



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional and Local Plan Guidance

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

WIOA Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan Guidance

July 1, 2021-June 30, 2025

Purpose.

The purpose of this Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan Guidance is to provide instructions to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB's) regarding the development and submission of Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive plans for program years FY 2022 through FY 2025 in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) four-year planning requirements.

A. Commonwealth of Kentucky Workforce Vision and Goals

The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB), in partnership with the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, and numerous partner cabinets, agencies and outside organizations, engaged in an aggressive effort to implement the strategic initiatives outlined in the KWIB Strategic Plan implemented 2018. This plan has served as a blueprint for transforming Kentucky's workforce services, and focused on adapting to the changing needs of employers. The Beshear Administration welcomes the opportunity for continued alignment of Kentucky's education and workforce systems with the goal of establishing dynamic, employer-led workforce development in Kentucky.

The Administration's vision includes:

- Establishing employer collaborative efforts arranged by both region and industry. These groups will examine current and future needs for skills and training, and identify effective talent development systems. The employers will provide information in real time to the workforce system in order to help align resources effectively and efficiently.
- Ensuring career development is an integrated element of government services to build the foundation for increasing the labor force participation and growing Kentucky's economy. Over the next four years, the Administration will work with the KWIB on a new strategic plan and setting clearly defined goals. These goals will inform subsequent modifications of the State Plan, and achieve the continuing transformation of Kentucky's workforce system through innovative practices. This will enhance sustainable economic and job growth to improve the lives of Kentuckians.

The Department of Workforce Investment (DWI) Goals:

1. Career Pathways and Sector Strategies – Collaborate with business and industry to define career pathways for critical state and regional sectors.
2. Work-Based Learning Infrastructure – Create a state-level framework to facilitate employer engagement in work-based learning, which can ensure consistency in definitions used across the education and training continuum partners.
3. Workforce Services Infrastructure Realignment – Continue to evaluate and realign services and support structures to expand on efforts to build a truly customer-centric model at the local level.

4. Data and Performance/Informed Decision Making – Ensure the collection of the right data to inform policy and practice among the partners to create an efficient and effective talent pipeline.

B. Local Comprehensive Plans.

Local Plans serve as four-year action plans to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and to support the State’s vision and strategic and operational goals.

The Local Comprehensive Plan sets forth the strategy to:

- Direct investments in economic, education, and workforce training programs to focus on providing relevant education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers;
- Apply job-driven strategies in the one-stop delivery system;
- Enable economic, education, and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training, and education programs; and
- Incorporate the Local Comprehensive Plan in to the Regional Innovation Plan per 20 C.F.R. § 679.540.

Section 108(a) of the WIOA, 20 C.F.R. § 679.00 *et seq* requires local boards in partnership with the appropriate chief elected officials to develop and submit a comprehensive four-year Local Comprehensive Plan to the Governor. It must identify and describe the policies, procedures, and local activities carried out locally that are consistent with the State Plan.

Local Plans, pursuant to WIOA, must align with the State’s vision as set forth in the Combined State Plan FY 2022-2025. The Local Plan must also address certain specific provisions as set forth in Section 108 of WIOA. The State provides this guidance to the LWDBs in the formulation of its Local Plans. At minimum, Local Plans must include the provisions in this guidance.

Given the limitations of the pandemic and the restrictions on meeting in large groups set by Governor Andy Beshear, any public meetings should follow CDC and state guidance. We strongly encourage virtual meeting and public notice.

C. Regional Innovation Plan.

Each LWDB and its respective Chief Local Elected Official(s) (CLEOs) must collaborate with the other LWDBs and CLEOs within a respective planning region to also prepare and submit a 4-Year Regional Innovation Plan that is consistent with their Local Plan content and timeframe. The Regional plan should identify opportunities for regional collaboration and innovation, and incorporate priorities and opportunities identified within the Local Plan, guidance from final WIOA regulations and feedback to Kentucky on its WIOA State Plan. Regional Innovation Plans **must be submitted** to the Kentucky Department of Workforce Investment **by April 30, 2021** for their review and feedback before the implementation date of July 1, 2021 (FY 2022).

KY’s Regional and Local Workforce Areas:

Central Region = Bluegrass LWDA, Northern KY LWDA, KentuckianaWorks LWDA, Lincoln Trail LWDA
East Region = TENCO LWDA and EKCEP LWDA
South Region = Cumberlands LWDA and South Central LWDA
West Region = Green River LWDA and West KY LWDA

D. Relationship of Regional Innovation Plan and Local Comprehensive Plan

The regional component of the plan should outline how the region has collected and analyzed regional labor market information and must incorporate the Local Comprehensive Plans for each of the local areas within the planning region consistent with the requirements of the WIOA Rules, 20 C.F.R. Section §679.540(a).

E. Plan Completion, Submission and Approval.

1. **Completion.** All Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) in Kentucky must submit a plan that includes both the regional and local planning components outlined in this guidance. The questions in the guidance must be addressed in the plans in the order in which they are outlined in the guidance. Planning teams may include content beyond these questions.
2. **Submission.** The FY 2022-2025 Regional and Local Plans must be submitted in PDF format electronically to DarleneK.Bussell@ky.gov on or before **April 30, 2021 for initial review by DWI. Any deficiencies identified must be remedied by June 30, 2021.**

Note: The FY 2022–2025 Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan must be sent by a designated single point of contact. If sending Plans by email the subject line should read “(Area name) FY 2022-2025 Regional and Local Plan.”

3. **Approval.** The 4-Year Regional and Local plan submitted will be approved by written correspondence from DWI within the initial 90-day review period. Plans not approved within the initial 90 days can be found deficient for the following reasons:
 - There are deficiencies identified through audits in Workforce Investment activities that the local area has not made acceptable progress.
 - The plan does not comply with WIOA regulations inclusive of the regulations, public comment provisions, and nondiscrimination requirements of 29 CFR part 38.
 - The plan does not align with the Kentucky Combined State plan in keeping with the alignment of the core programs in support of the identified state plan strategies.

The above list is not an exhaustive. If the plan was found deficient, DWI will issue written confirmation of the specific deficiencies found.

F. Modification Process.

Modifications to the Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan under Final Rules Section 20 C.F.R.

§679.530 and §679.580, each LWDB, in partnership with the Chief Elected Officials, must review the Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan **every two years** and submit a modification as needed using the same methods listed above in G-2.

The 2-Year modified plans should be considered by the local area **automatically approved** after 90 days of receipt if there is no correspondence from DWI within the 90-day review period.

Conditions which require a modification to the Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan include:

1. Changes in labor market and regional and/or local economic conditions; and
2. Other factors affecting the implementation of the plan, including but not limited to; the financing available to support the WIOA Title I and partner-provided WIOA services, LWDB structure, and/or the need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals.

G. Public Comment

The LWDB must make copies of all Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plans, and any subsequent modifications to such plans, subject to no more than a 14-day public review and comment period before submission to the Governor.

Plans should be:

1. Made available to the public through electronic and other means such as public hearings and local news media. This should include an opportunity for public comment of 14 days by members of the public inclusive of representatives of business, labor organizations and education.
2. Any comments that express disagreement with the plan must be submitted to the Governor along with the plan.
3. Information about the plan should be available to the public on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings.

H. Plan Organization

This planning guidance is organized into the following chapters and is designed to address both the regional and local planning requirements of WIOA in one planning document:

- Economic and Workforce Analysis
- Strategic Vision and Goals
- Alignment of Local and Regional Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies
- Program Design and Evaluation
- Compliance/ Performance/Administrative Cost
- Additional Elements

Questions to be addressed in each chapter are identified as Regional (R) or Local (L). Answers to regional questions require the collaboration of LWDB's, CLEO's, and partners within the region to provide a unified regional response. Answers to local questions require a local response.

LWDB name: Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB)

Regional name: East Region

Chapter 1: Economic and Workforce Analysis

- A. (R) 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.

Due to time constraints, EKCEP and TENCO decided it would be more advantageous for staff to review and address regional planning questions through email and phone consultations. The local/regional plan guidance is very similar to previous years' plans (approved and currently in effect), which were created with the input and approval of EKCEP's and TENCO's Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) and local workforce boards.

Regional local elected officials and workforce development board members will have opportunity to review and provide input for the current plan during the public comment period and through committee and board meetings. The document will be submitted electronically to the local elected officials and board members of each local workforce area when they are posted for the public comment period. Any public input received will be reviewed and, if appropriate, corresponding modifications will be made.

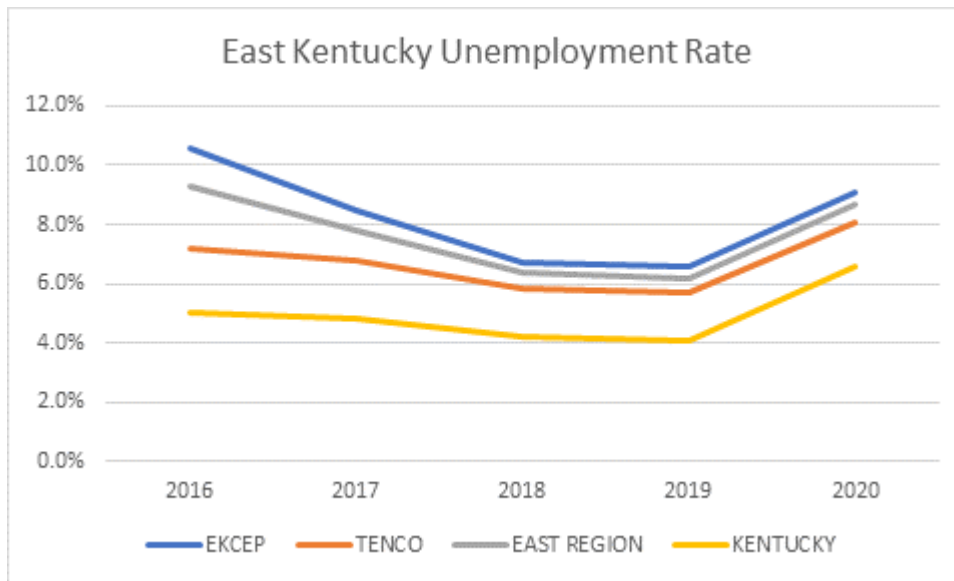
Both local areas conducted data analyses on the region's strengths, obstacles, and opportunities. The analyses conducted to complete the Regional Plan concluded that although there are many similarities in the challenges and opportunities faced by the region, there are also many differences between the two local areas that comprise the region. These differences — including each local area's available funding levels, limitations, identified sectors, and accessibility to resources — are reflected throughout this regional plan.

- B. (R) Provide a regional analysis of the economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)] and [20 C.F.R. § 679.560(a)]

In 2020 Eastern Kentucky continued to lag behind the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the United States in job growth and economic expansion. However, the continued growth of the healthcare sector and the vast array of job opportunities that come with increased connectivity provide hope that the region can rise above its historical role as a geographically isolated economy and become a full and equal participant in the world's internet-based economy.

Although the unemployment rate had steadily decreased in Eastern Kentucky from 2016–19 (2.97% decrease), the massive layoffs and closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically increased unemployment rates across the Commonwealth for 2020. Eastern Kentucky, which has consistently had higher unemployment rates than Kentucky and the United States, saw a sharp increase as well between December 2019 (6.5%) and October 2020 (9.38%). By December 2020, the unemployment rates have started to decrease (7.99%). As the economy starts to reopen in 2021, it is projected that Eastern Kentucky will continue to see higher than average unemployment rates as the pandemic negatively affected many of the small entrepreneurial businesses, retail, and the food and beverage industries which account for a significant number of jobs in the East Region.

Unemployment remains a major economic issue in the East Region. The chart below compares the unemployment rates for the East Region, EKCEP, TENCO, and Kentucky for the past five years.

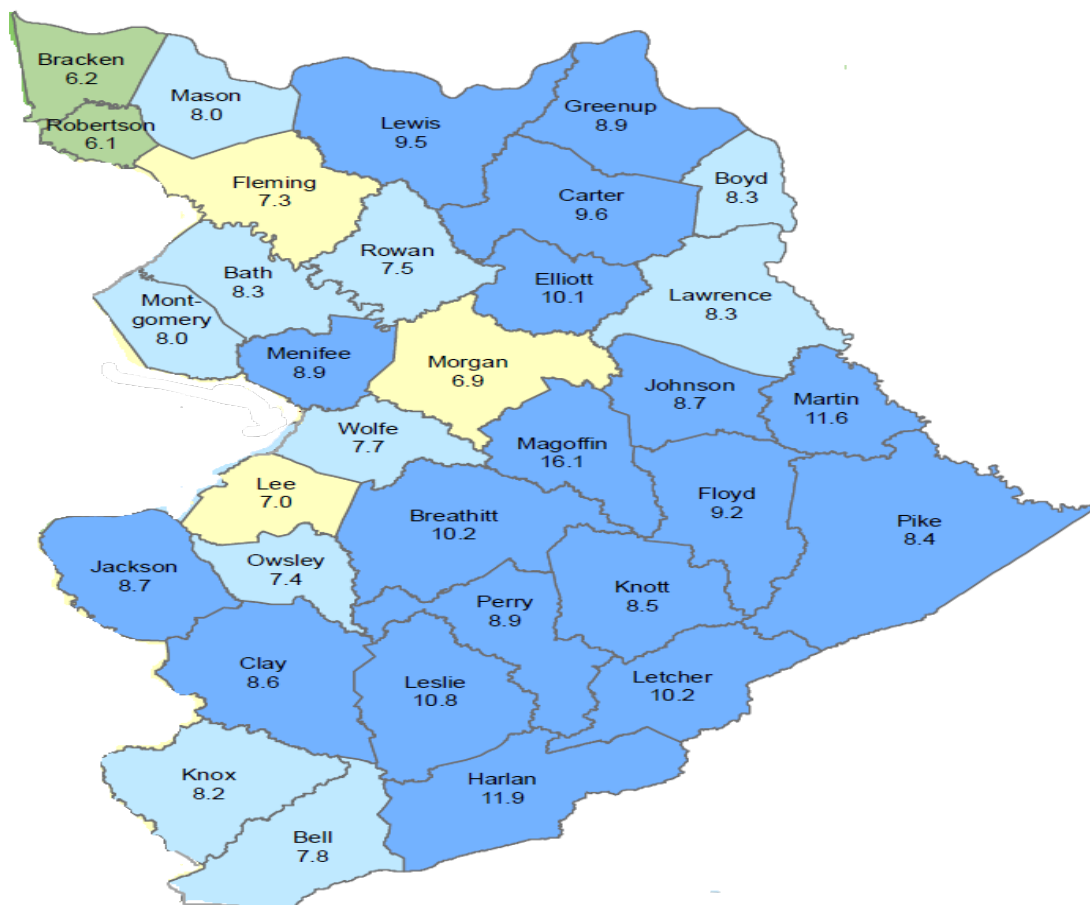


Unemployment Rates for the East Region:

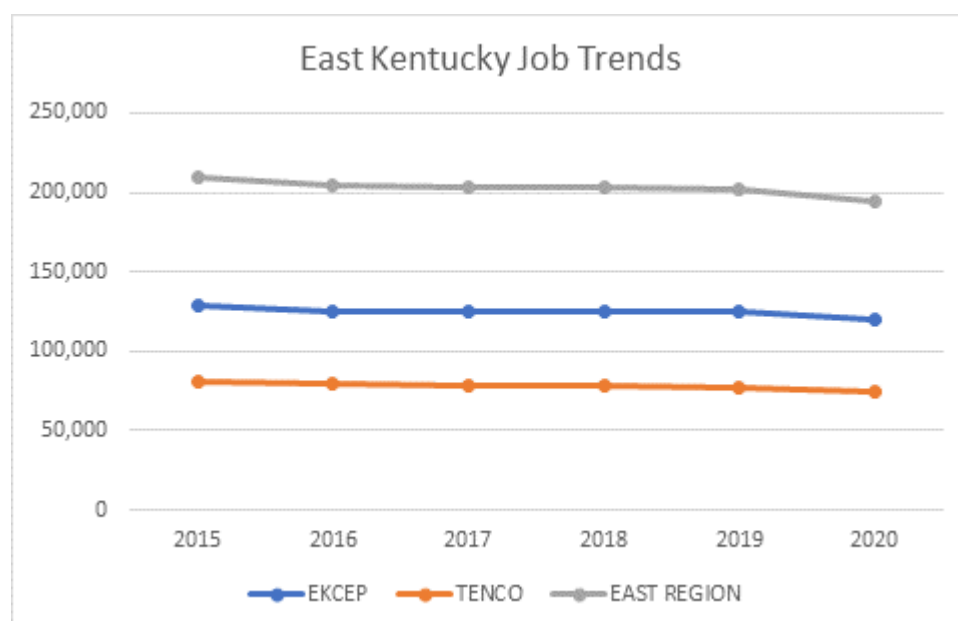
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
East Region	9.47%	8.05%	6.58%	6.5%	7.99%
Kentucky	5.0%	4.8%	4.3%	4.3%	6.6%

www.kystats.gov

The *Annual 2020 Unemployment Rates Local Area Unemployment Statistics* produced by the Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics, reflect the following counties' unemployment rates:



Job loss is also a major economic issue in the East Region. From 2015 through 2020, the region has seen a decline of employment opportunities with a five-year total loss of 15,039 jobs (14.6% decline).



