

Western Region  
Local Workforce Development Board  
2017-2020 Regional Workforce Plan

## PY 2017-2020 Western NY WIOA Regional Plan

### **a. Regional Service Strategies, including cooperative service delivery agreements.**

All Workforce Development Boards (WDB) in the Western New York region are committed to effective and efficient WIOA service delivery striving for continuous improvement. It is our goal to provide seamless service delivery regardless of which local area in the region a customer is accessing services. The use of OSOS as a guide for all workforce staff is critical for information sharing and efficiency. Workforce staff throughout the region have been provided the OSOS Guide to writing an effective case note. Through regular monitoring and communication, WDB Directors ensure that effective case notes are provided. All Local Workforce Development Areas agree to provide services to any customer accessing services at any Career Center in the region.

Please see attached Cooperative Service Delivery Agreement.

### **b. Sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations.**

For several years, the workforce boards in the Western Region have worked collaboratively to align their workforce strategies through regional planning.

The LWDBs have always and will continue to work with various partners including businesses and training providers to develop partnerships and clear career pathways in high demand sectors. In 2017, the Western LWDBs received a \$50,000 Sector Partnership award from the New York State Department of Labor to work collaboratively to develop a template for career pathways in Advanced Manufacturing, and Hospitality/Tourism. The overarching intent of this regional partnership is to:

- Leverage and align resources quickly and effectively to respond to the hiring needs and businesses according to regional business demand.
- Develop strategic industry sector partnerships that can quickly assess the skills gaps in the workforce, develop appropriate training programs, and increase the supply of skilled workers for targeted sectors.
- Inform training and educational partners of the opportunities that exist in the region. Working together, these providers can target programs in elementary or secondary education, as well as vocational training, and post-secondary education.
- Identify career pathways and stackable industry-recognized credentials for occupations advancement leading to self-sustaining wages.
- Upgrade the skill set and credentials of incumbent workers for career advancement and backfill entry-level opportunities with trained workers.

The WDBs will host sector specific roundtable discussions to gather information from businesses regarding industry specific skill needs and employment tracks, identify currently available trainings and resources that meet the industry needs, identify the gaps, map the various career pathways, and develop simple tools for career guidance with job seekers. All steps in the sector partnership and career pathways development process will include stakeholders input. Following the completion of the initial Sector Partnership, the LWDBs will continue to work together to develop career pathways for other priority industries.

### **c. The collection and analysis of regional labor market data.**

The regional economy has been expanding since early 2010. While the number of jobs has increased, the number of available workers in the labor force has declined. An aging, declining labor force combined with increasing demand for labor, particularly in the advanced manufacturing, health services, logistics and the leisure and hospitality has created shortages of workers across most occupations. These sectors have been targeted by the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council's long term strategy through exhaustive analysis. In collaboration with the Department of Labor's Western New York labor market analyst, the regional demand list was compiled to support these sectors. Part of the overall goals of the regional strategy was to create opportunities for and increase labor for participation rates of segments of the population that have been under represented in the past. Balancing the skills and abilities of the available labor force with the needs of businesses in these sectors requires a diverse approach. Everything from soft skill training, mathematical competency, to highly specialized technical training is currently in demand.

To list a few examples,

Advanced manufacturing has experienced growth for the first time in decades. While the total amount of growth may be small, opportunities exist across the skilled trades and production occupations due to the rapidly aging workforce. Recently, the president of the local UAW stated that 80 percent of the skilled trades at his plant could retire today. A similar situation exists among skilled tradesmen in the construction sector.

The health services sector's growth is being fueled by the aging of the population. As people age, they require more health care so demand increases. These demographic changes also affect the labor force of the sector. Growth and replacement need within this sector will remain high for the foreseeable future. Demand for every occupation from home health aide to radiologists will increase.

Over 50 million people live within a few hours' drive time of Western New York making the region highly desirable as a logistics hub. Many companies already operate large warehouse and distribution centers in the region and the addition of the Amazon Sortation Center will only increase demand for labor by this sector.

The employment needs of businesses in those sectors vary based on time of year, contract obtainment, retention, etc. Employment opportunities in all areas referenced above are posted on a regular basis which is the reason for them being on the Demand Occupation List. When reviewing the Demand Occupation List, the Workforce Development Boards' Training Committees are provided statistical analysis by the NYSDOL Labor Market Analyst and real time feedback regarding open jobs unfilled due to a lack of trained job seekers by local American Job Center staff. The Committees review and discuss the information provided to ensure that the proposed Demand Occupation List is meeting the employment needs of the local community.

