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Workforce  
Development Board  
Contra Costa County

## 2025 - 2028 Local Plan Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County



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## I. Introduction

Contra Costa County is the third-largest county in the San Francisco Bay Area, with an estimated population of approximately 1.15 million people.<sup>1</sup> The county has a unique geographical advantage due to its strong regional economy and close proximity to San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and some of the nation's top educational institutions. Approximately 8.3% of households in Contra Costa County are living below the federal poverty threshold. According to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, 24% of the population is foreign-born, and 37% of individuals aged five and older communicate in a language other than English at home.<sup>2</sup>

The Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County (WDBCCC) and the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) in Alameda County, Oakland, and Richmond collectively make up the East Bay region. With 2.8 million residents, it is the Bay Area's most populous and diverse subregion.<sup>3</sup> Local and regional priority sectors include:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Energy
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- Construction
- Transportation (Regional)

The 2025-2028 Local Plan serves as a roadmap for how the WDBCCC and its partners will deliver services to individuals through the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) system. The plan provides clear goals and actionable steps at the local level that align with the strategies and goals outlined in the East Bay Regional Planning Unit (EBRPU) Regional Plan and California's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan. The Local Plan details how local entities will work together to provide person-centered services that address the needs of the community, with a focus on reducing poverty and promoting economic mobility. By aligning with state and federal objectives, the Local Plan aims to create a cohesive system that benefits the various stakeholders involved.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "Quick Facts: Contra Costa County, CA." <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>. Accessed January 25, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> East Bay Economic Development Alliance. "Our Region." <https://eastbayeda.org/our-region/>. Accessed January 30, 2025.

While developing the Local Plan, the WDBCCC actively engaged the public through input sessions, receiving feedback from workers, employers, labor groups, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that represent immigrants, youth, veterans, and other underserved populations. The Local Plan highlights relevant stakeholder priorities and describes the strategies and initiatives the WDBCCC will employ to accomplish its objectives.

### **I.a. Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County**

The Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County (WDBCCC) is a business-led entity that builds public-private partnerships with education, economic development, labor, local agencies, and CBOs. As an agency of the public workforce system, the WDBCCC aligns and leverages various resources to enhance economic vitality. It fosters a network that develops and sustains a dynamic education system, supports high-performing businesses, and cultivates a thriving local economy. Equity is a guiding principle across all the WDBCCC's services and initiatives, and the WDBCCC is dedicated to creating an inclusive workforce that benefits local businesses and residents.

The WDBCCC's Board is a dynamic coalition of 25 appointed members from various sectors, including business, education, labor, and public agencies. They bring experience in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, technology, public services, and other areas. As representatives of workforce innovation and equity, members provide diverse perspectives and enhance the WDBCCC's ability to tackle the unique challenges faced by businesses and residents in Contra Costa County. Additionally, the WDBCCC is a lead entity in the EBRPU, comprised of the four Boards of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and the cities of Oakland and Richmond. The EBRPU coordinates grant collaboration, business activities, and staff training opportunities across the region.

The primary functions of the WDBCCC include monitoring labor market trends, bringing together key players from various industry sectors, securing funding for innovative projects, delivering targeted workforce development programs, providing resources to local businesses, coordinating impactful community economic programs, and conducting ongoing evaluations to support continuous improvement and ensure that the WDBCCC adapts to changing economic needs. Services are prioritized for populations with barriers, including Veterans and Spouses, Justice-Involved, Basic Skills Deficient, English Language Learners (ELLs), Low-Income Individuals, and People with Disabilities.

The WDBCCC is committed to helping low-income renter households achieve financial stability and make meaningful contributions to the local economy. As of November 2024, the unemployment rate

in Contra Costa County was 4.9%, which was slightly higher than the national average of 4.2% but below California's rate of 5.4%.<sup>4</sup> Residents face an ever-increasing high cost of living and pay an average rent of \$2,595 per month.<sup>5</sup> California's minimum wage of \$16.50 is far below the \$43 per hour needed to cover the average rent in the area. The WDBCCC plays a crucial role in bridging this financial gap by helping residents find sustainable jobs and access the supports they need to maintain employment.

In Program Year (PY) 2023-2024, the WDBCCC served a total of 1,043 enrolled participants, which included 131 dislocated workers, 226 youth, and 686 adults. Participants represented a diverse range of backgrounds: 399 identified as Hispanic/Latino, 307 as Black or African American, 107 as Asian, and 43 identified as more than one race. The WDBCCC's programs served historically marginalized communities, including 674 low-income individuals, 93 older adults, 86 ex-offenders, 95 homeless or runaway youth, and 63 current or former foster care youth.

The WDBCCC is in a strong financial position with a total approved budget of over \$13 million for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025. The budget includes WIOA funding of \$7.5 million and competitive grants that exceed \$5.7 million. As of the first quarter of 2025, the WDBCCC has secured nearly \$15 million in competitive grant funding from over a dozen federal, state, and foundation sources to advance local and regional initiatives over the next three years. With a trend of competitive grant funding increasing year over year, there have been challenges in aligning staffing capacity with operational needs. The WDBCCC has hired additional staff to address this, and will continue to focus on further expanding its capacity in the coming years to drive new program initiatives and improve service delivery in the region.

In FY 2023-2024, the WDBCCC strategically allocated funding across several high-demand industries to ensure a strong workforce pipeline and promote economic stability. Healthcare received the largest share of funding due to growing demands for skilled professionals in that sector. Construction also saw significant investment to support the development of skilled labor for infrastructure and housing projects. Additionally, funds supported the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry to enhance digital competencies essential for high-growth sectors like cybersecurity and software development. Smaller investments were made in the Personal Care and Transportation industries. These targeted investments were aligned with regional labor market needs and are helping to address sector-specific workforce shortages.

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Unemployment Rates." <https://www.bls.gov/>. Accessed January 3, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> "Rent Cafe. Contra Costa Centre, CA Rental Market Trends. November 2024." <https://www.rentcafe.com/average-rent-market-trends/us/ca/contra-costa-centre/>.

## **I.b. Strengths of the Local Workforce System in Meeting Needs of Job Seekers**

### **Collaboration with the Business Community**

AJCC staff are knowledgeable about the regional economy, labor market information (LMI), and the high-growth industry sectors – and can steer job seekers toward these sectors. Business Services Representatives communicate frequently with employers, and employers' skill needs and job descriptions get passed to clients through Case Managers. Frequent virtual and onsite recruitments, including company information sessions, allow job seekers to interact with employers directly. The WDBCCC collaborates with businesses by hosting job fairs and on-site recruitments, organizing the Workforce Integration Network (WIN) to share information about job openings, and leveraging partnerships with economic development agencies. The Integrated Business Services Team (iBEST) assists business owners by connecting them with organizations like the East Bay Small Business Development Center (EBSBDC) and the California Employer Association (CEA). Additionally, the WDBCCC provides employers with no-cost access to the human resource (HR) Hotline, which provides expert advice from contracted HR professionals.

Last year, the WDBCCC hired a Regional Manufacturing Careers Specialist to engage manufacturing employers. She has connected employers to the workforce system at industry summits, network meetings, companies, schools, and unions. She subsequently has met with WIOA career coaches and job seekers to share knowledge, resulting in greater awareness and understanding of manufacturing careers among young and mid-career job seekers. This role has been instrumental in enhancing the attractiveness of manufacturing careers among AJCC customers by advising them of the variety of occupations, career pathways, and sub-industries in the field, as well as the possibility of advancement and high earnings after only three to five years.

### **Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC)**

The WDBCCC contracts with Rubicon Programs, which in turn, contracts with the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC). The CCWC is comprised of CBOs and education partners: Opportunity Junction (OJ), Lao Family Community Development (LFCD), San Pablo Economic Development Corporation (SPEDC), Martinez Adult Education, Mt. Diablo Adult Education, Pittsburg Adult Education, Liberty Adult Education, and the Contra Costa Community College (4CD) system. The CCWC operates ten AJCC access points throughout Contra Costa County to provide accessible and tailored workforce services.

## **Green Empowerment Zone (GEZ)**

The WDBCCC is committed to supporting the creation of new green jobs in the area and is represented on the board of the Green Empowerment Zone (GEZ). GEZ leverages the regional concentration of highly skilled energy industry workers by prioritizing access to tax incentives, grants, loan programs, and workforce training initiatives for employers in the renewable energy sector, ultimately benefiting companies that support green jobs. Through this partnership, the WDBCCC supports internships in the green economy by connecting with green businesses to develop internships and supporting youth programs that provide paid internships in the green economy. Examples of green internship partnership opportunities include Contra Costa County Solid Waste and Recycling, which offers recycling programs; the Contra Costa Water District, which offers internships for high school students; and CiviCorps, originally East Bay Conservation Corps, which offers work-based learning (WBL) opportunities that build on career pathways developed by CiviCorps.