Job Data for 2015 – 2020

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EKCEP	129,048	124,765	124,671	124,742	124,956	120,252
TENCO	80,495	79,155	78,838	78,239	77,469	74,252
Region	209,543	203,920	203,509	202,981	202,425	194,504

Occupations in the East Region with the greatest decline include Food Preparation and Serving Related (-1,963), Office and Administrative Support (-1,623), Sales and Related (-1,329), and Production (-1,182).

Although job loss is an issue, the following chart shows the occupations that experienced high growth between 2017 and 2021:



The following chart indicates the top five occupations that have been identified by KYStats as projected to grow through 2028 for the Region:

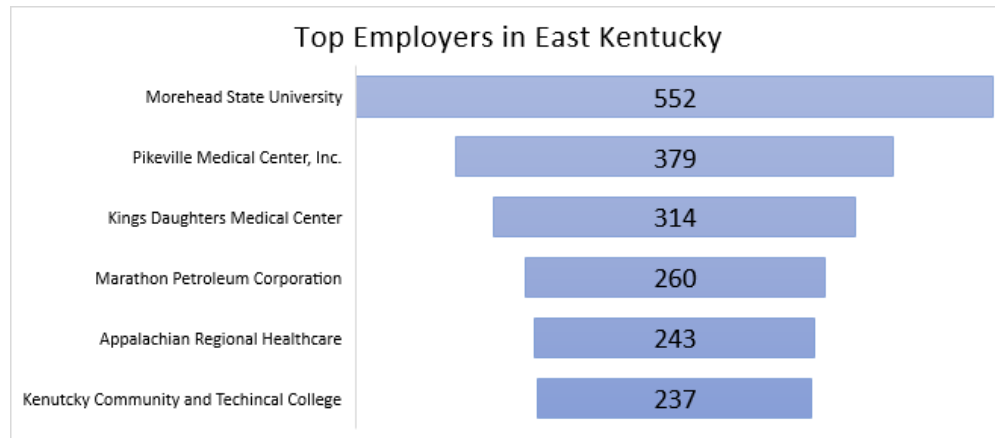
TENCO	EKCEP
Food Preparation and Serving	Healthcare Practitioners and Tech
Healthcare Practitioners and Tech	Food Preparation and Serving
Transportation and Material Moving	Personal Care and Service
Personal Care and Service	Education, Training, and Library
Healthcare Support	Healthcare Support

Based on the 2020 TENCO LWA Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, the occupations (Standard Occupational Classifications) in the region with the highest wages include:

1. Management Occupations - \$31.53 median hourly earnings (9,614 jobs in 2021)
2. Architecture and Engineering - \$28.29 median hourly earnings (1,848 jobs in 2021)

3. Life, Physical, and Social Science – \$26.71 median hourly earnings (1,181 jobs in 2021)
4. Legal Occupations – \$26.57 median hourly earnings (1041 jobs in 2021)
5. Computer and Mathematical - \$26.09 median hourly earnings (1,716 jobs in 2021)
6. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical -- \$25.49 median hourly earnings (16,383 jobs in 2021)

The following chart reflects where a significant number of the workforce in the East Region are employed.



Although it has represented a smaller percentage of jobs in the East Region in the past, Information Technology (IT) is a rapidly growing sector and appears to have an unlimited ceiling. The Internet-based digital economy has presented Eastern Kentucky with an unprecedented opportunity to compete upon a level playing field with the rest of the nation, because the Internet makes geography, transportation, and physical proximity to business centers irrelevant.

For over six years, EKCEP's Teleworks USA initiative has prepared Eastern Kentuckians to meet the needs of employers worldwide for home-based workers. These Internet-based work-from-home jobs — primarily in customer service but expanding into other fields such as cybersecurity — bring outside wages into the region and broaden the employment opportunities of Eastern Kentucky's workforce. Ongoing improvements in both the Teleworks USA workshops and relationships with employers have brought significant success to the initiative. Since January 2015, Teleworks USA has connected over 3,200 residents of the EKCEP service area to jobs with remote employers, representing more than \$73 million in potential new wages brought into the region. Most of these new teleworkers have been prepared and placed through the work of the staff of the nine Teleworks USA hubs (in Jackson, Perry, Lee, Owsley, Harlan, Pike, Leslie, Clay, and Lawrence counties). Due to changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Teleworks USA is transitioning to more of a virtual services model, with much less emphasis on face-to-face activities in the physical hub locations. The virtual services model has allowed Teleworks USA to continue to be productive and effective despite the pandemic restrictions, and promises well for future capacity to expand. The current employer demand for reliable teleworkers is almost limitless and shows no sign of fading.

The completion of the construction of a high-capacity "dark fiber" trunk line in Eastern Kentucky will further increase the remote-employment opportunities available to the region's workforce, as well as make it more feasible to attract employers to physically locate within the region to take advantage of its connectivity, which will then be the equal of anywhere in the United States.

The EKCEP Workforce Innovation Board has recognized these current economic conditions by establishing the following four sectors as its priorities for training expenditures:

- Healthcare

- Skilled Trades
- Energy Production and Transmission
- Business Services, including Information Technology and Customer Service
- Manufacturing

The TENCO Workforce Development Board has established the following sectors as its priorities for training expenditures:

- Healthcare
- Skilled Trades
- Manufacturing
- Logistics/Transportation
- Business Support Programs
- Agriculture

In all sectors, employers consistently request training in soft skills in addition to specific occupational skills. Soft skills training — provided in conjunction with work-based learning — continues to be an important element in workforce development services in the region.

To meet the coming employment opportunities in these sectors, job seekers will need assistance with setting attainable career goals, focusing their job searches, and choosing appropriate training. Job seekers often are not aware of the range of available occupations in the region that can offer a living wage and economic stability, especially with the steady expansion of job opportunities available online. Job seekers also need guidance in planning and preparing for their job search and in executing the steps in their job search process, such as writing resumes, developing job search strategies, finding job leads, and learning interviewing techniques. In sum, job seekers need assistance with career exploration and guidance, occupational information, access to resources, information about and access to training options, job search assistance, work experience, and education in soft skills and workplace behaviors. These needs emphasize the important role professional career advisors play in job seekers' successes.

Funds that enable the workforce system to remove the barriers that prevent some job seekers from employment success continue to be a strong need in the East Region. Along with increasing needs for services such as internships, on-the-job training, work experience, and other work-based learning placements that can open the doors to new career opportunities, EKCEP and TENCO anticipate an increasing need for the supportive services that make it economically feasible for adults to complete trainings for new careers. As the need to master new technologies and skills becomes increasingly important, workers will require support while pursuing training tied directly to employment opportunities.

- 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 [20 C.F.R. § 679.560(a)]

The East Region is comprised of the Eastern Kentucky C.E.P., Inc. and the TENCO local workforce areas, consisting of 33 rural counties: Bath, Bell, Boyd, Bracken, Breathitt, Carter, Clay, Elliott, Fleming, Floyd, Greenup, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lewis, Magoffin, Martin, Mason, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Robertson, Rowan, and Wolfe. The East Region contains 14% of the total population of Kentucky, and the overall population for the East Region continues to decrease.

Regional Analysis

633,914

POPULATION

Population decreased by 24,702 over the last 5 years and is projected to decrease an additional 20,338 over the next five years.

514,655

**Working Age
Population**

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Labor Force participation rate decreased from 41% in 2016 to 39.8% in 2020.

67,671

**Bachelor and
Associate Degree**

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

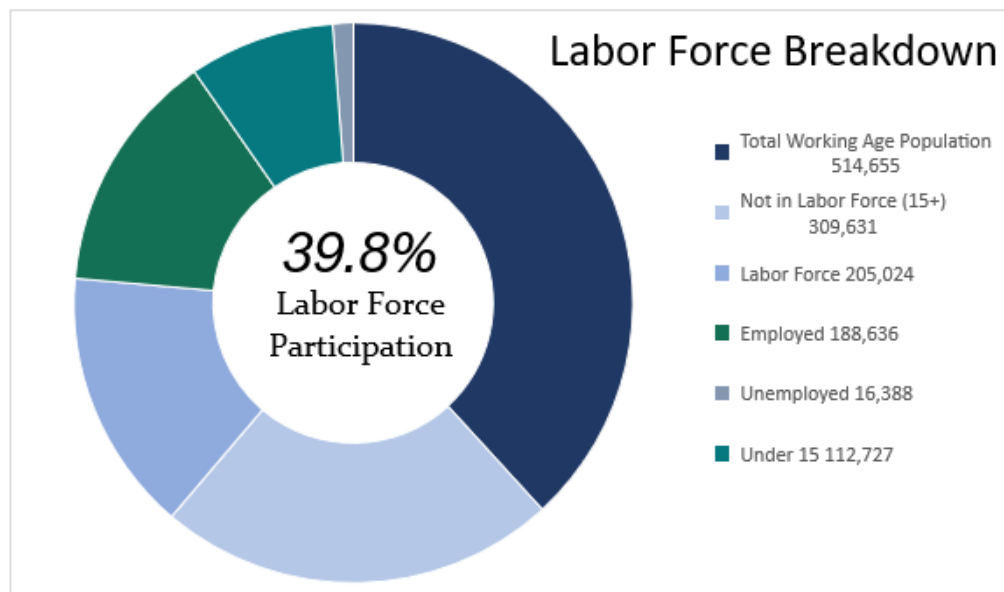
7.5% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree and 7.9% hold an Associate's Degree.

40

Median Age

POPULATION BY AGE

Median age of the population is 40.3% which is 1.5% higher than Kentucky's median age.



East Region Population

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Region	658,616	652,949	646,470	642,277	637,313	633,914
EKCEP	454,003	449,019	442,941	439,356	435,043	431,497
TENCO	204,613	203,930	203,529	202,921	202,270	202,417

Average Unemployment Rate for the East Region

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
East Region	9.47%	8.05%	6.58%	6.5%	7.99%
Kentucky	5.0%	4.8%	4.3%	4.3%	6.6%

The five counties with the highest unemployment rates for 2020 are:

EAST REGION COUNTY	2020 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Magoffin	16.1%
Harlan	11.9%
Martin	11.6%
Letcher	10.2%
Breathitt	10.2%

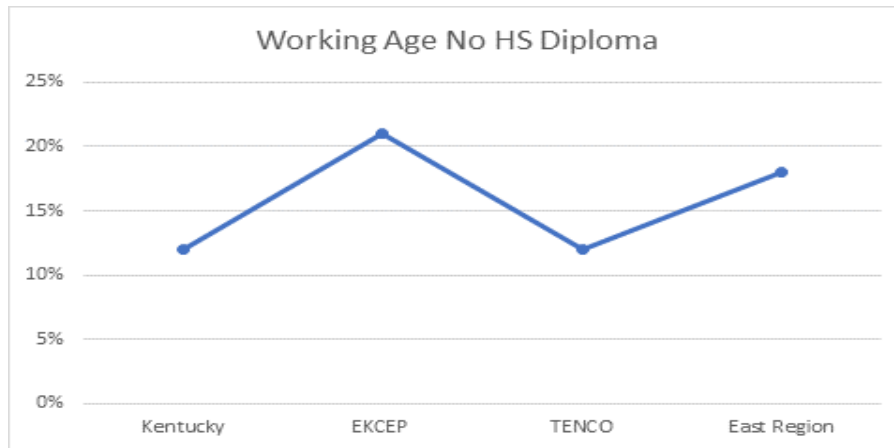
The five counties with the lowest unemployment rates for 2020 are:

EAST REGION COUNTY	2020 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Robertson	6.1%
Bracken	6.2%
Morgan	6.9%
Lee	7.0%
Fleming	7.3%

The poverty rate for the East Region has declined from 29.2% (2017) to 25.6% in 2020, representing a decline of 3.6%. However, the East Region's poverty rate is still 8.8% higher than the statewide poverty rate for Kentucky (16.8%). The counties with the highest poverty rates include: Leslie (36%), Harlan (35%), Bell (34%), Breathitt (34%), Lee (33%), and Perry (34%). (*KYStats*)

The secondary and post-secondary training institutions in the East Region continuously seek opportunities to improve upon the educational level in the geographical area. At a minimum, a high school diploma or its equivalent is necessary for entry-level employment. Current KY Stats data indicates the East Region as a whole has an average high school graduation rate of 95%.

Of the 33 counties in the East Region, there are 14 counties in which 20% or more of their working age population lacks a high school diploma or the equivalent. These include the following: Knox (22%), Harlan (23%), Bell (26%), Letcher (22%), Clay (33%), Knott (20%), Breathitt (22%), Jackson (21%), Lawrence (22%), Leslie (23%), Magoffin (25%), Lee (27%), Wolfe (20%), and Owsley (23%). The goal of Kentucky's Work Ready Communities Initiative is for counties to have 15% or less of the working age population lacking a high school diploma.



All counties in the East Region show 30% or more residents that have some college credits, which include certifications and licenses. The East Region includes eighteen counties that have 20% or more of the population with an Associate degree or higher: Bath, Boyd, Bracken, Breathitt, Fleming, Greenup, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Letcher, Martin, Mason, Montgomery, Robertson, Rowan, Perry, and Pike.

Five counties have a post-secondary educational attainment (Associate or higher) rate of 15% or less: Clay, Elliott, Lee, Magoffin, and Wolfe. The Work Ready Community Initiative has challenged Kentucky counties to achieve an educational level in which 32% of their residents age 25-64 have a two-year degree or higher within three years, and to achieve an educational level of 39% with a two-year degree or higher within five years. (*KYStats*)

Many of the concerns affecting the East Region — including high poverty rates, low educational attainment levels, poor graduation rates, and the percentage of the population lacking a high school diploma or the equivalent — are being addressed through initiatives such as SOAR (Shaping Our Appalachian Region) and Work Ready Communities. Six counties in the East Region have been recognized and certified as Work Ready: Montgomery, Rowan, Fleming, Mason, Greenup, and Boyd. Another 18 counties in the East Region have been certified as “Work Ready in Progress,” meaning that they have made significant progress toward meeting the standards required to be certified as Work Ready. These counties are: Lewis, Carter, Lawrence, Johnson, Martin, Magoffin, Floyd, Knott, Perry, Letcher, Owsley, Lee, Jackson, Knox, Bath, Harlan, Clay and Bell.

Another concern affecting the East Region is the aging workforce; the highest percentage of the region’s population falls into the 45-64 age range. Projections indicate that 28% of the region’s current workforce could retire within the next 10 to 20 years. Youth ages 16-24 make up only 11% of the region’s current population. This increases the concern that existing businesses may not have the workforce they need once individuals retire from their current positions. It also increases the concern that it will be difficult to attract new, high-tech businesses to the region.

