 2018 discussions, the WIB and DCSS began to consider approaches being implemented throughout California that focused on promoting a more positive image of child support agencies and using this positive image to connect those with enforcement orders to the workforce system. The discussions centered on the greater application of "motivation tools" that Tulare County DCSS could utilize to encourage NCPs to take advantage of workforce programs and services. Among these are the restoration of licenses; revisiting support orders to ensure they reflect the current circumstances of the NCP; and deferring or lessening requirements for payment during the time in which NCPs are engaged in workforce services, training, and job search. The WIB, Child Support Services, and other stakeholders agreed that the best tool to motivate and support NCPs' engagement with the workforce system is providing good and accurate information about child support obligations; payment options; labor market and employment opportunities; and services that can lead to well-paying jobs with career ladder potential. Early discussions also highlighted the importance of making a warm hand-off between the two systems.

Current Collaboration

Referrals made between the local workforce development system and DCSS have been made more effective through the establishment of single points of contact at Child Support Services and at the Employment Connection centers. This process helps to ensure that

representatives of both agencies are aware of referrals and provide appropriate coordination and follow-up.

C. Coordination with Local Partnership Agreement Partners Established in Alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

In 2018, during the process of updating and modifying our PY 2017-20 Local Plan, the WIB of Tulare County convened stakeholders from the disability services community and other interested parties in a forum focused on the use of competitive integrated employment (CIE), development of a local partnership agreement (LPA) among the state-mandated core partners, and opportunities for other organizations in the local workforce system to collaborate with the LPA partners. Through this community and stakeholder engagement process, the WIB and other stakeholders learned that the core partners (special education, the regional center, and DOR) had drafted an LPA and it was going through an initial review process. By May 2020, all parties had signed off on and executed the agreement, The Tulare-Kings LPA, represents the following core partners:

Local Education Agency Partners: Delano Joint Union High School District, Exeter Unified School District, Kings County Office of Education, Porterville Unified School District, Tulare County Office of Education, Tulare Joint Union High School District, Visalia Unified School District, Woodlake Unified School District;

Department of Rehabilitation: Visalia Branch Office; and

Regional Center: Central Valley Regional Center.

While not specifically named in the LPA, the WIB of Tulare County is considered a community partner.

Collaboration with the LPA partners has not only increased the workforce system partners' awareness of CIE and the unique employment needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities but has brought a stronger overall disability focus to the local workforce system. The WIB and system stakeholders will continue to improve collaboration with the LPA partners and other organizations within the local disability services network to ensure that services for individuals with disabilities are widely available and highly effective.

D. Coordination with Community-Based Organizations and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Who are English Language Learners, Foreign Born, and/or Refugees

Approximately two-thirds of Tulare County residents are Latino and among this population there is a significant number of immigrants. Serving individuals who are developing

English language skills is a regular part of the WIB's workforce services operations. Linkages with education and community partners are critical to the WIB's success in meeting the needs of English language learners (ELLs), foreign-born individuals, and refugees.

Network of Providers Serving the Target Population

Two core relationships are fundamental to the WIB's success in serving ELLs and other immigrants. The career services providers for Tulare County's network of AJCCs are CSET and Proteus (which is the local WIOA Section 167 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program grantee), both of which have decades of experience serving this target population throughout the County. The two organizations provide an extensive range of services to reduce poverty, develop skills, and strengthen individuals' and families' ability to achieve self-sufficiency. As a result of initiatives targeting ELLs, the WIB and the AJCCs have strengthened existing relationships with a variety of education providers and programs. Among these partners are several WIOA Title II grantees, including Sequoias Adult Education Consortium (SAEC), Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District (COJUSD), Visalia Unified School District, Porterville Unified School District, Farmersville Unified School District, and Tulare Joint Union High School District (TJUHSD). Other essential partners in serving ELLs include EDD, which has staff dedicated to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker outreach. The WIB is committed to sustaining and developing relationships with all ELL partners. Continued collaboration will enable the workforce system to effectively serve the ELL population, leverage resources to meet their needs, and expand the network of organizations serving this key target group.

Current Coordination of Services

Frequent and regular communication among agencies serving ELLs and immigrants is crucial to the coordination of services. AJCC staff attend various local and regional meetings where many CBOs and their partners convene to share information about resources and services available to this target group. Gatherings include monthly C.O.N.N.E.C.T. sessions and meetings of the South Valley Collaborative, which include participation by organizations providing diverse services, such as healthcare, parenting classes, and employment preparation activities, among others.

The WIB has collected and summarized the resources of an extensive network of partners, including those serving foreign-born individuals, within the Employment Connection Partner Guide. This guide was developed to support a seamless referral process among partners and system stakeholders and has been of great value in providing access to services for the ELL population.

As with partners serving all target populations, the WIB will continue to look for opportunities for AJCC staff to co-locate at ELL-serving organizations. This is a high priority for agencies with locations in remote/rural communities in Tulare County. The co-location of staff creates a mechanism to provide ELL customers greater access to

information regarding system-wide services such as English instruction and other educational programs, employment services, and support resources. Furthermore, the WIB seeks to expand on the one-stop concept by creating more community access points in areas where immigrants live, such as CSETs Family Resource Center located in the rural communities of Earlimart and Pixley, where services are co-located with a healthcare clinic.

It should be noted that immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries are not the only foreign-born individuals in Tulare County. The workforce system stakeholders are committed to supporting all immigrant groups in meeting their employment and career development goals. The stakeholders have connections to a wide range of resources that enable local workforce programs to access language and cultural liaison tools to serve job seekers no matter their primary language or background.

E. Coordination with Local Veteran Affairs, Community-Based Organizations, and Other Local Partners That Serve Veterans

Veterans are a primary target group for the local workforce development system. Not only does federal legislation mandate that veterans be given priority in the provision of employment, training, and placement services, but veterans bring to the local labor market key skills from their military service that are transferable to a wide range of civilian jobs. The services available throughout the WIB's network of Employment Connection centers address the broad range of interests and goals of Tulare County's diverse veteran population.

