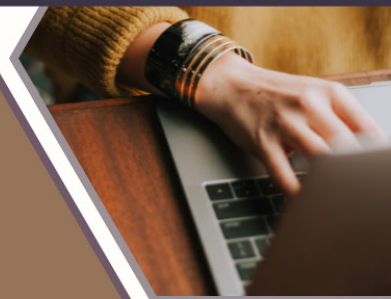


Providence Cranston Workforce Development Board

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
Providence/Cranston Local Area Plan

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2029



Submitted by:



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Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please answer the questions in Section 1 in eight (8) pages or less. The Department of Labor and Training's Labor Market Information Division can assist in developing responses to the questions 1.1 through 1.3 below. See Local Plan References and Resources.

1.1 An 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. This section should align with the industries and businesses identified in the state plan, including the industry clusters outlined in the state's economic development strategy - "Rhode Island Innovates" reports I and II. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)]

To align with Rhode Island's strategic vision outlined in the "Rhode Island Innovates" reports (I and II), the Providence Cranston local Workforce Area must focus on analyzing the economic conditions and in-demand industry sectors and occupations that the state has identified as priorities. Rhode Island's economic development strategy targets key sectors with growth potential, which are expected to drive job creation, innovation, and competitive advantage. Let's break down these elements:

1. Economic Conditions in Rhode Island

Rhode Island has a diversified economy as well as the Providence/Cranston Local Area, with significant growth observed in sectors like healthcare, technology, green energy, and advanced manufacturing. The state has focused on building a sustainable economic framework that prioritizes workforce development and technology integration, which will serve as a foundation for adapting to emerging labor market needs. Key factors influencing the economic climate include:

- **Post-pandemic recovery** and resilience strategies across sectors.
- **Supply chain and logistics** improvements, crucial for advanced manufacturing.
- **Population demographics** and workforce retention, especially with a focus on retaining youth talent.
- **Climate change** policies, which affect coastal and environmental sectors and create jobs in green and clean energy.

2. Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors

Rhode Island has identified specific industry clusters as critical to its economic development. These industries have been targeted as well on the Local level based on their potential for high wages, job creation, and alignment with national trends in innovation.

- **Healthcare and Life Science/Biomedical Innovation:** This sector has seen rapid growth and continues to expand, given the increased demand for healthcare services and advanced medical research. Occupations include healthcare practitioners, lab technicians, research scientists, and administrative roles.
- **Information Technology and Cybersecurity:** With the rise of digital transformation, IT and cybersecurity are crucial for supporting Rhode Island's innovation agenda. There is a high demand for software developers, cybersecurity analysts, data scientists, and IT support roles.
- **Advanced Manufacturing:** As traditional manufacturing shifts towards automation, Rhode Island's advanced manufacturing industry is focusing on robotics, precision machining, and aerospace components. Jobs in this sector range from skilled machinists and engineers to quality control analysts.

- **Marine Trades and Blue Economy:** Given Rhode Island’s coastal location, marine-based industries are vital. The blue economy encompasses fisheries, shipping logistics, and environmental monitoring, with new opportunities in sustainable fisheries and marine engineering.
- **Clean Energy and Green Technology:** This includes wind energy, solar technology, and green building solutions, supporting the state’s commitment to environmental sustainability. Emerging jobs include energy analysts, environmental scientists, wind turbine technicians, and sustainability consultants.
- **Hospitality and Tourism:** Rhode Island’s vibrant tourism sector continues to require a wide range of services, including management roles, event planning, culinary arts, and digital marketing for destination branding.

3. Employment Needs of Employers in Key Sectors

Rhode Island and the Local Areas employers in the aforementioned sectors are experiencing evolving workforce needs, driven by technology, regulatory requirements, and economic shifts. Key employment needs include:

- **Healthcare:** Employers seek qualified personnel, especially in nursing, medical technology, and mental health. Specialized certifications and experience with healthcare technologies (e.g., telehealth) are increasingly valued.
- **Technology and Cybersecurity:** Cybersecurity is a critical need, with employers prioritizing data protection and risk management skills. Proficiency in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and machine learning is also in high demand.
- **Advanced Manufacturing:** There is a need for technical skills in automation, quality control, and lean manufacturing processes. Upskilling the existing workforce for advanced machinery and digital manufacturing platforms is essential.
- **Marine Trades:** Employers require a range of skills from marine biology and environmental science to maritime engineering and logistics management.
- **Green Technology:** Rhode Island’s clean energy employers need workers trained in renewable energy systems, such as solar and wind installation, maintenance, and environmental impact analysis.
- **Hospitality and Tourism:** This industry requires diverse skill sets, including customer service, digital marketing, and event management. There’s an increased emphasis on skills in digital platforms, data analytics for marketing, and sustainability in operations.

4. Alignment with Rhode Island’s and Providence’s Economic Development Strategy

Rhode Island’s economic development strategy emphasizes building a resilient, innovation-driven economy by fostering industry clusters that support high-growth potential sectors. “Rhode Island Innovates” emphasizes strategic investments in education and workforce training that align with industry needs, addressing skills gaps to ensure that local talent is prepared to fill these high-demand roles. This alignment with WIOA’s goals supports sustainable economic growth and a workforce equipped for emerging job opportunities.

Rhode Island’s focused approach to industry-driven workforce development, alongside partnerships in education and business, positions the state to meet the demands of a competitive, dynamic labor market. By fostering skills in advanced manufacturing, technology, healthcare, clean energy, and other priority areas, Rhode Island is working to secure a sustainable economic future. Providence is currently finalizing a new economic development plan which is not ready for review at this time but we do know that green, blue, and Life Sciences will play a significant role. We will adjust the plan upon review of the finalized version with the City of Providence.

The Local Workforce Development Area is comprised of two Cities: Providence and Cranston. The combined population of Cranston and Providence, Rhode Island in 2024 was approximately 273,400. This is based on the following estimates:

Providence

In 2024, the population of Providence was 190,807

Cranston

In 2024, the population of Cranston was 82,572

Providence is the most populated city in Rhode Island, while Cranston is the third most populated city.

In November of 2024 as reported in the Providence Area Economic Survey generated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (January 7, 2025) the United States Unemployment rate increased from 3.5% in November of 2023 to 4.0% in November of 2024. The City of Providence saw a significant increase for the same period from 4.4% to 5.9% and the City of Cranston increased from 3.4% to 4.4%.

The Providence/ Cranston Labor Statistics as reported by the RI Department of Labor and Training show a strong improvement since the pandemic in particular categories with finance and insurance leading the way with the highest wage sector and Accommodations/Food Service resulting in the lowest private sector wages.

Providence - Cranston WIA Annual Average Labor Force Statistics

In 2023, private sector employment in the Providence/Cranston WIA averaged 124,825, an increase of 1,646 (+1.3%) from the 2022 employment level. Between 2020 and 2023, the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation sector added 713 jobs, the highest percentage increase (+74.0%), while Accommodation & Food Services had the largest numerical increase (+3,711). Information (-16.3%) was the sector that experienced the worst percentage decline since 2020 in the Providence/Cranston area. The 2023 annual average private sector wage was \$66,685 in the Providence/Cranston WIA, an increase of \$2,263 (+3.5%) from the 2022 annual wage. Finance & Insurance led all of the Providence/Cranston area employment sectors with a 2023 annual wage of \$130,883. The lowest annual average private sector wages were reported in Accommodation & Food Services (\$29,955).

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Area has additional challenges since it is more ethnically diverse than the rest of the state. As reported by the Department of Labor and Training the diversity leads to a host of challenges for the area from staffing to the delivery of services.

According to the latest American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the White population accounts for 46.9 percent of Providence/Cranston's population compared to 70.5 percent of the state's total household population.

Over one-third (35.6%) of Providence/Cranston residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin, while the Hispanic/Latino population make up approximately 17.6 percent of the state's total household population. The ACS indicates 83.1 percent of Providence/ Cranston's household population (age 25 and older) have a high school diploma or equivalent or higher. However, 16.8 percent of Providence/Cranston residents do not have a high school diploma, compared to 9.5% on a Statewide basis.

1.2 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)]

To analyze the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of local employers and identify the requirements for in-demand sectors, it's essential to take a data-driven approach aligned with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 108(b)(1)(B). Here's a breakdown of how such an analysis might be structured:

1. Identify In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

- **Local and Regional Labor Market Data:** Collect data on the top industries and occupations in the region, analyzing growth trends, job openings, and wage data from sources like the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), local economic development agencies, and labor market information systems.
- **Employer Engagement:** Conduct surveys, interviews, and focus groups with employers, industry associations, and economic development organizations to gain qualitative insights into hiring needs.
- **Forecasting Future Demand:** Use economic forecasts to identify occupations expected to grow over the next 5-10 years. For example, growth sectors may include healthcare, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and renewable energy, depending on regional strengths and emerging trends.

2. Assess Knowledge and Skills Requirements

- **Core Skills and Competencies:** Employers increasingly require a mix of technical and soft skills. Key competencies may include:
 - **Technical Skills:** Specific to each sector, such as programming languages for IT roles, patient care skills for healthcare, or knowledge of industrial machinery for manufacturing.
 - **Digital Literacy:** Nearly every industry now requires some degree of proficiency in digital tools, data analysis, and cybersecurity practices.
 - **Soft Skills:** Skills like problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and adaptability are highly valued across sectors.
 - **Professional Certifications and Licenses:** Many in-demand occupations require certifications (e.g., CompTIA for IT, nursing licenses for healthcare) to meet industry standards.

3. Educational and Training Needs for In-Demand Roles

- **Alignment with Educational Programs:** Analyze the extent to which local educational and training institutions align their curricula with these in-demand skills. Collaborations with community colleges, technical schools, and universities can support skill-building in emerging technologies and industry standards.
- **Work-Based Learning Opportunities:** Programs like apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training can help bridge the skills gap for high-demand roles, especially in fields like manufacturing, construction, and healthcare.
- **Lifelong Learning and Upskilling Initiatives:** Upskilling programs tailored for incumbent workers can ensure the workforce remains adaptable to new technology and industry shifts.

4. Recommendations for Workforce Development

- **Customized Training Programs:** Develop specific training pathways based on employer input, targeting skills needed in key industries. Programs may range from entry-level skills to advanced certifications.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage partnerships between employers, educational institutions, and workforce boards to co-develop training initiatives that respond to real-time market demands.

- **Career Pathway Development:** Support career pathway programs that provide clear progression routes, such as stackable credentials or tiered certification programs, especially in sectors with significant career advancement potential.

5. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- **Data Tracking and Outcome Measurement:** Track program effectiveness through employment outcomes, wage progression, and job retention rates. Adjust training programs based on emerging skill needs and industry feedback.
- **Regular Employer Feedback:** Establish ongoing dialogue with employers to adjust programs as needed, ensuring that workforce development initiatives remain responsive to evolving local industry demands.