Other factors that characterize the regional workforce and affect the economic conditions of the East Region include:

- **Disabilities** – Of the East Region’s residents of prime working age (18 to 64), 28.1% in EKCEP and 19% in TENCO acknowledge a disability. These percentages are higher than Kentucky’s statewide percentage (15.9%).
- **Offenders** – In 2017, there were 24,598 crimes in the East Region associated with Drug/Narcotics, Burglary, Assault, Vandalism, Larceny, Theft, Robbery, Stolen Property, Sexual Offenses, Kidnapping,

Homicide, Arson, Fraud, Extortion, Forgery, Counterfeiting, Bribery, Pornography, Prostitution, or Human Trafficking that caused individuals to become involved in the adult correctional system. (Note: This is the number of crimes, not the number of individuals who committed crimes.) The top three offenses included: Drug/Narcotics (8,771, an increase of 1,669 from 2016), Larceny (6,105, an increase of 140 from 2016), Assault (3,596, a decrease of 32 from 2016). The five counties with the most criminal activity based on their population are: Bell, Boyd, Knox, Montgomery, and Perry. (kystatepolice.org)

- **Commuting Distances** – Due to limited employment opportunities in many of the region’s counties, a significant number of individuals must commute outside of the county in which they reside to find employment. An average of 61% of the residents in the East Region travel outside of their home county for employment. This indicates a need for additional job opportunities at a higher wage in the East Region. (*2020 Commuting Patterns Report*)
- **Low Wages** – The average median household income for the 33 counties that comprise the East Region has steadily increased from \$32,471.00 in 2018 to \$37,798.54 in 2020. Although this shows an increase for families in the East Region, the median household income continues to be significantly below Kentucky’s overall median income of \$50,589. (*KYStats*)
- **Veterans** – There are 30,406 veterans living in the region in 2019 with the highest percentage of veterans based on population being in the counties of Boyd (7.4%), Greenup (6.5%), Montgomery (6.2%), Fleming (5.8%), and Harlan (5.3%).

- D. **(R)** 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 capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers 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).

The workforce development activities in the East Region of Kentucky (EKCEP and TENCO) are focused on helping job seekers prepare for and obtain careers that pay a self-sufficient wage while helping employers — in both existing and emerging sectors — find or develop the workers they need to prosper and help grow the region’s economy. The WIOA and workforce development board staff in both local workforce areas work closely with the partner agencies required under WIOA and with other organizations to ensure that both job seekers and employers receive a full array of services to make it possible for these goals to be met.

Job seekers need assistance with setting attainable career goals, focusing their job searches, choosing appropriate training, and removing the barriers that might keep them from succeeding in their training or new employment. Job seekers are often not aware of the range of available occupations in the region that can offer a living wage and economic stability — especially with the constant expansion of job opportunities available online. Job seekers also need guidance in planning and preparing for their job search and in executing the steps in their job search process, such as writing resumes, developing job search strategies, finding job leads, and learning successful interviewing techniques. In sum, job seekers need assistance with career exploration and guidance, occupational information, access to resources, information about and access to training options, job search assistance, work experience, and education in

soft skills and workplace behaviors. For these reasons, the role of the Career Advisor is crucial in the region's workforce development system.

Career Advisors are the central and most important element of the WIOA-funded workforce development system. Career advisors work with clients to understand their circumstances, aptitudes, interests, barriers, and career objectives, use this information to place or refer those clients into the services that will take them to their career objective, and work with clients every step of the way as the clients pursue and attain their objectives. The career advisor will evaluate each client's needs and circumstances, then develop a career action plan of assessments, services, and guidance that will empower clients to make realistic decisions about their employment goals and enact those decisions to reach those goals.

Although career advisors may use their knowledge of and relationships with partner agencies and organizations to connect clients with many services through referrals, the career advisors stay in close touch with clients and participate in the client's decision-making and problem solving.

The services career advisors can use to help a client reach his/her job goal include:

- Career Advising
- Assessments
- Basic Skills Instruction
- Workshops (e.g., soft skills)
- Work Experience/Internships
- Training (either ITA or Non-ITA)
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Customized Training (CT)
- Referrals to Partner Programs
- Referrals to Employment

In cases where it is appropriate, career advisors also can help job seekers become their own boss through entrepreneurship training.

In alignment with the emphasis of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, much of the training facilitated by the East Region's workforce development system involves work-based learning opportunities. Often the best path to acquiring the skills a job seeker needs for a new career is a work-based learning placement (i.e., work experience, internship, on-the-job training) in which they can earn while learning and proving their value and work ethics to their employer. This is especially true for many Eastern Kentuckians who have been displaced from their previous jobs by the region's economic downturn. Work experience, internships, and on-the-job training are major elements in the region's services, providing an opportunity for businesses of all sizes to "road test" potential employees while ensuring that they get the precise and specific training that they need to best benefit both the worker and the employer.

The business services representatives of both local areas work closely with employers and the other members of the Employer Services Teams (comprised of the business services representatives of KCTCS institutions, CDO, and other workforce system partners) to stay abreast of the workforce needs of the region's employers and to collaborate with employers and each other to craft training solutions that meet those needs.

In addition to supporting employment in existing business sectors, the EKCEP local area has invested significant resources in creating earn and learn opportunities to build new job opportunities in the region's nascent Information Technology (IT) sector. The IT sector not only creates employment opportunities within the sector itself, but also opens the door for economic growth for the entire region.

TENCO intends to review EKCEPs involvement and contribution in supporting the IT sector to determine if the TENCO local area could replicate a similar project for the northern part of the East Region.

In the growing and potentially huge IT sector, traditional two-year and four- year academic training programs are becoming increasingly less important to some tech-centric employers, who prefer specific skills-based certifications, internships, and other work-based learning situations that allow workers to produce actual products while demonstrating their abilities, capacity to learn, and creativity to potential employers and/or customers. Some of these high-tech internships may last over a year — such as programs that train computer programming/coding interns — while at the lower end of tech-based careers, unskilled job seekers can learn enough basic computer skills and customer service skills in a four-week training to land home-based telework jobs working for remote employers. EKCEP is supporting a variety of these work-based learning opportunities.

The East Region also has an opportunity to support the continually expanding aerospace industry. Like the IT sector, the East Region currently has limited employment in the aerospace industry, but it has potential to become one of the largest industries in the region. The One East Kentucky region successfully achieved their AEROready Certification from Common Sense Economic Development. This certification informs industrial site selectors that the area has met the criteria — including availability of local training in technical skills and an available skilled workforce — necessary to support aerospace industries. The support for Eastern Kentucky to be an “aerospace corridor” is widespread, with AEP, One East Kentucky and Ashland Alliance leading the charge. With coal and steel industries decreasing in the area, Eastern Kentucky has the workforce necessary for the aerospace industry to excel, including eight times the national average of metal workers.

Morehead State University (MSU) provides a unique opportunity for the region to participate in space exploration through the Ronald G. Eaglin Space Science Center, which opened in 2009. Students in the Space Science program at MSU are actively involved in planning, designing, construction, and operation of satellites, and work closely with NASA and other aerospace agencies. Other training institutions, such as Maysville Community and Technical College, have plans to modify the curricula of certain programs to include training such as construction, maintenance, and operation of drones.

When job seekers need more traditional classroom training, there is a wide selection of postsecondary institutions that are located or offer instruction in the region, including:

- Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS) institutions, including:
 - Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College
 - Hazard Community & Technical College
 - Big Sandy Community & Technical College
 - Ashland Community & Technical College
 - Maysville Community & Technical College
- Regional State Universities, including:
 - Morehead State University
 - Eastern Kentucky University
- Private Colleges, including:
 - Union College
 - University of Pikeville
 - Alice Lloyd College

- Frontier Nursing University
- Kentucky Christian University
- Galen College of Nursing

The workforce development system in the East Region has worked closely with most of these institutions, especially in preparing workers for careers in the growing healthcare sector. Many of these institutions have proven very willing to adapt their class schedules, teaching methods, and even locations to meet the needs of regional employers and/or the region's job seekers.

The workforce development system in the East Region also is alert to opportunities for job seekers to become their own bosses by starting businesses

The specific job skills employers require for current and emerging employment opportunities in the East Region vary widely by occupation. In some sectors, the paths to the necessary skills are clearly defined. (For example, almost every job in the growing healthcare sector has a defined academic training program and certification that provides job seekers with the skills that qualify them for work.) In other sectors, the career path is less precisely defined and may offer several alternate routes. However, all occupations require basic skills in math, reading and comprehension, written and oral communications, problem solving, reasoning, and human relations. For this reason, both TENCO and EKCEP recognize the importance of the GED and work closely with Skills U providers throughout the region.

Basic computer literacy is becoming a requirement for a steadily increasing percentage of the jobs in today's economy, and especially in the home-based customer service jobs.

Regardless of sector, employers consistently request training in soft skills (e.g., work ethics, attendance, punctuality, teamwork) in addition to specific occupational skills. Soft skills training — in conjunction with work-based learning — must remain an important service element in the East Region.

The primary factor affecting workforce development services in the East Region is funding, especially in the TENCO local area. Additional funds to enable the workforce system to eliminate the barriers that prevent some job seekers from employment success continue to be a strong need in our region. As the region's economy struggles and more workers are displaced, there will be an increasing need for the supportive services that make it economically feasible for these former workers to meet their obligations and survive while they complete trainings for new careers. As the need to master new technologies and skills becomes increasingly important, workers will require support while pursuing training tied directly to employment opportunities.

Additionally, the proven strategy of work-based learning is expensive, often requiring supportive services as well as wage subsidies during the training period. As the WIOA law recognizes, internships, on-the-job training, work experience, and other work-based learning placements can very effectively open the door to new career opportunities, but they require adequate funding in order to have a significant economic impact.

In conclusion, the following are the identified strengths of the East Region:

- Partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and partner organizations.
- Unemployment Rates, although still higher than most areas of the state, were steadily decreasing prior to COVID-19.
- Business opportunities through business expansions, business location, remote work, and entrepreneurship continue to increase.

- Professional and technical skills training is easily available through multiple on-site locations and virtual opportunities.
- Outreach is provided more uniformly with web-based, virtual opportunities.
- Eligibility, registration, and services are available remotely via technology.
- Programs have been implemented to provide intensive job preparation, work-based learning opportunities, training, and direct links to employment to at-risk populations such as offenders, individuals in recovery, those lacking high school diplomas/equivalency, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.
- Youth programs are expanding and offering holistic services.

The obstacles facing the East Region include:

- Transportation is limited across the region which restricts at-risk job seekers from obtaining and retaining employment.
- The opioid crisis has heavily affected Eastern Kentucky workers and businesses.
- The “benefit cliff” effect, social acceptance, and a cultural belief of entitlement keeps generations of families on government assistance.
- Lower wages create significant shortages in high-demand occupations such as healthcare, where workers can continuously move between businesses that pay a higher wage and/or provide better benefits; lower wages also make it difficult to attract skilled employees to the region.
- Poverty levels remain high.
- Skilled and professional educational levels are increasing but at a slower rate than most of the state.
- Workforce participation rates remain the lowest in the state.
- Job readiness preparation has been identified as a consistent need by businesses.

The local Workforce Development Boards ensure workforce services are available through the Kentucky Career Centers by providing basic career services, individualized services, and training opportunities. Partnerships with multiple agencies are a priority for ensuring the success of individuals and businesses. These partnerships allow the Workforce Development Boards to recognize and utilize the regional/local strengths to produce independent strategic plans that support business service activity, partner services, community projects, school events, and individual customer services.

- 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 C.F.R. § 679.560(a)]

The job skills necessary to obtain the current and emerging employment opportunities in Eastern Kentucky vary widely by occupation. However, all occupations require basic skills in math, reading and comprehension, written and oral communications, problem solving, reasoning, and human relations. Employers also continue to ask the workforce system to help train job candidates in basic work ethics and soft skills such as attendance, punctuality, and teamwork.

Basic computer literacy remains a requirement for what continues to be an increasing percentage of the jobs in today’s digital economy. In this borderless economy, access to remote-work job opportunities has grown exponentially with an expansion of remote work/telework opportunities related in part to the

closure of “brick-and-mortar” offices resulting from 2020’s COVID-19 pandemic. Even as restrictions on sharing work space have begun to ease in some business sectors, the spread of teleworking has not lessened. Knowledge-based employers are seeing increased productivity of employees and reduced physical-plant overhead costs thanks to the increasing emphasis and acceptance of teleworking. EKCEP’s experience and growing employer partnerships reveal that this teleworking boom includes not only increased demand for entry-level customer service and technical support employees through EKCEP’s Teleworks USA initiative, but also new, higher-skilled opportunities in other sectors, including cybersecurity, insurance claims adjusting, and others. These sectors are now more accepting of teleworking than ever before.

In some sectors, the paths to the necessary skills are clearly defined. For example, almost every job in the healthcare sector has a defined academic training program and certification that provides job seekers with the skills that qualify them for work. The healthcare sector has more skilled-worker demands than in previous years due to the strain COVID-19 has placed on healthcare providers.

In other sectors, there are multiple paths that can lead to a successful career. For example, in the still-growing IT sector, defined two-year and four-year academic training programs are becoming increasingly less important to some tech-centric employers than specific skills-based certifications, internships, and other work-based learning situations that allow workers to produce actual products while demonstrating their abilities, capacity to learn, and creativity to potential employers and/or customers. Some of these high-tech internships may last nearly a year — such as programs that train computer programming/coding interns — while at the lower end of tech-based careers, unskilled job seekers still can learn enough basic computer skills and customer service skills in a four-week training to land home-based telework jobs working for remote employers.

For many Eastern Kentuckians, the best path to acquire the skills they need for a new career may be a work-based learning placement (i.e., work experience, internship, on-the-job training) in which they can earn while learning and proving their value and work ethics to their employer. EKCEP is introducing an internship program — called “One Up” — that places strong emphasis on this model. One Up will help ensure Eastern Kentucky’s current college students can get plugged into subsidized internship experiences with employers in the region who have developed, with EKCEP’s assistance, a well-defined internship experience containing skills development, benchmarks, and challenges in an on-the-job, mentored, on-the-floor workplace setting. One Up participants may include students in postsecondary education programs who are heading toward a certification or degree, or students who have graduated in the past year but aren’t yet capitalizing on their earned credentials. EKCEP will provide students who are building skills that are sought by partnering employers with access to internship opportunities with those employers. One Up will match the talents that these students are building in their chosen programs of study with the talents the region’s employers are seeking. This effort will be a key component in helping meet the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board’s (EKWIB’s) strategic goal to increase workforce participation in the EKCEP Local Workforce Development Area by three percent annually over the course of the next five years.

Chapter 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

- A. (L) Describe the local board’s strategic vision and goals to support regional economic growth and self-efficiency. Include goals in preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). Also, include as applicable a description

of any plans to generate new strategic vision and goals in the coming year and indicate the timeframe for such activities to occur. Strengthen to the extent possible 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)] TEGL 7-20

The strategic vision and goals of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) are stated in its Strategic Plan, as follows:

MISSION — The Eastern Kentucky WIB’s mission is to “Prepare, advance, and expand the workforce of eastern Kentucky.”

GOALS — The Eastern Kentucky WIB’s goals are:

- More — and better — job opportunities for the citizens of our region.
- A better-educated and better-prepared workforce in our region.
- A more diverse economy in our region.

VISION — The Eastern Kentucky WIB’s Strategic Plan includes its visions for the region of Eastern Kentucky, the workforce system in Eastern Kentucky, and the role of the WIB:

- Vision for the Region of Eastern Kentucky —The WIB’s vision for the region of Eastern Kentucky includes the goals below that expand its influence with other key components of the workforce system like economic development, secondary and post-secondary education, and others — with the outcome being that the WIB will have a more tangible effect on job creation, educational and skills attainment, graduation rates, economic development and diversity, and job placement and retention. The goals associated with this vision are:
 - Employers — new, existing, and emerging — have an adequate supply of well-educated and well-trained workers.
 - Residents have the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes to work and earn incomes that make them self-sufficient.
 - The region exhibits improved college and career readiness among high school graduates
- Vision for the Region’s Workforce System —The WIB’s vision for the region’s Workforce System includes the goals below for services and programs driven by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the current federal law that guides service delivery for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. These goals also include those shared by the Workforce Innovation Board and various partner agencies in the overall, integrated workforce system, including: postsecondary education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Kentucky Adult Education, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, Kentucky Office of Employment and Training, Experience Works, Job Corps, YouthBuild, Kentucky Office for the Blind, and Kentucky Department for Community Based Services, as well as programs authorized under the federal Wagner-Peyser Act. The goals associated with this vision are:
 - Lifelong learning and skills development are integral parts of the workforce system. Long-standing relationships between employers and educators keep education and training opportunities one step ahead of the needs of the market.
 - The system partners with those industries and businesses that drive the regional economy. It also works with chambers of commerce and economic development entities throughout the region to identify and support emerging industries vital to the region’s continued growth and diversification.