## **Human-Centered Design (HCD)**

The WDBCCC integrates HCD strategies in its service delivery models, ensuring that services reflect the needs of each individual customer. To support this commitment, staff have received training in HCD practices. The WDBCCC also publicly emphasizes its preference for all contractors providing WIOA services to be knowledgeable about and utilize HCD strategies.

## **Trauma-Informed Practices (TIP)**

The WDBCCC staff frequently engages with populations affected by trauma and employs a trauma-informed approach when interacting with clients. Staff have received training in TIP, which includes understanding different types of trauma, recognizing bodily and mental reactions, identifying trauma responses, and learning how to avoid re-traumatizing individuals while serving them.

## **Offering Virtual Access to Programs and Services**

The WDBCCC offers remote access to various services. These include an online portal for WIOA services, online job seeker workshops, the Metrix Online Learning Platform with industry-specific courses for skill development, an Online Work Readiness Curriculum tailored for WIOA Youth and youth with disabilities, technical assistance for online classes, and resources for purchasing technology such as laptops, tablets, and internet access.

## **Emphasis on Justice-Involved Community**

The WDBCCC is exploring new ways to leverage California Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109) funding, which is anticipated to increase. The Contra Costa County Probation Department (CCCPD)'s Office of Reentry and Justice (ORJ) leads the implementation of AB 109 programs. The WDBCCC, CCCPD, and various local agencies and CBOs, including the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE); the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office; Behavioral Health Services Division; Health, Housing, and Homeless Services (H3); Department of Child Support Services (DCSS); Detention Health Services; and Rubicon Program's Reentry Success Center, among others, coordinate services to improving community safety, reducing recidivism, and decreasing the use of jail. The WDBCCC maintains additional reentry partnerships with various agencies to support workforce services for justice-involved individuals. These partnerships include the California Coalition for Workforce and Economic Development, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), and the California Prison Industry Authority (CalPIA).

Before the pandemic, the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County (WDBCCC) offered in-custody job fairs in partnership with the Sheriff's Department and the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) at the county jails, and also conducted in-custody presentations and mock interviews at San Quentin prison. The WDBCCC is now exploring the possibility of reintroducing these programs. For the past several years, the Parole and Community Team (PACT), East Bay District, has conducted its mandatory orientations for parolees on-site at the AJCC to introduce them to career services. At the PACT meetings, they hear from local law enforcement, county agencies, and community service providers. Attendees can be referred to literacy services, occupational training, and sources of employment, such as job boards and hiring events. In 2024, EHSD created the Personnel-supported "County Pathways" program to rapidly speed up recruitment for particular entry-level positions. The WDBCCC is considering developing a similar "County Pathways" program for the reentry population. In addition, if AB 109 funding increases, the WDBCCC could potentially fund a probation officer in the career center – or a career coach at a probation office or day center.

### **Partnerships to Serve People with Disabilities**

The WDBCCC services align with the Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Blueprint<sup>6</sup> to support people with disabilities in finding jobs that offer fair wages, equal benefits, and a work environment

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<sup>6</sup> California Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint: "Employing Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Developmental Disabilities in California: Real Work for Real Pay in the Real World." Prepared by the California Department of Education, California Department of Rehabilitation, and California Department of Developmental Services, 2015. <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/cie/>. Accessed January 21, 2025.



where individuals with disabilities interact with coworkers without disabilities. Additionally, the WDBCCC is on the Business Advisory Committee of HireAble, a CBO that serves people with disabilities. The WDBCCC maintains a strong partnership with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), which has a weekly presence at the AJCC. The DOR participates in WIN meetings, Homeless-Workforce Integration Network (H-WIN) meetings, job fairs, and in-service trainings. They have been a popular presenter for both workforce and homeless services providers.

### **Clear Industry Pathways**

The WDBCCC aims to provide its customers with access to high-growth, high-demand strategic sectors through short- and medium-term tracks. Contra Costa County has a strong system of adult education programs and community colleges, and it is located near many colleges and universities, including California State University-East Bay and the University of California, Berkeley. The staff at WDBCCC serve on advisory committees for foster youth, colleges, and adult education and periodically attend Adult Ed Career Technical Advisory groups to strengthen this link and provide influence in industries such as transportation and logistics, advanced manufacturing, health care and life sciences, energy, and construction. The WDBCCC leverages these partnerships to ensure that educational opportunities lead to jobs in high-demand strategic sectors.

### **I.c. Current Trends and Challenges in the Local Workforce System**

In developing the Local Plan, the WDBCCC has identified several areas where opportunities exist to strengthen services that address the workforce and education needs of the local community.

#### **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

The National Association of Workforce Boards has emphasized the role of AI in driving societal changes, and stressed the importance of building trust with communities amid these rapid changes. In order to accomplish this, it encouraged workforce development boards (WDBs) to consider diverse perspectives, learn from community members, and leverage new technologies to share the workforce system's story and improve services. As the role of technology grows in today's workforce, the WDBCCC continues to adapt its service delivery to include more digital options. The WDBCCC attends U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOL E&T) webinars, which provide resources from various national agencies focused on digital skill-building. Additionally, the WDBCCC utilizes AI-powered career preparation tools, data analytics for predictive labor market insights, and user-friendly job search and application platforms to help ensure that Contra Costa

County will remain competitive in the digital age.

### **Generational Differences**

The WDBCCC has observed changes in the local workforce space. Although younger generations display a preference for remote work and digital communication, older employees often prefer in-person management and mentorship opportunities. Youth have unique expectations of employers and are more often seeking meaningful work at businesses that are making a positive impact on the environment. The WDBCCC will work with California Employers Association to develop webinars relevant to these topics, both to assist businesses that struggle to reconcile the varying expectations and motivations of their employees – and to support career professionals who coach clients on how to structure their work lives to be flexible without missing out on traditional opportunities to gain implicit knowledge from senior colleagues.

### **Lack of Exposure to Skilled Trades**

At the same time, it has become increasingly uncommon for high school and college students to be exposed to skilled trades, which limits their career choices. Some students find the trades less desirable for this reason. Even if they aspire to the trades, many graduates leave high school with inadequate math skills and turn to community colleges for remediation. This has prompted some local employers to look to out-of-state labor to fill positions. The WDBCCC will continue to promote its Earn-and-Learn and Targeted Training strategies, which are detailed in the following Strategic Vision section. These strategic initiatives aim to expand career options and education pathways, making them accessible to all and combining new technologies with WBL. As these programs are driven by employers, they serve as an on-ramp to high-demand occupations. They connect individuals to quality jobs and support the sectors that drive the local economy.

### **Access to Resources**

Several factors contribute to employment instability for local businesses. Limited English proficiency makes it more challenging for recent refugees to access employment and other resources. Commonly, non-English-speaking business owners struggle with the digital tools necessary for online commerce and business marketing. Other barriers that complicate employability and worsen labor shortages include homelessness, the challenges foster youth face when transitioning to independent living, missed opportunities to utilize the unique skills of veterans, and the resource constraints of vulnerable populations. Among job seekers, there has been a growing lack of soft skills necessary for success in the workplace. Without sufficient onboarding and on-the-job (OTJ) training, many workers

remain unprepared for the job market. As the cost of living continues to increase in the county, it is necessary for local businesses to provide quality jobs that offer a living wage. While many resources exist to help grow and sustain businesses, many entrepreneurs are not aware of all the resources available to them. At the same time, job seekers often face barriers to reaching out for assistance. Therefore, agencies providing resources must be proactive in their outreach efforts to businesses and job seekers alike. The WDBCCC's Strategic Communication strategy, outlined in the following Strategic Vision section, aims to improve resource access through expanded outreach efforts.

### **Industry Opportunities**

The Bay Area is home to many industries, including Trade, Transportation, Utilities, Education, Health Services, Professional Business Services, Goods Production (e.g., Manufacturing, Logging, and Construction), and Leisure/Hospitality. It hosts some of the largest ship repair and maintenance facilities on the West Coast and is experiencing a significant shortage of skilled workers in the marine trades. Many maritime employers in the area provide internal career ladders and encourage participants to transition from entry-level roles to higher positions within the industry. The ferry in Richmond is now operational, with plans to introduce new routes to Hercules and possibly Antioch, which will create new job opportunities on the Northern Waterfront. Additionally, for job seekers looking for higher-paid entry points into manufacturing who are not averse to commuting to the neighboring county, Hayward and Fremont were identified as key areas for careers, per recent Advanced Manufacturing Bay Area (AMBayArea) events. Healthcare is a growing industry, and Antioch is well-positioned to become a medical hub with growing opportunities for careers in the medical profession. The WDBCCC's Earn-and-Learn and Targeted Training strategies, outlined in the following Strategic Vision section, provide examples of how the WDBCCC is working to expand career options and education pathways to meet emerging industry needs.