The WIB coordinates with local Veteran Affairs representatives, community-based organizations, and other local partners serving veterans. Employment Connection centers maintain strong partnerships with organizations such as AMVETS, the American Legion, Wounded Warrior Project, EDD Veteran Employment Services, and Happy Trails Equine Services for Heroes.

Both comprehensive AJCCs in Visalia and Porterville have a dedicated Veterans Representative, who plays a key role in supporting and serving veterans by actively participating in community events, including monthly AMVETS meetings and veterans' resource fairs. At these events, the representatives provide information about workforce services, distribute information on resources, and offer career guidance. Additionally, the representatives assist veterans with navigating U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) processes, such as benefits and the VA rating system. Veteran Representatives work closely with EDD's veterans services representatives, who perform the federally defined LVER and DVOP functions. This coordinated approach ensures veterans receive comprehensive and personalized support that addresses both their employment and broader service needs. Additionally, the WIB works closely with EDD to provide cross-training to all AJCC staff to support their effectiveness in making referrals and providing services to veterans.

F. Collaboration with the Strategic Planning Partners to Address Environmental Sustainability

The PY 2025-28 planning cycle marks the first time that local workforce boards and RPU have been required to address their efforts to collaborate with partners on efforts to promote environmental sustainability in connection with workforce development service delivery and oversight. While some current WIB projects support environmental sustainability in various aspects of work, the four-year period represented by this plan will provide the opportunity to conduct strategic planning with system partners and stakeholders related to the state, regional, and local climate goals and their connection to jobs and the economy.

Current Projects and Initiatives Related to Environmental Sustainability

WIB of Tulare County collaborates with local and regional partners to address environmental sustainability through several key initiatives.

Jobs First Initiative: As a local convener for the Kings-Tulare subregion under the California Jobs First planning grant (S2J2), the WIB engaged regional partners to identify industry clusters and investments that promote sustainability. Key sectors identified through this process include clean energy and fuels, responsible food systems, and circular manufacturing, which provide a broad roadmap for advancing regional economic and environmental goals.

National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs): The WIB has also implemented grant-funded projects, such as National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs), to address environmental impacts from natural disasters, including the 2021 wildfires and the 2023 floods. These projects have supported local cleanup efforts while offering displaced workers employment opportunities and skill development.

Ag Skills Advancement Project: Recognizing the economic shifts caused by climate change, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and automation, the WIB operates the Ag Skills Advancement project. This initiative provides farm workers and their families with pathways to enhance productivity in agriculture or transition to alternative industries with growth potential, ensuring workforce resilience and alignment with evolving sustainability priorities.

Through the foregoing efforts, the WIB collaborates with strategic partners to promote environmental sustainability while supporting economic growth and workforce development.

Future Environment and Climate-Focused Work and Collaboration

WIB of Tulare County oversees and participates in various collaboration structures that can serve as platforms for planning to more intentionally and strategically incorporate

environmental sustainability into the efforts of the workforce development system. These include:

Workforce Investment Board: Based on the diverse representation of the board and its business majority, the WIB should provide input and review options on workforce strategies to promote environmental sustainability.

Employment Connection Committee (ECC): Comprised of core and required partner representatives, as well as individuals from state strategic partner organizations and local agencies, the ECC provides a forum for interagency discussions and planning on full range of workforce and related issues.

Jobs First Initiative: As indicated above, the Job First initiative has already targeted sectors and jobs where the workforce system partners can help to promote sustainability. This work will continue to evolve over the period covered by the Local Plan.

Central California Workforce Collaborative (CCWC): The CCWC is led by the directors of the eight local workforce investment areas in the San Joaquin Valley, which together comprise the SJVAC RPU. The CCWC provides a platform for regional coordination and alignment, including the development and implementation of the Regional Plan. Within the ten-county region, issues such as dead and dying trees, a movement away from fossil fuels, and water conservation needs are beginning to affect the focus and content of workforce programs. The Regional Plan envisions opportunities to test workforce strategies in support of public and industry-led environmental sustainability goals. As is common within the region, pilots that achieve successful outcomes are prime targets for replication and WIB of Tulare County may look for opportunities to adopt models with the potential to grow the local economy and create good jobs in promising career paths.

In addition, industry-specific goals can be addressed through WIB of Tulare County's participation in sector partnerships, such as the Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership and supported the South Valley Industrial Collaborative, which are discussed in Section IV of this Plan.

IV. WIOA TITLE I COORDINATION

The following narrative addresses services, activities, and administrative requirements of the WIB of Tulare County under the WIOA Title I formula programs, along with strategies for staff preparation, training, and ongoing professional development to effectively respond to participant needs.

A. Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Digital Technology and Other Skills

WIB and Employment Connection leadership ensure that training in all areas, including the use of technology, is ongoing. Some of the most common ways in which training takes place include:

System Cross-Training: All AJCC MOU partners deliver training that provides an overview of their programs, services, and resources, as well as basic eligibility requirements for services. This enables staff from partner organizations to make accurate and appropriate referrals. For training sessions, partners utilize an Employment Connection-branded PowerPoint slide deck to identify that it is part of the cross-training series. Sessions are conducted via Zoom, recorded, maintained in a shared folder, and remain accessible to provide “refresher” training and to train new staff.

Employment Connection Onboarding: The monthly Employment Connection Onboarding Orientation is designed to familiarize staff with the Employment Connection System and specific responsibilities within it. The training covers essential information about the centers, collaborative partners, and branding, and incorporates a “meet and greet” session to facilitate interaction between WIB staff, center staff, and partnering organizations

Digital Technology Skills Training

Overall, WIB staff, individuals employed by service provider contractors, and the majority of staff representing the local workforce system have a high level of competency with regard to digital skills and the use of technology that enables web-based meetings and all forms of distance learning. However, training in digital technology skills is provided on a regular basis to ensure the workforce system staff skills remain current and reflect the latest technology products and strategies for their use. Recent training has been provided on the following topics.