This structured approach aligns workforce development efforts with local employer needs, bridging skills gaps, and supporting regional economic growth.

Many of the clients serviced by the Providence American Job Center are closer related to traditional educational levels to fulfill particular areas such as the Healthcare industry in particular we have seen a very high demand for Certified Nursing Assistants, Phlebotomists, and Medical Assistant Technicians.

There is also high demand for Certified Driving Licenses (CDL) drivers which for the most part has an undefined educational attainment and allows for the training and hiring of justice involved individual.

We are seeing an increase as well as in the Construction industry as well and anticipate a greater need to fund apprenticeship opportunities with Building Futures and the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership over the next several years.

To emphasize, these areas present a high growth career pathway for those on the lower end of the educational scale. The State is targeting improvements in the secondary education pathway but a majority of our clients do not meet that criteria but can still avail themselves of rewarding careers.

In addition, there are some higher-end key sectors such as the:

Green Economy
Blue Economy
Life Sciences

We are in the process of reaching out to several significant partners in each area to develop a workforce development model for each sector to facilitate a structured approach for recruitment and placement.

1.3 An analysis of the local 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)]

The Providence/Cranston workforce development strategy is guided by a comprehensive plan that addresses the needs of the local areas labor market, including targeted efforts to support individuals facing employment barriers. The local area economy shows increased participation in key sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and green energy, reflecting both current labors demands and future growth projections. The City of Providence has established a cabinet level Economic Development team of which Workforce Solutions is

a participant to discuss various opportunities and developments. The Life Sciences community is one example where there will be significant participation in workforce development.

As previously stated in the DLT Providence/Cranston WIA Annual Average Labor Force Statistics, in 2023, private sector employment in the Providence/Cranston WIA averaged 124,825, an increase of 1,646 (+1.3%) from the 2022 employment level. Between 2020 and 2023, the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation sector added 713 jobs, the highest percentage increase (+74.0%), while Accommodation & Food Services had the largest numerical increase (+3,711). Information (-16.3%) was the sector that experienced the worst percentage decline since 2020 in the Providence/Cranston area. The 2023 annual average private sector wage was \$66,685 in the Providence/Cranston WIA, an increase of \$2,263 (+3.5%) from the 2022 annual wage. Finance & Insurance led all of the Providence/Cranston area employment sectors with a 2023 annual wage of \$130,883. The lowest annual average private sector wages were reported in Accommodation & Food Services (\$29,955).

In April 2024, 28.0 percent of the 2,457 individuals collecting long-term unemployment insurance benefits in the state were residents of the Providence/Cranston WIA.

Long-term unemployment, that is, unemployment spells of fifteen weeks or longer, was lower among Providence/Cranston area residents (28.0%) than in the state (31.4%) as a whole. Workers under 25 years of age living in the Providence/ Cranston area were less likely to face long- term unemployment (25.6%) than their counterparts statewide (29.3%).

More than a half (55.3%) of the Providence/Cranston area residents collecting long-term unemployment insurance benefits were between the ages of 25 and 44 years of age. Unemployed Providence/Cranston area residents with a high school degree or less (57.4%) collected long-term unemployment at a higher rate than the same group in the state (51.9%) as a whole.

More than one quarter of the long- term unemployed Providence-Cranston WIA residents collecting benefits were previously employed in Administrative & Waste Services (18.7%), followed by

Health Care & Social Assistance (13.3%) and Construction (9.8%).

Almost 11 percent of the long-term unemployed Providence/Cranston residents collecting benefits in April 2024 were previously employed in Office & Administrative Support (10.7%).

According to the latest American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the White population accounts for 46.9 percent of Providence/Cranston's population compared to 70.5 percent of the state's total household population.

Over one-third (35.6%) of Providence/Cranston residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin, while the Hispanic/Latino population make up approximately 17.6 percent of the state's total household population.

The ACS indicates 83.1 percent of Providence/ Cranston's household population (age 25 and older) have a high school diploma or equivalent or higher. However, 16.8 percent of Providence/Cranston residents do not have a high school diploma, compared to 9.5% Statewide.

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board's strategic workforce initiatives under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasize career pathways that help residents achieve stable, full-time employment. This includes partnerships with local organizations such as We Make RI, CNA Training schools, as well as the Providence Public Library to provide accessible career services, financial literacy education, and individualized employment plans, as well as specific initiatives for at-risk youth thru our affiliation with the Comprehensive Community Action Program, Community Action Program of Providence, and Tri-County Community Action Program. We also aggressively service veterans with co-located DLT Staff, and those with

disabilities with the Office of Rehabilitative Services. By investing in these pathways and expanding partnerships across sectors, the local area aims to strengthen its talent pool while ensuring equitable economic opportunities for all residents.

1.4 An analysis and description of adult and dislocated worker workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the needs identified in 1.2. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D) & 108 (b)(7)]

Recent workforce analysis highlights key employment trends, challenges, and opportunities. As of late 2024, the state’s unemployment rate is around 4.6%, showing a slight increase from the previous year, with certain sectors, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and retail, employing the largest shares of long-term unemployed individuals. The state’s labor force has recently seen growth, with job gains in various industries including health care, social assistance, and retail, but labor shortages remain in specialized areas like advanced manufacturing and IT.

The educational attainment and skill levels of Rhode Island’s workforce vary, with significant segments lacking post-secondary credentials. Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and through partnerships with entities such as Skills for Rhode Island’s Future aim to close skill gaps by offering training in technical skills, work readiness, and soft skills. There is also an emphasis on supporting individuals with barriers to employment, including youth, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and those requiring English language assistance, facilitated through Adult Education centers and targeted job training initiatives

In summary, the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Area is actively addressing labor force needs through targeted training, collaboration with local employers, and workforce readiness programs designed to support populations with employment barriers. These efforts are designed to improve employment outcomes and equip the workforce to meet evolving job market demands in high-growth sectors. The primary focus is on the delivery of:

Basic Career Services: maintaining eligibility, job placement, skills assessments provided by the Providence Public Library, targeted training programs and financial aid.

Individualized Career Services: Counselors will continue to work with applicants by providing skill assessments that lead to individualized employment plans general career counseling and providing digital workshops in conjunction with our partner the Providence Public Library in English and Spanish.

Training Services: The Providence/ Cranston Local Area provides financial assistance for a myriad of programs as delineated on the State’s Eligible Training Provider List to obtain credentials and employment.

Follow-up Services: Applicants are given twelve (12) months of support by quarterly contact to determine if additional services such as counseling and job retention assistance.

The Providence/Cranston Local Workforce Board is focused on the delivery of services that will foster career pathway growth despite decreases in WIOA funding year-after-year. As a result of the changes to federal funds being frozen or delayed in some cases the focus is changing from financing training programs to jobs placement. Blended Funding is an area that must be explored by the Local Workforce Board with the Governors Workforce Board for a more equitable distribution of Job Development Funds for the Local Area to maintain its high performing status.

1.5 An analysis and description of Rhode Island youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices, for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

The youth workforce initiatives, supported under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), focus on providing comprehensive training, career preparation, and support services to help young people succeed in the workforce. The Providence/Cranston Workforce Board prioritizes programs for both in-school and out-of-school youth, including those with disabilities, and strives to create inclusive pathways that meet diverse needs across the workforce. The Local Area still maintains that 75% of the Youth served come from the out-of-school youth population and 25% from the in-school Youth population. The State changed to a 50/50 distribution. The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board sees a greater need in serving the Out-School-Youth populations. It is noted that it is harder to serve this population but the need is greater to effectuate change and ultimately employment.

The youth services include a range of skill-building and experiential opportunities such as tutoring, leadership development, financial literacy, and paid and unpaid work experiences. Recognizing the importance of hands-on learning, the Providence/Cranston Workforce Area prioritizes high-quality work-based experiences like internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training, which are integrated into broader career pathways to provide youth with practical experience and job-readiness skills. Furthermore, youth with disabilities are supported through partnerships with organizations like the Office of Rehabilitative Services co-located at the Providence American Job Center that specialize in accessible training and assistive services, ensuring equitable access to career pathways. have been successful in connecting young people with high-demand industries and offering sector-specific training. The various Community Action Programs have been successful in established valued Work Experience/Readiness programs with a number of local employers to initiate career path development. These programs include mentorship and guidance from career coaches, who help youth explore viable career paths based on their interests and abilities, especially for those facing employment barriers

To bolster effectiveness, the Providence/Cranston Workforce Board emphasizes partnerships with local and national organizations to deliver essential program elements, allowing the leveraging of resources to maximize youth support.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Please answer the questions in Section 2 in ten (10) pages or less. Section 2 responses should be greatly influenced by the members of the local workforce development board and other community stakeholders.

2.1 Provide the Providence Cranston Workforce development board's vision and goals for its local workforce system in preparing an educated and skilled workforce in the local area, including goals for youth and individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce was developed utilizing the guiding principles set forth by the Governor's Workforce Board that stresses a demand-driven and industry sector-based strategy, the integration of federal funding and programs available within WIOA to advance state priorities and strategies, the alignment of a support service network to maximize resources and build a ladder/pathway to employment for all, as well as better integration of data systems and the reimagining of our Providence/Cranston One Stop Career Center around the needs of the customer. The primary focus will be on the needs of the job seekers and the minimization of their barriers to employment.

VISION STATEMENT

To create a rich, vibrant, competitive economy in the Providence/Cranston workforce investment area where people find good jobs, employers find the skilled workers they need and where all parties find the Providence/Cranston workforce development area a place where they want to live, work, and invest.

MISSION STATEMENT

To continuously improve the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development area's capacity to connect people, employers, jobs, education and service.

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board has enacted several new measures to meet these goals and to align with the Governor's vision for workforce development. The Governor's new initiative is based on the improvement of wages for all participants. This focus has called for a realignment of workforce priorities centered around industry growth, career pathways and the potential for long term employment.

The use of On-the-Job-Training (OJT) was a primary focus to ensure that individuals being trained will have income during the training period. This represented a departure from the "train and pray" method of the past but unfortunately due to budget cuts and the Providence/Cranston Area serving an unanticipated fluctuation in volume due to the lack of State Funding has caused the Local Board to re-evaluate the high expenditure levels associated with this program and voted to implement a cap on training expenditures to serve a greater number of individuals. This will be reviewed once funding levels are made clear and the Board can analyze the correct path to move forward in the next several years.

Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston acting as the One-Stop-Operator for the American Job Center obtains first-hand input by convening on going meetings of local Community Based Organizations (CBO) to discuss the relationship between WSPC and organizations that serve individuals with barriers to employment. These meetings help identify areas in which WSPC and the Providence/Cranston American Job Center (AJC) can improve to serve their customers including improved intake procedures, better communication between WSPC and the CBO's. They have been successful since we see close to 600 individuals at the Center on a monthly basis. These meetings establish priorities and goals that will be reviewed and implemented in the monthly partner meeting held by the one-stop operator.