### **California Master Plan for Career Education**

California Governor Gavin Newsom recently announced the upcoming Master Plan for Career Education, an initiative focused on improving career pathways to well-paying jobs.<sup>7</sup> These efforts include allocating over \$221 million for workforce development to align training with industry needs, developing a digital Career Passport to detail workers' skills for hiring purposes, and removing college degree requirements for nearly 30,000 state jobs. The plan will prioritize hands-on learning, support

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<sup>7</sup> Gavin Newsom, "Governor Newsom releases new framework to create high-paying career pathways without four-year degrees," published December 16, 2024, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2024/12/16/governor-newsom-releases-new-framework-to-create-high-paying-career-pathways-with-and-without-four-year-degrees/>.

veterans in converting military experience into credentials, and expand apprenticeship programs to serve 500,000 apprentices by 2029, which will provide new opportunities for the local workforce and businesses.

## II. Strategic Vision

### Vision

To support a network that creates and promotes a dynamic education system, high-performing businesses, and a prosperous local economy with an abundance of high-quality jobs and the skilled workers to fill them.

As new opportunities and challenges emerge within the local economy, the WDBCCC will utilize its partnerships and stakeholder input to create innovative solutions, develop skilled workers, and assist businesses in providing and sustaining high-quality jobs. The WDBCCC remains committed to the strategies outlined below to address both the urgent and long-term issues facing the local economy.

#### Create Earn-and-Learn Opportunities

Earn-and-Learn strategies offer businesses an increased and easily accessible incentive to recruit and retain employees. The WDBCCC expedites access to training and resources to get job seekers into careers with livable wages. The WDBCCC will increase and leverage financial and human capital resources to support business retention and expansion. The WDBCCC will also support system alignment, service integration, and continuous improvement, using labor market data to advance evidence-based policymaking.

- **Civil Engineering Degree Apprenticeship Pathway (CEDAP)**, which the WDBCCC is in the early stages of launching, is a new transportation sector initiative that builds on a successful pilot program in Los Angeles. The WDBCCC was recently awarded a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs (BILJ) grant, providing \$5 million over five years to support this effort. CEDAP will provide a pathway for individuals to obtain a four-year degree while combining pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship STEM opportunities. This new initiative is being developed in close partnership with community colleges with a particular focus on students with math and other barriers to pursuing engineering degrees. CEDAP is designed to train future engineers, particularly in the transportation sector, uses an earn-and-learn, cohort-based approach, and is a rare example of an apprenticeship program

where participants earn a four-year degree. Community college students will receive paid work experience and supportive services, with the goal of having participants enter Engineering Aide apprenticeships following their internships. The program will address the growing demand for civil engineers driven by regional infrastructure investments, renewable energy projects, and transportation initiatives. The key partners in this initiative include workforce intermediary, Growth Sector, three major civil engineering employers, two California State universities, and 11 community colleges, including the Contra Costa Community College District (4CD), and WDBs in northern and southern California.

- **Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) 4 Equity and Paramedic 4 Equity Programs**, funded by grants from the Workforce Accelerator Fund (WAF), High Road Training Partnership (H RTP), and California Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS), have established an apprenticeship pathway from EMT to Paramedic. This pathway is a collaboration between the WDBCCC and employer partners that aims to improve diversity within the emergency services workforce, ensuring it better reflects the communities it serves. The Paramedic 4 Equity program builds on the WDBCCC's successful EMT 4 Equity pilot program. EMT 4 Equity now acts as a *pre-apprenticeship* for the Paramedic 4 Equity apprenticeship, which was recently registered both federally and with the state. As part of this new apprenticeship, EMTs are financially supported to further their education and become paramedics. Over the past several years, these programs have resulted in strong employer engagement and a more inclusive workforce sustained by historically underrepresented groups. The WDBCCC has recently submitted a proposal for funding to expand this apprenticeship to include additional occupations such as Behavior Health Specialists and Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN).
- **East Bay Health Equity Initiative (EBHEI)**, funded by an H RTP grant, is a new planning initiative that aims to replicate and scale the model established by the Paramedic 4 Equity program. The WDBCCC is collaborating with nine local community clinics to develop programs that provide medical and behavioral health skills training to their existing medical assistants. With additional training and expertise, medical assistants will become eligible to earn higher wages. The WDBCCC will work towards getting this new training track approved as a registered apprenticeship.
- **Community Clinics Upskilling Project and Allied Health Incumbent Worker Upskilling Project** are two new healthcare initiatives funded by the Employment Training Panel. These projects will enhance medical staff retention at local employers and support career advancements in local healthcare jobs.

- **Measure X Inclusion in Early Learning, Child Care Boost, and Youth Center Initiatives**, led by WDBCCC, are community-identified projects that address critical needs to improve opportunities for underserved populations in early childhood education and youth center development. Measure X funds, established in 2020, are administered by the Board of Supervisors and funded by a half-cent countywide sales tax.

The Inclusion in Early Learning initiative aims to increase the inclusion of children with disabilities in early care and education programs by offering specialized training to childcare providers. To date, approximately 299 childcare providers in the county have participated, with a significant portion being women of color and about 40% born outside the U.S. Many of the providers earn lower median salaries compared to state averages.

The Child Care Boost initiative is a new project that will improve early childhood education by providing financial stipends and support for family childcare providers and childcare center staff. A total of 120 early childhood educators will be selected through a lottery system, emphasizing target zip codes and infant care programs. Stipends provide \$1,167 per month for Family Child Care Owners, \$1,083 for full-time teachers/assistants, \$1,000 for part-time staff, and \$1,000 for Center Directors in the form of a one-time payment. Participants will receive individualized support from a Workforce Development Coordinator, and have access to trainings, support groups, and networking events to promote collaboration.

The Youth Center initiative is a new project that will establish and improve services for youth aged 12 to 18 by launching three new youth centers. One will be located in the existing Concord Community Youth Center. Two additional centers will be built in Brentwood and Pittsburg over the next two to three years. While under construction, contractors will provide youth programming at temporary locations. Services will include academic support, job skills training, mental health and substance use disorder programs, mentoring, cultural programs, music, art, sports, fitness, and youth leadership development activities. The WDBCCC will explore ways to integrate WIOA services and leverage partnerships to support youth center providers and enhance the effectiveness of this project.

### **Implement Strategic Communication**

Working with Full Capacity Marketing (FCM) for the past few years, the WDBCCC has built a strong, recognizable brand in the community. Through social media campaigns, giveaways, local media, and press releases, the WDBCCC has been able to tell its story, engage customers and stakeholders, and

strengthen partnerships. As the marketing contract is out for bid, some work will temporarily be brought in-house. The WDBCCC will utilize a newly developed marketing toolkit that will allow staff to produce attractive, in-brand flyers, press releases, social media posts, and other materials quickly and easily. In addition, the WDBCCC will develop new partnerships to leverage greater exposure of its services to new provider and user communities. The WDBCCC will continue to leverage social media, giveaways, local media, and press releases to advertise programs and connect with the community. A new strategy is to partner with the Contra Costa County Housing Authority, which will include information about WDBCCC's services in their mailings and tenant briefing materials. The WDBCCC will seek more partnerships like this one to expand its reach.

### **II.a. Goals for Supporting Economic Growth and Economic Self-Sufficiency**

The WDBCCC will empower Contra Costa County's residents and support their pursuit of economic self-sufficiency through the following activities:

- Work with the county's most vulnerable residents to implement participant-driven human-centered employment and training plans to meet unique needs, challenges, and aspirations;
- Connect job seekers to employment opportunities with sustainable wages to support themselves and their families;
- Strive for all workers to be in positions that have the opportunity for career advancement and upward mobility;
- Support access to resources not evenly distributed throughout the county and readily available to all;
- Strategically provide supportive services that are necessary for workers to succeed on the job; and
- Prioritize investments in earn-and-learn opportunities to ensure individuals can enroll in education and/or training while continuing to earn needed income.

The WDBCCC will pursue economic growth by supporting local businesses, employers, and CBOs to help them thrive and grow through these activities:

- Create community resource centers that can support all businesses, with an emphasis on minority-owned and micro businesses, to gain greater access to appropriate resources;
- Proactively work with all partners (including EDD, CBOs, etc.) to respond to the needs of the community accordingly and appropriately;

- Invest in analyzing and identifying the skill needs and occupations of high-demand industries and optimize investments in these skills and occupations; and
- Develop and expand relationships to leverage knowledge and resources.
- Capture the market share of job seekers, youth, and businesses using services to meet or exceed performance metrics.
- Expand partnerships with organizations that can help the WDBCCC achieve its latest strategic plan.
- Proactively seek discretionary funding necessary to achieve key performance metrics not covered by WIOA.

## **II.b. Service Delivery Strategies to Ensure Equitable Access to Regional Sector Pathways**

The WDBCCC remains committed to leading and operating with an equity lens, to actively engage the community and partners in decisions that affect them directly, and to promote equity and inclusion with dignity and respect. The WDBCCC will pursue the following primary service delivery strategies to allow all community members to participate fully and realize their full potential, valuing individual and community expertise.