- Strong commitments to innovation, productivity, accountability, and results keep the system flexible and responsive to employers’ and residents’ ever-changing workforce needs.
- Vision for the EKCEP Workforce Innovation Board —The WIB’s vision for the role of the WIB includes the goals below that set the course for continued innovation in service delivery and the leveraging of additional funding to create new revenue streams that shape and guide organized activity outside the scope of WIOA. The goals associated with this vision are:
 - The EKCEP WIB will continue to explore ways to influence economic development and provide citizens’ access to more and better jobs through the use of innovation and telework programs.
 - EKCEP will continue to identify and pursue new revenue streams and leverage funding to diversify the employment base and expand activity outside the scope of WIA.
 - The EKCEP WIB will set the regional workforce agenda. It will be widely recognized for its excellence as a leader and governing board, and for its commitment to making a difference.

CORE VALUES—In addition to defining its mission, goals, and visions, the Eastern Kentucky WIB’s Strategic Plan also identifies five core values that the WIB believes must be embraced and practiced in order for it to succeed in its mission and attain its visions and goals. These core values are:

- Innovation — We believe we must remain creative and embrace emerging technologies and opportunities in order to not only strengthen economic development now, but also anticipate and plan for future growth and expansion.
- Diversity — We believe that if Eastern Kentucky is to grow to new levels, sustain our citizens, and support both new and existing business, we must pursue economic diversification.
- Collaboration — We believe we must seek, build, and nurture collaborative partnerships that will leverage the workforce system with other service providers to bring about more success for jobseekers and employers than we can accomplish alone.
- Vision — We believe that to positively change the economic landscape of our region, it will take a unified strategic effort and focused planning powered by a strong vision that guides the collective actions of education, economic development, and workforce partners.
- Adaptability — We believe that we must remain nimble and flexible in creating and delivering relevant workforce and employer services that have the most impact on jobseekers and employers and economic development throughout the region.

- B. (L) Describe how the local board’s vision and goals relate to the Commonwealth’s goals, initiatives and priorities as outlined in the WIOA State Plan.

Under the guidance of the EKWIB, EKCEP’s work and objectives are well aligned with elements of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board’s state plan *“Kentucky Work Ready — An Urgent Call to Action.”* EKCEP’s strategies, initiatives, and processes align especially well with the KWIB plan’s Strategic Goal 1 for Employers (“Actively engage employers to drive Kentucky’s workforce development system”) and Strategic Goal 3 for Workforce Participation (“Increase Kentucky’s workforce participation by creating opportunities, incenting workforce participation, and removing employment barriers for Kentuckians.”)

STRATEGIC GOAL #1: Employers — Several EKCEP initiatives and projects are designed to encourage “employers (large and small) to assume leadership roles in workforce development programming.” EKCEP concurs with the KWIB that “Employer engagement . . . is fundamental to the realization of a future in which the Commonwealth workforce system consistently delivers highly trained and flexible workers that create value for employers” and that “consistent industry input and guidance throughout the skills development continuum is essential to align the training of workers to the skills they will need

to succeed in the workplace now, and into the future.” A few of the EKCEP activities that reflect this vision include:

- *“One Up” Internship Program* — EKCEP is introducing an internship program — called “One Up” — that places strong emphasis on the idea that a work-based learning placement may be beneficial to both the job seeker and the employer. An EKCEP-led employer advisory group developed the One Up model, under which employers in the region will develop, with EKCEP’s assistance, well-defined internship experiences containing skills development, benchmarks, and challenges, to be delivered in an on-the-job, mentored, on-the-floor workplace setting. One Up will help ensure Eastern Kentucky’s current college students can get plugged into subsidized internship experiences with these employers. One Up participants may include students in postsecondary education programs who are heading toward a certification or degree or students who have graduated in the past year but aren’t yet capitalizing on their earned credentials. These students who are building skills that are sought by the partnering employers will get access to internship opportunities with those employers. One Up will match the talents that these students are building in their chosen programs of study with the talents the region’s employers are seeking. In addition to being employer-driven, the One Up effort will be a component in helping meet the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board’s (EKWIB’s) strategic goal to increase workforce participation in the EKCEP Local Workforce Development Area. One Up obviously aligns with the KWIB’s Objective 1b: “Establish a clear channel for employer engagement in workforce development services” and Objective 1c: “Increase the number of employers participating in work-based learning experiences and apprenticeships,” as well as the KWIB’s call to “Increase in the number of registered apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities sponsored by employers.”
- *Galen College of Nursing Externship Program* — Driven by Appalachian Regional Healthcare’s strongly expressed need for more registered nurses, EKCEP collaborated with this employer and the Galen College of Nursing in a venture that allows students to do work experience at the Hazard ARH Hospital while studying at the Galen location in Hazard. In ARH’s experience, recently graduated nurses sometimes leave their first job because they are not happy or comfortable in that hospital area or specialty. The externship program allows nurses to experience different areas and specialties while in school in order to get a better understanding of them. It also builds a relationship between the nurses and the employer that continues after graduation, when—if the nurse remains at ARH—the employer will help pay off the cost of their nursing degree. This extern program aligns with the KWIB’s Objective 1b: “Establish a clear channel for employer engagement in workforce development services,” and Objective 1c: “Increase the number of employers participating in work-based learning experiences and apprenticeships,” as well as the KWIB’s call to “Increase in the number of registered apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities sponsored by employers.”
- *Teleworks USA* — EKCEP’s Teleworks USA initiative is wholly driven by the hiring needs of the remote employers who hire home-based workforces. Teleworks USA staff maintains close contact with many major employers in the remote work field and stays aware of their hiring needs, skill preferences, and procedures. As a result, Teleworks USA is able to recruit, prepare, and place Eastern Kentucky workers in home-based online jobs that include benefits, vacations, opportunities for advancement, etc. Since 2015, Teleworks USA has helped these employers hire over 3,200 Kentuckians. Teleworks USA has obviously not only established but sustained “a clear channel for employer engagement in workforce development services.”
- *Healthcare Pathways Partnership Program* — EKCEP’s Healthcare Pathways Partnership Program is an employer-driven initiative designed to alleviate healthcare workforce shortages by creating sustainable employment and training programs in healthcare occupations serving rural populations. Funded by a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Program, the Healthcare Pathways Partnership Program was conceived, designed, and will be implemented by a collaborative of:

- Eastern Kentucky healthcare systems, including: Appalachian Regional Healthcare, Pikeville Medical Center, Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation, Primary Care Centers of Eastern Kentucky, Juniper Health, Mountain Manor of Paintsville, and Rockcastle Regional Medical Center.
- Postsecondary education and training providers, including: Galen College of Nursing, University of Pikeville, Big Sandy Community and Technical College, Hazard Community and Technical College, Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College.
- Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Workforce Center's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) system.
- EKCEP.

The program was developed in response to employers' increased demand for healthcare workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in rural Eastern Kentucky areas where there was already an acute need. Through the Healthcare Pathways Partnership Program, approximately 446 unemployed or underemployed individuals and 54 incumbent workers will gain access to employment and support services, training, and placement assistance. At least 400 participants are expected to gain employment or advance into positions in patient-facing occupations in the healthcare sector, focused largely on nursing pathways (CNA, CMA, LPN, RN). EKCEP's Healthcare Pathways Partnership Program will utilize a four-pronged approach: (1) Develop four Regional Healthcare "Career Navigator" Positions; (2) Adjust advanced skills training programs to include employer-driven skillsets; (3) Develop regional healthcare career ladder advancement partnerships between employers, training programs, and EKCEP; and (4) Create a regional healthcare virtual career portal platform.

- *Talent Pipeline Management* — EKCEP is involved in the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's Talent Pipeline Management efforts, focusing on the healthcare industry in the region. Talent Pipeline Management is designed to "Establish a clear channel for employer engagement in workforce development services."

Along with other EKCEP strategies and programs, the five examples above have met the KWIB's Objective 1a "Create a workforce development system that is valued by employers," which has in turn produced the KWIB's desired "increase in employer engagement in . . . workforce development."

STRATEGIC GOAL #3: Workforce Participation — Several EKCEP initiatives and programs are closely aligned with the KWIB's Strategic Goal 3 — Workforce Participation: "Increase Kentucky's workforce participation by creating opportunities, incenting workforce participation, and removing employment barriers for Kentuckians." As the local workforce area with the lowest workforce participation rate in the state, EKCEP has long been focused on efforts to increase workforce participation. A few of the EKCEP initiatives and programs that align with this KWIB goal are:

- *Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery and Training (eKART)* — The eKART program bridges the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery by providing them with valuable career, training, and supportive services, and by cultivating and supporting second-chance employment opportunities. eKART also helps teach Eastern Kentucky businesses ways to provide a supportive environment for newly employed individuals in recovery, thus increasing the opportunities for work-based training and apprenticeships, while simultaneously partnering with addiction treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals who are appropriate for those opportunities. Those targeted to be served, trained, and/or placed in employment under eKART have completed or are in the latter stages of a reputable treatment program which provides aftercare that includes ongoing counseling, accountability, and support. As these recovering individuals are placed with trained employers, eKART's Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches help ensure their success, providing support, guidance, and resources to the new workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise. To date, eKART has placed over 290 recovering Eastern Kentuckians in unsubsidized jobs. This work aligns with the KWIB's Objective 3e, "Develop and Pursue strategies

that increase the number of Kentuckians, work-ready and free from the influence of substance abuse,” Objective 3d, “Develop and promote strategies for employers to address employment barriers,” and Objective 3a, “Strengthen collaboration across workforce development, social services, employers and non-profits to address barriers to employment for individuals.” eKART also expands the successful partnership between EKCEP and Addiction Recovery Care (ARC), Inc. (arccenters.com), which is successfully training individuals in recovery to become Peer Support Specialists, enabling them to return to the workforce in jobs where they can help other individuals enter and complete recovery. eKART is supported in part by a \$1,461,000 POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) Grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Other money that supports eKART comes from: Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) funding through the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services; funding from the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet’s Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP); and EKCEP’s WIOA formula funding. The multiple fund sources that support eKART align with the KWIB’s Objective 3c, “Embed programs serving specific populations across cabinets to promote workforce participation.”

- *SITE (Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment)* — EKCEP administers and delivers the statewide SITE (Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment) program, which —like eKART — helps bridge the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery by providing them with valuable career and supportive services, and by cultivating and supporting second-chance employment opportunities. SITE helps Kentucky businesses learn to provide a supportive environment for newly employed individuals in recovery, thus increasing the opportunities for work-based training and apprenticeships, while simultaneously partnering with addiction treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals who are appropriate for those opportunities. Those targeted to be served and placed in employment by SITE have completed or are in the latter stages of a reputable treatment program which provides aftercare that includes ongoing counseling, accountability, and support. As these recovering individuals are placed with trained employers, SITE’s Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches help ensure their success, providing support, guidance, and resources to the new workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise. This work aligns with the KWIB’s Objective 3e, “Develop and Pursue strategies that increase the number of Kentuckians, work-ready and free from the influence of substance abuse,” Objective 3d, “Develop and promote strategies for employers to address employment barriers,” and Objective 3a, “Strengthen collaboration across workforce development, social services, employers and non-profits to address barriers to employment for individuals. SITE is funded by Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) funds through the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services and funding from the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet’s Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP). This funding from two cabinets, along with EKCEP’s administrative involvement, align with the KWIB’s Objective 3c, “Embed programs serving specific populations across cabinets to promote workforce participation.”
- *Opportunity Youth Program* — EKCEP’s WIOA Youth Program — called “Opportunity Youth” — is designed as a robustly structured community-based program that addresses essential life skills and work skills, training, career coaching, and support services for youth who are disengaged from the workforce and education. The service model focuses on Eastern Kentuckians ages 18-24 who are not attending school of any kind and are at risk of long-term unemployment or under-employment, emphasizing career advising and transition into employment. The program delivers services that are relevant to the employment and training needs of these youth, using structured curricula in a progression that leads each youth to obtain an industry-recognized credential and/or unsubsidized employment as a part of a career path that leads toward a high-wage, high-demand occupation. The WIOA services are integrated with other appropriate community services provided by partners, including: social service agencies, adult education, vocational rehabilitation services, residential treatment providers, medical and behavioral health care agencies, the criminal justice system, and other entities that provide the program elements and services to assist out-of-school youth ages 18-24 to lead happy, healthy, and successful lives. By focusing on at-risk youth with a community-based

array of services, the Opportunity Youth program aligns with the KWIB's Objective 3a, "Strengthen collaboration across workforce development, social services, employers and non-profits to address barriers to employment for individuals," and Objective 3d, "Develop and promote strategies for employers to address employment barriers."

STRATEGIC GOAL #2: Education — By introducing internet-based employment opportunities in the digital economy to Eastern Kentucky workers of all ages, EKCEP's Teleworks USA initiative (described above) aligns strongly with KWIB's Objective 2e, "Create opportunities for early, mid, and later-career learning for all Kentucky workers to provide a range of learning opportunities for growth, upskilling, and adaptation to changes in the nature and structure of work." Teleworks USA's work to inform job seekers of the changing opportunities in internet-based work and to prepare them to adapt to new opportunities certainly aligns with this objective.

- C. (L) Describe how the local board's vision and goals take into account an analysis of the strategies in working partnership with the other entities that carry out the core programs, and the required partners in the alignment of resources.

The vision and goals of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) were established through an inclusive strategic planning process that involved a wide array of stakeholders within the EKCEP region. EKCEP's process was designed to create a strategic plan that defined not only the ways EKCEP spends the dollars it controls in the region, but also the ways its actions and programs reflect priorities shared with its partner organizations and therefore influence the ways they spend their allocations within the region.

To develop a consensus on regional vision and plan, EKCEP polled its partners and regional stakeholders in workforce development, secondary education, postsecondary education, government, community action, and business to determine their priorities and strategic objectives, and to quiz them on their vision for the role and most important functions of the workforce system and the WIB.

The resulting strategic plan is simple and very focused, clearly stating four primary results-based goals, as well as defining EKCEP's core values, mission, and vision for that region, the workforce system, and the WIB. Because it is a strategic document, the plan does not include tactics to accomplish goals or specific methods of measurement. However, the plan does reference these details as they appear in separate background support documents that clearly illustrate how the highlighted goals will be tracked and measured. It also includes a version of a "report card" showing how the region and work of the workforce system rate when compared to other comparable regions and sectors (for example, areas such as the Lake Cumberland LWIA and other states like West Virginia) in order to come up with a baseline against which to compare EKCEP's regional success.

The completed plan was shared with EKCEP's partners, and further comments were allowed. The plan was then adopted by the WIB.

By using this strategic plan to guide its decisions, the EKCEP WIB is incorporating the input and vision of its partners and other interested stakeholders into its expenditures and guidance of the workforce development system.

EKCEP has been closely involved in the SOAR (Shaping Our Appalachian Region) initiative, which has worked to build consensus and a shared vision on an even larger scale about what the Eastern Kentucky region will become in the wake of the decline of coal as an economic driver. EKCEP's Strategic Plan has served as the framework for much of its involvement in the SOAR initiative, and its validity has been

reinforced by the fact that the mission, vision, and goals developed and adopted by SOAR closely resemble — and comfortably align with — the vision and goals in EKCEP’s Strategic Plan:

Mission — SOAR’s mission is to expand job creation, enhance regional opportunity, innovation, and identity, improve the quality of life, and support all those working to achieve these goals in Appalachian Kentucky.

Vision — SOAR’s vision is an Appalachian Kentucky engaged in a landscape-changing enterprise: shaped by a shared and envisioned future, driven by innovation, entrepreneurship, and a commitment to common purpose, with improved education, health, and economic outcomes, and expanding opportunities, for all our region’s citizens.

