



2025 - 2029

West Region

Regional Plan

AND

Green River

Local Plan

**Developing Kentucky's
World Class Talent Pipeline**

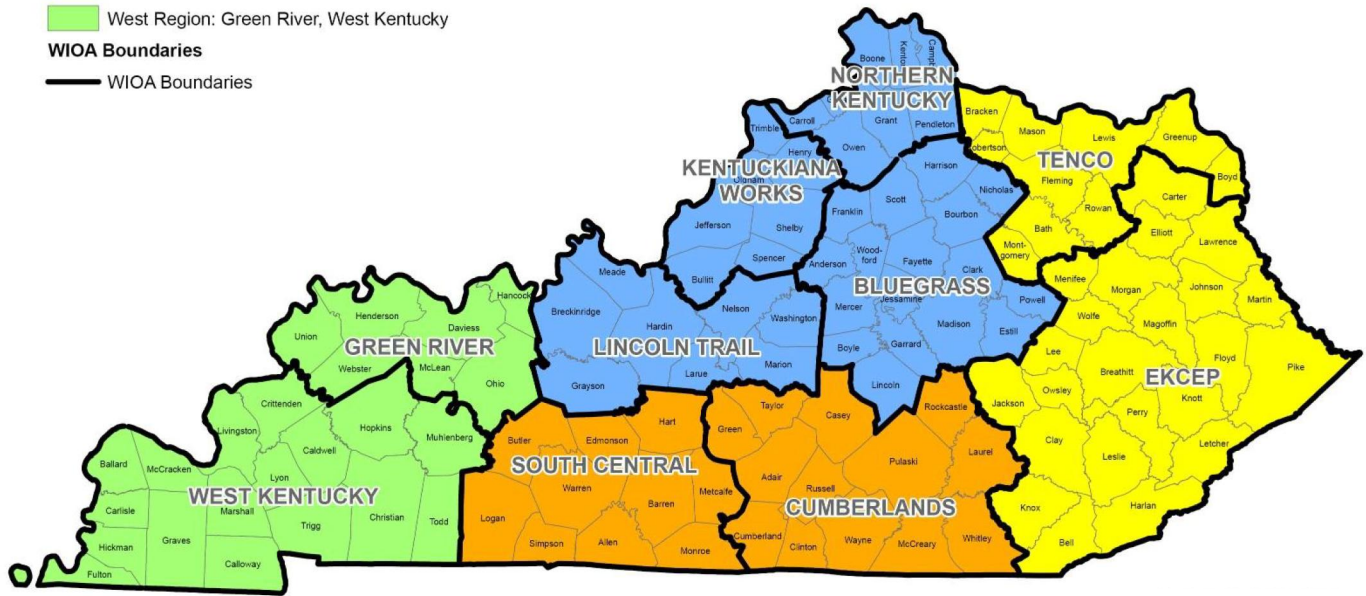
Kentucky Career Center

WIOA Regions

- Central Region: Bluegrass, Kentuckiana Works, Lincoln Trail, Northern Kentucky
- East Region: EKCEP, TENCO
- South Region: Cumberlands, South Central
- West Region: Green River, West Kentucky

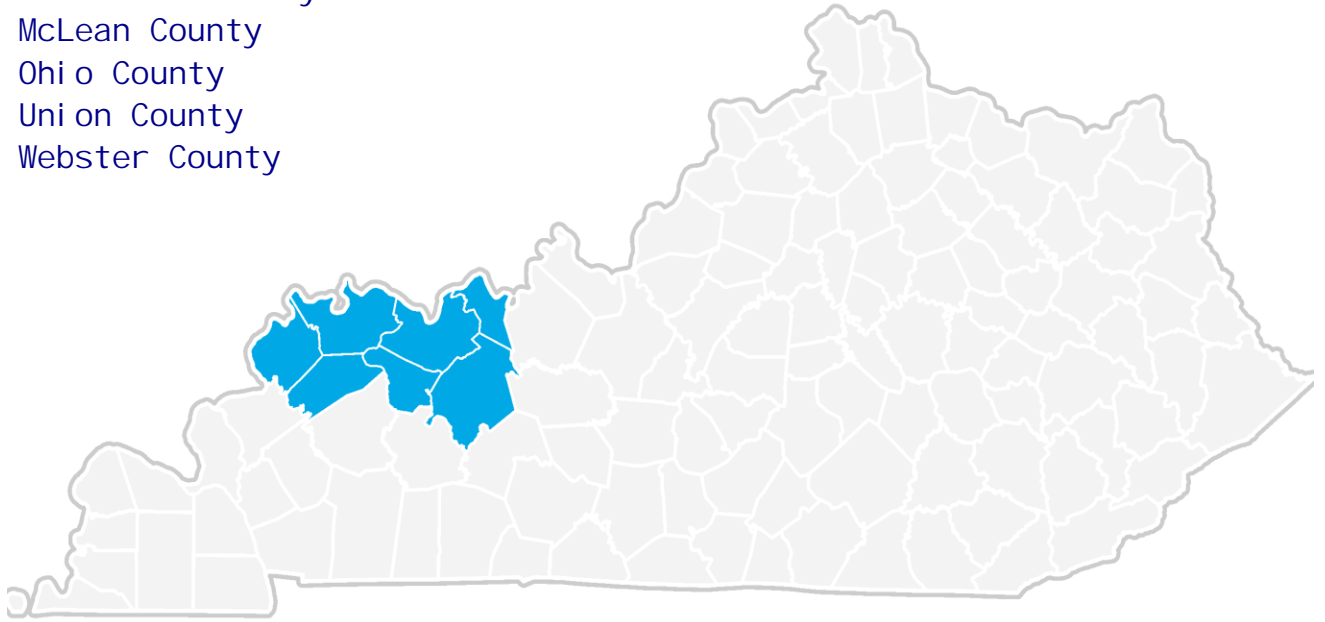
WIOA Boundaries

- WIOA Boundaries



Green River Workforce Development Area

Daviess County
Hancock County
Henderson County
McLean County
Ohio County
Union County
Webster County



Local Workforce Development Area Name: Green River Workforce Development Board

Region Name: West Region WPR

The responses received to questions addressed in each chapter, whether regional (R) or local (L). Answering regional questions necessitates the collaboration of LWDBs, CLEOs, and partners within the region to provide a unified regional response. The guidance for local and regional plans can be found here: [Guidance 21-007](#) released 1/1/2025. With the accompanying [Local and Regional Plans Toolkit](#) that provides statewide strategic objectives, programs, and initiatives that are referenced in the Combined WIOA State Plan.

Chapter 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

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

Together, the Green River Workforce Development Board and the West Kentucky Workforce Board service areas comprise Kentucky's West Workforce Planning Region (WWPR). In partnership with the local elected officials, the Boards have engaged in a collaborative process to develop this workforce plan. A timeline for the local and regional planning activities has been detailed in Figure 1: Project Timeline for Regional Plan on page 2.

To achieve a comprehensive view of regional opportunities and challenges, staff from both local Boards met regularly to review labor market data, discuss the strategic elements, and coordinated planning efforts. A key component of the process was a stakeholder engagement discussion that occurred on February 14, 2025, where staff shared their findings from the economic analysis and gathered input on essential questions regarding high-demand sectors, perceived challenges within the workforce system, and Board best practices to stakeholders. This meeting included local elected officials, partner agency staff, workforce Board members, area employers, chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, economic development entities, and institutions of higher education.

To ensure transparency and public engagement, the Green River Workforce Development Board (GRWBD) and the West Kentucky Workforce Board (WKWB) Local Plans will be posted for a 30-day public comment period on our respective websites, beginning April 1, 2025:

- Green River Workforce Board: www.gradd.com
- West Kentucky Workforce Board: www.wkworkforce.work

This planning process ensured that the local workforce Boards had an equal opportunity to participate, provide input, and contributed to the development of a workforce strategy that addresses the needs of the WWPR region. The final regional and local workforce plans will be submitted to the Kentucky Department of Workforce Department by April 30, 2025. Any public comments received during the review period will be forwarded to the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet for consideration in the final plan.

Figure 1: Project Timeline for Regional Plan

A detailed timeline for the local and regional planning efforts completed by the Green River Workforce Board and West Kentucky Workforce Board.

Activity	Date	Notes
Staff Discussion	1/30/2025	Joint LWA Discussions / Planning
Staff Discussion	2/3/2025	Joint LWA Discussions / Planning
Staff Discussion	2/10/2025	Joint LWA Discussions / Planning
WWPR Planning Session	2/14/2025	Joint Planning with each LWA Board & workforce partners
Staff Discussion	2/26/2025	Joint LWA Discussions / Planning
Staff Discussion to Finalize Draft	3/10/2025	Review for Updates
Presentation to LWBs	3/25/2025 3/27/2025	GRWDB Executive Council WKWB Board of Directors
Regional Plan Draft Release	No later than 4/1/2025	Plan Posted for Public Comment
Regional / Local Plan Submission	4/30/2025	Plans submitted to KY Education and Labor Cabinet

B. (R) Provide a regional analysis of the economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. This is in line with [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (A)] and [20 CFR 679.560 (a)].

The WWPR has a strong economy that includes a mix of established and emerging industries and that offer excellent employment opportunities. Our analysis includes existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, key occupations, and the employment needs of regional employers. The GRWDB and WKWB are organizations that collaborate with local elected officials to improve the workforce development system in the WWPR footprint. The GRWDB serves seven counties: Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster. The WKWB serves the following seventeen (17) counties: Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, Muhlenberg, Todd, and Trigg.

The 24-county area has a total population of 627,439 residents, which includes 36,615 Veterans. The WWPR has a labor force participation rate of 54.3%, and a total of 369,630 individuals who are employed in the working age population (25-55 years old). Figure 2 details these statistics utilizing data from the Kentucky Center for Statistics.

Figure 2: Regional Demographic Profile

West (WPR) Overview



Total Population
627,439



Veteran Population
36,615



Poverty Population
98,393



Median Household Income
N/A



Workforce Participation Rate
54.3%



Total Working Age Population
369,630



Working Age No HS Diploma
10%



Working Age Some College Plus
53%



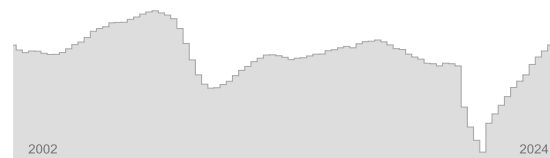
Working Age Associate Plus
30%

*Source: KY Center for Statistics,
Workforce Overview Report for
KY Regions, Updated 11/2024*

Employment is one of the broadest and most timely measures of a region's economy. Fluctuations in the number of jobs shed light on the health of an industry. A growing employment base creates more opportunities for regional residents and helps a region grow its population. Employment in the WWPR has certainly been affected by fluctuations driven by the housing market crash that led to the 2007 Great Recession and by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Four of Kentucky's oldest population counties are in the WWPR. Hickman, Lyon, Marshall, and Trigg counties have the highest percentage of people aged 65 and older in the Commonwealth. Despite this, comparing employment now to employment in 2002, the number remains steady despite an aging population and reduction in birth rates. According to JobsEQ, as of 2024Q2, total employment of the WWPR is 270,795 (based on a four-quarter moving average).