### **Equity-Focused Industry-Sector Partnerships**

The East Bay Health Workforce Partnership, in which the WDBCCC is a partner, is particularly interested in promoting equity and connecting training with communities of color, and the WDBCCC will actively support these strategies. The WDBCCC will also support the healthcare sector goal focused on ensuring that workers in the sector are more reflective of the population as a whole. The WDBCCC will work with sector partnerships to assess regional system capacity to address disparate outcomes related to race and equity.

### **Strengthening Partnerships**

The WDBCCC has built meaningful local and regional partnerships that promote investments in equitable pathways in priority sectors. The WDBCCC has plans to increase its capacity to build new partnerships by hiring a Business Services Manager. Filling this position will enable the WDBCCC to relaunch its popular “Untapped Talent” employer education forums. This series of half-day in-person events connected employers to overlooked populations (e.g., reentry, persons with disabilities, unhoused) that have the skills they need – while addressing their concerns about each of these populations. The WDBCCC hopes to feature veterans as the next “untapped talent” pool.



The AJCC builds and maintains its partnerships in four ways:

**1) Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC) Steering Committee.** Monthly meetings allow attendees to share information, discuss items of mutual benefit, and resolve site/structural issues.

**2) Quarterly Workforce Integration Network (WIN) and Homeless-Workforce Integration Network (H-WIN).** Two separate meetings are held each year, as well as two combined meetings, which partners throughout Contra Costa County attend via Teams or Zoom. Separate meetings typically have an average of 40 attendees, while combined meetings have twice that number, averaging 80 attendees. Meetings include two to four presentations, followed by sessions for problem-solving and information sharing. Last year, H-WIN began including field trips and visited one of the county's busiest homeless care centers, the Trinity Center, in central Contra Costa County.

**3) Bi-weekly AJCC Partnership.** Meetings include managers and leadership from each on-site organization: WDBCCC, Rubicon Programs (contractor), and EDD (co-located partner). This meeting usually addresses items related to AJCC operations, including facilities, safety, processes, or programs.

Three of the AJCC's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partners, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), and Job Corps, have returned to the career center post-pandemic. They are onsite several times a month. The Reception area of the career center is nearly always partially staffed with SCSEP work experience trainees (WEXes), who have proven to be delightful team members with whom all onsite entities are pleased to work. The AJCC is fortunate to host these workers, if only temporarily, and benefit from their wisdom, calm demeanor, and extensive knowledge of services.

Program information regarding partner services is available online through the *EASTBAYWorks* website. Such information is also distributed by AJCC staff and partners to share with the public via email or onsite. Job opportunities, job fairs, and events are regularly shared among co-located partners, itinerant partners, and CCWC access points. Each agency at the AJCC maintains an Excel spreadsheet to record referrals, follow-ups, and outcomes. Such participant information is also recorded in CalJOBS, which each AJCC partner (Rubicon, EDD, WDBCCC) can access.

### **Data Collection and Planning**

The WDBCCC will use data collection and analysis to identify unique needs and existing access to services across Contra Costa County, and utilizes a data-driven continuous quality and improvement

approach for evaluating and improving its services. This information, in turn, informs the development of strategies to address and ensure equitable access. In addition, the WDBCCC will continue to explore ways to better monitor demographic data and deploy necessary resources in relation to changing community needs. WDBCCC staff will work with partners to create decision-making criteria that include diverse and innovative ideas and strategies that promote equity.

CalJOBS is the central data management system that provides the WDBCCC with access to real-time customer counts, services provided, and outcomes. AJCC Operations routinely communicates participant data and outcomes for Special Grants as well using the CalJOBS platform. The AJCC has also used data such as the ratio of referrals to enrollments to identify additional outreach strategies and modify intake processes to make programs more accessible to participants seeking services. The Comprehensive AJCC has a long history of meeting or exceeding WIOA Performance outcomes while focusing on serving those most in need. Services are tailored to individuals as much as possible. The AJCC seeks feedback on the delivery of services by conducting surveys after hosting recruitment events, business forums, expos, etc. Both electronic tools (e.g., Survey Monkey) and paper-and-pencil tools are used to garner responses. The AJCC also holds debrief meetings after large-scale events with staff to share employer comments, learn about areas of improvement, and plan accordingly.

### **Staff Training**

An important tool for ensuring equitable access to sector partnership opportunities is strengthening the equity and inclusion knowledge and skills of staff. As described in the following WIOA Title I Coordination section, the WDBCCC will develop and deliver training for staff and provider partners to ensure equity competency and advocacy. The WDBCCC Adult Program Manager recently completed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) certificate through eCornell, and will focus on improving access through the county's Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) Core Committee.

### **Supportive Services**

The WDBCCC will expand need-related payments to support people while they are taking part in training so that low-income participants, in particular, can support themselves during training. The EMT to Paramedic apprenticeship, marine trades programs, youth programs, and the new CEDAP program will offer paid work experience opportunities. A WDBCCC policy requires that work experiences and internships compensate participants at rates above the minimum wage, and the WDBCCC will encourage providers to extend the duration and hours for these experiences, with a goal

of up to 500 internship hours. Increasing the paid work experience wage to a minimum of \$18 has been an effective strategy in encouraging youth to remain on their chosen career paths and enroll in WIOA programs. By treating work experience participants as regular employees with hourly wages and the potential for wage gains after a specified number of hours, this approach offers a genuine work experience to youth rather than simply a stipend-based arrangement. Additionally, the WDBCCC has approved an increase in wages for CCWORKS participants, and CCWORKS is currently developing a plan to implement this change.

### **Targeted Training for Participants**

The WDBCCC provides targeting training to prepare workers for new or evolving high-tech or high-skilled positions. These preparation programs offer career development in high-demand industries, focusing on narrowing the gap between high- and low-skilled labor. These efforts, including initiatives previously described in the Earn-and-Learn Opportunities section, include support for investments/agreements in infrastructure, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships that move toward equity. In addition, the WDBCCC seeks to expand access to short-term certificate and credential programs.

The Concord AJCC has an Assessment Lab with 16 computers where customers can take career assessment exams to further tailor their interests. Staff are knowledgeable about regional and local priority sectors and encourage customers to explore career opportunities in these industries. A consultant from EDD specializing in LMI is connected with the AJCC. They distribute monthly LMI reports to all staff (partners can opt in) and are available for consultation with WIOA staff.

The AJCC encounters customers of all skill and work experience levels. If a customer is interested in training, staff help them connect with the appropriate resources to accommodate their interests. Staff are competent in helping customers navigate training options that result in industry-recognized credentials. Multiple programs, skill-based workshops, and info sessions are held monthly (sometimes multiple times a month). Customers in priority groups (e.g., veterans, justice-impacted, Dislocated Workers) are often given expedited enrollment. Co-enrollments are encouraged to leverage funding, allowing additional support.

Supportive services are offered on an as-needed basis for program participants who are actively in training, offering assistance on program-related supplies, equipment, and textbooks. Work-based learning (WBL) is also emphasized to assist clients in obtaining real-world skills as efficiently as possible. Examples of WBL are partnering with local pre-apprenticeship programs that practically

guarantee pick-up by unions, and using OTJ training in targeted industry sectors.

The WDBCCC promotes regional training programs, such as the new, paid four-week semiconductor training program the Semiconductor Skills Bridge Academy recently offered in neighboring Alameda County. This high-tech, short-term training allows residents from the local area to access entry-level manufacturing roles and receive a certificate in Smart Manufacturing Technology.

Below are several examples of new initiatives that offer targeted training for participants.

- **The Marine Trades Skills Training (WAF 11) Program** provides core skills training for maritime machinists, welders, painters, and carpenters, as well as soft skills training to improve overall employability. The WAF 11 initiative was federally funded through CWDB with the Governor's 15% Discretionary Grant. Over a 21-grant period ending in March 2025, WAF 11 supported the planning, development, and implementation of an accelerated 10-week training program for 30 participants and serves as a pilot program for the H RTP initiative. At the end of November 2024, Cohort 1 had 95% success, with 24 out of 25 participants graduating, and the five remaining participants were enrolled in Cohort 2, along with participants from H RTP.
- **Marine Trades Waterfront Transportation Careers (H RTP) Program** is a regional initiative led by the Alameda County WDB (ACWDB) in partnership with the WDBCCC and the Oakland WDB (OWDB). This 24-month initiative ending April 2026 is funded by a state grant awarded to ACWDB with WDBCCC and OWDB as sub-recipients. H RTP will offer a maritime transportation component along with core maritime trades skills training for 300 participants, with the WDBCCC contributing 100, including the 30 co-enrolled WAF 11 participants. Training for the WAF 11 and H RTP programs is provided by Friends of the Port, which is doing business as the Working Waterfront Coalition (WWC), a nonprofit advocacy group of maritime businesses and transportation committed to developing training and career pathways in the maritime industry. Recruitment efforts have targeted ELLs, homeless and housing-insecure, immigrants, justice-involved individuals with disabilities, veterans, and women and leveraged outreach through CBOs serving neighborhoods with historically limited representation in the maritime industry. Offering stipends and additional support services (and starting in Cohort 2, additionally providing transportation to and from the training facility), could be recognized as a best practice both statewide and nationally for addressing equity gaps.
- **The Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Fund (DOGWF) Initiative**, which the WDBCCC is in the early stages of launching, is a California State initiative designed to support displaced oil and gas workers as they transition into new job opportunities and career paths in high-growth sectors such as transportation, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, energy, and

construction. DOGWF was in response to California's Just Transition (JT) initiative, which outlines a 12-year plan to phase out fossil fuels, significantly impacting the state's oil and gas workers. The DOGWF objectives include developing partnerships to enhance regional workforce development infrastructure. This new program will provide training, work-based learning experiences, wraparound services, and additional resources. It also aims to create career pathways that offer high-quality jobs with livable wages in sustainable industries.