Values — SOAR is a widely-shared enterprise. Our commitment to build greater prosperity, resilience, and equity in the region is posited upon a belief that support for, and strengthened partnerships among, those already working to achieve these goals is the wisest course. Our trust rests in the region’s greatest assets, upon which this future will be built: its people, places, and heritage, and in these mountains we call home.

Chapter 3: Alignment of Local and Regional 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 in order to provide services. Include 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 should also include a descriptive overview of the local workforce development system; include 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, Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another.

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

The strategic vision for the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) to achieve its mission (outlined in 2.A, above) emphasizes working closely with the required and optional partner agencies to align resources in order to carry out the core programs and meet the regional goals as efficiently as possible.

In Eastern Kentucky, the workforce system partners include:

- WIOA Title I programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth — Operated by EKCEP's nine contractor service providers (Bell-Whitley CAA, Big Sandy Area CAP, Daniel Boone CAA, Gateway CAA, Harlan County CAA, Knox County EOC CAP, LKLP CAC, Middle Kentucky CAP, Northeast Kentucky CAA).
- Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act - Career and Technical Education and Postsecondary Vocational Education — Provided through KCTCS and other postsecondary education institutions.
- Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Title II Adult Education — Skills U (Kentucky Adult Education).
- Veteran's Workforce Programs — Kentucky Career Development Office.
- Unemployment Insurance — Kentucky Labor Cabinet.
- Wagner-Peyser Act — Kentucky Career Development Office.
- Title V - Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP).
- Job Corps.
- KTAP, TANF and SNAP — Kentucky Department for Community Based Services.
- CSBG Employment and Training — LKLP CAC.

In its solicitation for entities to perform the services of One-Stop Operator throughout Eastern Kentucky's workforce development network, the EKWIB tasked the selected operators with:

- Coordinating the delivery of services of participating one-stop partners and service providers in the county or counties that the One-Stop Operator serves.
- Fostering a culture of collaboration and excellent customer service among one-stop partners that promotes delivery of the innovative, high quality workforce development services to all customers of the workforce development system.
- Convening and leading regularly scheduled meetings of the one-stop partners to build the collaborative culture, improve service delivery, and evaluate progress toward shared goals.
- Serving as a resource for staff of all partner agencies in regard to the objectives, processes, requirements, and regulations of WIOA and the workforce services delivery system.

The administrative structure for the key stakeholders associated with the partners in Eastern Kentucky's workforce development system are listed below:

Administrative Structure

State Workforce Agency

Entity Name: Kentucky Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development, Department for Workforce Investment

Address: 275 East Main Street, 2 W-A, Frankfort, KY 40621

Contact Person: Marty Hammons, Commissioner, Marty.Hammons@ky.gov

Administrative Entity

Entity Name: Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) LWDB & LWIA

Address: 412 Roy Campbell Drive, Suite 100, Hazard, KY 41701

Contact Persons:

Jeff Whitehead, Executive Director, jwhitehead@ekcep.org

Owen Grise, Senior Deputy Director for Administrative Support, Special Projects, and Target Groups, ogrise@ekcep.org

Fiscal Agent

Entity Name: Eastern Kentucky CEP (EKCEP) LWDB & LWIA
Address: 412 Roy Campbell Drive, Suite 100, Hazard, KY 41701
Contact Persons:

Jeff Whitehead, Executive Director, jwhitehead@ekcep.org
Tonya Collins, Director of Finance, tcollins@ekcep.org

Chief Elected Official

Eastern Kentucky C.E.P., Inc. Board of Directors

Contact Person: John Ed Pennington, Chairperson, jepennington@windstream.net
Address: 347 Railroad Ave., Manchester, KY 40962

Workforce Development Board

Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB)

Contact Person: Howard Blackburn, Chairperson, blackbho@ctbi.com

One-Stop Operator, Comprehensive Kentucky Career Center JobSight, Hazard **(as procured by the EKWIB)**

Entity Name: LKLP Community Action Council
Address: 398 Roy Campbell Drive, Hazard, KY 41701
Contact Persons:

Rick Baker, Executive Director, r.baker@lklp.net
Abbie Little, KCCJ Manager, a.little@lklp.net
Allison Brown, WIOA Director, a.brown@lklp.net

Counties Served: Leslie, Knott, Letcher, Perry

One-Stop Operators, KCC JobSight Network **(as procured by the EKWIB)**

Entity Name and Address: Bell-Whitley Community Action Agency
P.O. Box 159, Pineville, KY 40977
Phone: 606-337-3044

Contact Person: Craig Brock, Executive Director, craigbrock@bell-whitley.org

Counties Served: Bell

Entity Name and Address: Big Sandy Area Community Action Program
230 Court Street, Paintsville, KY 41240
Phone: 606-789-3641

Contact Person: Wanda Thacker, Executive Director, wthacker@bsacap.org

Counties Served: Floyd, Johnson, Magoffin, Martin, Pike

Entity Name and Address: Daniel Boone Community Action Agency
1535 Shamrock Road, Manchester, KY 40962
Phone: 606-598-4330

Contact Person: Mike Buckles, Executive Director, mike.buckles@danielboonecaa.org

Counties Served: Clay, Jackson

Entity Name and Address: Gateway Community Action Agency

151 University Dr., P.O. Box 367, West Liberty, KY 41472

Phone: 606-743-3133

Contact Person: Charlene Engle, Executive Director, charlene.engle@gcscap.org

Counties Served: Menifee, Morgan

Entity Name and Address: Harlan County Community Action Agency

319 Camden St., P.O. Box 1556, Harlan, KY 40831

Phone: 606-573-5335

Contact Person: Donna Pace, Executive Director, dpace@harlancountycaa.com

Counties Served: Harlan

Entity Name and Address: KCEOC Community Action Partnership

P.O. Box 490, Barbourville, KY 40906

Phone: 606-546-3152

Contact Person: Paul Dole, President and CEO, pdole@kceoc.com

Counties Served: Knox

Entity Name and Address: Middle Kentucky Community Action Partnership

1137 Main St., Suite 107, Jackson, KY 41339

Phone: 606-666-5902

Contact Person: Darrell Shouse, Executive Director, darrell.shouse@yahoo.com

Counties Served: Breathitt, Lee, Owsley, Wolfe

Entity Name and Address: Northeast Kentucky Community Action Agency

21039 West US 60, Olive Hill, KY 41164

Phone: 606-286-4443

Contact Person: David Carroll, Executive Director, david.carroll@nkcaa.net

Counties Served: Carter, Elliott, Lawrence

- 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 leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable and stackable). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

The Eastern Kentucky WIB has worked to expand access to employment, training, and supportive services to eligible Eastern Kentuckians by expanding the amounts and types of workforce funding it brings into the region. Over the past four-plus years the EKWIB has risen to the challenge presented by the rising numbers of dislocated and underemployed workers in the region who need workforce services by pursuing and administering resources beyond WIOA formula funds with which to serve them.

The additional funds that the EKWIB has brought into the region include:

- **Mining Industry (“H.O.M.E.”) NEGs** – This fund stream involves two National Emergency Grants totaling over \$27 million from the U.S. Department of Labor that have funded “Hiring Our Miners Everyday” (H.O.M.E.), EKCEP’s program that has helped over 4,800 dislocated coal industry workers and their families regain a place in the workforce. The wide array of services available under H.O.M.E.

(including tuition, travel, and needs-based payments) have made it possible for many of these workers to retrain for new careers, and for some to relocate to continue their mining careers.

- **Community Impact NEG** – This fund stream is a National Emergency Grant (NEG) of just over \$12 million from the U.S. Department of Labor that enables EKCEP to provide workforce development and retraining services to many Eastern Kentucky residents who lost their jobs in non-coal businesses as a result of the economic “domino effect” resulting from the rapid decline in the region’s coal industry. This grant has served over 2,350 clients to date.
- **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER ((Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) Grant** – This \$1,461,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission supports EKCEP’s “Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery and Training” (eKART) program. The eKART program bridges the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery by providing them with valuable career, training, and supportive services, and by cultivating and supporting second-chance employment opportunities. eKART also helps teach Eastern Kentucky businesses ways to provide a supportive environment for newly employed individuals in recovery, thus increasing the opportunities for work-based training and apprenticeships, while simultaneously partnering with addiction treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals who are appropriate for those opportunities. Those targeted to be served, trained, and/or placed in employment under eKART have completed or are in the latter stages of a reputable treatment program which provides aftercare that includes ongoing counseling, accountability, and support. As these recovering individuals are placed with trained employers, eKART’s Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches help ensure their success, providing support, guidance, and resources to the new workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise. eKART also expands the successful partnership between EKCEP and Addiction Recovery Care (ARC), Inc. (arccenters.com), which is successfully training individuals in recovery to become Peer Support Specialists, enabling them to return to the workforce in jobs where they can help other individuals enter and complete recovery. The variety of trainings offered to recovering individuals under eKART—including Transitional Employment/Work-Based Trainings, Trainings for Recovery-Friendly Jobs, ARC Peer Support Specialist Academy Training, and Career Advancement Training and Credentialing for certified Peer Support Specialists. To date, eKART has placed over 290 recovering Eastern Kentuckians in unsubsidized jobs.
- **Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) Funding** – This fund stream of \$2.138 million (to date, with possible renewals) has been provided by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services to support EKCEP’s administration and delivery of the statewide SITE (Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment) program, which helps bridge the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery by providing them with valuable career and supportive services, and by cultivating and supporting second-chance employment opportunities. SITE helps Kentucky businesses learn to provide a supportive environment for newly employed individuals in recovery, thus increasing the opportunities for work-based training and apprenticeships, while simultaneously partnering with addiction treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals who are appropriate for those opportunities. Those targeted to be served and placed in employment by SITE have completed or are in the latter stages of a reputable treatment program which provides aftercare that includes ongoing counseling, accountability, and support. As these recovering individuals are placed with trained employers, SITE’s Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches help ensure their success, providing support, guidance, and resources to the new workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise. A portion of these KORE funds support eKART, which serves the EKCEP local workforce area with parallel services.
- **Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Funding** – This fund stream of \$2.5 million (to date, with possible renewals) has been provided by the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet’s Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) to support EKCEP’s administration and delivery of the statewide SITE (Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment) program, which helps bridge the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery by providing them

with valuable career and supportive services, and by cultivating and supporting second-chance employment opportunities. SITE helps Kentucky businesses learn to provide a supportive environment for newly employed individuals in recovery, thus increasing the opportunities for work-based training and apprenticeships, while simultaneously partnering with addiction treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals who are appropriate for those opportunities. Those targeted to be served and placed in employment by SITE have completed or are in the latter stages of a reputable treatment program which provides aftercare that includes ongoing counseling, accountability, and support. As these recovering individuals are placed with trained employers, SITE's Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches help ensure their success, providing support, guidance, and resources to the new workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise. A portion of these ODCP funds support eKART, which serves the EKCEP local workforce area with parallel services.

- **Emergency Funding for COVID-19 Response** – This fund stream is a National Emergency Grant (NEG) through the Commonwealth of Kentucky. EKCEP has received just over \$1,010,000, which enables EKCEP to provide workforce development and retraining services to many Eastern Kentucky residents who lost their jobs as a result of the economic downfall resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant has served over 133 clients to date.

NOTE: The fund totals listed here are for the entire terms of these grants; the total funds listed are not available for the 2021-22 Program Year. (In some cases, the totals listed above include money already spent during previous years of those grants.)

These additional funds make workforce services accessible to hundreds more individuals than could be served by formula funds alone. The EKWIB will continue to pursue additional funding sources to expand access to employment, training, and supportive services to eligible Eastern Kentuckians.

In addition, EKCEP has created a virtual intake process utilizing a Google platform that allows potential clients to fill out any and all eligibility information online and transmit through a secure Google connection. This enhancement enables clients to access services through WIOA via virtual entry without the need for a physical appointment. This process has expanded access to services, especially in physically remote areas, and proved especially helpful during the COVID pandemic when offices were closed to in-person activities.

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

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

Per WIOA mandate, one role of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) is to engage the area's business community in order to learn its needs and develop innovative partnerships and strategies to meet those needs. To carry out that responsibility, EKCEP's staff Employer Engagement and Business Services liaisons consistently reach out and market the services of the workforce development system to the region's businesses directly. Staff also attend meetings of chambers of commerce, Rotary Clubs, trade associations, Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) organizations, and other business-oriented activities, where they engage business owners and managers in conversations about business needs and how the workforce development system might address those needs. Job fairs provide additional opportunities for EKCEP's representatives to network with businesses. EKCEP's industry liaisons are in constant communication with businesses

inside and outside of the EKCEP region. These business engagements lead to the development of strategies to meet identified business needs. These resulting strategies are communicated to training providers to ensure that training programs are employer driven.

Additionally, EKCEP is developing and implementing agreements with individual employers and/or employer groups that describe the employer's workforce needs, outline a multi-year plan for meeting those needs, and define the role of key workforce partners in that multi-year plan. These agreements formalize EKCEP's relationships with these individual employers or employer consortia and define the objectives of the relationship. (For example: an agreement may define specific numbers of qualified employees for specific positions that an employer will need within a specified period, and identify the tactics EKCEP staff and other community partners will use to help produce those employees.) If circumstances or the employer's needs change during the effective period of the agreement, the agreement may be modified collaboratively by EKCEP and the employer to reflect and adapt to these changes.

This business-focused and industry-focused program structure also requires EKCEP's front-line staff to work with the region's community colleges and other training providers to ensure that their curricula and the number and competency of their graduates satisfy the employer's requirements as identified in the agreement. As a component of this strategy, EKCEP's front-line and contracted workforce staff across the region work with the community colleges and other training providers to identify the barriers that keep students from completing training, and work with community and workforce system partners in a "collaborative impact case management" approach to remove those barriers. The agreements spell out as specifically as possible the roles of community and workforce system partners in achieving business and industry objectives.

In planning and developing its One Up internship program, EKCEP also created and works closely with an Employer Advisory Council comprised of private-sector leadership across each of the EKWIB's five business sectors of emphasis (Healthcare, Manufacturing, Energy, Skilled Trades, Business Services). This council features 17 members representing 14 of the region's largest employers. The council members have collaboratively and closely guided EKCEP staff on the implementation of the internship policy. As One Up moves forward, select members of the council will also review applications from area employers that apply to be internship hosts and will make recommendations for approvals to the EKWIB, hence creating an "EKWIB Certified" status for employers approved for internships. EKCEP anticipates this Employer Advisory Council will serve in a similar capacity upon the development of reimagined WIOA Youth internships in the area.

Additionally, EKCEP works closely with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Workforce Center's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) division, with an emphasis on helping the region's healthcare providers identify skilled position needs and then working collaboratively between workforce development and higher education to address these needs through innovative new training approaches and enhanced support from EKCEP's WIOA programs. In addition to boosting new training opportunities for eligible participants, EKCEP's enhanced support can also increase the use of WIOA supportive services resources to help ensure that students complete their programs of study and are not sidetracked by life issues (e.g., childcare expenses, travel expenses, training-related supply needs) that these resources can address.

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

Complying with the WIOA mandate for local workforce development boards to lead efforts to engage a diverse array of employers, EKCEP staff will continue to meet business leaders and owners face-to-face to discover and discuss their current and future workforce needs and develop and deliver timely solutions. EKCEP's Business Services and Employer Engagement Team will also continue to serve as the convener and coordinator for quarterly, collaborative meetings with a larger group of partners and professionals consisting of business-services-targeted state staff, employers, workforce staff from system partners, education and training providers, and other stakeholders — all of whom are in constant communication with businesses inside and outside of the EKCEP region. Information from these business communications is discussed at the group's meetings, where joint strategies are developed to meet identified business needs.

Businesses will be invited to these group meetings periodically to allow them to provide feedback and suggestions for improving our services. EKCEP will use this information to develop workshops around the needs of business and to improve service delivery.