- Telling your Story with Data
- Communicating with Data
- Three Habits of Highly Effective Remote Workers
- Effective Remote Management of People
- Conducting an Effective Virtual Meeting
- Conducting an Effective Virtual Workshop
- Developing Relationships in a Hybrid Workplace

In addition, staff members are assigned specific courses and training modules available through Metrix Learning to address their individual learning needs.

Moving into the PY 2025-28 Local Plan cycle all partners agree that increased training on the applications and use of Artificial Intelligence will be needed by staff at all levels. WIB leadership will be chiefly responsible for identifying and deploying AI and other advance technology training.

Other Professional Skills Training

WIB and Employment Connection management regularly assess the training needs of staff and partner representatives. While the focus of training will vary from year to year, the following topics addressed through recent training sessions exemplify the variety of areas addressed through workshops and professional development.

- Customer Service Training
- Communication Training
- Adult Education Training Programs
- Eligible Training Provider List Overview

B. Frontline Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Cultural Competency and Effectiveness in Working with Individuals and Groups that Have Been Exposed to Trauma

Tulare County has a diverse population with many immigrants calling communities within the county home. As an extension of this diversity, the WIB has long considered cultural awareness to be an important part of staff development. Over the last several years, staff and system partners have participated in numerous training sessions touching on cultural competence and trauma-informed strategies. Recent training addressing the needs of vulnerable and diverse populations includes:

- Disability Etiquette
- Windmills addressing the needs of and services for individuals with disabilities.
- Mental Health Resources provided by Schrank's Clubhouse
- Trauma-informed Training for Workforce Professionals
- Trauma-Informed Training for Leadership (ACE Overcomers)
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access Training
- Safe Zone 101 Training addressing the LGBT+ community

As addressed in Section I.G, as part of developing the Local Plan, WIB of Tulare County leadership convened individuals and organizations with expertise and a unique stake in serving three target groups for which services and service strategies can be strengthened: homeless and housing insecure individuals; the LGBT+ community; and individuals with mental health needs. During the four-year period covered by the Local

Plan training on services for these and other target groups will be provided to workforce development system staff at all levels.

Other strategies that the WIB will employ to increase competency in serving a wide variety of communities and individuals include hiring individuals having “lived experience” in addressing challenges faced by local job seekers (e.g., involvement with the justice system, homelessness, immigrant status) and the use of customer-centered design strategies to adapt services to best meet the needs of job seekers that utilize Employment Connection services.

C. Coordination of Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities

Upon the rollout of the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act in 1988, WIB of Tulare County began providing Rapid Response services to workers affected by layoffs covered the legislation. Over the last three decades, the WIB, EDD, and local partners have continued to develop and refine Rapid Response services, reflecting guidance from U.S. DOL and the State of California and ever-evolving labor market needs. In recent years, layoff aversion activities have become an increasingly important part of the workforce system’s strategies to minimize the effects of layoffs – actual or potential – on Tulare County workers.

Responding to Events of Worker Dislocation

Tulare County businesses experiencing events of worker dislocation defined in WARN must notify the Governor, and state officials, in turn, provide notification to the WIB. Following the WIB’s notification, the Rapid Response team (which consists of the WIB Business Services Team, Employment Connection staff, and regions; partners) convenes to prepare an event-specific strategy and then meets with company officials and organized labor representatives (if applicable). One or more Rapid Response orientation sessions are scheduled for affected workers. During the orientation, the Rapid Response team presents information about services and resources available to help laid-off workers, including information about eligibility for Unemployment Insurance, training and employment opportunities available at the Employment Connection Centers, health care insurance, and more. These sessions are typically conducted at sites where workers are employed but may be held at nearby facilities. Workers receive information kits, which include printed pamphlets and flyers which summarize the information presented during the orientation and explain the next steps, including how to contact an Employment Connection Career Coach. As a follow-up service to the initial orientations, the WIB hosts weekly Rapid Response webinars that serve to further elaborate on information originally presented to workers and as a forum for workers to pose questions to workforce system staff.

Efforts to Avert Worker Dislocation

The WIB uses tools and resources such as Econovue and Dunn and Bradstreet data to identify businesses with declining revenues and other risk factors. For these businesses,

the primary mechanism through which the WIB conducts Layoff Aversion is robust business outreach and engagement activities. Members of the WIB's Business Services Team, as well as Business Resource Specialists stationed within the AJCCs, support this process by providing businesses with customized solutions to a variety of needs. Discussions with business leaders often initially focus on workforce hiring and training issues. However, during a "needs assessment" conducted by the Business Services Team, a wide range of other issues may be identified. For businesses in distress or for which specific concerns are identified, resources are presented, which may include: workshare assistance through EDD; information on loans; Small Business Development Center (SBDC) resources; Incumbent Worker Training; and California Training Benefits. The WIB's website and postings on social media sites provide information about a variety of services available to businesses.

Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable Support for Rapid Response

Supporting regional and local efforts to serve business is the Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable (CVIER), which includes participation by all eight local boards in the Central Valley and Mother Lode WDB. Also participating are EDD and representatives from the California Labor Federation. The group meets quarterly to coordinate messaging and discuss Rapid Response and other strategies for the region. The group identified needs to increase staff knowledge about labor market information, Incumbent Worker Training, Rapid Response Services, and Sector Partnerships. Training on these topics has been provided to Tulare County workforce system staff and others throughout the Valley. As the CVIER stakeholders continue to meet, WIB of Tulare County anticipates that additional strategies will be identified to support businesses, including improved approaches Rapid Response, recruitment assistance, and layoff aversion activities.