### **III. WIOA Core and Required Partner Coordination**

*How Local Boards and AJCC partners will coordinate the services and resources identified in their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as outlined in WIOA MOU (WSD18-12).*

In the coming years, the WDBCCC is committed to enhancing and expanding its initiatives in alignment with the WIOA vision of an integrated service delivery system where core and required programs collaborate seamlessly to meet the evolving workforce development needs of the community. This will involve ongoing strategic assessments of community workforce development needs to create tailored service strategies that respond to the changing labor market. The WDBCCC will employ performance-based measures that track the effectiveness of its programs and conduct regular outcome assessments to adapt and refine services. These efforts will result in an improved customer-focused service delivery model that integrates services and increases accessibility for job seekers to obtain employment, training, and educational resources.

#### **III.a. Coordination of Services and Resources in the MOU under WIOA**

The WDBCCC has established referral processes that ensure seamless access to services, allowing job seekers to navigate the various programs efficiently. The AJCC partners that are not co-located provide services through referral or cross-training of AJCC staff. The AJCC MOU partners will continue to convene regularly to ensure ongoing engagement and that services align with WIOA goals. Additionally, a new referral system has been implemented to support Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) recipients accessing work readiness programs according to their work authorization status. Established referral processes exist for all partners and mandated programs, including:

- **WIOA Title II - Adult Education and Literacy** - Martinez Unified School District – Adult Education/Literacy; Mt. Diablo Unified School District – K12 and Adult Education; West Contra Costa Unified School District – Adult Education; Liberty Union High School District – Liberty Adult Education; Pittsburg Adult Education Center; Contra Costa Office of Education – Contra Costa Adult School (schools in jails)

- **WIOA Title III - Wagner-Peyser** - Employment Development Department (EDD)
- **WIOA Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation** - California Department of Rehabilitation-Greater East Bay District
- **Carl Perkins Career Technical Education** - Career/Technical Education
- **Title V Older Americans Act** - Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD)
- **Job Corps** - Job Corps
- **Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)** - Northern California Indian Development Council, Inc.-Scotts Valley Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- **Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)** - California Human Development
- **Veterans** - EDD
- **Youth Build** - There are no YouthBuild programs in operation in this region
- **Trade Adjustment Assistance Act**
- **Community Services Block Grant** - EHSD – Community Services Bureau
- **Housing and Urban Development** - Contra Costa County Housing Authority
- **Unemployment Compensation**
- **Second Chance** - Contra Costa County Probation Department (CCCPD)
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)** - EHSD

### **In-Service Trainings to Expand Partner Capacity**

The WDBCCC plans and coordinates in-service training for homeless services providers that routinely draws 90 participants. At each training, a member of the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC) presents on WIOA, and four other agencies present their programs – a different set every year. To date, these providers have heard presentations from 25 organizations in the greater workforce development ecosystem.

The WDBCCC is a California Jobs First grant recipient and is represented on the Steering Committee governing the Bay Area Jobs First Collaborative (BAJFC). The BAJFC is focused on creating regional solutions to improve housing and economic stability for more than one million people living in extremely low-income households in the Bay Area. As mentioned previously, the WDBCCC convenes the WIN to facilitate information sharing, cross-training, and referral processes to benefit the AJCC MOU partners as well as community organizations. Quarterly WIN meetings are held to improve communication of available resources and eligibility criteria. H-WIN, built on the WIN model, further strengthens these efforts and utilizes human-centered design (HCD) to help CalWORKs-eligible and

homeless individuals achieve permanent housing and self-sufficiency. Both networks ensure that staff from participating agencies are knowledgeable about all available services to support multi-agency wraparound care. The WDBCCC collaborates closely with community colleges and adult education programs to identify and develop training pathways in high-demand sectors such as advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, technology, and energy. Adult education students develop essential technical and soft skills when working with institutions like Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College, and Los Medanos College. Additionally, the WDBCCC participates in the development of the Contra Costa Community College (4CD) Strategic Plan. The WDBCCC is represented on various boards, including the California Workforce Association (CWA) Executive Committee and Race and Equity Committee, the Green Empowerment Zone (GEZ) Board, and the AMBayArea Board. The WDBCCC is a member of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA) and serves as the lead agency for the EASTBAYWorks partnership, which develops a regional plan. As a member of the Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership, the WDBCCC collaborates with the ACWDB, the OWDB, and the Richmond Workforce Development Board (RWDB) to develop and implement workforce development strategies that support underserved populations across the region.

### **III.b. Co-Enrollment and Common Case Management Strategy**

*How the Local Board and AJCC partners will work towards co-enrollment and common case management as a service delivery strategy, as outlined in Strategic Co-Enrollment – Unified Plan Partners (WSD19-09).*

Through contracts with CCWC partners, the WDBCCC will continue to operate ten strategically located AJCC access points throughout Contra Costa County to provide residents with access to one-stop services. The CCWC consists of lead agency Rubicon Programs, as well as CBOs and education partners such as Opportunity Junction (OJ), Lao Family Community Development (LFCD), San Pablo Economic Development Corporation (SPEDC), Martinez Adult Education, Mt. Diablo Adult Education, Pittsburg Adult Education, Liberty Adult Education, and the Contra Costa Community College (4CD) system.

Co-enrollment procedures have been implemented to ensure referrals are appropriately and efficiently accommodated. Typically, the partner agency will refer their client to a program staff member, who will collaborate with the Case Manager of the referring agency to accumulate eligibility documents needed for enrollment. This process has also been established with the WDBCCC's co-located

partner (EDD). Additionally, AJCC Case Managers attend EDD's Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) workshops as an alternative method of receiving referrals.

Through bi-weekly staff meetings, the AJCC clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of co-located leadership, staff, and program partners. The AJCC also has an integrated organizational chart, which has been shared among all co-located partner staff. The AJCC frequently invites non-co-located partners to market their services in the center, encouraging them to have a regular presence. Such partners have responded enthusiastically about having a presence at the center, allowing them to connect with customers more efficiently.

The WDBCCC will employ a variety of strategies to facilitate co-enrollment and integrated case management. One key strategy is the integration of WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Services and WIOA Youth Services, which provides ongoing supportive services and essential case management for eligible youth, helping them successfully transition into the workforce. Additionally, it allows for the co-enrollment of participants who are formerly incarcerated through the Prison to Employment (P2E) Grant, which helps reduce barriers to accessing training and employment opportunities.

The WDBCCC will integrate programs, such as enrolling adult education and community college students into WIOA through the EMT 4 Equity and Paramedic 4 Equity programs and Civil Engineering Degree Apprenticeship Pathway (CEDAP). Doing so creates a seamless pathway for students to advance their education and enter the workforce. The CCWORKS subsidized employment component of CalWORKs is integrated into the WDBCCC programming to facilitate streamlined referrals and co-enrollment into WIOA. The WDBCCC and the AJCC will host CCWORKS work experience (WEX) trainees to provide practical experience and skill development. In addition, the WDBCCC and EDD will continue to serve as host sites for Senior Employment WEX trainees, fostering inclusive employment opportunities for seniors.

To ensure that all participants have access to career services, the Wagner-Peyser Act will be utilized to guarantee universal access to labor exchange services for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services participants. These initiatives will utilize the CalJOBS system for data management and reporting. The WDBCCC also leverages the CalJOBS and Cal eGrants systems for seamless data sharing across various case management platforms. The WDBCCC will maintain the Adult and Youth Service Providers list where customers can engage with WIOA services. This list will be available on flyers at key locations across the county and digitally on the EASTBAYWorks website, which will also list points of contact for each location. Additionally, the WDBCCC will cross-train the AJCC staff so



they have the necessary skills to access and utilize resources from partner programs or platforms (e.g., Metrix Learning).

The WDBCCC will continue to improve communication and information sharing by regularly updating co-enrollment contact information and promoting available services through WIN and H-WIN. The WDBCCC will continue to promote its services by utilizing WIN and H-WIN presentations and training sessions to improve outreach. It will conduct regular training sessions for workforce partners to help them stay well-informed and equipped to assist clients effectively. Additionally, the WDBCCC will continue to hold annual in-service trainings for Health, Housing, and Homeless Services providers.