Every WSPC WIOA Youth provider offers High School Equivalency programs in-house to facilitate obtaining this credential.

Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board Goals

Goal 1: The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board will continue to align its core services i.e. WIOA training opportunities, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Delivery of Supportive Services in a manner that best meets the needs of job seekers and employer hiring needs.

Goal 2: The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board will continue to foster ongoing relationships with community-based agencies in the development of collaborative workforce training programs, group training programs and the development of programs to assist those with the greatest barriers to employment.

Goal 3: The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board is committed to the implementation of programs and training opportunities that result in job placement. As there is a slight transition away from the

On-the-Job training program due to funding greater emphasis will be placed on providing robust apprenticeship programs in cooperation with Building Futures, CCRI and the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership which will be needed to develop a transitional pool of qualified employees.

Goal 4: The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board is committed to furthering programs and opportunities to serve job seekers with developmental and physical disabilities.

Goal 5: The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board is committed to the development of various revenue streams to better serve the residents and their employment needs. Diversification of revenue streams should be a mutual goal between the State and the local area due to the significant economic and socio-economic footprint that we currently serve.

2.2 Describe how the board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision of the Governor's Workforce Board of Rhode Island (RI's State Workforce Development Board). See Local Plan References and Resources.

Vision

The Governor's Workforce Board envisions a Rhode Island where individuals from all income and skill levels, no matter their present economic circumstance, receive the resources and supports necessary to improve the economic condition of themselves and their families. In the process, Rhode Island employers receive a distinct competitive advantage in the form of a strong, diverse, and talented labor market to power their growth.

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board envisions a robust and inclusive local workforce system aimed at building an educated and skilled labor force, accessible to all community members. This vision includes fostering a dynamic economy where both job seekers and employers can thrive, with a special emphasis on helping those facing employment barriers, such as youth and individuals with disabilities.

The Board's goals include strengthening collaborations with local industries, educational institutions, and community organizations to create targeted programs that align with local economic demands. For youth, these goals encompass not only career readiness but also connecting them with skill-building opportunities in emerging sectors, such as manufacturing and technology. Programs are tailored to develop both soft and technical skills, preparing young people for sustainable employment. Partnerships with organizations like the Jane Addams Resource Corporation further enhance this by providing specialized training for manufacturing roles, a field where demand remains high in the region.

Additionally, the relocation of the American Job Center facility in Providence at 50 Sims Avenue underscores the Board's commitment to accessibility. This center functions as a one-stop resource for both job seekers and businesses, offering customized services like career counseling, resume building, job search support, and industry-specific training. The facility also aims to reduce employment barriers by centralizing resources in a space shared with key community partners, such as Job Corps and the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, which enhance access to training and employment services across the community. We have seen a steady increase of customers on a monthly basis in most months exceeding 500 clients to the American Job Center.

2.3 Describe how the board's goals, strategies, programs, and projects align with and will contribute to achieving the Governors Workforce Board key goals below:

GOAL 1: Continue to utilize demand-driven, sector-based strategies to develop pipelines of skilled workers that meet employer workforce needs and support the state's economic development priorities

GOAL 2: Advance career pathway strategies to provide education, training, employment, and support services for current and future workers, particularly those with barriers to employment and/or economic mobility (including TANF recipients).

GOAL 3: Align policy and leverage existing structures and resources so that government is networked and coordinated to achieve efficiencies and effectiveness throughout the workforce system.

GOAL 4: Use data to inform policy-making decisions, guide investments and evaluate performance to measure return on investments.

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board aligns closely with the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) goals, focusing on sector-specific strategies, career pathways, coordinated policy, and data-informed decision-making to drive workforce development across the state:

1. Demand-Driven, Sector-Based Strategies

The Providence/Cranston Local Workforce Board supports Rhode Island's and the City of Providence's economic priorities by creating programs that respond directly to employer needs in high-demand sectors, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and IT. Partnerships with entities like the We Make RI are an example of companies that provide manufacturing skills training that are addressing the skills gap in this sector. We have strategically aligned our use of On-the-job training grants to develop pipelines by engaging local employers to shape workforce training curricula and ensure job placements align with industry standards. Over the next several years we anticipate an expansion with the funding of apprenticeship programs like Building Futures.

2. Career Pathways and Support for Workers with Barriers

To advance career pathways, the Board implements initiatives to support individuals facing employment barriers, including TANF recipients and individuals with disabilities. Programs at the Workforce Solutions facility offer comprehensive services, from career counseling to skills training in fields with growth potential. For youth, programs provide not only technical skills but also leadership and life skills, helping them build sustainable career paths. This layered support, especially at new facilities in accessible locations, promotes economic mobility for underserved populations.

3. Policy Alignment and Coordination for Efficiency

The Board aligns with GWB's third goal by collaborating with state and local agencies to streamline services and increase access. The Workforce Solutions facility in Providence exemplifies this approach by housing several partner organizations under one roof, providing seamless, coordinated services to job seekers. This integration

supports government efficiency by reducing service overlap and improving accessibility for community members seeking employment assistance.

.4. Data-Driven Decision Making

The Board utilizes data to inform program adjustments, guide funding, and evaluate the impact of workforce initiatives. By tracking performance metrics, the Board can assess the success of sector-based training and career pathways, allowing it to allocate resources effectively and enhance program outcomes. This data-driven approach aligns with the GWB's goal of using evidence to maximize returns on investment and ensure programs adapt to evolving workforce demands.

Through these strategies, the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board not only aligns with but actively contributes to the state's workforce development objectives, fostering a resilient, skilled labor force tailored to Rhode Island's economic goals. The Providence American Job Center has been a consistent high performing center with regard to placement and earnings for its participants.

2.4 Describe board actions to become and/or remain a high-performing board. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(18)]

For the purposes of this element, the GWB considers a high-performing local board as a board that:

- ensures the yearly attainment of goals, strategies, and operational elements as articulated in applicable law, regulation, contract(s) and agreement(s);**
- ensures the expectations outlined in the State WIOA Plan, program grant and associated requirements, and federal guidance are achieved;**
- meets its varied responsibilities including fiduciary and administrative in a professional manner;**
- upholds its mission of being accountable to the workforce area stakeholders; and**
- abides by other policies and expectations as determined by the Governor’s Workforce Board**

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board (PCWDB) takes a proactive approach to ensure it meets high-performance standards in alignment with both the Governor’s Workforce Board (GWB) expectations and federal WIOA requirements. Key actions taken by the PCWDB include:

1. Ensuring Attainment of Goals and Compliance with Law and Contracts

The PCWDB adheres to yearly goals, strategies, and operational guidelines set forth by applicable laws, contracts, and agreements. This is achieved by aligning its local workforce initiatives with federal WIOA guidelines and state requirements. The Board continuously monitors its progress toward goals, particularly around skill-building, sector-focused training, and employment placement, ensuring its programs deliver on the expectations outlined in both state and federal mandates. The Board insures that there is a consistent and periodic review of local area policies and requirements. In addition there is continuous review of local labor market information and a renewed effort to serve the local employers and community organization thru the recent hiring of a Senior Job Developer to coordinate these activities.

2. Meeting State WIOA Plan and Grant Requirements

The Board actively works to fulfill the objectives set out in the Rhode Island State WIOA Plan. This includes providing workforce services that address the needs of employers and job seekers, especially those with barriers to employment. By offering programs that range from career counseling to technical training and industry-specific education, the PCWDB ensures compliance with the specific requirements of each program grant, upholding federal guidance in all operations.

3. Upholding Fiduciary and Administrative Responsibility

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board places strong emphasis on fiduciary responsibility and administrative professionalism. The Board is diligent in managing funds, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively, and maintaining transparent financial practices. This includes rigorous oversight and audits with the City of Providence to ensure that public funds are used efficiently and in ways that maximize benefit for the local workforce and economy. All requests for funds must be brought to and voted on by the City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply thus providing another level of oversight for expenditures and training programs.

4. Accountability to Workforce Area Stakeholders

As a public service entity, Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board is accountable to a wide range of stakeholders, including job seekers, employers, training partners, and local government officials. To foster trust and transparency, the Board regularly engages with the community, seeking feedback and adjusting services as needed. This engagement not only builds public trust but also ensures the Board's programs are responsive to the evolving needs of the local economy.

5. Compliance with Policies and Expectations of the GWB

The Board strives to consistently establish policies that for the most part align with the Governors Workforce Boards (GWB), including utilization of the pre-screened providers for the State's Real Jobs Program thereby expanding the pool of training providers. By adhering to these policies, the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board remains aligned with the broader goals of the Governor's Workforce Board, ensuring consistency in workforce services across Rhode Island.

In summary, through strategic planning, compliance, stakeholder engagement, and prudent financial management, the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board exemplifies the qualities of a high-performing workforce board, supporting sustainable employment and economic development across the Providence and Cranston areas.

2.5 Describe how the board's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The USDOL has established performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of workforce programs. The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board has met or exceeded all performance standards as established by WIOA. Workforce Solutions staff performance has been nothing but stellar in all iterations of the public workforce development system. The Board believes that the overall goals will lead to continued compliance with the federal performance measures. The Board during a review of the measures was aware of the necessity to expand some of the training opportunities to cover a greater number of job seekers with services all the while maintaining acceptable performance levels. To ensure continued success and continuous improvement, the Providence /Cranston Workforce Development Board requires performance reports from both the OSO and WSPC detailing performance at each PCWDB meeting. These reports enable the Providence/Cranston Workforce Board to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and to modify procedures when appropriate. For example, the expansion of the use of the Real Jobs provider list when there were insufficient providers on the State-run Eligible Training Provider List.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Please answer the questions in Section 3 in eight (8) pages or less. Many of the responses below, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners.

3.1 Considering the analysis in Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the organizations that carry out core programs to align resources in the local area, in support of the vision and goals described in Question 2.1. See Local Wagner Peyser plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

In this time of diminished resources at the State and Federal Level it is important to avoid duplication of services and to leverage resources. The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board is committed to bringing AJC services to the community. We are working closely with the Providence Housing Authority to bring services directly to the various housing villages. We are also reaching out to various community groups to discuss their strategy for moving forward during these challenging times of diminished or non-existent funding. We are in the process of finalizing making the orientation/services available electronically, and have accepted the participant assessment of referring partners to the extent allowable by law to avoid duplication of services. Most providers are instituting CASAS Assessment testing prior to referral.

The creation of the Small Business Hub by Skills for RI Future gives the public workforce system the opportunity to engage with employers and to leverage pre-employment readiness services. It will serve the system and employers to create a meaningful partnership to recruit, prepare and train individuals by leveraging expertise and resources. The Providence/Cranston Local Workforce Board proposes that the development of a blended funding strategy with the Governor's Workforce Board will improve the results in the Providence/Cranston Area by improved performance.