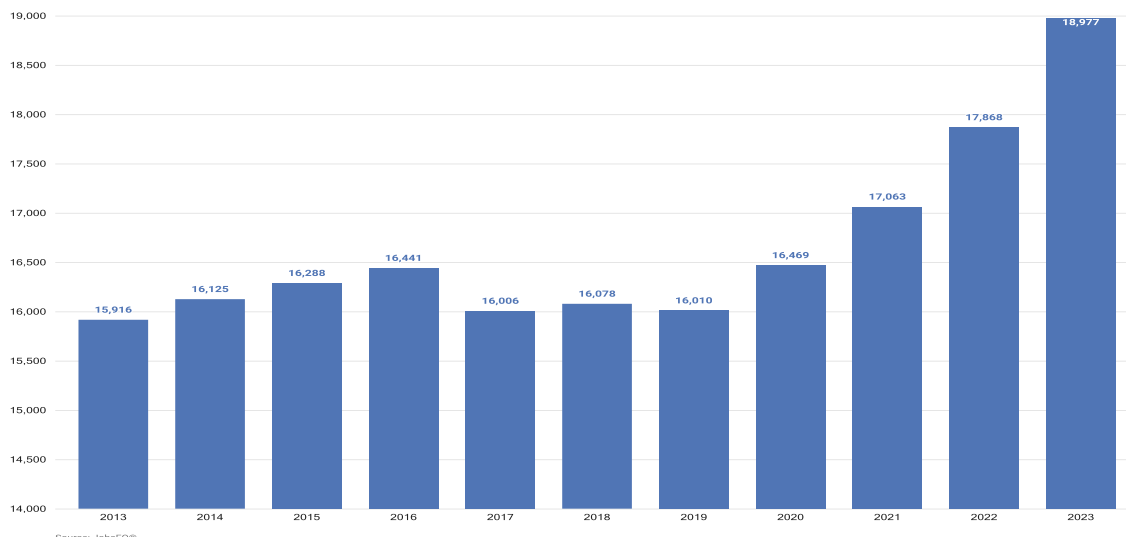
Figure 3: Employment Trends Since 2002-2024



Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report, Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2

In 2023, there were 18,977 industries establishments in the WWPR (per covered employment establishment counts), an increase from 15,916 establishments ten years earlier in 2013.

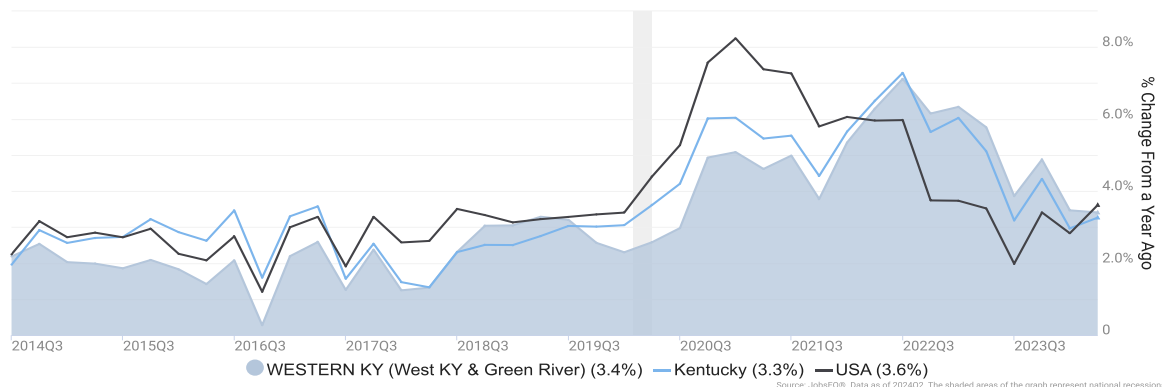
Figure 4: Establishments in West Workforce Planning Region



Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2

The average worker in the WWPR earned annual wages of \$51,985 as of 2024Q2. Average annual wages per worker increased 3.4% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$72,405 in the nation as of 2024Q2.

Figure 5: WWPR Average Annual Wage Trends

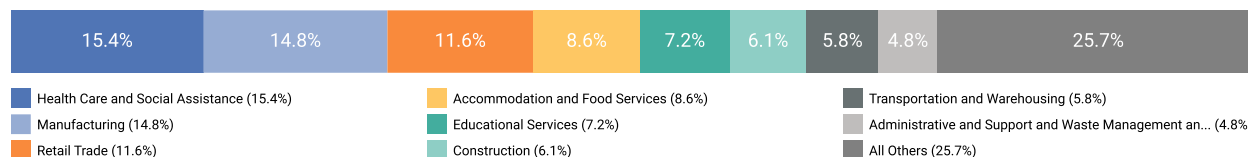


*Source: Jobs EQ – Industry Spotlight Report
Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2*

Recently, the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) voted to revise Kentucky’s top five in-demand sectors to include: Healthcare, Manufacturing and Logistics, Construction, Education, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. While some of these sectors are also in-demand for the WWPR, not all are among the top sectors employing the region’s workers. Figure 6: Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors details the WWPR’s top nine sectors according to JobsEQ, an economic development dashBoard produced by Chmura Economics & Analytics.

Figure 6: Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors

Total Workers for WESTERN KY (West KY & Green River) by Industry



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2024Q2
Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

*Source: JobsEQ, Economic Overview Report
Industry Snapshot for West Region WPR, 2024Q2*

The following narrative reviews the existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations for the WWPR that align with Kentucky’s new in-demand sectors. It also highlights the two unique in-demand sectors the region has selected, as well as the employment needs of employers. It is important to note that while Figure 3 reports the Retail sector 11.6% (31,467 workers) and Accommodation and Food Services sector at 8.6% (23,291 workers), as in-demand sectors for the WWPR, our stakeholders did not select them for inclusion as unique high-demand

occupations for the region. It was felt that while the sectors offer multiple employment opportunities for those with barriers and a pathway to self-sufficiency without post-secondary degrees, median wages were below self-sufficiency and too many individuals did not have the opportunity to work full-time or receive benefits. Instead, the stakeholders chose to use high location quotients indicating which sectors have high concentrations of employment compared to the national average.

The best job growth over the last five years has occurred in the Construction (+2,289 jobs), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+1,577), and Transportation and Warehousing (+1,539) sectors. According to JobsEQ, the strongest forecast by number of jobs over the next five years will occur for Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and Construction.

Health Care and Social Assistance

In the WWPR, Health Care and Social Assistance is the dominant industry. Driven by an aging population and an increase for medical services, the healthcare sector employs 15.4% of the region's total workforce (41,664 workers) with an average annual wage of \$57,789. Employers emphasize the need for more trained nurses and support staff, particularly in rural areas. Soft skills, patient care experience, and specialized certifications are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Registered Nurses (RNs)
- Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)
- Medical Technologists
- Home Health Aides

Manufacturing and Logistics

The manufacturing sector remains one of the region's largest employers, particularly in automotive, aerospace, food production, and machinery. The WWPR has secured a significant share of Kentucky's \$10 billion investment in EV battery production and auto parts manufacturing. This sector is driving demand for skilled labor, particularly in engineering, automation, and production roles. The sector employs 14.8% (40,039 workers). Manufacturers seek employees with technical skills, industry certifications (such as OSHA and CNC programming), and experience in automated systems and robotics. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Industrial Maintenance Technicians
- CNC Machinists
- Welders
- Production Operators

The WWPR is within 65% of the nation's major transportation routes, population, personal income, and manufacturing business establishments – making our region a transportation multimodal hub (rail, river, road, and air). There are 15,627 transportation workers with an average annual wage of \$63,880 residing in the region. Employers seek candidates with commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), supply chain management experience, and familiarity with logistics software. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Commercial Truck Drivers (CDL-A)
- Warehouse and Logistics Coordinators
- Forklift Operators
- Deckhand

Construction

The Construction industry is a major driver of economic growth, but the jobs are often filled by out-of-area workers as contractors and trade unions move workers from project to project. Fueled by ongoing infrastructure projects, commercial developments, and residential housing demands, the sector employs 6.1% of the region's total workforce (16,611 workers) with an average annual wage of \$61,453. The industry faces labor shortages in both skilled and specialized trades. Employers emphasize the need for more skilled tradespeople and project managers. Hands-on experience, safety certifications, and technical expertise in modern construction methods are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Carpenters
- Electricians
- Heavy Equipment Operators
- Construction Managers

Education

In the WWPR, the education sector is experiencing significant labor shortages, driven by the increasing rate of retirements among teachers and school staff, as well as pursuit of careers away from the classroom. As veteran educators leave the workforce, schools districts struggle to replace them, leading to higher student-to-teacher ratios, increased workloads for remaining staff, and potential declines in education quality. The sector employs 7.2% of the region's total workforce (19,477 workers) with an average annual wage of \$42,125. Employers emphasize the need for more qualified teachers, particularly in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), special education, and early childhood education. They also value state certifications, classroom management experience, and strong interpersonal skills to foster student engagement and learning. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Elementary and Secondary Teachers
- Middle School Teachers
- Bus Drivers
- Teacher Assistants

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

In the WWPR, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services is a rapidly growing industry but not among the region's top sectors. Driven by advancements in technology, increased demand for specialized expertise, and business expansion, the sector employs 3.4% of the region's total workforce (9,279 workers) with an average annual wage of \$70,191. Employers emphasize the need for more skilled professionals in engineering, IT, and business consulting, particularly in high-tech and research-driven fields. Analytical skills, technical certifications, and industry experience are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:

- Accountants and Auditors
- General and Operations Managers
- Civil Engineers

- Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks

WWPR Unique In-Demand Sectors

- **Agriculture** is a foundational industry, supporting both local economies and global food supply chains. The sector has a Location Quotient 2.39, one of the highest among our industry clusters, with average annual wages of \$54,561. Driven by advancements in agricultural technology, increasing demand for sustainable farming practices, and the need for food production, the sector employs 2.6% of the region's total workforce (7,024 workers). Employers emphasize the need for more skilled farm workers, agronomists, and equipment operators, particularly in rural areas. Hands-on experience, knowledge of modern farming techniques, and certifications in agribusiness management are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:
 - Agricultural Technicians
 - Heavy Equipment Operators
 - Food Scientists and Agronomists
 - Livestock and Crop Farmworkers
- **Energy** is a key industry driving economic growth and infrastructure development. Fueled by increasing demand for renewable energy, fuel manufacturing, advancements in extraction technologies, and grid modernization, and enriched uranium stocks. The WWPR's highest average wages per worker are within Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$101,039) class. Employers emphasize the need for more skilled technicians, engineers, and equipment operators, particularly in emerging renewable energy fields. Technical expertise, safety certifications, and experience in energy systems are highly valued. Sector In-Demand Occupations include:
 - Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
 - Power Plant Operators
 - Electrical Lineman
 - Renewable Energy Technicians
 - Pipeline and Utility Workers

C. (R) Provide an analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data and information on labor market trends and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)] and [CFR 679.560(a)]

The WWPR is experiencing steady employment growth, particularly in manufacturing, healthcare, and infrastructure development. However, addressing labor shortages, skills mismatches, and employment barriers will be crucial for sustaining economic momentum. Expanding workforce training, improving job accessibility, and supporting key industries will ensure continued growth and prosperity in the region.

As of the second quarter of 2024, total employment in the WWPR reached 270,795, reflecting a 1.8% increase over the previous year, based on a four-quarter moving average,

according to JobsEQ. This growth is driven by industry expansion, particularly in advanced manufacturing and electric vehicle (EV) battery production. The region's labor market is evolving rapidly in response to economic trends and workforce demands. The unemployment rate for the WWPR was 5.2% as of November 2024, which was higher than the national rate of 4.0%. One year earlier, in November 2023, WWPR unemployment rate was 4.0%. (See Figure 8 for WWPR Unemployment Data from KYSTATS.)

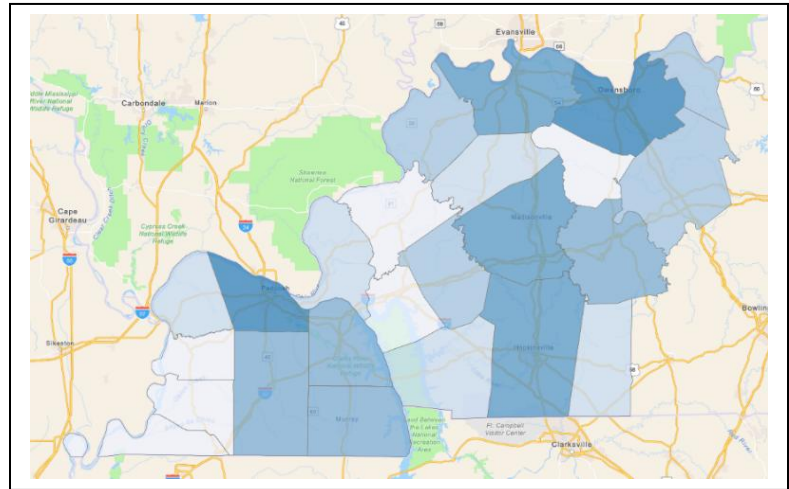
The labor force participation rate in Kentucky has historically lagged the national average. According to KYSTATS, the December 2024 Local Area Unemployment Statistics report published 1/29/2025 shows that Kentucky's unemployment rate stood at **5.1%**, slightly above the national average of **3.8%**. In the WWPR, labor shortages in key industries—such as education, healthcare, and technical trades—are contributing to hiring challenges, despite overall job growth.