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

Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. continues to be deeply involved in the SOAR ("Shaping Our Appalachian Region") initiative, as it has been since SOAR's inception. One of SOAR's prime objectives is to guide the region's leaders to a consensus vision of what shape the region's economy should take in the future — and the steps required to make that vision become a reality. SOAR has been characterized by unprecedented collaboration between economic development, workforce, education, private business, and government, and EKCEP has been an active and contributing participant at every step. Relationships between EKCEP and economic development entities (e.g., Kentucky Highlands Investment Corp., MACED, One East Kentucky, One Harlan County, Hazard/Perry County Economic Development Alliance, and others) have been deepened and expanded as they have worked in partnership to identify and address the area's needs and opportunities. EKCEP leadership will continue to be available to work with any economic development entity that serves Eastern Kentucky to help build the new economy that will begin to fill the gap left by the decline of the coal industry.

4. Strengthen linkages between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance programs; and

The Kentucky Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development decided a few years ago to automate much of the process for filing and managing unemployment claims through online applications and marginally staffed call centers. This change made it more difficult for the frontline staff of WIOA and other Kentucky Career Center partner programs to interact with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and staff. Subsequently, the overwhelming influx of UI applications that resulted from business closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic swamped this mostly-automated UI system and highlighted the need for personal UI services. Kentucky Career Center staff from WIOA and other partner programs were pressed into service to assist UI with the volume of claimants in mid-2020, which helped to re-establish their relationship with the UI program.

Although a decision was made to move UI out of the Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development—which houses most of the one-stop partner programs — the subsequent decision to return to face-to-face UI services provided through the Kentucky Career Centers statewide should help re-connect the linkage between UI and the other programs that provide services through the one-stop centers. This return to the one-stop centers will give KCC staff opportunities to provide UI customers with a thorough orientation about all the services at the center that are available, further strengthening the linkage between programs.

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

In addition to the routine collaborations on client services that WIOA staff and other one-stop partner staff have with the staff of Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) in Eastern Kentucky's career centers, EKCEP is currently in discussions with state OVR leaders to explore and establish ways in which EKCEP's Teleworks USA initiative can be used to increase the job opportunities available for individuals with disabilities throughout Kentucky. Teleworks USA links job seekers to employers worldwide who hire home-based workers. These Internet-based work-from-home jobs — primarily in customer service but now expanding into other fields such as cybersecurity — bring outside wages into the region, boosting local economies and broadening employment opportunities for the region's workforce. During the past six years, ongoing improvements in both the Teleworks USA workshops and the staff's relationships with employers have brought significant success to the initiative: since January 2015 Teleworks USA has connected over 3,200 residents of the EKCEP service area to jobs with remote employers, representing more than \$73 million in potential new wages brought into the region. EKCEP believes that home-based jobs transacted over the internet could be a great benefit to disabled individuals with mobility issues or other challenges that would make performing in-person jobs in an office or retail location difficult.

Additionally, the EKCEP region is still benefitting from EKCEP's recent collaboration with the state's Office for the Blind, Department for Vocational Rehabilitation, in the "Project C.A.S.E. (Career and Successful Employment)" federally funded grant project. Project C.A.S.E. improved the career pathway opportunities available to disabled Eastern Kentuckians by helping connect Kentuckians with disabilities to training, careers, and work experiences in healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology. The three Project C.A.S.E. Career Pathway Coordinators (employed by EKCEP) worked with Eastern Kentucky employers to inform them about the capabilities of the disabled and the resources — including assistive technologies — that are available to help them succeed in employment. The coordinators also explored with employers the ways career pathways and training progressions can be developed for disabled workers.

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 pathways initiatives, 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), and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

- D. (L)(R) Describe local and regional efforts to support and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

Locally, TENCO's business service representative provides a wide array of opportunities for entrepreneurs, including but not limited to regional job fairs, referrals for incentive packages and/or loans, on-the-job training, customized training, and internships. Emerging and existing entrepreneurs are encouraged to expand and grow their workforce through on-the-job training, which allows businesses to be reimbursed for up to 50% of the employee's wages during their training period.

Morehead State University (MSU) provides entrepreneurs services throughout the East Region through the Small Business Development Center, which provides consultations at no cost for current and potential entrepreneurs in Eastern Kentucky. As a companion to this service, MSU also provides a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a track in Small Business Management/Entrepreneurship.

Other efforts to support and promote entrepreneur activity in the TENCO area include:

- Youth programs include an element/workshop component on becoming an entrepreneur;
- There are multiple entrepreneur centers located in the TENCO area; and
- Entrepreneurs are encouraged to use the Career Centers to locate skilled employees.

Opportunities also exist to provide an entrepreneurial conference for youth in the area. Coordination would be with KCTCS, MSU, and other interested partners.

In support of emerging and existing entrepreneurs, EKCEP continues collaborative activities with SOAR Innovation, a partnership between SOAR and the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development's KY Innovation office. SOAR Innovation assists existing small businesses and entrepreneurs whose business or idea has the capability to expand existing markets or create new markets by leveraging technology.

SOAR Innovation has deployed Business and Innovation Champions across Eastern Kentucky. These champions work proactively throughout the region to identify and build relationships with existing small businesses that have the desire and capacity to scale-up utilizing technology through methods of e-commerce, export, etc. Often times, these relationships lead SOAR's Innovation Champions to interact with EKCEP's Employer Services and Business Engagement staff to develop innovative solutions to employer needs, whether through entrepreneurial-based activities or more traditional WIOA-driven, work-based learning offerings developed in collaboration with employers.

- 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) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

EKCEP's WIOA Youth Program — called "Opportunity Youth" — is designed as a robustly structured community-based program that addresses essential life skills and work skills, training, career coaching, and support services for youth who are disengaged from the workforce and education. The program delivers services that are relevant to the employment and training needs of these youth, using structured curricula in a progression that leads each youth to obtain an industry-recognized credential and/or unsubsidized employment as a part of a career path that leads toward a high-wage, high-demand occupation.

EKCEP's Opportunity Youth service model focuses on Eastern Kentuckians ages 18-24 who are not attending school of any kind and are at risk of long-term unemployment or under-employment, emphasizing career advising and transition into employment. Although EKCEP's youth programs ensure that eligible youth have opportunities to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training, they also emphasize shorter-term training assistance and more direct paths to employment, especially for out-of-school youth.

Providing Youth Services — EKCEP provides youth services directly or through contractors who hire youth staff and deliver services in their local areas. As a positive result of accommodations developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, registration and services have been and will continue to be available

either in person or virtually, depending on the client's barriers, location, or ability to utilize such services. Registration and eligibility determination are now available by mail, e-mail, virtually, or in person by appointment, observing CDC safety guidelines.

Opportunity Youth staff work closely with community partners and employers to implement EKCEP's policies and develop strategies for youth services that:

- Effectively connect eligible youth to available services, either in person or virtually.
- Provide a thorough review of the occupational and workforce service needs of each youth.
- Provide an individualized service strategy for each youth that includes appropriate career goals and plans for overcoming barriers.
- Integrate WIOA services with other appropriate community services provided by partners, including: social service agencies, adult education, vocational rehabilitation services, residential treatment providers, medical and behavioral health care agencies, the criminal justice system, and other entities that provide the program elements and services to assist out-of-school youth ages 18-24 to lead happy, healthy and successful lives.
- Prepare youth to meet employers' needs.

EKCEP's Opportunity Youth WIOA program is based upon developing a collaborative partnership with each youth being served that respects and values that youth's potential. These collaborative partnerships are based on recognizing that the youth and program staff are jointly responsible to work together to solve problems and act courageously to create a pathway to self-sustainability and meaning. Based upon individual needs, these 14 service elements are available to Opportunity Youth clients:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. Alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that include a component of academic and occupational education, including:
 - Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities throughout the year;
 - Pre-apprenticeship programs;
 - Internships and job shadowing;
 - On-the-job training.
4. Occupational skill training, which may include training programs that lead to postsecondary credentials or are linked to in-demand sectors;
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and subsequently, for a total a duration of at least 12 months;
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completion, as appropriate;
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;
11. Financial literacy education;
12. Entrepreneurial skills training;
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Out-of-School Youth Services — Because of limited funding and the requirement under WIOA that 75% of Youth funds be spent on Out-of-School Youth, EKCEP designed the Opportunity Youth program to primarily target Out-of-School Youth ages 18 to 24 — the portion of the eligible population that is most critically in need of rapid assistance to enter employment. The Opportunity Youth program is expected to spend between 85-100% of its budget on serving Out-of-School Youth but anticipates that it may be necessary to spend up to 15% on In-School Youth.

Opportunity Youth services focus on the uniqueness of individualized youths' needs to overcome their barriers to entering and succeeding in the workforce. It is not uncommon for a participating youth to be eligible for services based on more than one barrier; some are even eligible based on all the barriers. The Opportunity Youth program is designed to identify the complex challenges to entering and succeeding in the workforce or education faced by these youth, provide assistance and guidance to overcome these barriers, and make it possible for these youth to re-engage and succeed.

Work experience opportunities are featured prominently for Out-of-School Youth. Work experience placements introduce and acclimate participants to the world of work and the Opportunity Youth program is designed to give multiple opportunities in more than one specific career field if necessary in order to find a good fit with the right employer, who may be hiring soon. Although it does not exclude other options, EKCEP's Out-of-School Youth program emphasizes real local employment opportunities and the short-term skills development that will qualify clients to take advantage of those opportunities.

In-School Youth Services — Although the Opportunity Youth program will not actively recruit them, some in-school youth may be served, as appropriate. Opportunity Youth program policies would allow up to 15% of the program budget to be spent on serving in-school youth ages 18-21 who are at risk of leaving school and becoming disengaged from education and their path into the workforce. However, EKCEP's contractors that provide Opportunity Youth program services may choose not to serve any in-school youth. When served, in-school youth can receive a variety of services to help them overcome barriers to career or academic success, through a service model that focuses on the uniqueness of each youth's barriers and needs. The program emphasizes work experience placements, the skills necessary to acquire a job, and career advising to help the youth make informed career and educational choices and define the steps needed to pursue their career or educational goals. Work experience placements introduce and acclimate participants to the world of work and the youth program is designed to give multiple opportunities in more than one specific career field if necessary in order to find a good fit with the right employer who may be hiring soon.

- 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 to avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The staff of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) coordinates education and workforce activities with Area Technology Centers, Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS) institutions, and other postsecondary education providers in the region. Coordination with educational agencies may include: regular meetings for improved communication and development of strategies and goals; joint planning and implementation of professional development/training; collaborative work on important initiatives such as Work Ready Communities; joint planning of and participation in career fairs and job fairs; sharing labor market information and employer feedback about high demand training leading directly to jobs in order to improve training offerings in the region; and partnering on customized training projects to meet the needs of key employers in the region.

EKCEP has also included the employer services representatives of area postsecondary institutions on the Regional Employer Services Teams that EKCEP convened and facilitates to serve the region. In addition to the business services representatives of EKCEP and area postsecondary institutions, these teams consist of employer and business services representatives from other workforce system partners, training providers, and other stakeholders. These representatives are in constant communication with businesses inside and outside of the EKCEP region to determine employers' needs. The sharing of information through these teams' bi-monthly meetings reduces redundant efforts to serve employers, and the joint strategies developed by these teams ensure that the resources of all members are brought to bear to meet identified business needs.

EKCEP also is introducing an internship program — called “One Up” — that places strong emphasis on coordinating regional employers' needs with courses of study. One Up will help ensure Eastern Kentucky's current college students can get plugged into subsidized internship experiences with employers in the region who have developed, with EKCEP's assistance, a well-defined internship experience containing skills development, benchmarks, and challenges in an on-the-job, mentored, on-the-floor workplace setting. One Up participants may include students in postsecondary education programs who are heading toward a certification or degree or students who have graduated in the past year but aren't yet capitalizing on their earned credentials. EKCEP will provide students who are building skills that are sought by partnering employers with access to internship opportunities with those employers. One Up will match the talents that these students are building in their chosen programs of study with the talents the region's employers are seeking.

As the number of successfully completed projects have increased and important outcomes have been achieved in Eastern Kentucky as the result of these partnerships, staff and leadership with education and workforce agencies have become more and more committed to working together to achieve common goals and shared visions. This continuous collaboration enhances service delivery for customers and clients and avoids duplication of services through enhanced communication and partnership.

- 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) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

Because of the unique characteristics of the two local areas and the differences in budget and capacity identified by the analyses of the region, the local workforce development boards of the EKCEP and TENCO areas see no advantage in attempting to standardize the provision of supportive services across the region or coordinate the ways supportive services are provided between the two local areas. The WIBs have determined that each local area will be responsible for policies and procedures governing the type and level of supportive services provided to the customers in its area.

- H. (L) Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local One-Stop Delivery System, maximizing coordination of services provided by DWI merit staff and the LWDBs contracted service providers to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The staff of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) works closely with DWI's merit staff in the local area and with EKCEP's contracted direct service providers to implement the operational goals of Eastern Kentucky's one-stop system. The MOU (including the Resource Sharing Agreements for

full-time partners co-located in a Full Service or Affiliate Center) that provides the framework for all partners to share in the collaborative operation of the Kentucky Career Center JobSight one-stop operation and the jointly planned and implemented professional development training for partner staff all ensure that the workforce system partners work fluidly together and avoid duplication and repetition. On-going partner meetings at the county and regional level also ensure that detailed communication takes place on a regular basis to improve coordination and implement the best strategies for operational goals within the EKCEP local one-stop system. The One-Stop Operators for the Kentucky Career Center JobSight workforce development network in Eastern Kentucky have been tasked with:

- Coordinating the delivery of services of participating one-stop partners and service providers in the county or counties that the One-Stop Operator serves.
- Fostering a culture of collaboration and excellent customer service among one-stop partners that promotes delivery of the innovative, high quality workforce development services to all customers of the workforce development system.
- Convening and leading regularly scheduled meetings of the one-stop partners to build the collaborative culture, improve service delivery, and evaluate progress toward shared goals.

Additionally, the vision and goals of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) were established through an inclusive strategic planning process that involved a wide array of stakeholders within the EKCEP region. EKCEP's process was designed to create a strategic plan that defined not only the ways EKCEP spends the dollars it controls in the region, but also the ways its actions and programs reflect priorities shared with its partner organizations and therefore influence the ways they spend their allocations within the region. To develop a consensus on regional vision and plan, EKCEP polled its partners and regional stakeholders in workforce development, secondary education, postsecondary education, government, community action, and business to determine their priorities and strategic objectives, and to quiz them on their vision for the role and most important functions of the workforce system and the WIB.

The resulting strategic plan is simple and very focused, clearly stating four primary results-based goals, as well as defining EKCEP's core values, mission, and vision for that region, the workforce system, and the WIB. By using this strategic plan to guide its decisions and operational strategies, the EKWIB is incorporating the input and vision of its partners and other interested stakeholders, creating a higher level of "buy-in" and unified spirit.

- I. (L) Describe how the local board will collaborate with SkillsU, 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 carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA sec. 107(d)(11) (A) and (B) (i) and WIOA sec. 232. Adult Education and Literacy grant review training and process oversight to be provided by the Kentucky Office of Adult Education.

The EKCEP local board will collaborate with Kentucky Skills U (WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy) providers at both the local level and state level. Kentucky Skills U contracts with a service provider for each of the 23 counties within the EKCEP local area. Both EKCEP's staff and direct services contractors work with these service providers to coordinate the referrals of clients for assessments, testing and diagnostics, GED instruction, and remediation services to bring basic skills up in order to enable clients to continue to postsecondary education.

Skills U providers are located on site and provide services at both the Kentucky Career Center (KCC) JobSight, Full Service Center, in Hazard, and the KCC JobSight, Affiliate Center, in Pikeville.

In counties where the local Skills U provider is not co-located with the other workforce partners, all partners work together to plan and execute regular meetings to improve communication and referrals among partner staff for greater customer service and satisfaction in the local workforce development system. EKCEP local board staff also work with Kentucky Skills U leadership staff to improve coordination and planning, and to discuss appropriate training and/or professional development for one-stop staff in the region.

- J. **(L)** Please describe the direction given by the Governor and the local WDB to the One-Stop Operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services that will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individual who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134 (c)(3)(E).