Since Workforce Solutions has assumed the role of the one-stop operator the quality of the local partner meetings has improved dramatically. The meetings are held to ensure alignment of the one-stop system and to make the best use of resources available. The goal for all of us is an integrated system that is responsive to local and regional workforce needs. Collaboration will result in enhanced customer service. Regular partner meetings initiated and managed by our Workforce solutions is one of several coordinating measures in our contract with them.

A customer-centered approach is the cornerstone of our service delivery. This will be achieved by:

Increasing opportunities for cross training of staff, fostering timely and responsive services without duplication, and the sharing of information to ensure alignment with the goals identified by the Board:

- Supporting the state's goal for a common intake process
- Establishing a point of contact for each partner to enhance the customer referral process
- Establishment of a standardized referral form has significantly improved the referral process.

3.2 Identify the programs/partners that are included in the local workforce development system. Include, at a minimum, organizations that provide services for Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

Providence/Cranston enjoys a robust workforce development system with established partnerships. We work with numerous partners including those identified in the state plan and in our Memorandum of Understanding. The main partners are as follows:

- RI Department of Labor and Training
- RI Department of Education
- RI Department of Rehabilitative Services
- Job Corp
- Youth Build Providence
- RI Indian Council, Providence
- Providence Housing Authority
- RI Department of Human Services
- Comprehensive Community Action Programs for Cranston and Providence as well as the Tri-County region
- Equus for the TANF Program
- Providence Public Library
- Various Veterans representative sand organizations

Many of the programs are co-located. For example, Wagner Peyser, Rehabilitation programs, Adult Education, Veteran programs are co-located with our Title I WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Adult Education will provide classes in the one-stop to ensure customers desiring to enter skills training programs have the basic skills needed for successful participation.

Workforce Solutions as the One-Stop -Operator, takes responsibility for coordinating the programs and services of our one-stop partners as detailed in the agreement between us and our Board. Workforce Solutions will require that all partners communicate regularly to ensure services are provided seamlessly, collaboratively and without duplication. The ultimate goal is a common intake and/or referral process for which discussions have begun on developing an operational system.

The Workplace will hold regularly scheduled staff training sessions with all partners. During those meetings, information about services and resources available for participants and businesses will be shared. These trainings will allow staff to learn about appropriate referrals for each agency and how to access services. In addition, other partners will be invited to ensure customer have access to all community resources not just those within the AJC.

3.3 Describe efforts to work with partners identified in 3.2 to support alignment of service provision to contribute to the achievement of goals and strategies. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston held a series of meetings with our one-stop partners as we developed our joint MOUs with them and we as the One-Stop Operator will continue to hold monthly local partner meetings to ensure alignment of the AJC system and to make the best use of resources available. The goal for all partners and stakeholders is an integrated system that is responsive to local and regional workforce needs. We have started to schedule regular meeting with the Department of Labor and training to enhance the placement services provided to job seekers at the American Job Center. Collaboration will result in enhanced customer service. A customer-centered approach is the cornerstone of our service delivery model. This will be achieved by:

Increasing opportunities for cross training of staff fostering timely and responsive services without duplication.

- Sharing information to ensure alignment with the goals identified by the board
- Supporting the state's goal for a common intake and assessment process
- Establishing point of contacts for each partner to enhance the customer referral process.

The monthly partnership meetings will be the primary point of contact to discuss specific joint efforts to provide services and to discuss any and all ongoing training opportunities that will be provided to the community.

3.4 Describe strategies to maximize coordination of services in order to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

Specifically, AJC partners are invited to participate on site at the AJC on a regularly scheduled basis. This will allow partners to provide information and services to one stop customers presenting with barriers to employment that they typically address at their location. We are also in discussions to periodically station WSPC staff at partner locations to provide information on partner programs. The city of Cranston has made this request as well as the Providence Housing Authority to be serve their tenants. These expanded relationships will assist in mitigating any hesitation in partner customers from visiting the AJC for fear of the unknown and duplication of services already received at the partner location and will create stronger linkages between the programs and services offered in the AJC and those offered through partners which will create a more unified and holistic system to lift people up to better achieve economic self-sufficiency. Employer engagement through industries targeted by the PCWDB by Labor Market Information will address common workforce challenges related to entry-level workers, the recruitment of low-income and other specified groups, and as well as the placement of those individuals seeking re-entry employment It is through employer engagement that Workforce Solutions has identified in-demand occupations and the pre-employment skills required by employers. These items have been addressed by the development of workshops available at the AJC and the training offered.

Workforce Solutions maintains a vibrant social media presence and utilizes these platforms to notify constituents of events, job training and job fairs. in addition, Workforce Solutions also has implemented a streamlined referral process and are seeking to develop a common intake system to eliminate the burden

on the customer to provide information to multiple partners. The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board is exploring an automated registration system for capturing specific information at the front desk located at the American Job Center.

3.5 Identify how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan and state provided criteria. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

The Board of Directors is not involved in the review of applications under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy. Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston as the administrative entity for the Local Board will continue to coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under the WIOA Title II though its on-going partnership with the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI). RIFLI's mission is to equip adult immigrants in our communities with the literacy skills necessary for upward mobility, engaged citizenship, strong families and lifelong learning. RIFLI is co-located in the AJC and has been an integral partner in offering adult basic education services aligned with WIOA-funded workforce development activities.

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

Workforce Solutions is a cabinet member of the Economic Development Committee that meets on a monthly basis to discuss economic development activities in the City of Providence. The Department recently hired a Senior Job Developer which will facilitate entrepreneurship training, development of talent pools, and microlending opportunities. We anticipate closer coordination with the Small Business Development Corporation and the Small Business Administration. We are working with the partners economic development teams to explore the use of each city's revolving loan fund. Other opportunities for training will be explored with the Center for Women and Enterprise should they continue to receive federal funding, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as well as the Providence Chamber of Commerce. Small businesses are the driving force for the majority of the hiring the overall workforce. Most small businesses in Rhode Island are being classified as sole proprietors and still identify access to capital as a major barrier.

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

Each of the WSPC WIOA youth contractors provides pathways to secondary credentials through either GED or NDP programs, as well as activities and services to transition to post-secondary trainings. Together the WSPC staff and the youth contractor staff form a community of practice. The work group meets monthly, sharing information and strategies and aligning efforts. In addition, we are working closely with Roger Williams University with their workforce development initiatives to create additional opportunities in particular with the formerly Justice involved educational program individuals. A goal over the next few years would to advance apprenticeship/intern opportunities within the various technical schools and the encourage the of development at the high school level of entrepreneurship programs partnering with the small business community.

3.8 Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area, including facilitating transportation for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11)]

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Area coordinates several supportive services to assist customers with barriers to employment, especially those facing challenges like transportation issues. These services are designed to ensure that individuals can fully participate in workforce development programs and succeed in obtaining or maintaining employment.

Key efforts include providing financial assistance for transportation to training programs and work opportunities, allowing participants to attend essential training and job-related events. Local workforce development entities often collaborate with organizations like Community Action Partnership of Providence County (CAPP) and the Comprehensive Community Action Program to offer these supports, helping individuals overcome logistical barriers that might otherwise prevent them from accessing workforce opportunities.

These services are tailored to the needs of the region's diverse population, including youth, those with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Transportation solutions are part of a broader effort to offer comprehensive support, which may also include assistance with childcare, housing, and financial literacy. In many cases we have expanded Transportation Services to not only include the availability of bus passes but we have also instituted reimbursement for various ride sharing companies i.e. Uber, Lyft etc.

Supportive services are provided to eligible WIOA adults and dislocated worker participants when the supportive service will assist the participant in helping remove barriers with the intent to help the participant reach his/her employment and training goals. Policy includes documentation requirements to show that the supportive service is allowable, reasonable and not otherwise not available to the participant,

WSPC authorizes supportive services be provided to individuals who are:

- Adults and Dislocated Workers participating in career or training services as defined in WIOA sections 134(c)(2) and (3); and,
- Unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services.

Supportive services may include:

- Assistance with transportation
- Assistance with healthcare
- Assistance with books
- Assistance with tools
- Assistance with clothing
- Employment/training related tests
- Other allowable supportive services as approved by the P/C Workforce Development Board

Supportive services may be provided only when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in career services or training activities. In order to document the supportive service need, a "Determination of Need" form is completed to determine if the participant needs supportive services and the services are not available from other sources. WIOA dollars are the last dollars spent for supportive services. Alternative Supportive Services available thru the United Way 211 Program will be included as a counselor's responsibility

to offer various social service programs. In addition, we are developing a better relationship with Equus who oversees the TANF population at our location for additional co-enrollment opportunities and funding of ancillary supportive services as well as training opportunities.

WSPC policy operates under the following policy as related to providing transportation services.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICE	ALLOWABLE AMOUNT	DETERMINATION OF NEED
<p>Transportation assistance: private vehicle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Auto repair o Bus passes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A maximum equal to the Federal mileage reimbursement per mile. • A maximum of \$300 for any one vehicle to include only minor repairs such as tires, brakes, water pump, etc. <p>A maximum of 10 RIDE passes and/or one monthly pass.</p>	<p>This assistance shall only be provided in cases where such assistance is required for a customer to commute to and from work, training or other WIOA activities.</p> <p>This assistance shall only be provided in cases where it is necessary for the successful completion of training or the obtainment of employment.</p> <p>This assistance shall only be provided in cases where such assistance is required for a customer to commute to and from work, training or other WIOA activities.</p>

The Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston’s youth program budget includes funds for RIPTA bus passes, Uber and Lyft to ensure that youth with transportation barriers can access services. Most WIOA youth programs also have vans that provide transportation for WIOA activities. Referrals for supportive services for youth will be made in accordance with the executed agreements with the supportive services providers.

3.9 Based on the analysis described in Section 1.1-1.3, identify the populations that the local area plans to focus its efforts and resources on, also known as targeted populations.

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board operates under the federal priority of service policy as required by WIOA and the 2008 Jobs for Veterans Act. Priority of service means, with respect to applicable WIOA programs, certain populations will be given priority over others (as described in the Priority of Service policy below) for the receipt of certain employment, training, and placement services provided under WIOA Title I. Veterans within these groups receive priority over non-veterans. Adult priority is determined for the targeted groups during eligibility and enrollment.

Depending on the type of service being provided, taking precedence may mean:

Certain priority populations receive access to the service earlier in time than the non-covered person; or

If the service or resources are limited, priority populations receive access to the service instead of or before other population groups.

Priority for receipt of individualized career services and training services will be given to adult customers in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are ALSO recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals including those who are underemployed, or basic skills deficient.
- Second, to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals including those who are underemployed, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not recipients of public assistance, not low-income individuals including underemployed or who are not basic skills deficient.
- Fourth, to long-term unemployed individuals.
- Last, to all other persons not listed above — those who do not qualify as veterans, eligible spouses, recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, basic skills deficient individuals, or long-term unemployed individuals.

Priority of service cannot be waived. Priority of service does not guarantee that by virtue of his/her status an individual will always receive service. The individual must be eligible and able to benefit from the services.