Service Mapping to Improve Responses to Customer Needs

As part of the WIB's commitment to customer-centered service delivery, a "mapping" was recently completed of services to laid-off workers when they make initial contact with the Employment Connection center. This process entailed:

- The Rapid Response integrated team's developing a map of the customer's experience based on input from customers.
- The Welcome Team's mapping of the current state and aspirational future state of the welcome experience based on input from participants.
- Mapping the onboarding experience for customers and integrated customer interview protocols to identify work-related barriers and opportunities for services and employment.

As a result of the mapping process, services have been adjusted to better reflect customer needs.

D. Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

WIB of Tulare County's WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and services are employment-focused and targeted to industries in which there is significant demand for talent. While the WIB strives to continuously improve services, the local workforce system is highly effective in meeting the needs of business and job seekers. System strengths include, but are not limited to:

- A focus on and investment in areas of key sectors of the economy including advanced manufacturing, construction, energy, healthcare, transportation, logistics, and value-added agriculture.
- Strong local partnerships across which resources are leveraged to increase efficiencies and through which collaboration enables more effective service delivery.
- Regular strategic convenings of all system partners through quarterly meetings of the Employment Connection Committee.
- Service integration across various fund sources and programs, which features cross-trained staff, strategically integrated teams, and effective communication strategies.
- A commitment to innovation and improvement through efforts such as the development and implementation of an electronic referral and tracking process.

The information that follows further highlights system strengths and effectiveness.

Approach to Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Delivery

The WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker service delivery system is structured to provide quality career and training services for eligible individuals and to achieve performance goals set at the local level and negotiated with the state. Beyond these strategies, there are several unique characteristics of the WIB of Tulare County's approach to service delivery that set its programs apart from other local workforce systems. Among these are:

- Integrated Service Delivery System
- Workforce Transformation
- Customer-Centered Design
- Focus on Priority Sectors and Jobs
- Use of Career-Specific Assessments

Integrated Service Delivery System: The AJCC partners' service delivery is rooted in an integrated service delivery system that ensures seamless, customer-centered support. By maintaining an integrated customer pool, individuals receive universal access to demand-driven, skills-based services regardless of entry point. Partner collaboration is

strengthened through relationship-building, cross-training, and shared data tools to define customer pathways to improve service coordination. A focus on industry-driven change, priority sectors, and career-specific assessments enhances employment outcomes. Clear roles, structured referral processes, and intentional follow-through ensure that services remain responsive, effective, and aligned with local workforce needs.

Workforce Transformation: In early 2021, with funding and support from the Irvine Foundation, a group of workforce research and practitioner partners set out to explore the degree to which human-centered design principles were present in local workforce development boards across California and the country. The result was the Workforce Transformation Corps. As a grantee under this initiative, WIB of Tulare County hosted a “workforce transformation fellow” to advance the Corps’ objectives: implementation of human-centered design tools and principles that move toward customer and community-centered strategies to help solve deep structural barriers facing the public workforce system. The fellow worked to develop customer journey maps that identified bottlenecks in customer flow and enabled the system to deliver services in a way that benefits our customers.

Customer-Centered Design: The WIB, the AJCC career services providers, and system partners have embraced a customer-centered approach to designing and developing services. The WIB formed three local design teams with twenty-one representatives from partner agencies, local businesses, and six WIB staff to participate in a Human-Centered Design (HCD) program to assess and design workforce services focused on a distinct customer: business; unemployed adults; and youth. The HCD teams assessed needs through one-on-one interviews with customers, immersion, and surveys to develop services prototypes for each customer group.

Career-Specific Skills Assessment: All WIOA customers seeking training are assessed with WorkKeys, a tool produced by ACT, the company that produces the college entrance exam. The WorkKeys assessment is designed to gauge an individual’s level of “workplace employability skills” in three areas: Applied Mathematics; Locating Information, and Reading for Information. Upon completion of the assessment, participants earn a National Work Readiness Certificate, which identifies their skill level in the core subject areas.

Career Services

The delivery of career services at WIB of Tulare County’s Employment Connection centers (the AJCCs) begins with a greeting and an introduction to services. AJCC staff next determines WIOA eligibility, conducts an objective assessment, and develops an action plan, which will address job readiness, supportive services, and job search assistance. Customers may participate exclusively in basic career services or may need additional assistance and be enrolled in individualized career services.

Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services from the one-stop delivery system, and include:

- Determinations of eligibility;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation;
- Initial assessment;
- Labor exchange services;
- Referrals;
- Workforce and labor market employment information;
- Performance information and program cost information;
- Local area performance accountability measures;
- Availability of supportive services or assistance;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- Information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs.

Individualized career services are provided when they are needed for a participant to obtain or retain employment. One-stop center staff relies principally on assessments to determine the need for and appropriateness of individualized career services. These services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments;
- Development of an individual employment plan;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning (e.g., case management);
- Short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Training Services

The WIB of Tulare County makes a wide variety of training available to help job seekers prepare for jobs and careers in key sectors. Training modalities and services include:

Off-the-Shelf Training Using Individual Training Accounts: During the initial assessment, AJCC staff provides participants with an orientation to all WIOA services, including occupational skills training available through providers and programs listed on the Eligible Training Providers List. In consultation with AJCC staff, individuals receive information regarding approved programs, program quality, and training provider performance information. Participants conduct school visits to obtain more information such as class start dates, course curriculum, and other information about programs. The WIB gives priority to training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials and are in-demand occupations in the WIB's targeted industry sectors. Programs/courses are purchased through an individual training account (ITAs) established for the participant.

On-the-Job-Training (OJT) is a work-based learning model that provides training in an employment setting. Businesses may be reimbursed for a pre-determined percentage of the participant's wages to cover training costs. Job-specific training plans are developed to provide structure and specify skills development outcomes.

Transitional Jobs: This activity provides participants with work experience that takes place within the context of an employee-employer relationship, in which the program provider generally acts as the employer and provides an opportunity for the participant to develop important workplace skills.