### **III.c. Facilitating Access to One-Stop Services for Remote Areas through Technology**

*How the Local Board and AJCC partners will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through technology and other means.*

The WDBCCC will continue to operate access points to offer additional options that may be closer to residents' communities. The WDBCCC has a comprehensive referral process that connects clients with a broad range of support services offered by other organizations. The WDBCCC will leverage the EASTBAYWorks system, offering 32 access points throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, to provide both regional and local access to resources. Through the EASTBAYWorks website, partners and contractors, such as EDD and Rubicon Programs, will provide services designed to empower individuals to pursue employment and training opportunities.

Services will be available by phone, virtual meetings, and walk-in visits from Monday to Friday during regular business hours. The WDBCCC website is mobile-friendly and offers Google Translate, Job Access With Speech (JAWS) screen reader, and Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software. It includes youth-specific content, links to job resources such as CalJOBS and HotJobs, and online applications for services. Other features include an event calendar and a monthly e-newsletter providing regular updates. Additionally, the WDBCCC will continue to utilize search engine optimization to increase the website's visibility and accessibility.

The WDBCCC will conduct training and educational activities to support career development through the Metrix Learning portal. Individuals can use this online, self-paced platform to access career resources, participate in training programs, and earn certificates of completion. Metrix Learning has course content in the skilled trades, leadership, business, technology, and soft skills, and some modules benefit from gamification, increasing engagement and retention.

The WDBCCC will continue to engage in outreach and awareness activities to increase the reach of services, leveraging social media to advertise programs and posting content to connect with the community. The WDBCCC has engaged a marketing firm to increase audience exposure and awareness of available services and will use social media campaigns, giveaways, local media, and press releases to promote engagement. Additionally, the WDBCCC will continue to support improved technology access for low-income communities, by promoting organizations like the Oakland Tech Xchange and EveryoneOn.org that provide broadband access and offer low-cost refurbished computers. The WDBCCC is exploring ways to partner with libraries to share information about accessing broadband services and related programs.

The stakeholder feedback from the community input sessions highlighted several methods and technologies to enhance remote access to one-stop services. There was a strong emphasis on improving online applications and multilingual resources. As online services have become more commonplace, stakeholders voiced a need to continue offering remote meetings, online workshops, and a variety of communication methods, such as texts, social media messaging, and emails, to accommodate individual preferences and abilities while ensuring confidentiality. Additionally, there was a focus on utilizing technology to create engaging video content and develop interactive tools that appeal to different user groups. The WDBCCC will explore ways to leverage existing and new technologies to enhance access to services offered through the one-stop delivery system.

#### **III.d. Coordination of Workforce, Education, and Supportive Services**

*How the Local Board and AJCC partners will coordinate workforce and education activities with the provision of appropriate supportive services.*

In the coming years, the WDBCCC will continue to contract with providers to deliver AJCC/One-Stop services, including training and other supports. These services will be tailored for special groups, including youth, veterans, and dislocated workers. The WDBCCC will work to expand supportive services by exploring new initiatives and partnerships, including transportation assistance, childcare support, background checks, drug tests, physical exams, licensing, and legal aid.

The AJCC Site Manager and Site Coordinator are active in the WIN and H-WIN. The two networks meet quarterly, with two annual meetings coordinated as joint meetings. This model has effectively facilitated collaboration between the two systems and connected the homeless population to education, training, and employment opportunities.

To increase access to trainings and other services, the WDBCCC will promote regional training

programs, such as the paid four-week semiconductor training program the Semiconductor Skills Bridge Academy recently offered in neighboring Alameda County. This high-tech, short-term training allows residents from the local area to access entry-level manufacturing roles and receive a certificate in Smart Manufacturing Technology. The WDBCCC will participate in cross-promotion with mandated partners, such as the Contra Costa County Housing Authority, which provides information about WDBCCC's services in their mailings and other outreach materials and referrals.

## **New Partnerships**

The WDBCCC has developed several new partnerships and strengthened ongoing collaborations. The WDBCCC has always provided a tour of the comprehensive AJCC to any agency that requests it. New groups that have toured in 2025 (or have a tour scheduled) are Welfare-to-Work, Scotts Valley Tribal TANF, the Contra Costa Family Justice Center (FJC), and the City of Concord Executive Team. New collaboration activities will include providing in-service training to the navigators and staff at the FJC, as well as presenting at FJC's Women INspired to Grow and Succeed conference, which aims to enhance self-sufficiency and leadership skills among survivors of interpersonal violence. Additionally, the WDBCCC and Concord CS staff have plans to tour the FJC's south county facility in Danville. A new partnership with Pathway Humanity, a social purpose corporation that focuses on supporting underrepresented groups, disabled veterans, and homeless individuals, will help connect their clients with WDBCCC programs tailored to these underserved populations. Recently, Pathway Humanity expanded its services to include case management, mental health support, and treatment for substance use disorders, specifically for those affected by crime and homelessness. Their goal is to assist these individuals in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Civil Engineering Degree Apprenticeship Pathway (CEDAP) as previously mentioned, is a new transportation sector initiative that the WDBCCC is in the preliminary stages of launching, involving a partnership with Growth Sector, the 4CD, and employer partners such as Caltrans. CEDAP, funded by a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs grant, is designed to train future engineers, particularly in the transportation sector. This grant provides \$5 million over five years and will support individuals in obtaining a four-year degree through a structured pathway that combines pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship.

Many other WDBCCC initiatives rely on coordinating workforce, education, and supportive services. The Breaking Barriers initiative works to address systemic barriers to employment and offers services to foster youth, formerly incarcerated individuals, and individuals with disabilities. This program, spearheaded by CCWC, connects disadvantaged groups with high-quality jobs and provides

wraparound services, training, and individualized placement assistance. The WDBCCC is partnering with the Walnut Creek Chamber, Capstone Government Affairs, Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) to develop a new hospitality employment training program, with a first information session in the winter of 2025. The information session will provide information about careers ranging from housekeeping services, front desk reception, and banquet services to upper management positions in the hospitality industry. Training sessions will include soft skills training that would prepare individuals with little or no experience in hospitality jobs.

As mentioned previously, the WDBCCC provides equitable opportunities for marginalized communities through its EMT to Paramedic apprenticeship pathway. The EMT 4 Equity and Paramedic 4 Equity programs have strategically utilized WAF, HRTP, DAS, and WIOA funds to cover training costs and provide essential support services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. The registered apprenticeship program, which was initially created to provide individuals with EMT training, was recently expanded to offer an option for EMTs to undergo further training and become paramedics. Once participants have completed the paid EMT training and have six months of work experience, they become eligible to transition into the paramedic apprenticeship.

Maritime training programs, introduced previously and funded through WAF 11 and HRTP grants, target underserved groups, including immigrants, veterans, and those with disabilities, to address the Bay Area's skilled worker shortage in marine trades. In partnership with the Working Waterfront Coalition, these programs offer training in various occupations, such as machinists and deckhands. The WDBCCC has contracted with Rubicon Programs for case management and WIOA enrollment of trainees, providing them with additional supportive services and soft skills training.

Stakeholder perspectives underscored the importance of an integrated approach to workforce development that not only supports job seekers, but also considers the broader social context of employment. The WDBCCC aims to enhance service integration by improving access to and awareness of available resources among underserved populations. Stakeholders suggested leveraging the Contra Costa County Library (CCCL) partnership to further promote WDBCCC's services, share information about community access to broadband services, and identify new opportunities to collaborate on workforce development initiatives in the region. CCCL is home to Project Second Chance, which is an adult literacy program with high ESL enrollment. Several of the county's libraries host the Family Navigators, who provide information about resources to families. At the library in Brentwood, CCCL hosts Veteran's Services staff weekly. In the coming years, the WDBCCC will emphasize soft skills training and the use of current technologies in trainings, and will innovate new approaches to job fairs. The WDBCCC will leverage its connections to build new

employer relationships, and increase collaboration among agencies to improve equity and access to wraparound services among the service populations.

### **Faith Communities**

In the past, faith communities have reached out in an effort to partner to serve reentry populations and general job seekers. The WDBCCC has recently been approached by several new faith communities interested in collaborating. These communities offer a variety of career services, including workshops, interview assistance, resume writing, job search support, coaching, and resources from their employment centers. The WDBCCC is currently in discussions with them to explore how to best support their clients. The WDBCCC is also working to expand the community college presence at the AJCCs.

### **III.e. Compliance with WIOA Section 188 and ADA for Accessibility and Assistive Technology for Individuals with Disabilities**

*How the Local Board and AJCC partners will comply with WIOA Section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, assistive technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, as outlined in Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures (WSD17-01).*

The WDBCCC and the AJCC partners are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment that empowers individuals with disabilities to pursue meaningful employment and become more engaged in their communities. The WDBCCC and the AJCC partners continually work to enhance accessibility across their facilities, programs, and services, meeting biweekly to address issues and concerns. The AJCC uses the principles of human-centered design (HCD) to provide access to all customers, including individuals with disabilities.