The four counties with the largest employment in the WWPR are outlined below. Each contains a city with at least 25,000 residents, located along major highways and interstates. These counties feature hospitals and medical centers that serve as major employers and provide access to advanced healthcare. Additionally, each has a Kentucky Community & Technical College, with Murray State University operating regional campuses in Christian, Henderson, and McCracken counties, while Western Kentucky University has a regional campus in Daviess County.

- Daviess County (GRWDB area) has the largest employment in the 24-county WWPR, with key sectors in manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade. The median household income is \$65,323, and 11.9% of families live below the poverty line (U.S. Census).
- McCracken County (WKWB area) ranks second in employment, with key sectors in manufacturing, healthcare, education, and retail. The median household income is \$62,385, and 10.9% of families live below the poverty line (U.S. Census).
- Christian County (WKWB area) has the third-largest employment, heavily influenced by Fort Campbell Army Post, which provides military and civilian job opportunities. Key sectors include manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade. The median household income is \$48,000, with 12.1% of families living below the poverty line (U.S. Census).
- Henderson County (GRWDB area) ranks fourth in employment, with key industries in education, healthcare and social services, manufacturing, and retail trade. The median household income is \$52,000, and 9.7% of families live below the poverty line (U.S. Census).

Figure 7: Employment Trends by County

County	Empl
Daviess County, KY	49,543
McCracken County, KY	43,277
Christian County, KY	33,623
Henderson County, KY	20,274
Hopkins County, KY	19,004
Calloway County, KY	17,012
Graves County, KY	13,335
Marshall County, KY	13,321
Muhlenberg County, KY	9,162
Ohio County, KY	8,295
All Others	43,948



Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report
Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2

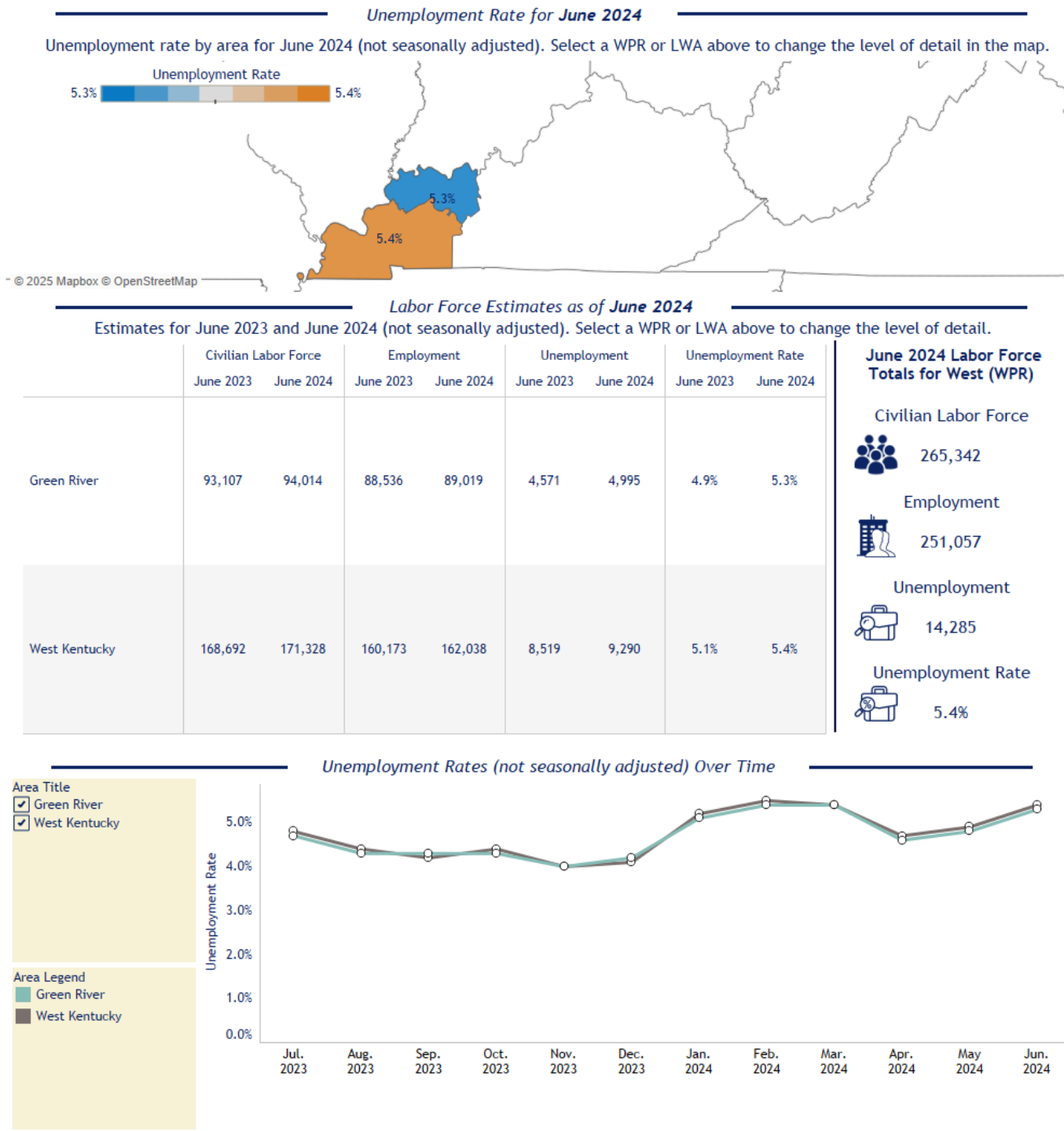
The WWPR is predominantly rural, which presents unique challenges related to employment accessibility, workforce mobility, and economic development. According to the US Census on the Map, a total of 221,198 WWPR residents are employed. A total of 176,137 (79.6%) residents live in work in the 24-hour area. A total of 54,959 residents must leave the WWPA for employment and the area only attracts 45,061 non-residents into the area for employment, meaning the area has a net job flow of -9,898 jobs. Addressing these challenges will be key to strengthening the regional workforce, supporting economic development, and ensuring long-term sustainability in West Kentucky. Below are the demographics of the WWPR residents who are commuting outside the 24-county region:

Figure 8: Outflow Worker Demographics

Outflow Worker Ages		Outflow Worker Wages	
Workers Aged 29 or younger	27.8%	Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	18.7%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	51.3%	Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	31.5%
Workers Aged 55 or older	20.9%	Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	49.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov>
Inflow/Outflow Analysis, Printed March 12, 2025

Figure 9: WWPR Unemployment Data



Unemployment Rates (not seasonally adjusted) Over Time

Area Title

☒ Green River

☒ West Kentucky

Area Legend

Green River

West Kentucky

Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics
Workforce Overview Report for Kentucky Regions (WORKR)
Updated November 2024

While the unemployment rate for the WWPR was 5.2% as of November 2024, only 711 Unemployment Insurance Claims were filed, as shown by Figure 9: Unemployment Insurance Overview for West Region WPR.

Figure 10: Unemployment Insurance Overview for WWPR



Total Initial Claims is any notice of unemployment filed (1) to request a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation or (2) to begin a second or subsequent period of eligibility within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Total Weeks Claimed is the number of weeks of benefits claimed, including weeks for which a waiting period or fixed disqualification period is being served.

Average Benefit Payment is benefits paid for total unemployment divided by weeks compensated for total unemployment.

Program Exhaustees is the number of claimants drawing the final payment of their original entitlement for a given program.

Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics

Workforce Overview Report for Kentucky Regions (WORKR)

Updated November 2024

The WWPR workforce is well-equipped to support key industries, but continued investment in education, skills training, and workforce accessibility remains essential to adapting to a changing job market. Each in-demand sector, including the unique industries of the WWPR region, requires a combination of academic qualifications, technical training, and work-based learning opportunities.

According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, 35.1% of workers have at least a high school diploma or GED. KYSTATS data (Figure 1, page 2) reports that only 10% of the WWPR workforce lacks a high school diploma or GED. Additionally, 53% of the working-age population has attended some college, while 30% hold an associate degree, reflecting a solid foundation for workforce development and upskilling initiatives.

During the February 14, 2025, stakeholder engagement discussion, participants reinforced concerns previously raised during KWIB local visits while drafting the newly adopted state plan.

Key barriers preventing individuals from entering and remaining in the workforce include limited access to workforce training programs, inadequate public transportation (especially in rural areas), and the availability and affordability of childcare for working parents. Addressing these challenges requires solutions beyond the scope of WIOA funding, necessitating broader policy and community-driven initiatives.

D. (R) Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training in the region. This will include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of workforce *development activities and the capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment and the employment needs of employers in the region.*

Note: Per WIOA Sec. 108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of the issuance of this guidance).

Education and Training Partners in WWPR

Adult Education Centers located in the WWPR:

- Henderson Community College
- Hopkinsville Community College
- Madisonville Community College
- Owensboro Community & Technical College
- West Kentucky Community & Technical
- West Kentucky Educational Cooperative
-

Career & Technical Centers located in the WWPR:

- Ballard County Career & Technical Center
- Caldwell County Area Technology Center (serving Caldwell, Livingston,
- Four Rivers Career Academy (ATC serving Fulton County, Fulton Ind., and Hickman County High Schools)
- Hancock County Center and Annex
- Mayfield-Graves County Area Technology Center (serving Carlisle County, Graves County, and Mayfield Ind. High Schools)
- Murray-Calloway County Area Technology Center

KCTCS Campuses located in the WWPR:

- Henderson Community College
- Hopkinsville Community College
- Madisonville Community College
- Owensboro Community & Technical College
- West Kentucky Community & Technical College

Postsecondary Institutions located in the WWPR (or located adjacent counties):

- Austin Peay State University
- Brescia College
- Kentucky Wesleyan College
- Murray State University (with regional campus' in Henderson, Hopkinsville, Madisonville, Paducah, and a campus at Fort Campbell)
- Western Kentucky University – Owensboro Campus
- University of Louisville – Owensboro Healthcare Campus
- University of Kentucky – Pigman College of Engineering, Paducah Campus

Stand Alone Training Facilities utilized in the WWPR:

- 160 Driving Academy
- Driver Resource Center
- KenTenn Emergency Management
- MedCertify
- MedCerts

The GRWDB and the WKWB play a critical role in providing workforce development activities to meet the needs of the regional workforce, including individuals facing barriers to employment. Our capacity to serve is built upon federal and state funding, partnerships with employers and educational institutions, and targeted programs designed to address skills gaps and workforce challenges. During the February 14, 2025, Stakeholder Engagement discussions, local elected officials, Workforce Board members, agency and community partners highlighted the following activities as best practices.

- **Rapid Response Services and Regional Coordination**

The WWPR has a long history of managing workforce dislocations, leading to the development of two well-established and experienced Rapid Response teams, each led by local area coordinators. These teams are overseen by either the GRWDB or the WKWB, depending on the location of the impacted employer.

Upon notification of a workforce reduction, the appropriate Workforce Board contacts the employer, assesses their specific needs, and develops a customized WIOA service plan. This plan includes a timeline for service delivery and ensures coordination with other agencies to prevent duplication of efforts.

Once the plan is established, the Rapid Response Coordinator informs Workforce Board leadership, team members, and regional partners, including WWPR officials, economic development professionals, and workforce organizations. When layoffs affect employees, who commute across multiple workforce areas, the Rapid Response teams collaborate on joint events, ensuring seamless service delivery for both employers and workers.