Incumbent Worker Training: The WIB has designated the manufacturing, logistics and transportation, and healthcare industries as priority sectors for incumbent worker training and has worked with local training providers to offer multi-employer site training programs that are customized to meet the needs of companies in these sectors.

Services for Business Customers

Provision of effective services to business customers is central to the success of the WIB's programs and the local workforce development system. Businesses rely on the workforce system to provide solutions to their talent needs, including support for employee recruitment, skills development, and retention. Business services include:

Consultation and Needs Assessments: The goal of business engagement is to lead to a better understanding of local businesses' workforce needs and, when necessary, connect a business to services offered by the Employment Connection, the WIB, or other industry engagement partners. The WIB Business Services Team and Employment Connection representatives coordinate engagement strategies that support Tulare County businesses and identify employment opportunities for Employment Connection's pool of job ready talent.

Support for Recruitment and Hiring: Recruitment Assistance is a key strategy to help local businesses find the skilled workforce they need. The level of recruitment provided to a particular business depends upon its industry, the number of positions filled, and wages of vacant occupations. When a business requires recruitment assistance, Business Services Team and Employment Connections representatives collaborate on finding and developing the skilled workforce they need. The responsibilities of the Business Services Team include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Engage with business partners to understand their hiring process and the skills and training needed for open positions.
- Provide consultation to business partners in need of recruitment assistance.
- Leverage work-based training opportunities.
- Publicize open positions and recruitment events on various platforms.
- Schedule and coordinate the logistics for recruitment assistance events with the designated Recruitment Assistance Team.

Sector Partnerships and Support for Key Industries: Sector partnerships are collaborations between businesses within the same industry and labor market region, working together with education, workforce development, and economic development organizations to address challenges and seize opportunities to strengthen their industry. For over a decade, the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County has led the Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership and supported the South Valley Industrial Collaborative (Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation, Warehousing, and Logistics). Key initiatives connected with these sector partnerships include:

Sector Summits: These collaborative events provide professional development for local educators and workforce development professionals, immersing them in a specific business environment to understand local industry needs and trends. Summits may feature site tours, panel discussions, upskilling sessions, work demonstrations, and networking opportunities to promote work-based learning.

Career Exploration Events: These events give local students the chance to learn about high quality, in-demand jobs in the region. Examples include immersive programs like Growing Health Leaders, and facility tours for large groups such as those that take place during an annual Manufacturing Day.

Talent Pipeline Management: This six-step process identifies and addresses gaps and inefficiencies in the talent pipeline for critical jobs in the region.

Priority Sectors and Quality Jobs: One-page labor market profiles have been created for the region's priority sectors. Initial training has been provided to demonstrate how to use the data presented within the profiles, and monthly training is provided to examine the labor market for each of the priority sectors. In addition, frontline staff participate in Sector Summits, conducted quarterly by the Tulare-Kings College and Career Collaborative. These summits feature on-site business externships; sector-specific updates about the labor market; and dialogue to encourage collaboration between workforce and education partners.

The WIB provides data to community partners and helps to keep them informed about the local labor market. Staff provides custom reports to industry, the community colleges, economic development, K-12, adult education, and Employment Connection representatives. This information is used to understand how they should focus training and presentations.

Priority of Service

The AJCCs prioritize services for Adult Program participants that meet criteria in the following categories.

Public Assistance Recipients and Other Low-Income Individuals: The WIB published local directive WIB TUL 16-01, which provides guidance on the priority of service for recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals. To be considered low-income, an

individual must meet one of the following criteria:

- Receives, or in the past six months has received or is a member of a family that is receiving, or in the past six months has received, assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, supplemental security income program, or state or local income-based public assistance;
- Is in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of the following: beneath the Poverty line or 70 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level;
- Is homeless; or
- Is an individual with a disability whose own income does not exceed the income requirement but is a member of a family whose total income does exceed the maximum.

Tulare County HHSA, along with other public agencies and community-based providers assists the AJCCs in recruiting individuals from this priority group.

Individuals Who Are Basic Skills Deficient: Priority for individuals in this category is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during participation. Basic skills deficiency criteria include:

- Lacks HS Diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in postsecondary education;
- Enrolled in Title II Adult Education/Literacy program;
- English, reading, writing, or computing skills at an 8.9 or below grade level;
- Determined to be limited English skills proficient through staff-documented observations; or
- A standardized test may be used to assess basic skills that include reading, writing, or computing skills.

Information regarding eligibility is documented in the participant's file and may take the form of school records; a referral from a WIOA Title II basic adult education; or ELL program; academic assessment results; case notes; or self-attestation.

Veterans: Priority of Services for Veterans and Eligible Spouses is specified in local directive WIB TUL 22-01. The federal Jobs for Veteran's Act mandates priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses "who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for participation" in DOL programs.

The Employment Connection centers are required to provide priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses for all WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funded activities, including technology-assisted activities. Priority of service means that veterans and eligible spouses are entitled to take precedence over non-covered persons in obtaining employment, training, and placement services. More specifically, a veteran or an eligible spouse either receives access to a service earlier in time than a non-covered person or, if the resource is limited, the veteran or eligible spouse receives access to the service instead of or before the non-covered person.

In implementing priority of service, providers must ensure veterans and eligible spouses receive basic career services and individualized career services before other non-covered individuals. Additionally, they must ensure veterans and eligible spouses receive first priority on waiting lists for training slots and are enrolled in training prior to non-covered persons. However, once a non-covered participant is enrolled in a workshop or training class, priority of service is not intended to allow a veteran or eligible spouse to bump the non-covered participant from that class or service.

Individualized career services and training services are each subject to the WIB's priority of service provisions.

E. Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Youth Program

Tulare County offers a comprehensive year-round WIOA youth workforce development program for both in-school and out-of-school youth ages 16-24. Youth programs are delivered by competitively procured providers (listed below) with experience in providing workforce development services to both in-school and out-of-school youth. Youth programs are co-located in both comprehensive AJCCs (Porterville and Visalia), and the following sites across the county.