In 2024, the WDBCCC implemented substantial upgrades in physical accessibility at the comprehensive AJCC. These projects involved collaboration with property management at the leased building and coordination with county and state ADA specialists and included the installation of ramps and approaches outside the building, automatic door openers, ADA-compliant visual indicators outside the suite, and windows in doors, as well as enhancements within the suite, such as signage, technology, furniture, and other improvements.

As mentioned previously, the AJCC provides users with a JAWS screen reader and Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software to enhance accessibility. There is a video relay carrel in the

resource room for Deaf and hard-of-hearing clients. The WDBCCC has had a Deaf Counseling and Referral Agency Specialist on-site in the past, and is looking forward to hosting another one.

Accommodation request signs have been mounted at the intake window, and an iPad loaded with VOS Greeter software has been installed so that customers can check in privately instead of at a large kiosk. The kiosk will be relocated to the resource room to provide information about upcoming events such as workshops and job fairs.

Additionally, a sign was added near the iPad to inform customers that they can choose to check in with staff at the window if personalized assistance is needed. Braille signage was added to conference rooms, interview rooms, exits, and way-finding markers. The WDBCCC is replacing these signs to meet California state compliance standards. Various resource documents and wall-mounted phones were lowered to comply with ADA standards, and signage near volume-adjusting phones was installed. Assistive listening devices can be checked out at the front desk for use in workshops. Multiple modifications were made in the staff break room to ensure a more inclusive environment.

The WDBCCC and the AJCC emphasize ongoing training for staff and service providers to better serve individuals with disabilities. These trainings will include sessions organized by the California Workforce Association and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) about best practices for supporting individuals with diverse needs. Additionally, the WDBCCC has plans to upgrade to an assistive listening system for multiple users.

In working with individuals with disabilities, the WDBCCC will continue to employ an HCD approach to services and prioritize continuous feedback from the community, which allows staff to identify and address potential barriers. Regular assessments will ensure that both physical spaces and programmatic offerings comply with ADA standards and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. The WDBCCC will continue to foster strong relationships with rehabilitation organizations and engage in district-level discussions with DOR representatives. Additionally, a DOR representative will continue to be stationed at the AJCC on a weekly basis.

Stakeholder feedback underscored the ongoing need for collaboration between colleges and workforce services to raise awareness about services available for workers with disabilities. Stakeholders pointed out the importance of providing disability awareness and adaptive technology training for both staff and employers, utilizing ability-focused interviews, and offering flexible work arrangements. The WDBCCC will continue to build trust with clients in the coming years and encourage open discussions about barriers to services. The WDBCCC will continue recommending

trainings to employers, such as the no-cost Windmills “Disability Etiquette” training, which can help businesses become more informed about employing individuals with disabilities.

## **IV. State Strategic Partner Coordination**

### **IV.a. Coordination with County Health Agencies and Local Partners for CalFresh Services**

*How the Local Board will coordinate with County Health and Human Services Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who access CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) services.*

The WDBCCC will continue coordinating with the Contra Costa County Health Services Department (HSD) to serve individuals accessing CalFresh E&T services and address the various social challenges that impact employment and training opportunities, such as homelessness. Previously, the WDBCCC collaborated with HSD to launch the Health Ambassadors Program, which trains and employs individuals from disadvantaged communities as health advocates who promote healthy practices, vaccinations, tobacco cessation, and community health initiatives such as proper hazardous waste disposal.

Ongoing collaborations with other local partners, such as SparkPoint and Diablo Valley College, aim to reach more individuals accessing CalFresh E&T programs and connect them with the AJCC resources. The EDD Workforce Services Branch will offer workshops and informative tours of the AJCC to provide clients with valuable resources and the necessary guidance to navigate the CalFresh application process. A strategic partnership between Opportunity Junction (OJ) and Fresh Success (FS), operated by the 4CD, will continue to provide CalFresh E&T clients who wish to pursue a college education with case management and other support services.

The CCWORKS program, administered by EHSD, will continue to offer paid work experiences for TANF and CalWORKS benefits recipients. The program's Employment Placement Counselors assist participants with creating resumes, developing job-seeking skills, practicing for interviews, and dressing professionally. These employment placements will pay minimum wage or more, and can be with county departments, local businesses, or non-profits. This program will also benefit businesses by reimbursing them for the minimum wage paid to participants hired through the program. Initial placements typically last six months and can continue up to 12 months, depending on participant performance and employer needs. The ultimate goal of the CCWORKS program is to help participants transition to permanent, unsubsidized employment.

Stakeholder feedback emphasized the importance of regular staff training on CalFresh programs and

requirements to improve support for clients. Offering brochures and flyers about various resources, such as WIOA and Adult Education, in CalFresh offices was suggested by stakeholders to ensure information was easily accessible. There was also a call for encouraging organizations that referred clients to CalFresh E&T services to identify client needs and make appropriate referrals, along with providing regular training for these organizations on available services. Additionally, stakeholders noted the need to highlight programs like FS on college campuses, ensuring that information is available in program offices, including SparkPoint locations across community colleges. The promotion of WIOA co-enrollment options was mentioned as a way to streamline access to services. Offering educational sessions, such as classes or Zoom meetings, was also suggested to provide further support and information to clients. The WDBCCC will use this feedback to improve and refine its strategies to benefit clients enrolled in CalFresh E&T services.

#### **IV.b. Coordination with Child Support Agencies for Non-Custodial Parents**

*How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Child Support Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who are non-custodial parents.*

The WDBCCC will provide support for non-custodial parents through engagement and relationship building. The ongoing collaboration between the Contra Costa County Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) and the WDBCCC will continue to allow for these clients to be cross-referred between organizations. DCSS will also continue to provide trainings and presentations to WDBCCC staff, including at WDBCCC's regular Partner-Provider convenings and WIN and H-WIN meetings.

DCSS offers a number of support services through its Virtual Information Center and virtual chat without the need for in-person appointments. DCSS has established a resource center for case managers, which helps to assess client needs and facilitates warm hand-offs. Services such as free genetic testing and debt reduction programs reduce the need for court appearances by supporting clients in accessing the necessary documentation for legal processes. Other employment and financial support services include helping clients restore driver's licenses necessary for employment and setting up flexible payment arrangements.

The integration of CalWORKs services helps homeless non-custodial parents by connecting them to training programs and pathways to stable employment. Financial literacy programs are also offered through collaboration with organizations like SparkPoint and DCSS. These programs will continue to offer trainings on budgeting skills and financial management. Essential items are covered through WIOA supportive services and tailored to individual needs.



Stakeholders suggested that the WDBCCC could improve its connection with non-custodial parents by hosting tours led by local child support agencies. The AJCC has hosted such tours in the past and is planning to host more tours for this population. Stakeholders also suggested posting outreach materials at grocery stores and utilizing word-of-mouth for participants to share their positive experiences and reach more parents. The WDBCCC will explore these options and strengthen relationships with employment counselors to enhance its outreach to this population in the coming years.

#### **IV.c. Coordination with Partnership Agreement Partners for Individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities**

*How the Local Board will coordinate with local Partnership Agreement partners, established in alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Blueprint, and other local, regional, and statewide partners who serve individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.*

The WDBCCC supports a CIE approach, which provides full- or part-time jobs that offer fair wages, equal benefits, opportunities for advancement, and a work environment where individuals with disabilities interact with coworkers without disabilities. The WDBCCC will continue supporting earn-and-learn and apprenticeship opportunities that emphasize skill-building and independence. Additionally, the WDBCCC and its partners will support grants that provide work experience and improve employability for individuals with disabilities.

The WDBCCC regularly engages with Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) representatives, who have a weekly on-site presence at the AJCC. The WDBCCC will also schedule meet-and-greet sessions with new DOR leadership and organize staff tours of both the Regional Center and the AJCC to promote a shared understanding of available services and resources. Additionally, the WDBCCC will continue to work closely with local partners that serve as work experience host sites to offer practical job training and placement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

DOR participates in the WDBCCC's job fairs and other events. The Business Services staff of the WDBCCC and its contractor Rubicon Programs have connected with DOR Regional Business Services staff to explore further collaboration. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the WDBCCC is on the Business Advisory Committee of HireAble.

Stakeholders suggested increased DOR representative visibility at service locations, which would promote DOR's services, improve communication, and dispel misconceptions about the organization. The WDBCCC is in the process of setting up meetings with DOR Regional Business Services staff,

and will continue to support their connection with individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

#### **IV.d. Coordination with Community Organizations for English Learners and Refugees**

*How the Local Board will coordinate with community-based organizations (CBOs) and other local partners who serve individuals who are English Language Learners (ELLs), foreign-born, and/or refugees.*

The WDBCCC will continue to enhance workforce services for ELLs, refugees, and foreign-born individuals through collaboration, capacity building, and community engagement. These target populations include special immigrant visa holders, special immigrant parolees, humanitarian parolees, and those with “Right to Work” status. The WDBCCC will utilize resources like the Language Line, which provides over-the-phone translation, to communicate with participants in their native languages. As previously mentioned, the WDBCCC Adult Program Manager was recently Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) certified, and will focus on improving access through the county’s Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) Core Committee.