- **Strong Support for Individuals Facing Barriers to Employment**

The GRWDB and the WKWB are committed to ensuring access to employment opportunities by providing comprehensive support services for individuals facing barriers to employment. These barriers may include lack of education, limited access to transportation, childcare

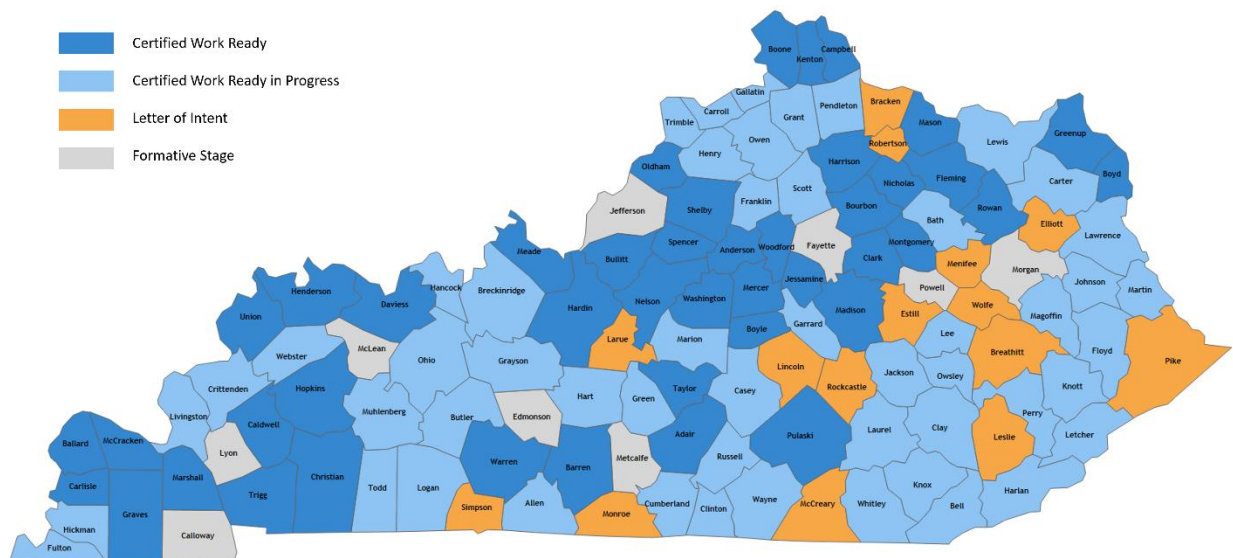
challenges, disabilities, long-term unemployment, or involvement with the justice system. The key to access is through strong community partnerships that breaks down employment barrier and expands opportunities for all individuals to participate in the workforce. The goal is not just to connect job seekers with employment but to ensure long-term career success and economic stability for individuals and their families. Stakeholders found value in the services offered to justice involved individuals, transitioning service members, the underemployed, and disconnected youth.

- Work Ready Communities**

Over the past several years, the majority of WWPR counties have actively pursued certification through the Kentucky Work Ready Communities program. This initiative, led by county fiscal courts, enables communities to evaluate their workforce strengths and follow a structured process to earn Work Ready or Work Ready in Progress certification.

As of this publication, twelve counties in the WWPR have achieved Work Ready certification, while ten (10) additional counties have been designated as Work Ready in Progress. These designations reflect the region’s commitment to strengthening workforce readiness through education, skills development, and employer engagement.

Figure 11: Work Ready Status by Kentucky County



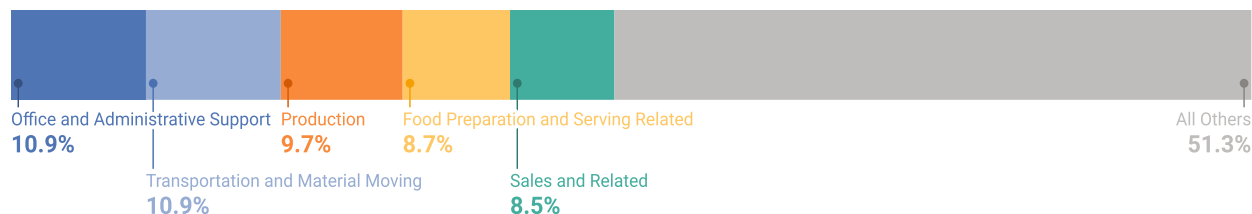
Source: Certified County Map, Effective January 1, 2021
www.workready.ky.gov

E. (L) Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)] and [20 CFR 679.560(a)]

The GRWDB and the WKWB continuously assess the knowledge and skills necessary to meet employer demands across the local economy's in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Given the evolving labor market, the region must align education, training, and workforce development initiatives to ensure job seekers are equipped with the competencies employers require.

Utilizing the JobsEQ Industry Spotlight Report for the WWPR, the following occupational groups have been identified as the region's top employment sectors. Across the 24-county area, 270,795 individuals are currently employed, with an average annual wage of \$51,985, which remains well below the national average of \$72,405.

Figure 12: Top Occupational Groups for WWPR



*Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report
Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2*

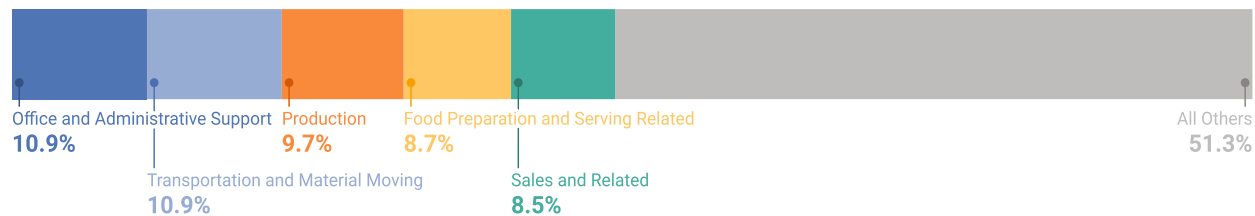
Over the past ten (10) years, employment has increased by 3.3%, highlighting the success of economic development efforts in attracting new industries and supporting the expansion of existing businesses. The diverse mix of occupations within the region underscores both the ability to sustain key industries and the flexibility to adapt to future workforce demands.

The knowledge and skills required by WWPR employers span a wide range of competencies, from customer service and administrative skills to highly specialized technical expertise and skilled trades. A comprehensive analysis of employment requirements shows that the mix of occupations points to the ability of a region to support an industry and its flexibility to adapt to future demand. Here is what we have learned from reviewing the data, stakeholder discussions, and employer input:

- Demand for skilled trades, healthcare professionals, and manufacturing workers remains high.
- Workforce adaptability is essential, with a focus on technological proficiency, problem-solving, and industry certifications.
- Soft skills, including communication, teamwork, and leadership, are increasingly valued across all sectors.
- Advanced training and micro-credentialing programs play a critical role in bridging skill gaps and supporting workforce readiness.

By continuously evaluating regional workforce needs and aligning training programs with employer demand, the GRWDB and WKWB are committed to fostering a highly skilled, competitive workforce that supports long-term economic growth and prosperity.

Figure 13: Top Staffing Patterns for WWPR



*Source: JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight Report
Total, All Industries for West Region WPR, 2024Q2*

Chapter 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

- A. **(L)** Describe the local Board’s strategic vision and goals aimed at fostering regional economic growth and self-sufficiency. Explain plans to prepare an educated and skilled workforce, especially for youth and individuals facing barriers to employment. As applicable, include a description of any plans to generate a new strategic vision and goals in the coming year and indicate the timeframe for such activities to occur. To the extent possible, strengthen goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The vision of the Green River Workforce Development Board (Board) is to support the workforce by providing the tools necessary to meet the needs of employers and drive economic development by aligning industry demands with lifelong learning, resulting in a highly skilled workforce meeting the needs of local employers. Creating knowledge of industries and occupations is key to engagement. The objective is to create an environment where residents can

access good-paying jobs and employers have access to a trained and capable workforce. Labor market needs and challenges by employers support the design of workforce programs, what type of training should be offered, which sectors should be targeted, what skills job seekers need and how programs are designed.

The Board's vision statement maps the direction of the Board over the coming years. The Board has defined its purpose in its mission statement as the mechanism for driving workforce development in the Green River local area.

Vision:

Support the workforce by providing them with the tools necessary to meet the needs of employers and drive economic development by aligning industry demands with lifelong learning.

Mission:

Develop today's workforce and tomorrow's economy by engaging employers, jobseekers, and partners.

These efforts are centered on fostering regional economic growth and promoting self-sufficiency by aligning workforce development efforts with the areas evolving economic landscape. The primary goal is to create an environment where businesses have access to a skilled labor force, while individuals in the community, particularly youth and those facing barriers to employment, are empowered with the skills, training, and opportunities needed to thrive in a competitive job market. This vision emphasizes building a sustainable and inclusive workforce that supports long-term economic stability and growth.

The Board conducts outreach and recruitment of jobseekers and employers to communicate KCC – Green River services and value to our communities resulting in further engagement of disengaged populations. The goal of this initiative is to foster stronger community involvement and access to employment resources.

The Board aligns training programs with current and emerging needs of local industries. The goal of this initiative is to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to meet workforce needs. This alignment supports economic growth and enhances the employability of job seekers by preparing them for relevant, in-demand careers.

Currently, a 35,000 square foot high-technology healthcare innovation simulation center, HealthForce Kentucky, is under construction in Owensboro to serve the region. While the innovation center is being built, two mobile simulation laboratories, HealthForce 1 and HealthForce 2, are bringing simulation labs, classrooms and medical labs to every corner of the local area.

With the technology available today, people of all ages in the smallest towns will have access to the same high-quality education as those in larger communities. To date, more than twelve thousand individuals have participated in educational experiences offered by the two mobile

laboratories, which have collectively traveled over twelve thousand miles across Kentucky. This initiative underscores HealthForce Kentucky's commitment to expanding access to healthcare education and ensuring that every community has the opportunity to develop its healthcare workforce.

HealthForce Kentucky offers students of all ages access to high-technology healthcare training tools that are second to none. The opportunities available are extraordinary. As a result, our region—and by extension, the entire state—will benefit from improved access to even higher quality healthcare education and training.

The mission of the HealthForce Kentucky collaborative goes beyond healthcare; it serves as both an educational and economic development engine. It is designed to address critical healthcare workforce shortages by providing immersive training for aspiring healthcare professionals.

Healthcare jobs are among the most secure and highest-paying positions in every community. When these roles are filled, average and median incomes rise, spending power increases, and the fiscal health and overall vibrancy of communities improve. HealthForce Kentucky is more than a solution to a workforce shortage—it's a vital investment in the future economic and educational prosperity of the region and the state.

The Board is committed to continuing to leverage resources, increasing the availability of job training, supportive services and certifications that lead to sustainable employment opportunities in high-demand sectors. The objective of this goal is to increase resources to allow the area to meet local workforce demands. In the past, the Board relied heavily on federal funding, specifically funds from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The funding is restrictive with specific eligibility requirements and can vary from year to year depending on formula allocations. The Board has secured new funding resources to increase services for job seekers and employers. The overall intent of this goal is to increase the local talent pool through development and implementation of targeted outreach to engage jobseekers and employer customers. This commitment aims to strengthen the workforce and support long-term economic growth by preparing individuals for stable and rewarding careers.

The Hire-to-Operate (H2O) Project, funded by a grant secured through the Delta Regional Authority, addresses the shortage of certified water and wastewater operators fostering economic growth. The median age of Kentucky's water utility workforce is 55. Roughly 56% of current operators are eligible to retire now or within the next two (2) to five (5) years yet the inability to fund an apprentice and/or pay a competitive wage for an operator is a barrier for utilities to replenish the workforce. Four counties in the Green River area, Henderson, McLean, Union, and Webster, are receiving assistance with paying for wages and training to obtain certification for water/wastewater utility apprentices. H2O creates a pipeline of highly qualified operators for rural utilities and stable, quality careers for new entrants to the workforce, dislocated workers and incumbent workers at minimal cost to the apprentices or local utilities.