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board has given priority to individuals with barriers to employment, as identified in local policy 2020-12 and section 4.6 below, for those customers that do not fall into the federal priority guidelines.

Discussions are underway at the national level from the National Association of Workforce Development Boards with the Department of Labor as to whether Priority of Service constitutes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion activities under the new administration directives. It is our opinion that it is not a DEI activity.

3.10 Based on the analysis described Section 1, identify all industries, if any, where the local area plans to engage a targeted sector strategy. This section should align with the industries and businesses identified in the state plan, as well as the priorities outlined in the state's economic development strategy - "Ocean State Accelerates"

The Providence/Cranston Workforce development Board in conjunction with Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston has identified various sectors that will play a key role in the local economy which will result in clear identifiable career paths. These sectors are construction, advanced manufacturing, IT, healthcare positions, blue and green economy as well as playing a key role in the Life Science industry. We are strengthening our partnership with these sectors thru collaboration with various entities such as We Make RI, Polaris MEP, and the Life Science Hub.

The collaboration between Workforce Solutions and the Providence Economic Development Department ensures that local economic initiatives and workforce development issues are integrated.

The Executive Director of Workforce Solutions serves on the Economic Development Committee as a cabinet member. These efforts will align with the Ocean State Accelerates plan with regard to their three main goals of:

1. Strong Communities
2. Increased Prosperity
3. Sustainable Growth

3.11 Based on the analysis described Section 1, describe the local investment strategy toward targeted sectors identified in 3.10 and targeted populations identified in 3.9.

As previously noted in section 3.9 we intend to serve those specific groups and we have identified several sector industries which align with the sectors identified in the State Plan as well as in Rhode Island Innovates 2.0. The disparity lies in the skill set being demonstrated by existing customer qualifications and how they fit or don't fit with the industry sector's needs. The report previously mentioned identifies this as a major problem for job placement due to skills gaps that currently exists in the current talent pool. As previously noted Industry sector interaction will allow us to identify those needs and leverage our training dollars invest toward minimizing those perceived and actual skills gaps. In addition, we are forging ongoing relationships with various community groups, economic development departments, Chambers of Commerce, SBDC, and SBA, and the Center of Women and Enterprise to acquire a laser focus to serve the small business community for their hiring needs with these entities. We have created the position of a Senior Job Developer located at the American Job Center to facilitate our outreach to various entities.

3.12 Identify and describe the strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:

- A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in workforce development programs (in addition to targeted sector strategies identified in 3.10 and 3.11)**
- B. Support a local workforce development system described in 3.2 that meets the needs of businesses**
- C. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs**
- D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs**

This may include the implementation of incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, or utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in 3.1. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4) (A&B)]

Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston in conjunction with the Board of Directors designs and develops programs to meet the needs of local businesses. Existing industry partnerships with local organizations, including the expansion of utilizing state vetted vendors and partners, will help increase participation in sector strategies while helping create more employer-informed policy decisions. Other strategies include employer recruitment events at the AJC and job fairs for multiple employers. AJC staff will also work with employers to attempt to back-fill any openings created by incumbent worker training. Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston will continue to partner with other workforce areas to address regional needs for through multiple initiatives. Particular emphasis will be placed on apprenticeship programs in partnership with the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership and Building Futures, to coordinate programs to strategically serve the needs of employers.

WSPC is in a unique position as it relates to the coordination of workforce development activities with economic development in the region. The Executive Director of Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston reports to the Director of Economic Development. The goals of Workforce Solutions are aligned with many of the economic development strategies of the City of Providence and further strengthen the connection

between workforce and economic development. WSPC also has strong ties to the City of Cranston's Office of Economic Development as the City's Economic Development Director is a WSPC Board member. In addition, our plan to establish industry sector focus groups coordinated with specific community groups which will enhance our reach for development of a progressive workforce. It is our intention to be an active participant in specific sector events run by the RI Manufacturers Association, SBA/SBDC as well participating in seminar opportunities with various Chambers of Commerce and Providence Business News.

Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston is able to coordinate with the City of Providence's Economic Development Department to fund additional programs at the One-Stop through the First Source Program. This program works closely with small businesses to provide a local tax break with the promise of hiring Providence residents. Workforce Solutions of Providence Cranston provides various services/technical assistance which includes financial literacy, practical business skills, market analysis, and access to capital required to start and grow a small business.

In an effort to strengthen the linkage between the One-Stop System and the various Unemployment Programs we are targeting in-demand industry sectors and meeting the needs of business, we plan to place significant emphasis on apprenticeship partnerships with Building Futures, and We Make RI for Manufacturing Training. An ongoing referral system has been established between the various partners to identify potential clients for these initiatives. In our view there is no better indication of workplace demand than when an employer agrees to hire and train an AJC customer for one of their current openings. The implementation of On-the-Job training grants has been minimized due to funding constraints in the beginning of 2025. We hope to revisit them once we have clarity of our funding situation with the new administration.

3.13 Does the local board currently leverage or have oversight of funding outside of WIOA Title I funding and state general funds to support the local workforce development system? Briefly describe the funding and how it will impact the local system. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, does it have future plans to pursue them?

Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston does not have any major funding sources aside from WIOA allocated funds. The City of Providence awarded a small amount of ARPA funds to provide a small amount of sector specific workforce training but all those funds have been obligated.

As to future plans, WSPC is always open to opportunities that are compatible with and within the scope of the mission and vision of the state and WSPC. Also, we are currently exploring the revitalization and utilization of an affiliated 501 C 3 called the Providence Skills Center which previously operated training programs in conjunction with CCAP. It is the Board's intention to have this available to diversify our funding streams from being only WIOA. In addition, we are working closely with the Life Science Hub to develop a workforce strategy to function as a convener of workforce programs. The freezing of federal funds by the Trump Administration further demonstrates the need to diversify funding streams.

3.14 Describe the local area's strategy for community engagement and outreach which may include partnering with community-based organizations, identifying community leaders/champions, and/or working with area school districts to increase the awareness and availability of services beyond the AJC location and within the community. Such strategy may include the strategic co-location of WIOA services within culturally competent organizations with trust and positive reputation within the state's traditionally underserved communities.

Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston recently added a Senior Job Developer to be liaison to those individuals seeking employment as well as providing the business community with a direct contact to the

American Job Center services. As part of our outreach effort we have partnered with We Make RI to sponsor monthly job fairs for manufacturing and all industry events as well as the Department of Labor and Training to provide on-site job fairs. We are reconvening our American Job Center job fairs to improve our presence in the business community and to make a reduction in the increasing unemployment rate. We are also partnering with Community based companies such as the Providence Public Library and the Providence Housing Authority to provide digital literacy and direct job recruitment services at the public housing units.

The make up of the American Job Center has over 24 required members to provide services from DLT, Office of Rehabilitative Services to the Exeter Job Corp. We have regular monthly meetings to discuss their needs as members of the American Job Centers. In addition, we have a very active social media presence to distribute information about our programs and career services.

We have improved our Employer Engagement with the hiring of a Senior Job Developer through direct engagement as well attending forums and networking events with Providence Business News and various local Chambers of Commerce. The Board members themselves attend a variety of community and business events which helps disseminate information on any programs or events.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Please answer the following questions in Section 4 in eight (8) pages or less. Many of the responses below, such as career pathways and individual training accounts, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners.

4.1 Describe how the local board, 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. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

Meetings with local CBOs have identified areas in which Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston in cooperation with the Local Workforce Development Board can improve its community presence and service delivery. The PCWDB has directed WSPC staff to make a priority of engaging community organizations by exploring providing core services at the CBO site or by group sessions at the AJC. WSPC will also accept partner assessments to the extent allowable to avoid duplication. Policy will be developed to codify this.

Improved relationships with CBOs will also provide improved access to supportive services provided by these organizations. These services will increase the probability of success of the participants by gaining access to support for both the individual and his/her family.

Individuals with barriers to employment are identified as follows:

- a) Displaced homemakers;
- b) Low-income individuals;
- c) Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians;
- d) Individuals with disabilities;
- e) Older individuals (age 55 or older);
- f) Ex-offenders;
- g) Homeless individuals (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6)));
- h) Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system;
- i) Individuals who are English learners, have low literacy levels, or face substantial cultural barriers;

- j) Eligible Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers as defined in WIOA Sec. 167(i);
- k) Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF;
- l) Single parents (including pregnant women);
- m) Long-term unemployed individuals;
- n) Members of other groups identified by the Governor (WIOA, Sec. 3(24)).

To aid in directing customers to appropriate support services, the American Job Center Staff along with the Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston (now serving as the One-Stop-Operator) utilizes the Comprehensive Service Supportive Directory developed by the United Way to aide our clients. The Support Service Directory is tool for the American Job Center Staff and other workforce development network partners to locate and connect with support services and service providers throughout Rhode Island. The directory is designed to help staff locate a particular service or support based on a customer's need. While not an exhaustive list of all providers or services, this directory assists staff to better serve their job seeker customers and helps provide a more complete picture of what services are available in the region.

WIOA Title II contractor, RIFLI continues to provide adult education at the AJC to customers in need of remediation to meet the qualifications of an employer or training provider.

4.2 Describe how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways 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). See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board of Directors has and will continue to promote career development activities that will result in Post-secondary credentials thru various means i.e. partnerships with CCRI and RWU as well as credential recognized group training RFP's. All training approved for the ETPL are required to offer a recognized credential. Any group training contracts awarded by Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston includes the requirement that a WIOA recognized credential be available.

While OJT is exempt from the WIOA credentialing requirement, it does provide an income to the individual while learning so is a preferred training option for many participants. With the board decision to approve incumbent worker training, employed individuals can upgrade their skills and achieve a credential all the while continuing to earn an income.

4.3 Describe how the local board will utilize co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs to maximize efficiencies and use of resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

WSPC practice is to use co-enrollment into WIOA for non-WIOA grants managed by WSPC. Past examples are the prisoner re-entry grant LEAP 2 in which soon to be released inmates of the Adult Correctional Institution were co-enrolled in WIOA for post-release services, many participants of the Ready to Work H 1 B Grant were enrolled in WIOA for post program services including job hunting skills workshops, job placement and follow-up.

Currently, participants of the Recovery Through Opportunity are co-enroll in WIOA to make training services and support services available as many opioid impacted individuals are in need these services to successfully transition into self-sufficiency.

This practice has proved advantageous to both the non-WIOA and WIOA operations. Duplication of services is avoided and continuity is preserved as communication between programs remains in-house.

WSPC has developed a policy and procedures for the use of the dual enrollment strategy for youth program participants that also meet Adult eligibility requirements. WSPC has recently allocated space at the AJC for WIOA youth providers to spend regular hours onsite to encourage and facilitate dual enrollment. We are actively encouraging dual enrollment with the allocation of ARPA funds when there are clear identifiable credentials to be earned.

4.4 Describe one-stop delivery system in the local area, consistent with the One-Stop Center Definitions. See Local Plan References and Resources.