- Area I – Porterville and surrounding areas (TCOE – SEE)
- Area II – Tulare and surrounding areas (CSET)
- Area III – Visalia and surrounding areas (CSET)
- Area IV – Cutler-Orosi/Dinuba and surrounding areas (CSET)
- Area V – Farmersville/Exeter and surrounding areas (Proteus, Inc.)

Tulare County WIOA Youth Services

Services focus on helping youth align their interests and skills with education, training, and employment. All participants receive individualized, comprehensive, and integrated services that provide the opportunities, preparation, and support necessary to transition to a successful and sustainable career path. Youth Priorities, include the following.

For those participants who do not have a high school diploma

- To earn a high school diploma or equivalency credential during or post-participation.
- Obtain subsidized employment or unsubsidized employment in a career path with sustainable wages.

For those participants who have received a high school diploma

- To enroll in a postsecondary education program; or
- Enroll in an occupational training program in an-in-demand industry sector; or
- Obtain subsidized or unsubsidized employment in a career path with sustainable wages.

To serve in-school youth, the WIB partners with school districts to develop specialized projects for their students. These projects focus on opportunities to bridge, education, training and employment. This approach strengthens communication and coordination of services to better serve the students needing workforce development services, skills attainment, and coordination of supportive services. Students are identified and referred to the WIOA youth program by their school site work-based learning coordinator or school counselors. Target populations include students with disabilities, justice-involved youth, foster youth, homeless or runaway youth, and those who are English language learners.

WIOA prescribes 14 youth elements or service categories that must be available in all Youth programs. The actual services provided to a participant are based on the results of individual assessments. The WIB ensures that youth can access all WIOA-required services, including the following, which are those that typically reflect areas of greatest need among local youth.

Orientation: WIOA Orientations expose youth to all features and benefits of the program.

Eligibility Determination: WIOA youth eligibility documentation includes in-school or out-of-school status, age between 16 and 14, authorization to work, residency, selective service, barriers, family size, and income verification.

Objective Assessment: All participants enrolled in the WIOA youth program receive an objective assessment, which establish baselines for all activities and training. It will act as the foundation for developing goals (i.e., educational, employment, credential attainment, etc.). CASAS is used to determine grade equivalent reading and math levels, which may include a basic skills deficiency that will be addressed by the program. Other instruments used to assess youth include Mynextmove and O*Net.

Individual Service Strategy (ISS): This customized service planning document is based on the objective assessment results. The ISS is written plan of action that identifies age-appropriate short and long-term goals, including career pathways, education goals, and service needs.

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling: Each youth receives one-on-one support from a career coach and may be referred for additional specialized services such as personal, family, or substance use-related counseling. Some youth may receive individual or group mentoring support.

Work Readiness Skills Training: Youth participate in workshops and one-on-one activities to improve their knowledge and abilities in interviewing skills, resume building, job search, conflict resolution, and team building, and receive guidance on completing financial aid and college applications.

Basic Skills Training: Participants assessed as deficient in basic literacy skills or lacking a high school diploma or equivalency will be offer services through referral to the local

education system, which provides options for basic literacy skills training and dropout recovery and offers academic training and access to occupational skills training.

Work Experience: Most youth participate in work experience, which is a structured learning activity that takes place in a workplace and provides youth with opportunities for career exploration and skills development.

Occupational Skills Training: Job-specific training in-demand occupations is available to youth ages 18-24. Youth may participate in training-specific assessment to determine their suitability for various program.

Activities to Support Educational Attainment: Youth have access to a wide range of training to improve basic skills, advance toward school completion, or prepare for post-secondary transition, such as enrollment in college, advanced training, or other vocational programs, including apprenticeships.

Financial Literacy Education: Youth are provided financial literacy education and are guided on how to create a personal and household budget, to make an informed financial decision about education, retirement, homeownership, and credit scores.

Labor Market and Employment Information: WIOA Youth Program staff educate youth on in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area.

Supportive Services: Supportive services are provided to overcome barriers that hinder the successful participation in WIOA funded activities. Supportive services may include transportation, work attire, and more.

Activities to Prepare for and Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training: WIOA youth participants interested in advanced education are provided with college exploration and guidance, career assessment, financial aid, and labor market information.

Follow-up Services: WIOA Youth Program staff provide a minimum of 12 months of follow-up services for participants, which may include assisting youth with securing and retaining employment, continuing training, or attaining secondary or postsecondary credential/diploma.

Serving Youth with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities participate in a comprehensive assessment to identify their skills, interests, barriers, and goals. Based on the results of their assessment, these participants receive services corresponding to their individual needs. Depending on the participant, services may include activities leading to competitive integrated employment opportunities.

The Student Training and Employment Program (STEP) is a specialized program in which the WIB and DOR share consumers. The program serves students with disabilities with

job readiness training and work experience in a career pathway matching their interests and career goals. The program targets students ages 16–21 who have 504 or IEP plans. Participants are co-enrolled in the WIOA youth program, with referrals and enrollments approved by the Department of Rehabilitation.

The Equity Target Population (ETP) program also serves this target population. It is focused on creating a skilled workforce, addressing employment gaps, and improving access to quality jobs for people with disabilities and disconnected youth. The program provides work-based learning, transitional jobs, and cohort-based training in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, and logistics.

Strategies to Promote Digital Literacy

Whether youth services are provided at a comprehensive AJCC, a satellite center, or a community-based site, participants have access to technology in resource rooms, large and small. The overwhelming majority of youth participants demonstrate high levels of digital literacy, as they were born into a world where personal computers, personal devices, and the Internet are part of daily life. While the WIB has served many youth participants who have not had their own hardware, exposure in school and through other activities has resulted in their development of strong digital skills. Even when encountering new technology, young people tend to approach such situations with far less apprehension than their older counterparts, such as baby boomers. When youth participants do need support to increase their digital literacy skills, workshops, tutorials, and on-line training are available.

F. Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds and the Competitive Process Used to Award Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities

The WIB of Tulare County is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. The WIB has been delegated the authority to disburse WIOA grant funds by agreement with the Tulare County Board of Supervisors (TCBOS). This authority is documented in an Administrative Services Agreement between the WIB and TCBOS dated August 22, 2017.

The WIB uses a competitive procurement process to award grants and contracts for activities carried out under this plan. This process follows all applicable federal, state, and local guidelines for such procurement. Procurement of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs takes place every four years. During the 4 years covered by this plan, procurement will result in the award of contracts for all Title I programs.

All procurement transactions by the WIB and its subrecipients are conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with standards of the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR part 200. To the extent possible, bidders/proposers or offerors must have an equal chance to secure a contract. The requirements specified in the procurement must bear a relationship to the need being procured. The process for a competitive procurement includes the following:

- A Request for Proposal/Quote (RFP/RFQ) is prepared that includes response timelines, ensuring sufficient time for all phases of the procurement process to be carried out.
- Proposal evaluation procedures are established.
- Public notification of the procurement is issued through an announcement in a local public medium (e.g., newspaper) or media that, at a minimum, cover the entire service area. A copy of the RFP/RFQ is provided to any party requesting it. Notification is made through the dissemination of the RFP/RFQ to entities included on the current, applicable proposal list. A record (e.g., log) is made of all inquiries received regarding the procurement and the submission requirements. All inquiries are responded to in writing, except those that are answered in the solicitation. Copies of all inquiries and written responses are distributed on a timely basis to all parties to whom the solicitation has been distributed. Clarification updates are issued weekly to ensure that timely and accurate information is distributed to all potential bidders.
- A proposers' conference is held after the distribution of the RFP. When such a conference is held, all parties to which the solicitations have been distributed are notified of the date, time, and place of the conference. This notification is included in the RFP itself. Each question answered at the conference is documented in writing and this information is provided as an addendum to the solicitation package to any subsequent requesters of the RFP.
- The date and time proposals are received are noted to ensure that only proposals received by the due date and time qualify for the evaluation process.
- Competitive negotiation requires that at least two responsive proposals for the same scope of work and service area are received in response to the RFP. If only one responsive proposal is received, then there has been a failed competition and the WIB has the option to re-compete the procurement or proceed. The WIB's definition of a failed competition and its rights and options in the event of such a failure are included in the RFP.

G. How the Local Board Fulfills the Duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider or Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers

WIB of Tulare County has implemented approaches to fulfilling the WIOA-mandated Operator and Career Services Provider roles that produce strong results for the local workforce development delivery system.

AJCC/One-Stop Operator

The WIB has secured approval from the state to serve the AJCC/One-Stop Operator (OSO) for the workforce system in Tulare County. As the OSO, the WIB provides

coordination of services as prescribed by WIOA and its implementing regulations for the local network of AJCCs, including two comprehensive centers; one in Visalia and the other in Porterville.

The WIB has identified a number of advantages to acting in the role of OSO. First, it eliminates duplication of effort, as the WIB already provides much of the coordination of the AJCC system that is required of the OSO. In addition, the WIB's longstanding role in the community has resulted in many strong and effective relationships with required partners and other stakeholders. The WIB had led the development and implementation of customer-focused services for employers and job seekers. This approach to the AJCCs' delivery of services enables the system to address participants' individual needs and circumstances, which often call for the deployment of services from multiple partners.

In the role of OSO, the WIB strives to continuously evaluate and improve services and to realize efficiencies that make services more accessible and that achieve greater results. As OSO, the WIB continues to embrace the following guiding WIOA Principles:

- Streamlining services through AJCC service delivery systems;
- Empowering individuals through information and access to training service;
- Providing universal access to employment-related services; and
- Increasing accountability (i.e., improving customers' employment retention and earnings, improving the quality of the workforce, sustaining economic growth, enhancing productivity, and reducing welfare dependency).

Career Services Provider

The WIB competitively procures and contracts out the duties and responsibilities of the career service provider. The board contracts with Community Services & Employment Training (CSET) to deliver career services in Visalia, Porterville, and Tulare centers, and Proteus, Inc. is contracted to deliver career services in Dinuba. Career services are described under Section IV.D of this Plan.

V. SYSTEM PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2025 - 28

The Local Plan describes not only the services and priorities of WIOA Title I programs, which are administered and overseen by the WIB, but those of the many partner agencies that comprise the local workforce system. To ensure that the Local Plan reflects systemwide perspectives, WIB of Tulare County's leadership organized a series of community and stakeholder discussions. These sessions captured input from individuals representing various organizations and interests, including individuals from WIOA core partner programs, economic development, education, and representatives of community-based organizations, among others. As a result of these listening sessions, the workforce system will examine and seek to address the following issues during the period covered by the four-year Local Plan.

A. Workforce Priorities for Tulare County

1. Increase Digital Skills and Digital Workplace Readiness

To compete successfully for jobs and maximize opportunities for career advancement, workers will need a wide range of digital technology skills, including the ability to utilize software common to most workplaces, web-based applications, and artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

2. Develop Workers' Communication Skills

Success in all work environments requires strong communication skills, including not only the ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing, but competency in clear messaging, persuasive speech, and relationship building.

3. Ensure System Accessibility

The success of the workforce system in meeting its customers' goals requires that all aspects of the system be easily accessible to customers'. The workforce system should develop a comprehensive accessibility strategy that addresses brick-and-mortar service sites, digital information and services, promotion and messaging, and ease of processes.

4. Examine Impact of Investments

While WIOA and its many of its partners' programs are subject to standardized performance measurements, long-term effects of participation in local workforce development programs and services is not clear. Efforts to track program effectiveness and outcomes over extended periods following customer participation could provide critical information for program improvement.