Green River prioritizes youth and young adults to the opportunities existing in the local area by sharing career pathways that explain the available careers, education, training, and skill requirements, and pay ranges. Under WIOA, greater efforts and concentration are placed on training of Out-of-School Youth (OSY) ages 16-24; therefore, it is the Board's continuing goal to sustain the enrollment of OSY and expend at least 75% of the WIOA Youth Funding on this population. OSY often face difficult challenges such as having dropped out of school or completed school but do not possess the appropriate employability skills. They are often in low-wage employment and many are parenting youth.

The Board envisions continued collaboration with One Stop Partners, as well as WIOA Core Programs, Adult Education, post-secondary educational institutions, Greater Owensboro (GO) Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME), Henderson Community College (HCC) FAME and employers that provide work-based learning. The Board will continue to expand partnerships that promote Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, providing valuable certifications and credentials recognized by business and industry.

The Board has established standards and provides oversight for the One-Stop Operator (OSO) and Direct Services Provider (DSP) to ensure Youth achieve all their Individual Service Strategy (ISS) goals. WIOA Youth, including individuals facing barriers to employment, will receive support throughout their educational journey leading to successful training completion.

The Board was recently awarded funds as a statewide initiative to help young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 find employment. The "Putting Young Kentuckians to Work" aims to improve opportunities and bridge the gap between education and workforce. These additional funds allow the Board to offer skills training, job opportunities and other services to help young Kentuckians participate in short-term training, work experience and on-the-job training to assist in obtaining full-time employment with a sustaining wage. The program will also offer career exploration services to prepare our young adults for the future. The intent is to provide opportunities that will retain young people in our local area.

The Board hosts a Youth Summit, designed to engage middle and high school students. The Summit provides students with a unique opportunity to participate in educational leadership sessions led by community leaders, business professionals, and educators. The Youth Summit aims to inspire and equip students with essential skills for future careers and personal development. Students may select from a variety of topics during the daylong event. Examples include:

Financial Literacy - students learn critical money management skills, budgeting, saving, and the importance of financial planning for their future. This session is designed to help students build a solid foundation in financial responsibility, preparing them for adulthood and the workforce.

Soft Skills to Success - emphasizes the importance of communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and professionalism. These skills are crucial for career readiness and are highlighted through interactive workshops and real-world scenarios, allowing students to practice and understand the value of soft skills in both educational settings and future workplaces.

Leaders Always Win - focuses on leadership development, encouraging students to cultivate leadership qualities such as confidence, decision-making, and resilience. Presenters share experiences and insights, providing students with practical advice on how to become effective leaders in their communities and future careers.

The Youth Summit serves as a platform for students to connect and foster relationships, leading to mentorship opportunities, internships, and career exploration. It also allows students to gain a clearer understanding of various career paths, and the skills required to succeed in today's job market.

The Board is committed to preparing the next generation for the workforce by providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to succeed. This initiative not only supports students in their educational journey but also strengthens the local workforce by encouraging youth to develop skills that align with the needs of local employers and the broader economy.

Board partnerships foster engagement and coordination to better support employers and jobseekers. The Board promotes economic self-sufficiency, supporting small business development focusing on stimulating economic growth. Emphasis is also placed on ensuring residents have access to jobs that provide adequate wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. The Board applies strategic approaches that leverage community organizations, educational institutions, and government/public entities. Building stronger partnerships enhances the support provided to businesses and jobseekers while improving outcomes.

The Board ensures services are provided and continued partnerships with educational programs to warrant that essential skill requirements are met, and job seekers are ready to begin work and retain jobs. It is imperative that workers have skills needed that allow them to be competitive for high-wage, high-demand jobs. Investments must be made to ensure workforce needs of business and industry are supported. The Board will continue to collaborate with partners in the workforce system to identify skills gaps to determine which strategies to create, expand, or eliminate. The Board will operate under a common vision addressing the challenges identified in this plan and use statewide strategies and measurable outcomes to efficiently operate workforce programs.

The Board integrates the primary indicators of performance by tracking measures such as employment outcomes, median earnings, credential attainment, and effectiveness in serving individuals with barriers to employment. By using these accountability measures, the Board aims to ensure that training programs and employment services are effective in helping individuals achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. These data-driven insights will guide future strategies to enhance workforce development, ensuring that the region remains competitive in a rapidly changing global economy.

- B. **(L)** Describe how the local Board's vision and goals are intricately aligned with the Commonwealth's goals, initiatives, and priorities as outlined in the WIOA State Plan. This alignment is crucial in ensuring the success of the collective efforts.

The Board is committed to developing a workforce that is not only educated but also adaptable to the demands of a changing economy aligning with the goals, initiatives, and priorities of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board's 2024-2027 State Plan. This alignment ensures that workforce programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of the community while supporting broader economic objectives. The strategic approach includes partnerships with educational institutions, training providers, and local employers to ensure that educational programs are aligned with industry needs. The Board is focused on enhancing career pathways for youth, offering targeted training opportunities that help individuals gain the necessary skills to secure employment in high-demand industries. For individuals facing barriers to employment, such as those with limited education, disabilities, or other challenges, the plan includes tailored support services that provide the tools for overcoming these obstacles, such as job readiness programs, mentorship, and access to resources like childcare or transportation assistance. In addition to these ongoing efforts, the Board strives to introduce new initiatives to strengthen economic growth. These may include expanding sector-based workforce development programs, developing apprenticeship and internship opportunities, and enhancing collaboration with local businesses to identify skill gaps.

The Board prioritizes building strong partnerships with employers in the region to support employer engagement. This includes sector partnerships to ensure that local workforce development strategies align with the specific needs of businesses. Collaborating with industry groups, chambers of commerce, and employers directly help identify skill gaps and opportunities for work-based learning programs, apprenticeships, and internships. These efforts ensure that job seekers are trained for in-demand positions while businesses receive a steady stream of qualified talent.

The Business Services Team (BST) is another resource used for concentrating on employer needs. The BST offers an array of services to assist employers throughout the local area. Training is provided only in sectors that contain high demand/high growth occupations to prepare job seekers to enter the talent pipeline based on the needs of employers. The identified sectors include: Healthcare, Manufacturing and Logistics, Construction, Education, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services. In the local area, Agriculture and Energy have also been identified as priority sectors.

The Board connects educational programs with the local labor market to improve education attainment, by enhancing access to high school equivalency programs, post-secondary credentialing opportunities, and adult education. Partnering with local educational institutions to align curricula with the skills needed in the workforce bridges the gap between education and employment. Career pathway programs that integrate both education and work experience help individuals progress along their educational journeys while gaining practical skills making them more competitive in the job market.

The Board focuses on increasing the workforce participation of individuals facing barriers to employment. This includes prioritizing programs that address the specific needs of underrepresented groups such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, young adults, reentry and recovery individuals and others from low-income backgrounds. By providing tailored support services like career counseling, job search assistance, and skills development programs, individuals are better prepared to overcome obstacles such as lack of transportation, childcare, or digital literacy. Engaging local community organizations and employers in these efforts ensures that workforce participation is accessible to all members of the community.

The Board ensures that resources across various agencies are coordinated to maximize efficiency and avoid duplication. Conducting a comprehensive mapping of local workforce development resources, including funding sources, programs, and services, identifying gaps and opportunities for collaboration. The integration of services through One-Stop Centers creates a streamlined experience for job seekers and employers, ensuring they have easy access to the full spectrum of services. Additionally, aligning workforce development strategies with regional economic development plans ensures that resources are being directed toward sectors and industries with the greatest potential for growth.

The WDB has one (1) certified comprehensive center (hub) and six (6) access points. By having services available in all seven (7) counties more job seekers and employers are engaged with the workforce system increasing opportunities, workforce participation rates and eliminating barriers to employment.

C. **(L)** Describe how the local Board's vision and goals are considered and provide an analysis of the strategies for working with the required partners and other entities to carry out the core programs and align resources.

The Board's visions and goals play a significant role in shaping the direction of workforce development initiatives at the local level, ensuring that the efforts align with both state and federal workforce priorities. The vision focuses on creating a robust, inclusive, and dynamic workforce that can meet the specific needs of the regional labor market. The Board achieves these goals by working with a broad array of partners, including education providers, economic development agencies, community organizations, and other key stakeholders. The alignment of these goals ensures that the local workforce development system addresses the needs of job seekers, employers, and the broader community in a coordinated and strategic manner.

To effectively conduct the core programs of workforce development, the Board has established and maintains strong partnerships with a variety of required partners including, the OSO, the DSP, education and training providers, vocational rehabilitation agencies, economic development organizations, and community-based entities. Collaboration with these partners is essential to ensure the smooth delivery of services, such as job placement, training, education, and support for individuals facing barriers to employment. The Board works with these partners, guiding the development of service delivery strategies and ensuring that each partner's role is aligned with workforce development objectives.

A key aspect of these collaborations involves aligning resources to ensure that programs are efficiently and effectively implemented. The Board coordinates funding, staffing, and physical space with its partners. An important strategy for aligning resources is to prevent duplication of services and ensure that participants receive the support they need to succeed in their career pathways.

Another strategy for aligning resources is the co-location of services. Bringing together multiple partners within a single One-Stop Center, or virtually through integrated platforms, enables individuals to access a wide range of services. This facilitates the efficient delivery of services, making it easier for job seekers to receive career counseling, training, job placement assistance, and other support services without having to navigate multiple agencies. The co-location model also promotes communication and collaboration among partners, ensuring that resources are used effectively to meet the needs of participants.

Resource mapping and gap analysis are also essential strategies that the Board uses to ensure alignment. By regularly assessing available resources and identifying service gaps, the Board strategically fills those gaps, whether through leveraging additional funding, seeking new partnerships, or adjusting current strategies. This proactive approach allows the Board to respond to changing workforce needs and emerging trends, ensuring that the system remains flexible and responsive to both local labor market demands and the evolving needs of job seekers.

Ultimately, the success of the Board achieving its vision and goals hinges on the ability to collaborate closely with required partners and align resources effectively. By fostering strong partnerships, coordinating efforts, and aligning funding, training, and services, the Board ensures that workforce development programs are delivered efficiently. These efforts are critical in building a workforce that meets the needs of employers, addresses the barriers faced by job seekers, and contributes to the overall economic vitality of the local area.

Chapter 3: Alignment of Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

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

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

The Board ensures that service delivery aligns with and integrates local resources from participating partners, effectively addressing the training and employment needs of job seekers and employers. This approach minimizes service duplication and enhances the overall customer experience.

The OSO collaborates with organizations managing core and workforce development programs to streamline service alignment. The Board prioritizes integrating services, improving outcomes, assessing results, and building strong partnerships

To strengthen the referral process, the Board partners with Adult Education, ensuring that individuals pursuing a General Education Development—whether planning to continue their education or entering the workforce—can access WIOA assistance. Adult Education Centers are available in all seven counties of the local area, and Adult Education Providers actively participate in Board meetings.

Education partners play a crucial role in collaborative initiatives. Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC) works closely with local high schools to establish dual enrollment programs and design curricula tailored to the current workforce needs. Additionally, OCTC collaborates with the Board and other partners to secure training funds and develop firsthand learning opportunities. Similarly, HCC engages with high schools, businesses, and other stakeholders to foster regional workforce development. Career and technical education programs and business partnerships at the secondary level have been recognized as key strengths in Ohio and Henderson County.

Beyond regional collaboration, FAME is highly regarded by stakeholders. Green River has two local chapters - GO FAME and HCC FAME. These partnerships of local manufacturers offer work-based learning opportunities, primarily through apprenticeship-style programs, to develop a skilled talent pipeline for the manufacturing workforce. The program's applicant pool has grown and is expected to continue expanding as more students explore careers in manufacturing.