- A. Describe 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, and workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]

WSPC subscribes to a demand-driven philosophy to support the labor market. The core partners participate on the board as well as labor representatives, CBOs, and businesses including the Chambers of Commerce of Greater Providence and Greater Cranston. WSPC's board is representative of area's industry composition. The Board and its sub- committees meet regularly and are committed to continuing to focus on key areas such as business needs, workforce system effectiveness, youth and customer services to remain a high performing board. Board members are active in a variety of service organizations and other boards that allows for increased knowledge and a broad reach in the community. We evaluate the skills required in our region through conversation with business and reviewing Labor Market Information.

At the Workforce Development Board meetings, the Workforce Development Board of Providence/Cranston reviews the quarterly performance reports, provides feedback, and recommends corrective action when appropriate. The One-Stop Operator, has developed a customer satisfaction survey for businesses and job seekers that will give us the ability to respond with to areas needing improvement. We believe that collaborating with our customers and meeting their needs has, and will continue to result in positive performance. In partnership with our Operator, we are developing a new set of performance metrics that will be used by the Board to further increase performance of the workforce system through a richer set of data.

WDB members participate in the development of policies. The WDB has active members that work to expand and increase the levels of partnerships. The Board communicates and develops partnerships between business, labor, education and workforce entities. WSPC provides oversight and guidance for the workforce system. The board works closely with the WSPC Executive Director to handle the day-to-day operations and make operational adjustments as necessary. Recognizing the inherent deficiencies in certain categories of the EPTL List for sector engagement the Board of Directors addressed this by extending the use of pre-screened providers on the Real Jobs Provider List should there be a minimal number of providers on the State EPTL List. While maintenance of the ETPL is a function of RIDLT, WSPC uses past results and current labor market information when working with participants. WSPC policy requires that Career Counselor provide labor market information to customers. Recognizing that customer choice is a tenant of WIOA, career counselors assist customers in making decisions on the type and provider of training services. We will continue to encourage other additional training providers to contact the State to be added to the list.

Workforce solutions of Providence Cranston has assumed the role of the One-Stop Operator and continuously informs the Board of Directors on a regular basis as to the interaction and direction of the partners. Since assuming that role the State will performing a review of the American Job Center also after an in-house comprehensive is conducted. The focus is of the review of the workforce system is to ensure that proper policies and procedures are in place to better meet the skill needs of the workforce and the talent needs of employers.

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

The Providence/Cranston AJC is located in an urban area and accessible by public transportation so the issues that impact remote or rural areas are not relevant to the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board.

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

Section 188 of WIOA requires AJC programs to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities to ensure equal access and opportunity. DLT oversees the accessibility of all Rhode Island AJCs including coordinating the required annual assessment of the AJCs which would identify any violations. In addition, there is an annual review to monitor the condition of the physical structure to guarantee compliant access by the City of Providence. In addition, we have engaged the City of Providence, Public Properties Division to conduct an on-site review to insure ADA compliance of the facility. Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston made a major commitment by the installation of an automated lift to ensure access to the second floor for training sessions, job fairs and seminars.

D. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners by providing a summary of the area's memorandum of understanding (and resource sharing agreements if such documents are used). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]
summary of the area's memorandum of understanding (and resource sharing agreements if such documents are used). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]

The MOU's process and agreements are structured with a stated goal of developing a clear focus and responsibilities with the overall objective of the to establish a system that creates integrated services and a unified structure and process of a proactive, transparent, effective job seeker and business services, orchestrated by a seamless collaboration of talent development and support services. They additionally call for the parties to share a common commitment to create a workforce system where every business has access to a qualified, job-ready workforce and every individual customer has the skills needed to connect with meaningful employment and advancement in their careers. It further details the responsibilities of the One-Stop Operator, Coordinated Service Delivery, Accessibility of Services to be Provided and the various Services to be provided by the specific agency partner. Recently, Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston was designated as the One-Stop-Operator for the Providence American Job Center which has resulted in improved focus on the partners concerns and training programs as well as a significant reduction of costs for the center.

E. Describe how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(21)]

The primary goal is to have a computerized intake system and survey kiosks to enhance the quality of information collected at the front desk. This has been lacking in the majority of the American Job Centers across the country. We are working with our internal IT Department to design and implement our own system. We DLT that they have contracted with a provider but it's our understanding that the system hasn't been implemented in the other centers. This is an absolute priority for PY 24-25.

4.5 Describe the policy, process, and criteria for issuing individual training accounts (ITAs) including any limitations on ITA amounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

Currently the PCWDB has instituted a \$6800 cap on ITA training by Executive Order of the Director. The previous approved amount was \$15,000. Unfortunately, the announcement of the State halting all ITA training and the lack of funding for Real Jobs programs until July 1, 2025 resulted in an influx of customers to the Providence Center since funds were still available at our site. To ensure we did not deplete our funds we decreased the amount to extend the available training dollars.

WSPC policy on ITA training is as follows:

American Job Center (AJC) staff may determine training services are appropriate, regardless of whether the individual has received basic or individualized career services first, and there is no sequence of service requirement.

Under WIOA, training services may be provided if the AJC staff, to include all AJC partners and other service providers supporting the AJC, determines after conducting an interview, an evaluation, and/or assessment, and career planning, that the individual:

- Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
- Needs training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment;
- Has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services;
- Is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including such sources as State-funded training funds or Federal Pell Grants or requires WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance.
- If a member of a worker group covered under a petition filed for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and is awaiting a determination. If the petition is certified, the worker may then transition to TAA approved training.

If the petition is denied, the worker will continue training under WIOA;

- Is determined eligible in accordance with the State and local priority system in effect for adults under WIOA sec.134(c)(3)(E) and PCWDB policy issuance on Priority of Service if training services are provided through the adult funding stream; and
- Has selected a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate.

Customer Choice Requirements

Training must be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice and:

The state list of eligible training providers must be made available to the customer;

The cost and performance of the training provider must be made available to the customer; and, an individual who has been determined eligible for training services under WIOA may select a provider after consultation with the Career and Employment Counselor. Unless the program has exhausted training funds for the program year, the AJC must refer the individual to the selected provider and establish an ITA for the individual to pay for the training. For purposes of this policy, a referral may be carried out by providing a voucher or certificate to the individual to obtain the training.

- WSPC has developed a Youth Policy for Individual Training Accounts
- WSPC has obligated some WIOA youth funds to be used for training, either as ITA'S or through group trainings for youth procured through WSPC.

4.6 If training contracts are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

WSPC governing group training contracts are governed by the following policy. Customer choice requires described in the previous response applies to all training regardless of the form the training takes,

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) are the primary method to be used for procuring training services under WIOA. However, in certain circumstances, a training contract may be used to provide training services, instead of an ITA. These circumstances are referred to as the "training exceptions" or "contract exceptions." These training exceptions may only be used if at least one of the five circumstances identified below applies and the process for their use is described in the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Area local plan.

Contract for training services may be used instead of ITA'S only when one or more of the following five exceptions apply, and the local area has fulfilled the consumer choice requirements of WIOA Regulations paragraph 680.340.

1. When the training is on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, incumbent worker training, or transitional jobs or ITA.
2. When the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board (PCWDB) determines that there are an insufficient number of Eligible Training Providers in the Providence/Cranston local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs.

When the PCWDB determines that there are training services programs that have demonstrated effectiveness offered in a local area by a community-based organization or other private organization to serve individuals with barriers to employment we will work to incorporate those programs into the AJC. As required under WIOA, the PCWDB has developed the following criteria that will be used to determine demonstrated effectiveness, particularly as it applies to individuals with barriers to employments to be served. Community-based organizations or other private organizations considered for the provision of training services must demonstrate:

Financial stability by the submittal of the latest audit or financial statements;

Demonstrated performance in the delivery of services to individuals with barriers to employment through such means as program completion rate; attainment of the skills, certificates or degree the program is designed to

provide; placement after training in unsubsidized employment; and retention in employment; and, o How the specific program relates to the workforce needs identified in the local plan.

When the PCWDB determines that it would be most appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education or other provider of training services in order to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors or occupations/ provided that the contract does not limit consumer choice.

When the PCWDB is considering entering into a Pay-for-Performance contract, and the PCWDB ensures that the contract is consistent with WIOA regulations 683.510 which details the requirements of such contracts.

For purposes of this policy, barriers to employment as noted in paragraph 2 above are defined as:

- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities
- Older individuals (age 55 and older)
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or homeless children and youths
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system
- Individuals who are: English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers.
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility
- Single parents (including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed individuals
- Such other groups as the Governor involved determines to have barriers to employment

4.7 Describe how the local board plans to integrate and connect training resources, including training contracts, with the work of the state’s industry and community-based partnerships such as Real Jobs RI.

Unfortunately, the State has suspended all Real Jobs Programs for PY 24-25 since they have depleted all funds for this program. We are waiting for formal notification that these programs will resume. We will be meeting with several community groups to discuss the overall impact of this situation to see if we can develop other pathways and coordination of services to maintain these institutions. We will also be proposing a reallocation of the Job Development Fund so that a set portion be allocated to the local development area for improved fiscal control and local involvement.

We will also be looking to expand the local area footprint to improve service on a wider area in coordination with an urban footprint which will result in increased funding due to the expanded area.

4.8 Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

In the previous Local Plan, WSPC planned to aggressively pursue closer coordination with Real Jobs RI and Real Pathways RI to leverage training funds and opportunities. The opportunities never came to fruition and with the depletion of funds for Real Jobs for PY24-25 alternative approaches have to be explored. We are actively pursuing local non-profit contributions as well as direct corporate donation for workforce development in particular sectors. In addition, we have a separate and distinct 501C 3 that we plan to solicit funding through.

This was previously utilized for Youth programs with CCAP thru what is called the Providence Skills Center formerly located at the Providence Place Mall.

Local Area CBOs are reaching out to us for funding since they relied on Real Jobs to sustain most programs. Unfortunately, our funds are at a low point since we were the only local area with training funds. We will be holding a meeting with the local groups in particular sectors in March 2025 to plot a possible path forward.

4.9 Describe how rapid response activities are coordinated and carried out in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

Rapid Response is the responsibility of the State. If we receive notifications we will assist the State's effort and reach out to the effected company to provide as many services as possible. We have not received any recent notifications.

Rapid Response activities are provided by the RIDLT. The State lists the services to be provided as follows:

Rapid Response coordination can benefit employers by:

Assisting with early intervention to allow employers and workers to communicate their concerns

Improving morale and productivity and lowering absenteeism due to reduced stress

Assisting in managing your human resource needs

Counseling affected workers in their efforts to return to work

Educating employers on such topics as Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN),

Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and other programs.

Helping maintain a good corporate relationship with the community.

Based on these provisions we would coordinate efforts and presentations with RIDLT for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) on site and directly with the effected workers.