Client Selection Procedures for ITAs: WIOA Adults — The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that local workforce areas give priority to recipients of public assistance and low-income individuals when selecting qualified adults into training. Veterans must also be given priority.

Program operators and career advisors must provide documentation that their client-selection process for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) gives priority to these groups in the following order of priority:

Adult Program Order of Priority for ITAs

1. 1st Priority: Veterans and/or eligible spouses who are public assistance recipients or low-income individuals who also meet the existing ITA eligibility requirements.
2. 2nd Priority: Nonveterans who are public assistance recipients or low-income individuals who also meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.
3. 3rd Priority: Veterans and/or eligible spouses who meet the existing ITA eligibility requirements.
4. 4th Priority: Non-veterans who meet the existing ITA eligibility requirements. In order to adhere to this policy, career advisors will be required to keep a complete record of the qualified Adult clients who were being considered for ITAs at the time of each selection process.

NOTE: Regulations state, in accordance with 38 U.S. Code Part 4213, that “any amounts received as military pay or allowance by any person who served on active duty, and certain other specified benefits, must be disregarded when determining if a person is a ‘low-income individual’ for eligibility purposes.”

Client Selection Procedures for ITAs: WIOA Dislocated Workers — WIOA requires that local workforce areas give priority to veterans when selecting qualified dislocated workers into training. Program operators and career advisors must provide documentation that their client selection process for ITAs gives priority to these groups in the following order of priority:

Dislocated Worker Program Order of Priority for ITAs

1. 1st Priority: Veterans and/or eligible spouses who meet the existing ITA eligibility requirements.
2. 2nd Priority: Nonveterans who meet the existing ITA eligibility requirements.

In order to adhere to this policy, career advisors are required to keep a complete record of the qualified Dislocated Worker clients who were being considered for ITAs at the time of each selection process.

Client Selection Procedures for ITAs: WIOA Out-of-School Youth — WIOA requires that local workforce areas give priority to veterans when selecting qualified out-of-school youth into training.

Program operators and career advisors must provide documentation that their client selection process for ITAs gives priority to these groups in the following order of priority:

Out-of-School Youth Order of Priority for ITAs

1. 1st Priority: Veterans and/or eligible spouses who meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.
2. 2nd Priority: Nonveterans who meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.

In order to adhere to this policy, career advisors are required to keep a complete record of the qualified Out-of-School Youth clients who were being considered for ITAs at the time of each selection process.

- K. (L) Please describe how the Kentucky Career Centers are implementing an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by One-Stop Partners.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky supplies and requires the use of its case management information systems for the WIOA and Wagner-Peyser programs. The use of KEE-Suite — the primary existing system — is mandated because it allows the Commonwealth to track and tabulate participant performance information. As long as it retains this prerogative to mandate usage, the Commonwealth will be responsible for implementing and transitioning any technology-enabled intake and case management system.

In addition, EKCEP has created a virtual intake process utilizing a Google platform that allows potential clients to fill out any and all eligibility information online and transmit through a secure Google connection. This enhancement enables clients to access services through WIOA via virtual entry without the need for a physical appointment. This has been especially helpful during the COVID pandemic when offices were closed to in-person activities.

The Commonwealth is currently considering replacing KEE-Suite with more modern and versatile system in order to better accommodate the needs of a workforce system.

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.

EKCEP's Employer Engagement and Business Services liaisons work closely with the region's employers to stay abreast of their workforce needs and to collaborate with employers to craft training solutions that meet those needs.

EKCEP will also convene quarterly a larger group of partners and professionals from throughout the area comprised of partners such as: state business-services-focused staff, chambers of commerce, Career Development Office, Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) institutions, Cabinet for Economic Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Corps, and others. The team members make a collaborative effort to be in the field regularly, talking with employers to identify

emerging industries, hiring needs, and training needs, and to detect declining businesses and industries as early as possible. The team approach ensures that all the represented partners are aware of the services provided by each partner, therefore enabling them to collaborate or make appropriate referrals as needed. EKCEP will employ the use of tools such as Survey Monkey to periodically poll businesses about their needs, our responsiveness to their needs, and to ask for suggestions and other feedback.

Businesses will be invited to these group meetings periodically to allow them to provide feedback and suggestions for improving our services. EKCEP will use this information to develop workshops around the needs of business and to improve service delivery.

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 jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) staff works with the state Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Coordinator, meeting on a regular basis and obtaining training updates within the KEE-Suite system and the Kentucky Center for Education & Workforce Statistics (KCEWS) state systems that capture and report eligible training provider registration and performance.

ETPL information must be reported by each institution and is stored in KCEWS. The data may be used for research by EKCEP management to determine if local and state eligible training providers are meeting the required performance benchmarks to maintain their high-demand status for each ETPL program offered within their institution. The EKWIB uses this performance data as the basis for decisions on whether to continue or discontinue using training providers. These decisions ensure that training that is offered to job seekers in the region is in high demand by employers in the local workforce system and will result in good jobs that pay sustainable wages upon completion of the training.

3. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the One-Stop Delivery System in remote areas, using technology and other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) will work with its partners in the workforce system to facilitate access to the services provided through the one-stop delivery system and related KCC JobSight network locations. The technology used will include video conferencing and webinars for partner staff meetings and professional development and training, as well as for customer services, when needed and as appropriate.

In addition, EKCEP has created a virtual intake process utilizing a Google platform that allows potential clients to fill out any and all eligibility information online and transmit through a secure Google connection. This enhancement enables clients to access services through WIOA via virtual entry without the need for a physical appointment.

The use of these technologies offers expanded opportunities for the services of all partners to be provided to staff and customers in remote areas. The use of technologies makes it possible to deliver services and collaborate more economically, conserving closely budgeted funds for service provision rather than expending them on travel, redundant staffing, and other costs of geographically

distributing services. The use of communications technologies and web-based data collection will allow more of the workforce partners' funds to be used to accomplish their specific goals and attain their outcomes, while allowing customers to access services without having to physically travel to a one-stop center.

4. How entities within the One-Stop Delivery System, including One-Stop Operators and OneStop 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. Also, include how the LWDB will providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

In the Eastern Kentucky local workforce area, the One-Stop Operators and all one-stop partners work together to ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of all facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials to individuals with disabilities. All partners within the KCC JobSight network may serve individuals with disabilities.

The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation [OVR] partners in the KCC JobSight network lend their expertise and specialized resources to Eastern Kentucky's full service and affiliate KCC JobSight Centers and other KCC JobSight network locations, providing annual ADA Compliance inspections and certifications, as well as technology and materials for disabled job seeker customers to utilize in the resource rooms at KCC JobSight locations, as needed in the EKCEP region. The ADA evaluations of existing facilities focus largely on four priorities for accessibility: (1) approach and entrance to the building; (2) access to goods and services; (3) access to toilet rooms; (4) additional access (e.g., water fountains, public phones, etc.).

The Vocational Rehabilitation partners provide OVR staff presence at KCC JobSight locations for on-site referrals of eligible customers and clients. The expertise of OVR staff is also utilized in Eastern Kentucky's one-stop delivery system to provide staff training and support throughout the locations in the KCC JobSight network.

5. Provide a description of the process used by the local board, consistent with subsection (d), to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the Local Plan, prior to submission of this plan. Local Areas are expected to provide accessible meetings for individuals with disabilities in this public hearing component.

The draft of the EKCEP Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional and Local Plan was posted on the EKCEP website and notices of the posting and inviting comment were placed online through social media and in key newspapers. Per instructions, public comments were accepted through the website for 14 days, allowing representatives of businesses and labor organizations to volunteer input. Additionally, the public comment notification included an invitation to a virtual public comment meeting held online to accept oral comments.

EKCEP staff will consider any significant comments or input received during the public comment period and bring those comments to the EKWIB for consideration during final approval of the plan.

- 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) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580].

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) has determined that its local area needs more industry-driven and workplace-based training in order to adequately prepare the area's workforce to compete for jobs and provide the capacity for expansion for the region's growing and/or emerging industries and businesses. For example, the EKWIB finds that the "off-the-shelf" trainings available in information technology, computer coding, computer programming, and application development trainings are often inadequate to position job seekers for success in these rapidly evolving occupations. Therefore, the EKWIB is using the on-the-job training model, internships, and other innovative methodologies in partnerships with employers to prepare the region's workforce to precisely meet those employers' needs.

EKCEP is introducing an internship program — called "One Up" — that places strong emphasis on coordinating regional employers' needs with courses of study. One Up will help ensure Eastern Kentucky's current college students can get plugged into subsidized internship experiences with employers in the region who have developed, with EKCEP's assistance, a well-defined internship experience containing skills development, benchmarks, and challenges in an on-the-job, mentored, on-the-floor workplace setting. One Up participants may include students in postsecondary education programs who are heading toward a certification or degree or students who have graduated in the past year but aren't yet capitalizing on their earned credentials. EKCEP will provide students who are building skills that are sought by partnering employers with access to internship opportunities with those employers. One Up will match the talents that these students are building in their chosen programs of study with the talents the region's employers are seeking.

The EKWIB also believes the local area could use more micro-enterprise training and entrepreneurial trainings. The EKWIB believes that entrepreneurship and small business growth will play a major role in driving the economic recovery of the Eastern Kentucky region and the entire Commonwealth.

The EKWIB also believes that the number of unfilled registered nursing jobs in the local area indicates that the registered nurse training in the local area has not been adequate to meet the demand of the area's healthcare industry.

Additionally, the EKWIB recognizes the need to continue to emphasize and expand the available trainings that can ensure high school students are able to graduate with a certification or other recognized workplace credential that will allow them to more directly into a job.

- 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) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580].

The Local Area Rapid Response (LARR) Coordinator and the state Rapid Response Coordinator work together to acquire information that is needed when a mass layoff is pending. If either one finds out important information regarding a mass layoff, they notify the other, to ensure that everyone has the latest information about the layoff.

The State Rapid Response unit is typically the primary initial contact for WARN notices. When a WARN notice is received at the State level:

- State Rapid Response Unit notifies the Local Area Rapid Response (LARR) Coordinator and Co-Coordinator with a copy of the WARN letter.
- The Rapid Response program entry in the Kentucky Integrated Business Engagement System (KIBES) is assigned to the LARR Coordinator.

If a WARN notice is received at the local level:

- The WARN notice will be entered into KIBES under the appropriate employer by received by the Local Area Rapid Response team.
- The LARR Coordinator will inform the State Rapid Response unit.
- LARR team members report local referrals relating to closures, downsizing, or layoffs with the LARR Coordinator to initiate contact with the employer.

Also, Local WIOA, CDO, and other Kentucky Career Center JobSight partner staff in the EKCEP region are instructed to notify the Local Area Rapid Response (LARR) Coordinator about any pending/actual layoffs. The LARR coordinator notifies the state via email within 24 hours of receiving notification of a pending/actual layoff that may impact 50 or more employees.

Services are coordinated by the LARR Coordinator and the local Rapid Response team members as needed following the actual layoff. Regional Employer Services Team members are also notified for additional assistance that may be needed for laid-off workers. The LARR Coordinator, or someone assigned by the LARR Coordinator, will plan the Rapid Response event and ensure that:

- A prior meeting notice of two or three days is provided to all LARR team members and partners.
- Directions to employer location are provided, as needed.
- Sign-in sheets for employees are provided.
- Packets with information regarding available services are provided. (Staff will take additional packets to leave behind after the event.)
- Basic information is gathered from employees on intake index cards and given to WIOA career advisers to all them to reach out to affected employees after their separation from the company.

When the LARR Coordinator finds out about a planned layoff, the employer is contacted to set up an initial informational meeting. During the initial employer meeting, the LARR team member will provide Trade information to the employer representative, when applicable. Website information is given to the employer to complete a Trade petition, if so desired. When the LARR Coordinator acquires information that a company or its employees are in the process of filing a trade petition, the state Trade Act staff is notified by e-mail. LARR, WIOA staff and state Trade Act staff (Regional Trade Facilitator and OET local staff) would be on standby for the final decision to certify the company and its employees as Trade eligible.

The LARR Coordinator notifies the state Rapid Response Coordinator, Katrina Bailey, by e-mail of all local Rapid Response events that are planned and delivered. The Rapid Response Coordinator or member of the LARR team will enter all information into Salesforce under the company record.

- D. (L) Provide a description and analysis 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 for increasing the

WIOA minimum 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) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.550-580]

EKCEP's WIOA Youth Program — called "Opportunity Youth" — is designed as a robustly structured community-based program that addresses essential life skills and work skills, training, career coaching, and support services for youth who are disengaged from the workforce and education. The program delivers services that are relevant to the employment and training needs of these youth, using structured curricula in a progression that leads each youth to obtain an industry-recognized credential and/or unsubsidized employment as a part of a career path that leads toward a high-wage, high-demand occupation.

EKCEP's Opportunity Youth service model focuses on Eastern Kentuckians ages 18-24 who are not attending school of any kind and are at risk of long-term unemployment or under-employment, emphasizing career advising and transition into employment. Although EKCEP's youth programs ensure that eligible youth have opportunities to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training, they also emphasize shorter-term training assistance and more direct paths to employment, especially for out-of-school youth.

Providing Youth Services — EKCEP provides youth services directly or through contractors who hire youth staff and deliver services in their local areas. As a positive result of accommodations developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, registration and services have been and will continue to be available either in person or virtually, depending on the client's barriers, location, ability to utilize such services. Registration and eligibility determination are now available by mail, e-mail, virtually, or in person by appointment, observing CDC safety guidelines.

Opportunity Youth staff work closely with community partners and employers to implement EKCEP's policies and develop strategies for youth services that:

- Effectively connect eligible youth to available services, either in person or virtually.
- Provide a thorough review of the occupational and workforce service needs of each youth.
- Provide an individualized service strategy for each youth that includes appropriate career goals and plans for overcoming barriers.
- Integrate WIA services with other appropriate community services provided by partners, including: social service agencies, adult education, vocational rehabilitation services, residential treatment providers, medical and behavioral health care agencies, the criminal justice system, and other entities that provide the program elements and services to assist out-of-school youth ages 18-24 to lead happy, healthy and successful lives.
- Prepare youth to meet employers' needs.

EKCEP's Opportunity Youth WIOA program is based upon developing a collaborative partnership with each youth being served that respects and values that youth's potential. These collaborative partnerships are based on recognizing that the youth and program staff are jointly responsible to work together to solve problems and act courageously to create a pathway to self-sustainability and meaning. Based upon individual needs, these 14 service elements are available to Opportunity Youth clients:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. Alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that include a component of academic and occupational education, including:

- Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities throughout the year;
 - Pre-apprenticeship programs;
 - Internships and job shadowing;
 - On-the-job training.
4. Occupational skill training, which may include training programs that lead to postsecondary credentials or are linked to in-demand sectors.
 5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
 6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors;
 7. Supportive services;
 8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and subsequently, for a total a duration of at least 12 months;
 9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completion, as appropriate;
 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;
 11. Financial literacy education;
 12. Entrepreneurial skills training;
 13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
 14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Out-of-School Youth Services — Because of limited funding and the requirement under WIOA that 75% of Youth funds be spent on Out-of-School Youth, EKCEP designed the Opportunity Youth program to primarily target Out-of-School Youth ages 18 to 24 — the portion of the eligible population that is most critically in need of rapid assistance to enter employment. The Opportunity Youth program is expected to spend between 85-100% of its budget on serving Out-of-School Youth but anticipates that it may be necessary to spend up to 15% on In-School Youth.

Opportunity Youth services focus on the uniqueness of individualized youths' needs to overcome their barriers to entering and succeeding in the workforce. It is not uncommon for a participating youth to be eligible for services based on more than one barrier; some are even eligible based on all the barriers. The Opportunity Youth program is designed to identify the complex challenges to entering and succeeding in the workforce or education faced by these youth, provide assistance and guidance to overcome these barriers, and make it possible for these youth to re-engage and succeed.

Work experience opportunities are featured prominently for Out-of-School Youth. Work experience placements introduce and acclimate participants to the world of work and the Opportunity Youth program is designed to give multiple opportunities in more than one specific career field if necessary in order to find a good fit with the right employer, who may be hiring soon. Although it does not exclude other options, EKCEP's Out-of-School Youth program emphasizes real local employment opportunities and the short-term skills development that will qualify clients to take advantage of those opportunities.