Employers play a vital role in this system by contributing to the development of training programs and providing job placements or apprenticeship opportunities. The Board collaborates with employers to ensure training programs align with workforce demands in high-growth industries. This partnership helps ensure that graduates of workforce development programs acquire the skills employers seek, strengthening the link between education and employment.

In summary, the Board's approach to partnering with organizations that deliver core programs and workforce development initiatives is rooted in collaboration, coordination, and strategic resource alignment. By actively engaging key stakeholders, including education providers, employers, advocacy groups, and mandated program partners, the Board ensures that the workforce development system remains effective and responsive to the needs of both job seekers

and employers. These strong partnerships maximize resources, creating clear pathways to employment and equipping individuals with the necessary tools and support to thrive in the labor market.

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

The Board plays a pivotal role in expanding access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, especially those facing barriers to employment. The Board collaborates closely with entities that conduct core programs to ensure a seamless and integrated approach to workforce development. By fostering strong partnerships with local educational institutions, employers, and community organizations, the Board ensures that individuals have access to comprehensive support services that address both immediate employment needs and long-term career goals.

To expand access, the Board actively identifies and engages with underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and others facing employment barriers. The Board works to eliminate obstacles by coordinating resources such as transportation assistance, childcare services, and access to training programs, ensuring that these supports are readily available to participants.

The Board facilitates the development of career pathways by working with employers and educational providers to create structured pathways that align with local labor market demands. These career pathways provide clear steps for individuals to gain industry-relevant skills and progress in their chosen fields. By integrating education and training with on-the-job learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and work-based learning experiences, the Board ensures that participants gain practical skills alongside theoretical knowledge.

Co-enrollment in core programs is another critical strategy the Board promotes to enhance service delivery. By encouraging eligible individuals to access multiple core programs simultaneously, the Board ensures that participants receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs. This approach maximizes resource utilization and provides participants with a more cohesive and streamlined experience, reducing administrative barriers and improving outcomes. Improving access to activities that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials is a central focus for the Board. The Board works to expand access to industry-recognized certificates and certifications that are both portable and stackable, allowing individuals to build upon their credentials over time and across different employment sectors. By aligning training programs with industry standards and ensuring that credentials meet employer requirements, the Board helps participants enhance their employability and career advancement opportunities.

Through these efforts, the Board ensures that eligible individuals, particularly those facing significant barriers, receive the necessary support to overcome challenges and achieve meaningful employment. The Board's commitment to collaboration, resource coordination, and career pathway development plays a crucial role in building a resilient and skilled workforce that meets the needs of both individuals and the local economy.

To increase accessibility, a website—kccgreenriver.com—is available, offering up-to-date information on all partner services available at the KCC – Green River. The website is regularly updated with the latest events and resources. A dedicated Facebook page also shares job fairs, job postings, and other relevant information. Furthermore, a Resource Guide provides a listing of community agencies that help customers overcome barriers to success.

Customer flow is regularly analyzed to identify service trends and peak times when individuals seek assistance at the KCC – Green River. The availability of virtual services has also proven beneficial, ensuring customers can access support anytime. Additionally, an efficient partner referral system has been implemented to streamline service coordination.

The Board collaborates with core partners to establish more clearly defined career pathways. These pathways will improve access to meaningful employment and provide training tailored to individual needs.

The Board utilizes the state-maintained Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to ensure that approved training programs and vendors offer industry-recognized credentials or certificates. These programs align with both state and local high-growth, high-demand sectors, equipping individuals with valuable skills for in-demand careers.

C. **(L)** Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies and services that will be used to:

1. Meet the needs and facilitate the engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs and targeted sector strategies.

The Board builds strong partnerships with employers by understanding their unique challenges and aligning program objectives with their workforce. Workforce development initiatives are tailored to support activities such as incumbent worker training programs, access to skilled talent, and assistance in workforce planning, to ensure employers can meet their current and future labor needs effectively. Engaging employers through regular communication, industry-specific forums, and collaboration with local business associations helps create a platform for ongoing dialogue and feedback.

Implementing an outreach campaign has ensured more employers are aware of and are utilizing the services offered through the KCC – Green River. Business Services offered add value by supporting local sector strategies and investment priorities. Staff are knowledgeable and responsive to business and workforce needs of the local area, how these align with local sector strategies, and protocols to access recruitment processes and other services. The Green River

BST provides recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including small employers, in the local area.

Sector-driven strategies cultivate employer engagement in workforce development, assessing employment needs through business intelligence, as well as influencing and investing in the education system and other pipeline sources. The key to success is rooted in strategies based on meeting job-driven needs.

The Board works closely with businesses applying a sector-based approach to meet local employer needs. The following support businesses with hiring and other workforce needs:

- Evaluating business's needs;
- Posting, sharing, and distributing employer job listings;
- Identifying and screening candidates;
- Organizing industry-focused and customized employer engagement events including job fairs, employer panels, recruiting events, and mock-interview sessions;
- Development of Internships, Mentorships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training;
- Rapid Response assistance for business closures and layoffs; and
- Other services requested by business customers e.g., wage industry/economic trends, employment laws, etc.

By involving employers in the design and implementation of training programs, workforce development efforts can address skill gaps more accurately, ensuring that employees receive relevant and up-to-date training that aligns with industry demands. Additionally, providing resources and support for small employers, who may have limited capacity to participate, helps create a more inclusive and robust workforce development ecosystem. This comprehensive approach ensures that workforce programs not only meet employer needs but also foster long-term partnerships that contribute to economic growth and sector-specific advancement.

2. Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.

The Board works with all partners, including the BST, to meet the employment needs of businesses through coordinated efforts. It is imperative to ensure employers are aware of the employment and training related services available through the KCC – Green River One-Stop Delivery System.

3. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs.

The Board gathers input from industry professionals and local businesses to assess their needs and align efforts with economic development initiatives. Additionally, the Board convenes with stakeholders to identify opportunities, address challenges and collaborate in integrating services for both job seekers and employers.

4. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

The One-Stop Delivery System connects customers receiving unemployment assistance to Career Coaches guaranteeing they receive comprehensive support beyond basic unemployment claims, allowing them to access resources for career growth and reemployment. Enhanced support and guidance are provided as Career Coaches offer personalized services, including individualized career planning, training opportunities, and partner referrals, supporting long-term career success. Improved resource utilization is achieved by offering orientations to all customers, making individuals aware of the full range of services available at KCC - Green River maximizing the benefits of the one-stop system. Streamlined navigation is facilitated by creating direct connections between unemployment programs and Career Coaches, reducing service fragmentation and allowing customers to navigate their employment journey more efficiently. Ultimately, increased employment outcomes result from access to training programs and tailored career services, equipping customers to secure sustainable employment and contributing to the overall success of the one-stop delivery system.

5. Increase competitive, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

By collaborating closely with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) partners and utilizing a referral process; Vocational Rehabilitation helps raise awareness and creates employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. These integrated employment opportunities are tailored to each individual, aligning with their interests, preferences, skills, and support needs.

6. Include the implementation of incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathway initiatives, or use of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local Board's strategy. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A) and (B)].

The Board promotes career pathways that have a strong work-based learning component. Activities such as Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), OJT, customized training, apprenticeships, internships, and training that lead to industry-recognized credentials are areas that Talent Development Specialist (TDS) and the BST works closely with employers and training providers to develop further.

IWT programs help current employees enhance their skills, ensuring that businesses remain competitive and adaptable to industry changes. OJT programs allow workers to gain practical, hands-on experience while earning a wage, bridging the gap between learning and real-world application.

Work-based learning programs and apprenticeship models provide structured pathways for individuals to develop specialized skills through direct engagement with industry practices, fostering a pipeline of qualified workers.

Customized training programs are designed to meet the specific needs of local employers, aligning workforce skills with the unique demands of regional industries.

Industry and sector strategies focus on targeted economic sectors, promoting collaboration between employers, training providers, and Workforce Boards to address sector-specific challenges and opportunities.

Career pathway initiatives offer structured progression routes for individuals, ensuring long-term career growth and alignment with industry needs. The use of effective business intermediaries and other business services facilitates connections between employers and workforce programs, enhancing access to resources such as talent recruitment, training, and business development support. Integrating these programs and strategies ensures that workforce development efforts are aligned with local economic priorities, supporting both employer needs and employee career advancement.

D. **(L)** Describe local and regional efforts to support and/or promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5)]

The Board embraces entrepreneurship initiatives. Entrepreneurs and small business owners are the catalyst to economic growth in the region due to the number of new hiring opportunities.

Coordination with local and regional economic development partnerships promotes businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities as well as developing innovative concepts. The BST and the Board assist in promoting services for those interested in owning their own business.

The Kentucky Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provides valuable tools to help entrepreneurs make informed business decisions when planning to open a new business. Additionally, the Kentucky SBDC provides clients with access to a network of knowledgeable consultants with various expertise who are working vigorously to ensure small business success.

Green River has a strong partnership with respective economic development entities. Moving forward, Green River will continue to explore opportunities between the Board and the BST to grow small business and entrepreneurial efforts.

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

The Board provides direction and planning related to the provisions of youth programs. The provisions focus on providing services through a comprehensive approach to reach a growing number of young adults that are not attending school and are not connected to the workforce. The youth program design places an emphasis on individualized assessment, sector-based training through Individual Training Accounts and work-based learning opportunities, placement, and follow-up services. Youth service information is also offered through career and college fairs and special events. Youth are offered a full array of services available through the Kentucky Career Center – Green River. An outreach and recruitment plan are utilized and employed to enroll targeted populations. If a youth is determined not eligible to receive services under WIOA Title 1, an appropriate referral is made to a partner agency.

The program is designed to help eligible youth become career ready by meeting education and employment goals. Youth are also provided with additional opportunities and resources related to leadership development such as teamwork, decision making, community service and civic and social responsibility along with financial literacy, education, and entrepreneurial skills.

Career pathways are incorporated as part of the objective assessment and an Individual Service Strategy is developed to identify goals, skills, and abilities. The program also includes connections with employers to meet the 20 percent work based learning requirement, including small businesses and in high-demand industry sectors.

The Board collaborates with OVR to enroll youth with disabilities in training and employment opportunities. Follow up referral services are provided to youth who are assessed for learning disabilities. The Pre-ETS program is designed to provide five broad services to students with disabilities. To receive this service, an individual must be a student with a disability. It can begin as early as the age of fourteen and ends when they are no longer a student or reach their 22nd birthday, whichever comes first. The unique thing about these services is that unlike the other services provided by OVR, individuals do not have to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation and be determined eligible to receive them. The five (5) services are limited to what is needed to help the person transition from school to work, not actual work itself. The services include: job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships; counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs; workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and instruction in self-advocacy Business Development Center-Murray State University, Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation, and Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce. They provide access to services such as financing, business plan development, management consulting, technology transfer as well as research and development.

The fourteen (14) required elements (WIOA Section 129 (c)(2)) are made available either directly or through a referral process to ensure the appropriate elements are provided to assist youth remove barriers and obtain short- and long-term goals.

1. Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Dropout Prevention – activities that lead to completion of a high school diploma includes services such as providing academic support, helping a youth identify areas of academic concern, assisting with overcoming learning obstacles, or providing tools and resources to develop learning strategies – provided Adult Education and on-campus or private tutoring.
2. Alternative Secondary School - assist youth who struggle in traditional secondary education or who have dropped out of school – provided by Adult Education, Heritage Park High School, and Emerson Academy.
3. Paid and Unpaid Work Experience – planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace and provide youth with opportunities for career exploration and skill development – provided by WIOA Title 1 Talent Development Specialist and area employers.
4. Occupational Skills Training – an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate or advanced levels – provided by the Kentucky Community College System and other accredited training institutions.
5. Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Partners – an integrated education and training model related to workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills training – provided by WIOA Title 1 Talent Development Specialists, Adult Education, GO FAME, HCC FAME, and the Kentucky Community College System.
6. Leadership Development Opportunities – encourages responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors – provided by WIOA Title 1 Talent development Specialists, Faith-Based Organizations, Job Corps, Junior Achievement and Chamber Young Professionals.
7. Supportive Services – enables an individual to participate in WIOA activities – provided by Department of Community Based Services, WIOA Title 1, Audubon Area Community Services, Adult Education, Free Legal Services, Owensboro Health Regional Hospital, Housing Authority, Faith-Based Organizations, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T), local homeless shelters and the Green River District Health Department.
8. Adult Mentoring – a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support and encouragement – provided by WIOA Title 1 Talent Development Specialists, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Faith-Based Organizations, Green River

Workforce Development Board members, former WIOA participants and Chamber Young Professionals.