4.10 Describe the design framework (such as requirements as described in a Request for Proposals) for youth programs utilized by the local board, and how the required 14 program elements are to be made available within that framework.

In addition to the WIOA requirements, WSPC uses these principles to describe the underlying intent of WIOA youth efforts:

- Adolescents and emerging adults need a developmentally appropriate and socially inclusive environment of support to successfully transition to adulthood.
- Coordinate and connect vulnerable youth to activities and services they need to transition to adulthood with a focus on planning for work and self-sufficiency.
- Commitment to the idea that social inclusion is as much about the ability to participate in community as it is about access to community.
- Supports for youth should enable them to participate in and shape their own futures and not perpetuate the need for services.
- Planning and implementation of programs and services must be firmly based in youth development principles and meet the needs of youth impacted by trauma.
- All programs and services must include plans to develop an understanding of diversity and the attainment of cultural competency skills for staff and participants.

WSPC requires additional program elements:

- Sector-based cohorts
- Media Literacy Skills
- Computers Skills

- Career Pathways

All the programs must address the following 14 Elements. Since all of our youth programs are managed through providers the approved contract delineates how each service will be provided either being provided in-house or contracted with an outside provider. Staff monitoring of each contract insures compliance.

14 Required Youth Program Elements:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
3. Paid or unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include: a) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; b) pre-apprenticeship programs; c) internships and job shadowing; and d) on-the-job training opportunities.
4. Occupational skills training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved.
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 and civic behaviors, as appropriate.
7. Supportive Services.
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation, and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.
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.
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

4.11 Describe the direction provided to the One Stop operator to ensure that priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E).

It is not the role of the one-stop operator to determine priority of services for WIOA customers. The PCWDB has issued a priority of service policy that details how priority for adult career and training services is extended to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient. A copy of this policy is provided by PCWFS to the One-Stop Operator as well as staff counselors for review and implementation. Obviously, we service a diverse customer base and provide services in coordination with WIOA regulations and anticipate a greater coordination of services with the various providers co-located in our facility. As a Comprehensive facility we have on site specific organization such as veterans' group i.e. Veteran's Services, Community Organizations i.e. CCAP, DLT which oversees multiple WIOAS required services, Office of Rehabilitative Services, etc. These and other outside CBO's interact directly with our staff counselors to review the client's situation for priority of service. Included in the MOU's with specific entities is a more structured referral process to identify those individuals where priority of services applies.

4.12 Describe the local board's strategies for ensuring that eligible veterans and covered persons are aware of their entitlement to priority of service, the full array of programs and services available to them, and applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.

Section 5: Compliance

Please answer the questions in Section 5 in six (6) pages or less. Most of the response should be staff-driven responses as each are focused on the organization's compliance with federal or state requirements.

5.1 Describe the process for neutral brokerage of adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. Identify the competitive process and criteria (such as targeted services, leverage of funds, etc.) used to award funds to sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services, state the names of contracted organizations, and the duration of each contract, [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services and Follow-up Services are provided by staff of the Cities of Providence and Cranston assigned to WSPC according to the personnel policy of the respective cities.

Training Services, when determined appropriate, are provided either through an Individual Training Account (ITA) or through a training contract. ITA training is available through a State Eligible Training Provider and Program List (ETPL), provided by an Eligible Training Provider (ETP) in accordance with WIOA sec. 122(d).

Contract training is awarded through a competitive process managed by City of Providence procurement policies and approved by the Providence Board of Contract & Supply based upon recommendation from the Providence/Cranston Workforce Board. Approved contracted training is currently being conducted by Genesis Center, Comprehensive Community Action Program, Community Action partnership of Providence, and Tri County Community Action Program.

WSPC's Youth Services are competitively procured through the WSPC Board and the City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply's public process,

- The process begins at a Youth Committee Meeting. Priorities and other changes to be made are discussed and an RFP subcommittee is appointed. Staff drafts the RFP with guidance from the subcommittee.
- The final RFP is submitted to the City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply (BOCS), which issues the RFP through its citywide public bidding system, which includes a bid conference and a public process for Q&A after the bid conference.
- Proposals are submitted to BOCS, time-stamped, scanned and distributed to WSPC for decision-making.

A team of readers will make individual assessments of the proposals and come together as a group to discuss all the proposals and make recommendations to Youth Committee, which in turn discusses and makes recommendations to the WSPC Board. The full board discuss and approves funding decisions and sends them back to the BOCS Board for final approval. Funding over \$1 million also goes before the City Council.

The most recent WSPC WIOA Youth RFP sought to leverage funds for services already being provided to WIOA eligible youth and to expand its provider community. Each of the 14 element descriptions asked if the element would be provided in-kind in the program budget. We will continue to expand this process of bringing existing services in at no cost to WIOA, with the goal of being able to serve more youth with our WIOA funds. WSPC was able to triple the number of WIOA providers from one to three. The providers are as follows: Community Action Committee of Providence, Comprehensive Community Action Program, and Tri-County Community Action Agency.

5.2 Identify the One-Stop Operator and describe the established procedures for ongoing certification of one-stop operators.

The One Stop Operator is now the Administrative Entity, Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston. The Board did not review the Workplace as the one-stop-operator and we had to receive State Approval for Providence/Cranston Workforce Solutions to act as the operator. We are attaching the newest policy for One-Stop Certification that was adopted by the Board on June 27, 2024. Since we are acting as the One-Stop Operator we are required to do a preliminary review which will be forwarded to the State who will review it and then initiate their review.

5.3 Provide an organization chart as Attachment A that depicts a clear separation of duties between the board and service provision.

See Attachment A

5.4 Provide a complete list of Local Board Membership Roster, including titles and professional associations.

AMATO	MARC	CHAIR	CEO	INNOVA LOGIC, LLC
BLISS	CHESTER	MEMBER	DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES	RHODE ISLAND INDIAN COUNCIL
BORBA	KERI	MEMBER	DIRECTOR EMPLOYEE LEARNING	AAA
CHENEVERT	DAVID	MEMBER	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	RI MANUFACTURES ASSOCIATION
CORTES	ANDREW	MEMBER	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	BUILDING FUTURES
DELANEY	ROBERT	MEMBER	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	INSTITUTE FOR LABOR STUDIES & RESEARCH
DEVINE	ALEXIS	MEMBER	YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COORD.	LIFESPAN

DUFRESNE	NICOLE	MEMBER	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF PROVIDENCE
FILARSKI	KENNETH	SECRETARY	PRINCIPAL/FOUNDER	FILARSKI/ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING + RESEARCH
JACKSON	BARBARA	VICE CHAIR	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	WE MAKE RI
KINNAMAN	TIMOTHY	MEMBER	OWNER	T. C. KINNAMAN WELDING SOLUTIONS
MARTIN	NANCY	MEMBER	HR MANAGER	ELECTRIC BOAT
		MEMBER	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM
MEJIAS	OSCAR	MEMBER	PRESIDENT/CEO	RI HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
MONTANARO	MICHAEL	MEMBER	REHABILITATION SPECIALIST	OFFICE OF REHABILITATED SERVICES
MORILLO	NICOLE	MEMBER	ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR	PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
MORRIS	BERNICE	MEMBER	DIR. OF EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT	CROSSROADS RI
PALMER	BRIAN	MEMBER	DIRECTOR OF TRAINING	TEAMSTERS LOCAL 251
PAOLUCCI	KAREN	MEMBER	HR MANAGER	YUSHIN AMERICA
PARTINGTON	KATHLEEN	MEMBER	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	NEW ENGLAND INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
PAULINO	FRANKLIN	MEMBER	DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	CITY OF CRANSTON
QUINN	DEBRA	MEMBER	MANAGER	COASTAL 1 CREDIT UNION
QUINN	PATRICK	MEMBER	EXEC. VICE PRESIDENT	NEHCEU DIST-1199
SEPE	RAYMOND	MEMBER	PRESIDENT	ELECTRO STANDARDS
TRAFICANTE	MICHAEL	MEMBER	DIR GOV. AFFAIRS	NEW ENG. LABORERS UNION
YANKEE	CHRISTINE	MEMBER	VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAM SERVICES	GOODWILL OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

5.5 Provide the policy and process for nomination and appointment of board members.

See Attachment B

5.6 Provide the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for WIOA within the local area.

Workforce Solutions of Providence Cranston designates the Executive Director at the Providence AJC as the Equal Opportunity Officer in conjunction with the Equal Opportunity Officer for the City of Providence. The Executive Director is Stephen C. Boyle and he can be reached by email at sboyle@providenceri.gov or by phone at 401-680-5100.

5.7 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

The awarding of grant funds is recommended by the Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board to the Providence Board of Contract & Supply of which the Mayor of the City of Providence is the Chair, and are managed by Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston by public policy, WIOA regulations and agreement between Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston, Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board and the City of Providence. Disbursement of funds is handled by the City of Providence, Treasurers Department once invoices are approved by the Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston Fiscal Manager.

**5.8 Indicate the most recent negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures.
[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]**

Negotiated Performance Rates for Workforce Solutions PY 25

WIOA Performance Measures	Rhode Island		WSPC Actual	WSPC PROPOSED	
Final Negotiated Goals					
PY 24	PY 25		PY 21 – 22 Average	PY 24	PY 25
			Actual		
WIOA Adults					
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	82.50%	83.00%	89.68%	85.00%	85.75%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	80.50%	81.50%	82.68%	82.25%	83.50%
Median Earnings	\$7,500.00	\$8,100.00	\$8003.50	\$7500.00	\$8000.00
Credential Attainment Rate	59.00%	60.50%	74.39%	67.00%	68.00%
Measurable Skill Gains	47.50%	48.00%	55.05%	51.00%	53.00%
WIOA Dislocated Workers					
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	86.00%	86.50%	87.04%	85.00%	86.00%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	84.50%	85.50%	88.13%	84.50%	85.25%
Median Earnings	\$9,500.00	\$9,750.00	\$10374.50	\$9500.00	\$9800.00
Credential Attainment Rate	71.50%	72.00%	77.35%	72.50%	73.00%
Measurable Skill Gains	44.00%	44.50%	68.48%	48.00%	49.00%
WIOA Youth					
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	73.00%	73.50%	78.94%	73.00%	74.00%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	71.00%	71.50%	79.56%	71.00%	72.00%
Median Earnings	\$3,750.00	\$4,000.00	\$4396.50	\$3800.00	\$3900.00
Credential Attainment Rate	63.00%	63.50%	78.39%	63.00%	64.00%
Measurable Skill Gains	39.00%	40.50%	59.06%	49.00%	49.50

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

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

The fiscal agent for WIOA funds is WSPC. Oversight of fiscal operations is conducted by the City of Providence internal auditor, City contracted independent auditor, and state and federal agents. The Board of Directors defers the audit and oversight role to the City of Providence to measure effectiveness. The Board of Directors will review the completed comprehensive audit. The effectiveness of the service providers and the one-stop operator and delivery system is monitored by the various committees responsible for oversight with conditional approval by the Executive Committee, and then final approval by the Full Board. Review of the one-stop delivery system will be overseen by the Special Projects Coordinator and a third party will conduct a periodic review of performance to be completed in an oversight report to be presented to the WIOA, Executive Committee and Full Board acceptance.