For many employment opportunities, a minimum of a high school diploma or high school equivalency is required. For health care, the required certification or license is required for each position listed above. For advanced manufacturing, the required certification for positions listed is needed and in many cases some experience. For hospitality and tourism, many customer service positions require a HS diploma or HS equivalency, however many management and supervisory positions require an associate degree. For transportation, the required license is needed. For skilled trades, the required

certification is needed and in many cases some experience or acceptance into an apprenticeship program. For finance and accounting, any required certifications are needed and in many cases an associate or bachelor's degree. For computer related positions, any required certifications are needed and in many cases an associate or bachelor's degree. For human services, an associate or bachelor's degree. For engineers, an associate or bachelor's degree. For child care workers, a HS diploma or HS equivalency, any required certifications and/or experience.

The region has been experiencing rapid growth in the leisure and hospitality sector. Most occupations in this sector do not require educational attainment beyond high school and can provide excellent advancement opportunities. These positions require a high degree of soft skills in order to be successful.

As of October 2017 the unemployment rate was 4.9%, labor force stood at 656,900, the number of employed was 624,700 and the number of unemployed persons was 32,100.

Labor force has fallen from 730,200 in July 2008 to 662,700 in July 2017 due to the retirements of the baby boomers (-67,500). The region gained 3,300 jobs total, 8,900 private sector while losing 8,900 manufacturing jobs over the same time period. The growth is not consistent across the region, being concentrated in the Buffalo Niagara Falls area. The population has continued to decline losing 8,014 people from 2010 to 2015, while Erie County gained population.

Of the adult population (age 25+) just over 90% have a high school diploma or higher. However, the 10 percent that do not have a high school diploma represent an estimated 95,637 residents in the region and concentrations of poverty and low educational attainment exist in each of the 5 counties. Major barriers such as transportation, childcare and skill mismatch still exist throughout the region.

**d. The establishment of a regional spending plan that includes administrative cost arrangements between LWDBs and the pooling of funds where applicable.**

The LWDBs have established a regional spending plan that includes the pooling and sharing of training funding if one or more of the LWDBs runs out of training funding and/or one or more LWDBs is in danger of not spending their required 80% of WIOA funding. The regional spending plan also includes the ability to share administrative costs if a need or opportunity is identified by one or more of the LWDBs.

**e. The coordination of supportive services.**

The LWDBs are committed to coordinating supportive services if a need or opportunity is identified by one or more LWDBs. The LWDBs will share their supportive services policies for reference with all workforce staff in the region to ensure knowledge, consistency, and efficiency.

**f. The coordination of services with Economic Development partners.**

We align our initiatives and strategies with the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council's (WNYREDC) priorities, and work closely with local chambers and Industrial Development Agencies. Through our collective efforts, we strive to further the WNYREDC's Implementation Agenda, including fostering a culture of entrepreneurship through referrals to the Small Business Development Agency, implementing smart growth through our support of such projects, preparing our workforce through career guidance and training opportunities, and utilizing our Demand Occupation List which is focused on WNYREDC identified areas such as Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Life Sciences, and Agriculture. Tourism is supported through customer service training initiatives as well as career pathway development and sector partnership building which is a continuing process following the completion of initial steps. Additional work is planned in career pathway development and sector partnership building.

The Western LWDB's goal is to continue to work closely with the WNYREDC, attend as many open WNYREDC meetings as possible, and actively participate on workgroups to ensure collaboration, seamless implementation, and coordinated initiative and program development in all aspects related to workforce development.

**g. An agreement concerning performance accountability measure negotiation and reporting.**

The LWDBs agree to review quarterly performance reports. The goal will be to identify performance issues, develop performance improvement plans, and unified implementation. At the quarterly performance report review meetings, performance improvement plans will be reviewed for consistent implementation and effectiveness. Further guidance will be provided to workforce staff if needed. LWDBs will discuss Performance Measure negotiations prior to the negotiation due date ensuring coordination and collaboration.

Note that there is a public comment period of no more than 30 days that must be satisfied prior to the Regional Plan being submitted to NYSDOL.

This, in addition to completing the Local Plan segments, will complete the required WIOA Regional Plan for the LWDBAs in the region. Each Regional Plan will be posted on NYSDOL's Workforce Planning webpage under the Regional Planning section at <https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/wioa/workforce-planning.shtm>.

**Western NY LWDBs Cooperative Service Delivery Agreement**

The WNY LWDBs which include Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany LWDBs agree to a commitment to effective and efficient WIOA service delivery striving for continuous improvement. It is our goal to provide seamless service delivery regardless of which local area in the region a customer is accessing services. Workforce staff will be provided the OSOS guide for writing an effective case note to ensure that any workforce staff within the region can access case notes to determine the services received by a customer as well as potential services needed. All Local Workforce Development Areas agree to provide services to any customer accessing services at any Career Center in the region.

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