9. Follow-Up Services – critical services provided following a youth’s exit from the program – provided by WIOA Title 1 Talent Development Specialists and core partners.
10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling – provides individualized counseling to participants, including substance abuse, alcohol abuse and mental health counseling – provided by River Valley Behavioral Health, Audubon Area Community Services, Faith-Based Organizations, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Al-Anon Family Groups.
11. Financial Literacy Education – provides youth with knowledge and skills needed to achieve long-term financial stability – provided by WIOA Title 1 Talent Development Specialists and workshops conducted by local banking institutions.
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training - provides the basics of starting and operating a small business – provided by Kentucky Small Business Development Center at Murray State University - Owensboro and Chamber Young Professionals.
13. Services that Provide Labor Market Information – employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available – provided by WIOA Title 1 Talent Development Specialists, Career Development Office, and Wagner Peyser staff.
14. Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities – help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training – provided by WIOA Title 1 Talent Development Specialists and Kentucky Community College System and other accredited training institutions.

A highly effective model for youth workforce activities is work- based learning. This model enables youth to gain work maturity, acquire job specific skills, and gain exposure to the professional world. Through this approach, Youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and talents necessary to secure employment and advance in their careers. The Board collaborates with local KY FAME chapters, GO FAME and HCC FAME, to offer “work and learn” opportunities. This model allows youth to earn an industry recognized degree while gaining hands-on work experience. Work based learning opportunities are integrated with academic and occupational education programs. Opportunities include internships, OJT and pre-apprenticeships.

A regional Youth Summit hosted by the Board for middle and high school students is another proven approach. The Summit provides educational leadership sessions led by community leaders, local business professionals and educators that address topics facing today’s teens. The

one-day event is designed to inform and inspire a diverse group of youth as they prepare for future career paths and community involvement.

The Board was recently awarded funds as a statewide initiative to help young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 find employment. The “Putting Young Kentuckians to Work” aims to improve opportunities and bridge the gap between education and workforce. These additional funds allow the Board to offer skills training, job opportunities and other services to help young Kentuckians participate in short-term training, work experience and on-the-job training to assist in obtaining full-time employment with a sustaining wage. The program will also offer career exploration services to prepare our young adults for the future. The intent is to provide opportunities that will retain young people in our local area.

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

The Board collaborates with local education entities and will continue building partnerships to better serve customers. Priority will be given OSY to help them reconnect to education or enter the workforce. Additionally, the Board will assess training programs to ensure they align with local demand occupations, whether by providing industry-recognized credentials or enhancing essential skills for immediate workforce entry.

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

The WWPR recognizes the importance of supportive services in ensuring individuals can successfully participate in workforce investment activities. While direct coordination of supportive services across the region varies due to funding levels among local areas, efforts are being made to maximize access to available resources.

To support job seekers facing barriers such as childcare, transportation, and other essential needs, the region has implemented the following strategies:

- **Resource Sharing & Collaboration:** Local areas share information about available supportive services to expand options for individuals, ensuring they are aware of all potential assistance programs.
- **Partnerships with Community Organizations:** Workforce Boards collaborate with local agencies, non-profits, and service providers to connect participants with childcare assistance, transportation programs, and other essential support.

- Customized Referrals: Career Center staff provide tailored referrals based on an individual's specific needs, helping them access resources beyond WIOA-funded services.
- Leveraging Additional Funding Streams: Where possible, workforce programs work to align with other funding sources, such as state and federal grants or community-based initiatives, to enhance supportive service offerings.

The Green River Workforce Development Board currently provides supportive services contingent upon the individual's satisfactory performance, need to assist and available funding. Attempts to locate other sources, such as community service agencies, to provide services are made utilizing an established referral system. Referrals will be exempt if supportive services are of an immediate nature and a referral to non-WIOA funding for supportive services will impose undue hardship on the individual or impact their ability to participate in program activities, or it is known that the requested supportive service is not available from other resources in the community.

H. **(L)** Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local one-stop system, maximizing the coordination of services provided by DWD merit staff and the LWDB's contract providers to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

The Board implements its operational goals by the delivery of seamless services. Partner resources and programs are coordinated to meet the training and employment needs of job seekers and employers.

To effectively implement the operational goals of the local one-stop system, it is essential to foster strong coordination. A primary strategy is to establish regular communication, such as scheduled meetings and joint planning sessions, where both parties can align their objectives, share insights, and discuss upcoming initiatives. This ensures that all stakeholders are on the same page and can collaboratively address challenges as they arise.

By emphasizing teamwork and mutual goals, the one-stop system can maximize resources, enhance client experiences, and avoid unnecessary duplication of services.

I. **(L)** Describe how the local Board will collaborate with WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11) and WIOA Sec. 232. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]. This will include a discussion of how the local WDB will consistently review local applications submitted under Title II with WIOA sec. 107(d)(11) (A) and (B) (i) and WIOA sec. 232.

Many KCC – Green River customers require adult education and literacy services, particularly those tailored to workforce needs and career pathway development. To support this, a structured referral process has been implemented to connect individuals with appropriate resources. Once the referral is made and received, the referring agency is notified to ensure follow-through.

Adult Education is a partner in the KCC – Green River Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and efforts are made to strengthen local partnerships and encourage Adult Education’s active presence within the KCC-Green River.

Additionally, upon request or notification, the Board will review grant applications to support local Adult Education and Literacy Programs.

- J. **(L)** Please describe any plans to follow the strategies of the state and the local WDB to the one-stop operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec—134 (c) (3) (E).

The Board provides oversight to the OSO and DSP regarding priority for adult career and training services. The Board ensures that delivery of service focuses on recipients of public assistance, other low- income individuals and individuals who have basic skills deficiencies per statutory requirements. Individuals who do not meet income self-sufficiency levels or have barriers to employment including, but are not limited to poor work history, no work history, single parents, long-term unemployed and offenders will also receive priority of services. Through partnerships, the Board coordinates targeted outreach and recruitment practices.

- K. **(L)** Please describe how the Kentucky Career Centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

The KCC Certification serves as the foundation for collaboration among WIOA Core Programs and One-Stop Center partners. By establishing Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) and developing MOUs, partners can define roles and reach effective agreements. To ensure a smooth intake process, a customer flow chart has been created.

Currently, the Kentucky Enterprise Engagement System (KEE Suite) and the Kentucky Career Portal function as the primary customer referral system for One-Stop partners.

A structured referral process has been implemented with the following key principles:

- **Integrated and Seamless Service Delivery:** The referral system is designed to provide job seekers and employers with streamlined experience.
- **Partner Awareness:** Agencies commit to understanding the basic eligibility, participation requirements, services, and benefits offered by each program within the KCC network.
- **Accessible Program Information:** Partners develop and share materials summarizing program requirements for both staff and customers.
- **Standardized Processes:** Whenever appropriate, agencies use common intake, eligibility determination, assessment, and registration forms.
- **Effective Referrals:** Customers are directed at supplemental and complementary services that align with their needs.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The referral process is regularly evaluated, incorporating customer feedback and satisfaction surveys.

This structured approach ensures a coordinated and client-driven service system within the KCC network.

Chapter 4: Program Design and Evaluation

A. **(L)** Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including:

1. The local Board's efforts to collaborate with employers, to provide continuous improvement of business services, and to operate a "job-driven" delivery system.

The Board places strong emphasis on collaborating with employers to ensure the workforce system effectively meets the needs of the business community. This collaboration begins with actively engaging employers through regular outreach efforts, industry roundtables, and sector-based partnerships through our BST. By maintaining communication, the Board gains valuable insights into employer needs, industry trends, and emerging skills requirements. These insights allow the Board to align workforce development strategies with the specific needs of local employers, ensuring that training programs and services are directly tied to current and future job market demands.

The Board also prioritizes creating efficient pathways for job seekers to connect with employers. This includes hosting job fairs, facilitating direct employer engagement in training programs, and leveraging technology platforms to match job seekers with relevant job openings. By fostering strong partnerships with local businesses, the Board tailors services to meet employer needs while helping job seekers access meaningful employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the Board actively monitors labor market trends and industry developments to anticipate changes in employer needs. This proactive approach allows the Board to adjust its strategies and services in real time, ensuring that the workforce system remains agile and responsive. By integrating employer feedback into program design and maintaining a strong emphasis on employer engagement, the Board ensures that the workforce system operates in a job-driven manner, ultimately benefiting both businesses and job seekers in the community.

2. The local Board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted services providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]

The Board conducts outreach to local employers to gather insights into current and future workforce needs. This information is used to ensure that training programs and services offered by providers are aligned with the evolving demands of the local economy. By facilitating employer feedback, the Board ensures that providers receive direct input from employers, enabling them to tailor their training programs to specific industry requirements and skill gaps.

The Department for Workforce Development (DWD) maintains the ETPL and ensures successful performance.

3. How the local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas with technology and other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]

The Board is dedicated to ensuring that individuals in remote areas have access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by residents in these areas, the Board employs a multifaceted approach that leverages technology and other resources to bridge the gap and ensure comprehensive service delivery.

The Green River WDA has one (1) certified comprehensive career center and six (6) access points. This allows for more services to be offered in rural areas. Many services offered through the KCC-Green River are available online making it unnecessary for all customers to physically visit one of the centers.

By integrating technology and community partnerships, the Board supports residents in remote areas having access to the full range of services offered through the one-stop delivery system. This comprehensive approach helps eliminate barriers to employment and workforce development for remote populations, supporting their career growth and economic participation.

4. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)]

The Board, the one-stop delivery system, including the OSO and one-stop partners, are committed to full compliance with WIOA Section 188 and the applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). This commitment ensures that facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials are physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities, fostering an inclusive workforce development environment.

To achieve compliance, the OSO conducts regular assessments at the Green River Comprehensive American Job Center to ensure ADA standards are met. This includes evaluating entrances, restrooms, service counters, signage, and other key areas to guarantee that individuals with disabilities can access the center comfortably and safely. Necessary modifications are implemented to address any deficiencies identified during these assessments.

By integrating these measures, entities within the one-stop delivery system ensure that individuals with disabilities receive access to all programs and services. This approach not only complies with WIOA Section 188 and ADA requirements but also upholds the system's

commitment to ensure all job seekers, regardless of disability status, can participate fully in workforce development programs.

5. Describe the process used by the local Board to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comments by representatives of businesses and representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the Local Plan, prior to submission of this plan.

The Local Plan will be posted for public comment no later than April 1, 2025, for a thirty (30) day comment period. Comments are due no later than April 30, 2025.

Any comments submitted will be considered and incorporated into the local plan as appropriate. The plan will be made available, for review, on the Green River Area Development District (GRADD) website.

- B. **(L)** Describe the local Board's assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(7)]

The workforce system provides universal access to career services to meet the diverse needs of adults and dislocated workers. There are three (3) types of career services offered: Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services and Follow-Up Services which may all be accessed through the KCC-Green River. A range of employment and training services are available designed to meet client needs, including occupational skills training, OJT, IWT, customized training programs, and work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships and internships. Training programs are offered through partnerships with local community colleges, technical schools, and industry-specific training providers, ensuring that job seekers have access to high-quality educational resources.

The Board identifies key sectors in the local area, such as Healthcare, Manufacturing and Logistics, Construction, Education, and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services. The Board also identifies Agriculture and Energy where employment opportunities are expanding. Training programs are tailored to these sectors, offering courses that address critical skill gaps and prepare job seekers for in-demand roles.