In-School Youth Services — Although the Opportunity Youth program will not actively recruit them, some in-school youth may be served, as appropriate. Opportunity Youth program policies would allow up to 15% of the program budget to be spent on serving in-school youth ages 18-21 who are at risk of leaving school and becoming disengaged from education and their path into the workforce. However, EKCEP's contractors that provide Opportunity Youth program services may choose not to serve any in-school youth. When served, in-school youth can receive a variety of services to help them overcome barriers to career or academic success, through a service model that focuses on the uniqueness of each youth's barriers and needs. The program emphasizes work experience placements, the skills necessary to acquire a job, and career advising to help the youth make informed career and educational choices and

define the steps needed to pursue the career or educational goals. Work experience placements introduce and acclimate participants to the world of work and the youth program is designed to give multiple opportunities in more than one specific career field if necessary in order to find a good fit with the right employer who may be hiring soon.

The 75%/25% Fund Expenditure Requirement — Because EKCEP has been meeting the WIOA requirement that 75% of Youth funds be spent on Out-of-School Youth for several years old, EKCEP does not need to have “strategies . . . for increasing the WIOA minimum Out-of-School Youth expenditure rate to 75 percent.”

- E. (L) Describe local board actions to become and remain a high-performing local board, consistent with the factors developed by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB).

During recent years, the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board’s opportunity to participate in the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board’s formal process and protocol for being evaluated and designated as a high-performing local workforce board has been superseded by the EKWIB’s involvement in:

- Obtaining, designing, and administering two National Emergency Grants (NEGs) to try to help thousands of unemployed coal industry workers find their way back into the workforce and replace the billions of dollars that the coal industry collapse subtracted from Eastern Kentucky’s economy over the past five years;
- Obtaining, designing, and administering an NEG to try to help hundreds of unemployed non-coal workers who lost jobs as a result of the economic “domino effect” that followed the coal industry collapse find their way back into the workforce and replace their wages that had been subtracted from Eastern Kentucky’s economy over the past three years;
- Supporting and participating in the regional strategic and development work of the SOAR (“Shaping Our Appalachian Region”) initiative.
- Coordinating closely with economic development, including identifying and dealing directly with emerging and expanding employers, in an attempt to seed and prepare the workforce for new economic opportunities.
- Obtaining, designing, and administering two grants totaling \$600,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to help fund the expansion of EKCEP’s Teleworks USA initiative’s network of hubs and services, which since 2015 have prepared and placed over 3,200 Eastern Kentuckians into home-based jobs, representing a potential infusion of over \$73 million in new wages into the region.
- Obtaining, designing, and administering a \$1.46 million POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) Grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) that supports EKCEP’s “Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery and Training” (eKART) initiative, which addresses the workforce impacts of the opioid abuse crisis. The eKART initiative bridges the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery from SUD (substance use disorder) or OUD (opioid use disorder) by providing them with valuable career, training, and supportive services, and by cultivating and supporting second-chance employment opportunities. eKART also helps teach Eastern Kentucky businesses ways to provide a supportive environment for newly employed individuals in recovery, thus increasing the opportunities for work-based training and apprenticeships, while simultaneously partnering with addiction treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals who are appropriate for those opportunities. Those targeted to be served, trained, and/or placed in employment under eKART have completed or are in the latter stages of a reputable treatment program which provides aftercare that includes ongoing counseling, accountability, and support. As these recovering individuals are placed with trained employers, eKART’s Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches help ensure their

success, providing support, guidance, and resources to the new workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise.

- Administering, designing and delivering services for the statewide SITE (Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment) program, which helps bridge the gap between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery from SUD (substance use disorder) or OUD (opioid use disorder) by providing them with valuable career and supportive services, and by cultivating and supporting second-chance employment opportunities. SITE helps Kentucky businesses learn to provide a supportive environment for newly employed individuals in recovery, thus increasing the opportunities for work-based training and apprenticeships, while simultaneously partnering with addiction treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals who are appropriate for those opportunities. Those targeted to be served and placed in employment by SITE have completed or are in the latter stages of a reputable treatment program which provides aftercare that includes ongoing counseling, accountability, and support. As these recovering individuals are placed with trained employers, SITE's Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches help ensure their success, providing support, guidance, and resources to the new workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise. SITE is funded by:
 - \$2.138 million (to date, with possible future renewals) in Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) funds from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. A portion of these KORE funds support the eKART initiative, which serves the EKCEP local workforce area with parallel services.
 - \$2.5 million (to date, with possible future renewals) in funds from the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet's Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP). A portion of these ODCP funds support the eKART initiative, which serves the EKCEP local workforce area with parallel services.
- Serving as the White-House-appointed lead entity for Eastern Kentucky's designation as a TechHire region, including preparing applications for TechHire funding to support the development of IT jobs in the local area.
- Designing and implementing services under the \$2 million POWER (Partnership for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) grant, consisting of a trio of grant-funded initiatives that focused upon economic development achieved by expanding and diversifying the region's economy through the deployment and use of broadband technology.
- Serving as the lead entity for the \$20 million "Paths 2 Promise" pilot study grant from U.S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training funds, under which EKCEP attempted to get 2,000 SNAP recipients into employment and reduce their dependency on SNAP.
- And administering and running EKCEP's WIOA formula-funded programs.

While we believe that the EKWIB is widely perceived as high performing, we hope to better document high-performing processes consistent with the factors developed by the KWIB in the future when this can be accomplished without sacrificing the EKWIB's involvement in the region's transformation as noted above.

- F. (L) Describe how training services will be provided in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G), 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 Account's and how the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs.

In cases where training is not provided through a work-based training placement (e.g., on-the-job training work experience) or other contract for non-ITA training services, EKCEP funds training services for eligible individuals through the use of individual training accounts (ITAs). In Eastern Kentucky, the

workforce system funds trainings only in the industry sectors or occupations that the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) has identified as in-demand because they are either growing or emerging and have a high potential for sustained demand in the local area.

Client Selection Procedures for ITAs: WIOA Adults — The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that local workforce areas give priority to recipients of public assistance and low-income individuals when selecting qualified adults into training. Veterans must also be given priority.

Program operators and career advisors must provide documentation that their client-selection process for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) gives priority to these groups in the following order of priority:

Adult Program Order of Priority for ITAs

1. 1st Priority: Veterans and/or eligible spouses who are public assistance recipients or low-income individuals who also meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.
2. 2nd Priority: Nonveterans who are public assistance recipients or low-income individuals who also meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.
3. 3rd Priority: Veterans and/or eligible spouses who meet existing ITA eligibility requirements. 4th Priority: Non-veterans who meet existing ITA eligibility requirements. In order to adhere to this policy, career advisors will be required to keep a complete record of the qualified Adult clients who were being considered for ITAs at the time of each selection process.

NOTE: Regulations state, in accordance with 38 U.S. Code Part 4213, that “any amounts received as military pay or allowance by any person who served on active duty, and certain other specified benefits, must be disregarded when determining if a person is a ‘low-income individual’ for eligibility purposes.”

Client Selection Procedures for ITAs: WIOA Dislocated Workers — WIOA requires that local workforce areas give priority to veterans when selecting qualified dislocated workers into training. Program operators and career advisors must provide documentation that their client selection process for ITAs gives priority to these groups in the following order of priority:

Dislocated Worker Program Order of Priority for ITAs

1. 1st Priority: Veterans and/or eligible spouses who meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.
2. 2nd Priority: Nonveterans who meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.

In order to adhere to this policy, career advisors are required to keep a complete record of the qualified Dislocated Worker clients who were being considered for ITAs at the time of each selection process.

Client Selection Procedures for ITAs: WIOA Out-of-School Youth — WIOA requires that local workforce areas give priority to veterans when selecting qualified out-of-school youth into training. Program operators and career advisors must provide documentation that their client selection process for ITAs gives priority to these groups in the following order of priority:

Out-of-School Youth Order of Priority for ITAs

1. 1st Priority: Veterans and/or eligible spouses who meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.
2. 2nd Priority: Nonveterans who meet existing ITA eligibility requirements.

In order to adhere to this policy, career advisors are required to keep a complete record of the qualified Out-of-School Youth clients who were being considered for ITAs at the time of each selection process.

Chapter 5: Compliance/Performance/Administrative Cost

(Responses below should focus 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), in place between the local board and Workforce Investment's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. Also, include other individuals, such as 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 primary agreements that define and manage interactions between the East Region's local workforce development boards (LWDBs) and the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and Office for the Blind (OFB) with respect to collaborative efforts to enhance the provision of workforce services to individuals with disabilities are the one-stop center Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), along with their attendant Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs). These signed MOUs enable and provide the matrix for enhancing such services through collaborative efforts such as cross-training of staff, technical assistance, collecting and sharing of information, and coordinated work with employers.

The regional OVR manager is an active member of both the EKCEP and TENCO workforce boards and plays an integral role in ensuring career centers are accessible and user friendly to individuals with disabilities. Representatives of OVR also provide valuable employer services through their active participation in the local employer service teams.

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

The workforce development boards of the EKCEP and TENCO local workforce areas find no reason to pool funds for administrative costs. Such pooling would not provide any advantage or improvement in delivering services to meet the needs of the region's employers or job seekers. Therefore, each local area will be responsible for the administration of their local funds, projects, and programs.

- C. (R) Describe the establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate on and reach an agreement with the Governor 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.

The local workforce development boards of the EKCEP and TENCO local areas agree that there would be no advantage in collectively negotiating uniform performance levels for the East Region. Such uniform performance levels would be inappropriate because of the unique characteristics of the two local areas and their differences in budget, capacity, and priorities.

Additionally, both boards believe their position is supported by the Act, which specifically assigns to each local workforce development board and its chief elected official the responsibility to negotiate performance levels for its local area in Sec. 116(c)(2).

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

The Eastern Kentucky C.E.P., Inc. Board of Directors serves as the Chief Local Elected Official for the Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. local area, in accordance with the Section 107(c)(1)(C) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

As Chief Elected Official, this board receives the funds. Because this board has chosen to act as its own fiscal agent, rather than procuring an outside entity to act as fiscal agent, it is responsible for disbursal of the local area's funds.

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

Per a directive issued by the Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development, Department of Workforce Investment, all Kentucky local areas are required to abide by the Commonwealth of Kentucky's procurement policies and procedures. Those policies and procedures appear in KRS 45.A, which is incorporated herein by reference.

The current One-Stop Operators for the Eastern Kentucky CEP local workforce area were chosen through an open procurement process in February through June 2017. On February 27, 2017, EKCEP published a solicitation for proposals to:

- Deliver Direct Workforce Services to Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth
- Provide Business Services to Employers
- Serve as a One-Stop Operator in Eastern Kentucky's Kentucky Career Center Network.

EKCEP chose to bid the One-Stop Operator function in combination with the Workforce Services functions because the two are closely interrelated. Bidders were invited to designate the area in which they proposed to deliver services and serve as One-Stop Operator — allowing them to propose to serve anything from a single county up to EKCEP's entire 23-county area. Once the proposals were received, staff reviewed them and presented recommendations for contract awards to both the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) and the Eastern Kentucky C.E.P., Inc. Board of Directors (serving as the CLEO as prescribed by WIOA), which awarded the contracts in June 2017.

EKCEP is currently in the process of re-procuring contractors that will:

- Deliver Direct Workforce Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers.
- Deliver Direct Workforce Services to Youth.

- Serve as a One-Stop Operator in either or both of Eastern Kentucky's two comprehensive Kentucky Career Centers.

Contracts awarded under these procurements will go into effect July 1, 2021.

- F. (L) Describe the indicators currently used or intended by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B 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.*

Measuring the performance of the Fiscal Agent for the EKCEP local area is not appropriate, because the grant recipient is the fiscal agent in the EKCEP local area. The integrity and accuracy of EKCEP's fiscal processes and procedures are established by the agency's annual fiscal audit.

Performance information must be reported by each institution or provider that is on the Commonwealth of Kentucky's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). This information is stored in the Kentucky Center for Education & Workforce Statistics (KCEWS) system, where it may be accessed and used by EKCEP management to determine if these eligible training providers are meeting the required performance benchmarks to maintain their high-demand status for each ETPL program. The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) can use this performance data as the basis for decisions on whether to continue or discontinue using training providers. The EKWIB's criteria is that training that is offered to Eastern Kentucky job seekers must be in high demand by employers in the local workforce system, be in the sectors of emphasis selected by the EKWIB, and result in good jobs that pay sustainable wages upon completion of the training.

The performance of the one-stop workforce delivery system in Eastern Kentucky is measured mostly by its performance against the WIOA performance indicators. WIOA includes the following performance measures for all programs within the one-stop delivery system in the EKCEP local area for services to Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth:

WIOA Adult program performance indicators include:

- Employment Rate (Q2 post-exit),
- Employment Rate (Q4 post-exit),
- Median Earning,
- Credential Rate,
- Measurable Skills Gain.

WIOA Dislocated Worker program performance indicators include:

- Employment Rate (Q2 post-exit)
- Employment Rate (Q4 post-exit)
- Median Earnings
- Credential Rate
- Measurable Skills Gain.

WIOA Youth program performance indicators include:

- Placement in Employment/Training/Education (Q2 post-exit)
- Placement in Employment/Training/Education (Q4 post-exit)
- Median Earnings
- Credential Rate
- Measureable Skills Gain.

Although the WIOA law indicates that there will be performance indicators for Employer Services, the final decision has yet to be made on what those indicators will be.

Additional Elements

(Include or address the following elements in the Chapters/Questions above where applicable or address them in the list below.)

1. (L)(R) Include goals for specific populations particularly with individuals with barriers to employment, veterans, unemployed workers and youth, and any other populations outline in the State Combined Plan.

Goals for specific populations—including youth, individuals with barriers to employment, individuals in recovery from SUD/OD, and others—are addressed in the responses to the questions above.

2. (L)(R) Describe how you will use the results of any feedback to make continuous quality improvements.

Any feedback or comments received on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional and Local Plan will be placed before EKCEP management for consideration. If the feedback or comments are deemed to be substantive, EKCEP will discuss and prepare responses/solutions to the issue raised by the feedback. If the issue raised requires modification in strategies or policy implementation, EKCEP management may take the issue to the EKWIB for consideration.

3. (L)(R) Describe activities of core programs and program specific information on the alignment process.

The activities of core programs and their alignment are addressed in the responses to the questions above.

4. (L)(R) Describe the process for data collection and reporting of all core programs.

As stated previously in the responses above, all client data is entered into KEE-Suite, the state-mandated management information system. Career Advisors collect all applicable data from the clients needed to determine eligibility and document WIOA services, and that data is uploaded to KEE-Suite. Reports can be run directly from the KEE-Suite system, both at the local level and the state level, to produce information on the WIOA services being provided.

5. (L)(R) Describe the policies and procedures in place for Rapid Response and coordination with local and state agencies for layoffs, natural disasters, etc.

The policies and procedures for Rapid Response and coordination with local and state agencies for layoffs are addressed in the responses to the questions above.

6. (L)(R) Describe strategies for and/or toward work-based training models.

The strategies for work-based training models are addressed in the responses to the questions above

7. (L) Describe the Eligible Training Provider procedure including initial eligibility, criteria for selection and information addressing factors related to performance indicators.

In 2015, responsibility for the Eligible Training Provider List was transferred entirely to DWI. Local areas merely inform interested institutions of the process and refer them to DWI.

8. (L)(R) Describe how the LWDA/Region will establish or continue to improve an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program that provides educational services consisting of literacy and English language acquisition integrated with civic education that includes instruction of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Provision of an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program is the responsibility of the Adult Education & Literacy provider (Skills U). Skills U will provide ICLCE in the East Region.

We the undersigned attest that this submittal is the Regional and Local Plan for our Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) and certify that this plan has been prepared as required, and is in accordance with the applicable Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional Innovation and Local Comprehensive Plan Guidance.

Local Workforce Development Board	Chief Local Elected Official
BOARD CHAIR	
Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

See additional page if more than one Chief Local Elected Official or Local Elected Official signature is required.

Local Elected Official	Local Elected Official
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