5.11 Provide a description of the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Department of Human Services' Office of Rehabilitation Services with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to 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 Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board has a MOU with the RI Department of Rehabilitation Services that describes the responsibilities of each party to provide services to individuals with disabilities. In addition, we had a walkthrough session with RI Easter Seals to review the physical structure and also to review proposed training services to their clients. Providence/Cranston workforce Solutions made a substantial improvement with the installation of a Lift to facilitate those with disabilities to other floors in the American Job Center. As a way of being more intentional about our youth connections, providers, staff, and the Youth Committee together form the foundational level of a Youth Community of Practice.

5.12 Describe the process for getting input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d) and providing (minimum 30 day) public comment opportunity prior to submission. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plans.

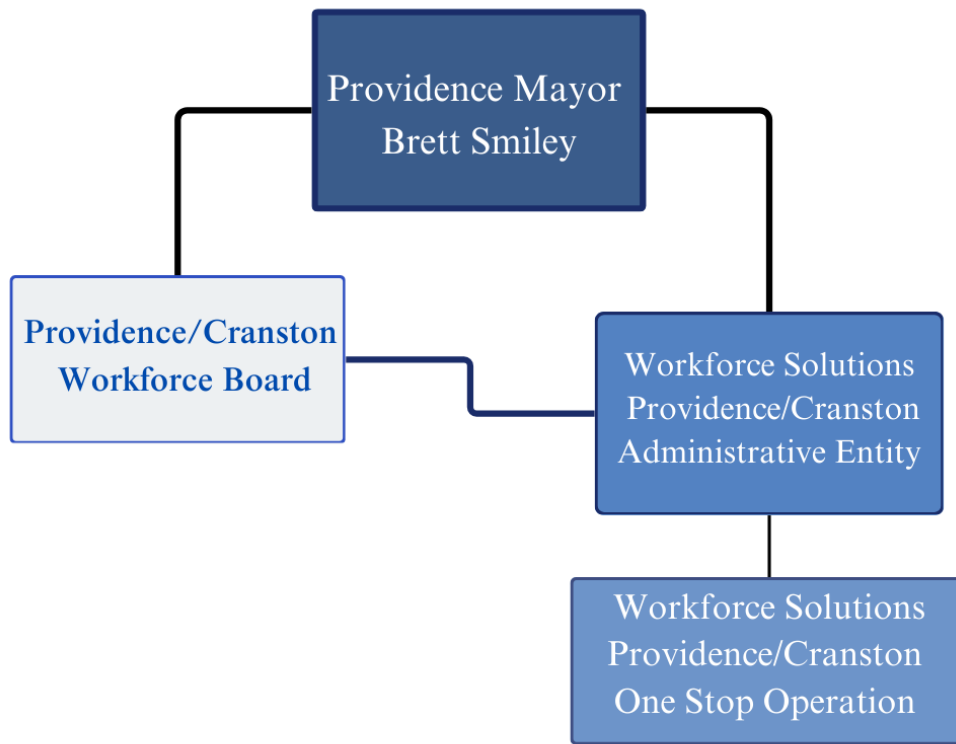
If any comments were received that represent disagreement with the plan, please include those comments here. See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

The PCWDB plan was made available for comment to the public by direct contact with Community based organizations, posting it to the City Site and various social media outlets. Any suggested revisions or suggestions can be sent directly to:

Stephen C. Boyle
Executive Director
sboyle@providenceri.gov

The Providence/Cranston Workforce Development Board will make modifications to the Local Plan as needed should there be a change in economic scenarios or changes to our funding streams, either positive or negative to best serve the residents of the Providence/Cranston Workforce Area in providing professional employment services.

Attachment A



Attachment B

ARTICLE V. STAFFING AND SUPPORT

- A. Support for the P/CWDB shall be provided by the staff of Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston (WSPC).
- B. The WSPC staff will work on implementation of the policies, goals and activities recommended by the P/CWDB. The staff shall make regular reports to the P/CWDB on implementation. WSPC staff shall be responsible for preparing and distributing agendas for all public meetings.
- C. Staff of WSPC shall maintain an official membership list, attendance records, a record of all actions of the P/CWDB, minutes of all public meetings and other documents of the P/CWDB and its committees.

Section 1. Composition

The WSPC staff shall ensure the membership of the P/CWDB conforms to all requirements of the WIOA, including, but not limited to:

- A. A majority of the members of the Local Board must be representatives of business in the local area. Each business representative must meet the following criteria:
 - (1) be an owner, chief executive officer, chief operating officer, or other individual with optimum policy-making or hiring authority; and
 - (2) provide employment opportunities in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as those terms are defined in WIOA sec. 3(23).
- B. At least 20 percent of the members of the Local Board must be workforce representatives. These representatives:
 - (1) Must include two or more representatives of labor organizations, where such organizations exist in the local area. Where labor organizations do not exist, representatives must be selected from other employee representatives;
 - (2) Must include one or more representatives of a joint labor-management, or union affiliated, registered apprenticeship program within the area who must be a training director or a member of a labor organization. If no union affiliated registered apprenticeship programs exist in the area, a representative of a registered apprenticeship program with no union affiliation must be appointed, if one exists;
 - (3) May include one or more representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training or education needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and
 - (4) May include one or more representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.

C. The Local Board must also include:

- (1) At least one eligible provider administering adult education and literacy activities under WIOA title II;
- (2) At least one representative from an institution of higher education providing workforce investment activities, including community colleges; and
- (3) At least one representative from each of the following governmental and economic and community development entities:
 - (i) Economic and community development entities;
 - (ii) The State employment service office under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) serving the local area; and
 - (iii) The programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, other than sec. 112 or part C of that title;

D. The membership of Local Boards may include individuals or representatives of other appropriate entities in the local area, including:

- (1) Entities administering education and training activities who represent local educational agencies or community-based organizations with demonstrated expertise in addressing the education or training needs for individuals with barriers to employment;
- (2) Governmental and economic and community development entities who represent transportation, housing, and public assistance programs;
- (3) Philanthropic organizations serving the local area; and
- (4) Other appropriate individuals as determined by the chief elected official.

E. Members must be individuals with optimum policy-making authority within the entities they represent.

F. Chief elected officials must establish a formal nomination and appointment process, consistent with the criteria established by the Governor and State Board under sec. 107(b)(1) of WIOA for appointment of members of the Local Boards, that ensures:

- (1) Business representatives are appointed from among individuals who are nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations.
- (2) Labor representatives are appointed from among individuals who are nominated by local labor federations (or, for a local area in which no employees are represented by such organizations, other representatives of employees); and
- (3) When there is more than one local area provider of adult education and literacy activities under title II, or multiple institutions of higher education providing workforce investment activities as described in WIOA 107(b)(2)(C)(i) or (ii), nominations are solicited from those particular entities. (WIOA sec. 107(b)(6))

- G. An individual may be appointed as a representative of more than one entity if the individual meets all the criteria for representation, including the criteria described in paragraphs (C) through (G) of this section, for each entity.

- (i) All required board members must have voting privilege. The chief elected official may convey voting privileges to non-required members.

Section 2. Appointments

- A. Members of the P/CWDB shall be appointed by the CLEO.
- B. WSPC staff shall ensure the membership and appointment of P/CWDB members are in accordance with WIOA and applicable State criteria.
- C. The composition of the P/CWDB shall be subject to certification by the Governor.
- D. Members who are appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve until the normal expiration of the term of the vacant seat. A member can continue to serve until reappointment or replacement by the CLEO.

Section 3. Term

- A. The term of each P/CWDB member shall be three (3) years, upon which time consideration for reappointment shall occur. The terms of all representatives may be staggered at the discretion of the CLEO.
- B. There shall be no term limits.
- C. Members who are no longer actively involved in the work of his/her membership category within the Workforce Development Area (WDA) of Providence/Cranston shall be required to resign from his/her P/CWDB seat.
- D. Members shall immediately inform the P/CWDB of a change in employer or employment status, or other change in membership category, at which time it shall be determined if the member is eligible to continue serving on the P/CWDB.

Section 4. Recruitments and Nominations

- A. In the event of a vacancy, the P/CWDB Membership Committee is responsible for maintaining the required composition of the P/CWDB, as stated in these bylaws. A vacancy may not necessarily be filled if the required composition of the P/CWDB can be maintained without filling the vacancy.
- B. All nominees shall be required to submit a membership application.
- C. Nominations shall be reviewed by the P/CWDB Membership Committee to ensure that nominees meet the membership criteria as stated in these bylaws. If a nomination is approved by the Membership Committee, the Membership Committee shall bring forth the nomination to the full P/CWDB for consideration.
- D. The recommendation of the full P/CWDB shall be forwarded to the CLEO for action on the recommendation for appointment or rejection.

Section 5. Vacancies

- A. A vacancy on the P/CWDB shall exist on the occurrence of noncompliance with applicable Federal and State regulations, or change in employment status from active employment in the classification that served as the basis for the appointment or other change in membership category.
- B. Vacancies will not necessarily be filled by individuals from a like organization; industry, employer, or association so long as the required membership composition is maintained.

Section 6. Resignations

- A. Any member may resign by providing written notice to the P/CWDB Chair and/or P/CWDB Membership Committee.
- B. The P/CWDB Chair shall provide written notice of all resignations to the CLEO.

Section 7. Removal

- A. A P/CWDB member may be removed from the P/CWDB if the member's conduct or action, in his/her capacity as a member or personal/professional dealings, is having or will have a severe detrimental effect on the ability of the P/CWDB to conduct its business.
- B. Procedures for Removal by P/CWDB:
 - 1. The membership of the P/CWDB shall develop a policy for the removal of members that shall be proposed and discussed at an Executive Committee meeting called for that purpose;
 - 2. The recommendation for removal from the Executive Committee shall be brought before the full P/CWDB for discussion and vote;
 - 3. The member whose removal is being considered shall be invited to present reason(s) why his/her removal should be reconsidered at both the Executive Committee and full P/CWDB meeting;
 - 4. Removal from the P/CWDB shall require a two-thirds majority and affirmative vote of the P/CWDB at a regularly scheduled meeting, in which a quorum has been established; and
 - 5. The P/CWDB Chair shall forward the recommendation for removal to the CLEO for approval.

Section 8. Size

- A. The membership size of the P/CWDB shall be that which is required by the WIOA, and to fulfill the duties of the P/CWDB.
- B. An individual may serve as a representative of more than one membership category so long as adequate justification for his/her expertise in each area is established and meets all the criteria for representation in accordance with WIOA. No matter how many membership categories an individual represents, he/she is only entitled to one vote and may only be counted as a single member of the P/CWDB.