For dislocated workers, the Board ensures that rapid response services are in place to provide immediate support following job loss. These services include career counseling, job search assistance, skills assessments, and access to training programs aimed at helping displaced workers re-enter the workforce quickly. The Board collaborates with local employers to identify opportunities for dislocated workers in industries that are actively hiring, facilitating targeted job placement efforts.

The Board demonstrates a strong commitment to providing a comprehensive array of employment and training activities for adults and dislocated workers. By aligning services with local labor market needs, addressing identified gaps, and maintaining strong employer

partnerships, the Board ensures that the workforce system effectively supports the economic growth of the local area and the career advancement of job seekers.

C. (L) Describe how the local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

Rapid Response provides comprehensive information and technical assistance leading to supporting the reemployment of dislocated workers affected by layoffs, closures, disasters, or crisis events. The Green River WDA delivers Rapid Response services to both employers and workers before, during and after a layoff or closure, ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations. Recognizing the time-sensitive nature of these activities, the local area has developed a structured protocol to facilitate timely communication with affected parties.

The Rapid Response Team includes a staff member from Green River BST, who collaborates with partner agencies and educational institutions. Most Rapid Response activities take place at employer sites and provide critical information on available resources, including WIOA training services, and job search workshops.

Under WIOA, the Rapid Response model has shifted to prioritize businesses as customers, aiming to maximize reemployment opportunities and reduce reliance on Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits.

When the state Rapid Response Coordinator receives a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) or another request for services, the Green River Rapid Response Team Lead is notified. The team leader reaches out to the employer to offer support. Depending on the size of the layoff, a pitch meeting is conducted with company management to recommend that the Rapid Response teamwork with the company to assess needs, review available services, and obtain any relevant employee information. Rapid Response presentations are scheduled at this stage. For companies with fewer layoffs, or who are not interested in on-site presentations, the team lead provides an informational packet with relevant information that can be distributed by the company to impacted employees. Companies who have not filed a WARN, or who have questions prior to filing a WARN; can also be directed to the Green River Rapid Response Team for assistance.

The local Rapid Response team regularly coordinates its activities with statewide efforts and resources with the assistance of the state's Rapid Response team. Green River's Rapid Response Team also works nationwide with local companies with a large national presence. If a company issues a WARN notice for a lay-off impacting multiple counties, initial meetings and conference calls include Rapid Response representation from all of the counties. In the absence of a WARN and where the Rapid Response Team is contacted directly by a multi-county employer, the local team lead contacts the appropriate Rapid Response Team contacts in other parts of the state.

D. (L) Provide an analysis and description of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth

workforce activities relevant to the local area. Describe strategies the LWDA will use to increase the minimum WIOA out-of-school youth expenditure rate to 75 percent. Provide information on types of work-based learning activities planned for youth. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

The Green River Youth program is offered through the KCC – Green River by the DSP. Eligible youth, including youth with disabilities, are made aware of the services available through the KCC- Green River and other partner agencies.

The provisions concentrate on providing services to reach a growing number of young adults that are not attending school and are not attached to the workforce. A targeted outreach and recruitment plan strategically focuses on expending 75% of WIOA youth funding on youth that are not currently enrolled in education. Work based learning programs are championed and strongly encouraged including internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships.

The Board was recently awarded funds as a statewide initiative to help young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 find employment. The “Putting Young Kentuckians to Work” aims to improve opportunities and bridge the gap between education and workforce. These additional funds allow the Board to offer skills training, job opportunities and other services to help young Kentuckians participate in short-term training, work experience and on-the-job training to assist in obtaining full-time employment with a sustaining wage. The program will also offer career exploration services to prepare our young adults for the future. The intent is to provide opportunities that will retain young people in our local area.

Work based learning opportunities are aligned with service and sector strategies. As noted previously, the Board partners with local FAME chapters to provide hands-on training while earning an industry-recognized credential.

A successful best practice for youth services by the Board is the Youth Summit, an event designed to engage middle and high school students in the Green River Area. The Board hosts this summit to provide students with a unique opportunity to participate in educational leadership sessions led by community leaders, business professionals, and educators. The Youth Summit aims to inspire and equip students with essential skills for their future careers and personal development. Students can select from a variety of topics, examples include:

Financial Literacy - students learn critical money management skills, budgeting, saving, and the importance of financial planning for their future. These sessions are designed to help students build a solid foundation in financial responsibility, preparing them for adulthood and the workforce.

Soft Skills to Success - emphasizes the importance of communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and professionalism. These skills are crucial for career readiness and are highlighted through interactive workshops and real-world scenarios, allowing students to practice and understand the value of soft skills in both educational settings and future workplaces.

Leaders Always Win - focuses on leadership development, encouraging students to cultivate leadership qualities such as confidence, decision-making, and resilience. Community leaders and

business professionals share their experiences and insights, providing students with role models and practical advice on how to become effective leaders in their communities and future careers.

The Youth Summit serves as a platform for students to connect with local leaders and professionals, fostering relationships that can lead to mentorship opportunities, internships, and career exploration. It also allows students to gain a clearer understanding of various career paths, and the skills required to succeed in today's job market.

By hosting the Youth Summit, the Board demonstrates its commitment to preparing the next generation for the workforce by providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to succeed. This initiative not only supports students in their educational journey but also strengthens the local workforce by encouraging youth to develop skills that align with the needs of local employers and the broader economy.

The Board realizes the importance of serving youth customers in a way to ensure that they can make informed decisions regarding their future. Many take advantage of occupational skills training and work-based learning opportunities. Many possess barriers that must be addressed to ensure success in whatever path they choose. To address such barriers, the fourteen (14) program elements, as required under WIOA, are made available on an individual basis based on need through the DSP and through partner programs by referral. Once a referral is made, coordinating efforts are established to ensure success. This is done on a continual basis as the youth progress.

All Individuals who have a disability, including Youth, are provided information and services in an integrated service delivery setting within the KCC-Green River. Youth with disabilities have the same access to the full range of Workshops, Individualized Career and Training Services and are not served exclusively by services from Vocational Rehabilitation. Additionally, the Board has core partners from Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation who are members of the Board and share updates and data regarding their services at quarterly meetings. Updates are also given by the OSO/DSP, to provide the Board with survey results, WIOA training progress, and ways outreach is being promoted. Board members have the opportunity to comment or suggest methods for continued improvement in serving Youth with disabilities.

OSY often face difficult challenges such as having dropped out of school or completed school but do not possess the appropriate employability or occupational skills. They are often in low-wage employment and many are parenting youth. The Board envisions continued collaboration with One Stop Partners, as well as WIOA Core Programs, Adult Education, post-secondary educational institutions, KY FAME chapters and employers that provide work-based learning.

The Board continues to leverage and increase partnerships that promote CTE programs which provide valuable certifications and credentials that are recognized by business and industry. The Board has established standards and provides oversight for the OSO and DSP to ensure youth achieve all ISS goals. WIOA Youth, especially youth who have barriers and are disadvantaged, should expect and receive support throughout their educational journey that will lead to successful training completion.

ELIGIBILITY FOR YOUTH: All Youth must meet the eligibility guidelines set forth by the WIOA Law, Regulations and the Department for Workforce Development. This includes low-income individuals who require additional assistance and those who are unable to “read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on a job, in the individual’s family, or in society.”

Utilizing the 5% window for youth who do not meet the income criteria as specified in the WIOA is allowable. No more than 5% of the total youth participants in any WIOA funded youth program will be served through the window. If an individual does not meet the income criterion, documentation of two of the following barriers will be required: (1) school dropout; (2) basic skills deficient; (3) are one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the individual’s age; (4) pregnant or parenting; (5) possess one or more disabilities, including learning disabilities; (6) homeless or runaway; (7) offender; and/or (8) is an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.

To monitor the 75% requirement for OSY, the 20% WBL requirement and the 5% ISY low-income exception, all expenditures are recorded in the WORK System for required financial reporting.

The work-based learning offered to Youth are aligned with the individual’s ISS and sector strategies. In most cases, the work-based learning is in line with the individual’s program of study.

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

The Board supports the use of the ITA to support the attainment of industry-recognized credentials. The ITA established on the Trainee’s behalf once an individual meets eligibility criteria set forth under WIOA Title 1-B Adult, Dislocated Worker or OSY Programs. The ITA may only be used for occupations that are in high demand for the local area. The training provider must be listed on Kentucky’s ETPL. The ITA is for the reimbursement of the actual cost of tuition, books, fees, and other training related expenses required to complete an approved training program that leads to a recognized Occupational Skills Credential or an Associate Degree (not to exceed three [3] years, as well, as not to cause an over-award with Title IV of Higher Education Act (HEA)). The cost of the training cannot be more than what is charged to the general public. The ITA sets forth the following Trainee responsibilities:

- The Trainee will maintain full-time student status (at least 12 hours per semester) unless given prior approval from the TDS;

- The Trainee will apply for financial assistance under Title IV of HEA. WIOA funds can be used to cover training costs not to exceed the amount awarded in the ITA;
- Continuation of WIOA funding is based on satisfactory progress and attendance, as documented by the review of grades, and compliance with training policies along with the availability of funding. The Trainee is responsible for submitting grades to the TDS after each grading period and must maintain a 2.0 GPA;
- The Trainee must inform the TDS of any change in telephone number, address, class schedule, and employment status. If the trainee drops, withdraws, or adds any classes, prior approval must be given as it may affect WIOA funding;
- The Trainee is responsible for payment of any/all remedial classes, if needed;
- The Trainee is responsible for payment of repeated classes;
- The Trainee will meet with the TDS on a regular basis to document the progress of training;
- The Trainee will be held financially responsible for any overpayment of WIOA funds expended on his/her behalf and caused by his/her actions; and
- Failure to comply with the above responsibilities will result in termination of the training account

The ITA establishes an agreement which is signed by the Eligible Training Provider, the Trainee, the DSP, and GRADD. The GRADD/WIOA agrees to pay allowable costs as specified in the ITA. The document is only good for the training period listed. Payment is made up to the dollar amount listed and any funds that are not expended on behalf of the Trainee will be de-obligated. Any party shall have the right to terminate the ITA for convenience at any time upon thirty (30) days written notice served upon the other parties. Any party may terminate the ITA immediately for cause upon written notice served upon the other parties. "Cause" can be defined as either party failing to fulfill in a timely and proper manner the obligations under the account.

It is the intent of the Board to utilize WIOA funding dollars for ITAs which assist and enable Trainees to make wage progression and gain a self-sustaining wage. The ITA may be used for short-term training, certifications, or associate's degrees.

The TDS meet with the trainee to implement an assessment, evaluation, and career planning; TDS will review and complete with the trainee the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or ISS. Based on the customer's training assessment, desire and need, they are directed to Kentucky's ETPL website <http://etpl.ky.gov>, which is maintained by the Department of Workforce Development to review and research the listing of providers and programs available. The TDS provide guidance and counseling to assist the customer with an informed choice.

Chapter 5: Compliance/Performance/Administrative Cost

Responses should be focused on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements.

- A. **(R)** Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), between the local Board and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and other individuals. This may include cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration and coordination. WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)

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

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

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

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

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

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

GRADD is the local grant recipient and is responsible for the disbursal of funds.

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

Green River follows the Kentucky Model Procurement Code and the guidance within the Uniform Administrative Regulations at 20 CFR 200, Office of Budget, and Management (OMB) Circulars and the Kentucky Revised Statute, KRS-45A.

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

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

The fiscal agent/local grant sub-recipient is independently audited annually; the Green River LEO Governing Board and the Board support the decision-making process; annual monitoring by the DWD is conducted for WIOA Title I Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth using a toolkit established by DWD; the DWD maintains and monitors the ETPL on an on-going basis. The local area utilizes resulting feedback to continuously improve. The Board complies with this process and utilizes the system to ensure customer choice.

Board staff annually monitor all local sub-recipients for contract (programmatic and financial) compliance.

All on-the-job training contracts and work-based learning agreements are monitored at least once during the contract/agreement period by Board staff.