5. Continue to Build Collaboration

Collaboration is a hallmark of the local workforce development system. WIB leadership, Employment Connection management and staff, and system partner representatives should continue to encourage stakeholder organizations to engage with the system and to openly share information and resources.

B. Strategies to Improve Workforce Development Services for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

1. Identify Mechanisms for Financial Support

To promote the greatest likelihood of success for homeless and housing insecure individuals participating in training and job readiness activities, mechanisms for financial support must be available. These may include stipends, incentives, paid work experience, part-time employment, or combinations of strategies.

2. Ensure the Availability of Wrap-Around and Extended Support

Sustained employment requires that comprehensive support remains available during and well after participation in workforce services. Individual service planning must ensure that support continues until housing, transportation, healthcare, and access to other essential services are stable.

3. Promote the Use of Peer Support Specialists

The availability of peer support specialists and other coaches has proven to be a successful strategy to support homeless and housing insecure individuals at work. Workforce system partners should examine opportunities to increase the availability of such individuals, including working with businesses to provide this form of support.

C. Supporting LGBT+ Individuals through Workforce Development

1. Increase Understanding and Acceptance

To promote utilization of workforce system services by LGBT+ individuals, comprehensive training should be provided to staff to increase their understanding and acceptance of diversity.

2. Engage LGBT+ Advocacy Leaders in the Workforce System

Community leaders should be fully engaged by the workforce system partners to increase their understanding of the features and benefits of the system and to create opportunities for them to share information with system partners.

3. Promote Acceptance of Chosen Identities and Identifiers

Chosen identifiers may include a person's name, gender identity, and personal pronouns. Training and information should be provided to workforce system staff to promote their acceptance of chosen identities and identifiers and improve their ability to share this information with others.

4. Ensure Safety and Promote Belonging

Environments where workforce system partners deliver services must ensure the safety of all customers and promote their sense of belonging in such spaces. Workforce system partners should inform businesses of the importance of adopting these practices.

D. Improving Linkages to Workforce Services for Individuals with Mental Health Needs

1. Increase Understanding of Mental Health Conditions and Needs

To provide appropriate support and assistance, workforce system partners must develop a clear understanding of mental health and the challenges faced by individuals with mental health needs. Training should be provided to staff at all levels.

2. Assess Businesses' Capacity to Function as "Wellness Partners"

Some work environments are better suited to accommodating individuals with mental health challenges. As part of the WIB's job quality framework, an assessment of businesses' capacity to function as "wellness partner" employers could lead to successful placement outcomes.

3. Integrate Mental Health and Wellness into the Workforce Development System

Information and services that acknowledge and promote the importance of mental health should be incorporated into workforce system partner programs.

The following items are included as part of the Local Plan.

Attachment 1: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

Attachment 2: Public Comments Received that Disagree with the Local Plan

Attachment 3: Signature Page

DRAFT

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

To facilitate the engagement of stakeholders in planning for the local workforce development delivery system and in the development of the PY 2025-28 Local Plan, the WIB hosted a series of discussions focused on topics affecting strategies and services across the system and for specific target groups.

These discussions included:

Workforce Priorities for Tulare County: Questions/topics addressed include, but were not limited to:

- What services are most needed by individuals who are new to the workforce and those who are unemployed and looking to return to work?
- What are the training programs of most interest to local job seekers and how do these align with jobs available in the local labor market?
- Are there opportunities for local workforce, education, and community service agencies to work together to more effectively serve job seekers?
- In what ways do services need to be “modernized” to meet the evolving needs of workers and businesses?

This community and stakeholder forum was held in-person on October 21, 2024.

Enhancing Workforce Solutions for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

This targeted stakeholder discussion was held via videoconference on November 5, 2024.

Empowering LGBT+ Communities through Workforce Services

This targeted stakeholder discussion was held via videoconference on December 5, 2024.

Strengthening Workforce Support for Individuals with Mental Health Needs

This targeted stakeholder discussion was held via videoconference on December 5, 2024.

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email, Social Media, Website	Employer: Advance to Work	Attended Forum	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Social Media, Website	CBO: Proteus, Inc. - WIOA Section 167 Program - Education - Title I Adult - Title II AEFLA	Attended Forum	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Social Media, Website	CBO: CSET - WIOA Title I-Youth - WIOA Title I-Adult - Title V SCSEP - Welfare to Work - Navigation Center	Attended Forum, Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB.	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Social Media, Website	CBO: Geo Reentry Services - Justice Involved	Attended Forum	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Social Media, Website	Human Services: Tulare County Department of Child Support	Attended Forum	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Social Media, Website	Education: Tulare County Office of Education	Attended Forum	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Social Media, Website	Education: Visalia Unified School District - Title II AEFLA	Attended Forum	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Social Media, Website	Education: College of the Sequoias - Carl Perkins CTE	Attended Forum	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	Human Services: Homeless Initiative	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	Human Services: Kings-Tulare Homeless Alliance	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	Human Services: Tulare County Resource Management Agency	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	CBO: Good Samaritan Hospital	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email, Phone Call	CBO: Salt & Light	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	CBO: The Source	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	Human Services: HHSA Mental Health	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	CBO: Schrank's Clubhouse	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	Human Services: Community Health	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.
Email, Phone Call	CBO: Kings View	Participated in 1-to-1 discussions	Engaged in the planning process.

DRAFT

**Public Comments Received That Disagree with The
PY 2025-28 Local Plan**

(Placeholder until completion of public comment period)

No comments were received during the 30-day public comment period.

DRAFT

Signature Page

The following signatures represent approval of the Local Plan by the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County and the Chief Elected Official for Tulare County Local Workforce Area.

For the **Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County**

Colby Wells, Chair	Date

For the **Tulare County Board of Supervisors**

Pete Vander Poel, Local Chief Elected Official	Date