By partnering with CCWC and EDD, the WDBCCC will continue participating in workgroups focused on workforce services tailored to these populations. Additionally, the WDBCCC will maintain collaborations with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and local county refugee resettlement agencies, including Opportunity Junction (OJ), Lao Family Community Development (LFCD), Upwardly Global, Contra Costa Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, Adult Education English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, International Rescue Committee, and New America.

The WDBCCC will continue to offer co-enrollment of ORR employment services with WIOA. This integration provides access to training funds, occupational skills training, and individual employment coaching. As previously mentioned, a new referral system has been implemented to support RCA recipients accessing work readiness programs according to their work authorization status.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for additional support for individuals with limited English skills. They noted greater barriers for ELL women entering the job market, including access to childcare. While they acknowledged that WIOA offers valuable programs for ELLs and refugees, they suggested a greater focus on helping those without high school diplomas transition to further education and career opportunities. Stakeholders also urged for greater ELL and refugee engagement on decision-making boards. It was noted that some smaller agencies supporting refugees may not be fully aware of the resources available to them. They recommended increased education, culturally

sensitive service delivery, and dedicated information sessions tailored for ELLs and refugees. The importance of providing multilingual informational materials was emphasized, and it was suggested that local colleges could be utilized for translation services. A strong priority of the WDBCCC in the coming years is focusing on equity, enhancing its outreach and services to ELLs and refugees, and building new employer partnerships. As contextualized language support becomes more common in trades such as healthcare and construction, the WDBCCC will explore opportunities to expand these supports into other industries.

#### **IV.e. Coordination with Local Veteran Affairs and Partners**

*How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Veteran Affairs (VA), CBOs, and other local partners who serve veterans.*

The WDBCCC will continue to partner with the VA, CBOs, and various local agencies to offer services to veterans. EDD is a co-located partner at the comprehensive AJCC and offers veteran services through Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veteran Employer Representatives (LEVRs) to veterans five days a week. Veterans are given priority of service in WIOA, which moves them to the front of the line.

The AJCC collaborates with the local VA office to host job fairs specifically for veterans, addressing their unique needs and utilizing their distinct qualifications. The WDBCCC has participated in the local Veterans Services Collaborative and will continue this collaboration in the future. Additionally, the WDBCCC is exploring a partnership with National University to help veterans transitioning out of service earn short-term certificates through the accredited educational institution.

Stakeholder input emphasized strengthening connections between the WDBCCC and veteran support agencies. To ensure that veteran agencies are educated about WDBCCC's services, it was suggested that veteran agency representatives be invited to the H-WIN/WIN meetings. During the 2024 WDBCCC in-service training for homeless service providers, a LEVR was one of the presenters. Additionally, stakeholders pointed to enhanced collaboration with veteran offices on college campuses to bolster WIOA enrollment for community college veterans. As mentioned previously, the Contra Costa County Library (CCCL) hosts Veteran's Services staff weekly at their Brentwood location. The WDBCCC is working to strengthen its partnership with CCCL to improve outreach to priority populations, including veterans. The WDBCCC is exploring opportunities to further engage with veterans and integrate veteran services organizations across events.

#### **IV.f. Collaboration for Environmental Sustainability**

*How the Local Board will collaborate with the Strategic Planning partners to address environmental sustainability.*

The WDBCCC and its partners are dedicated to creating a just transition towards a more sustainable future. The WDBCCC promotes environmental sustainability at the local and regional levels by collaborating with strategic partners through various initiatives.

The WDBCCC's partnership with the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) works to align initiatives with the county's Sustainability Plan, including support for the Green Empowerment Zone (GEZ), Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative, and Just Transition. This partnership includes a new Extreme Heat grant of \$750,000 received by the DCD, with the WDBCCC as a co-applicant, to fund the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Additional partners on this project are The Watershed Project, Sustainable Contra Costa, and 100K Trees for Humanity. The partners recently met with the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to initiate the planning process. This new initiative aims to create new jobs in the climate sector, aligning with the county's climate action plan, EnVision 2040. Another significant achievement is the collaboration with the Port of Oakland, which has secured \$55 million to enhance infrastructure while promoting sustainable practices.

The WDBCCC will work with CiviCorps to create a short-term training curriculum and develop WBL opportunities, building on career pathways developed by CiviCorps. The WDBCCC will recruit and convene employers who can provide WBL, including engaging with park districts, water districts, and other entities that can potentially provide hands-on training and long-term employment opportunities. The WDBCCC is also preparing to apply for the next round of CAL FIRE grant funding, which would create a new program aimed at improving wildfire prevention and firefighting capacity.

To further promote environmental sustainability, the WDBCCC is exploring regional opportunities in battery manufacturing, energy storage, and other clean-tech ventures. Contra Costa County is a prime location for a battery manufacturing hub, and the WDBCCC, CBOs, and employers are currently in conversation with DCD and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory about potential partnerships. The WDBCCC presented at the Next Gen Battery Conference and is helping to develop a strategic plan for this emerging industry.

Other ongoing initiatives aim to enhance sustainability in the maritime sector, particularly through the electrification of the ferry system, with Oakland at the forefront of these efforts. New ferry routes in

Richmond, Hercules, and potentially Antioch present job creation opportunities that are linked to transportation needs, while also promoting pathways into STEM careers and supporting the county-wide GEZ initiative. Contra Costa County's automotive fleet electrification project has also secured millions of dollars in funding. The WDBCCC is helping to facilitate the development of the necessary infrastructure through public works projects.

As previously mentioned, California's JT initiative outlines a 12-year plan to phase out fossil fuels. The WDBCCC's new DOGWF grant will support displaced oil and gas workers in the local area as they transition into new job opportunities and career paths in high-growth sectors such as transportation, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, energy, and construction, providing them with high-quality jobs with livable wages in sustainable industries.

The Health Ambassadors Program, which was previously funded by a CaliforniansForAll - California Volunteers grant awarded to WDBCCC, hired advocates from targeted communities to engage disadvantaged populations on important environmental justice issues. Advocates are raising awareness about food insecurity, climate change, recycling, and hazardous waste disposal in these communities. The John Muir Land Trust Garden Apprenticeship, also previously funded by the grant, continues to hire former foster youth to utilize organic and no-till farming techniques to address environmental issues like food deserts and soil health.

For participants seeking construction training, the WDBCCC connects participants to Future Build, Cypress Mandela, Richmond Build, Rising Sun, and Civicorps. The Future Build Program is a partnership between the WDBCCC, Pittsburg Power Company, the Pittsburg Adult Education Center, and various other organizations. This program provides annual training for low-income young adults in eastern Contra Costa County, covering essential skills in building trades, solar installation, construction, and hazardous waste management. As a 16-week pre-apprenticeship training, the program will provide no-cost education in various fields, including construction, plumbing, electrical work, and carpentry. Participants will benefit from hands-on training and earn eight industry-recognized certificates. The program integrates essential skills through the Home Builders Institute's Construction Technology and Multi Craft Core Curriculum and offers specialized training in solar energy, environmental safety, and alternative energy systems. In addition to technical training, Future Build offers workshops on resume writing, interview skills, and job applications.

Stakeholders expressed strong support for educational programs, such as those sharing messages like "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle." They highlighted the importance of job training in areas such as solar installations and other green skills. They underscored the need to focus on environmentally

challenged communities so that career opportunities can become more accessible. Additionally, they emphasized the need for stronger collaboration among green job providers to share resources and improve training opportunities. The WDBCCC will continue to be a thought leader in this growing industry and prioritize engaging environmentally-challenged communities in developing strategies to build a green workforce while increasing environmental sustainability in the local community.

## **V. WIOA Title I Coordination**

### **V.a. Digital Fluency and Distance Learning for Frontline Staff**

*Training and/or professional development that will be provided to frontline staff to gain and expand proficiency in digital fluency and distance learning.*

The WDBCCC is required to use EHSD-approved trainers for staff development. The WDBCCC is seeking grants to fund these trainings since it no longer receives regional funds for this purpose. The WDBCCC, in collaboration with CCWC, offers trainings to frontline staff focused on digital literacy and distance learning, utilizing partnerships with the EBRPU to offer training sessions throughout the region. As previously mentioned, the WDBCCC will also continue to attend DOL E&T Administration webinars, which will provide resources from various national agencies focused on digital skill-building.

Training opportunities for frontline staff will explore the use of Microsoft 365 Suite, DocuSign for electronic signatures, online survey tools, and social media platforms. These trainings will help staff comfortably use digital tools on both phones and computers. Technology training has included collaborative tools, such as Zoom, MS Teams, and Jamboard, to enhance team interactions and presentations, while training on other tools, such as SharePoint, Copilot, Eventbrite, WordPress, and SurveyMonkey, are provided on an as-needed basis. Additionally, staff will continue to receive training in participatory tools within Zoom and online translation tools to ensure effective communication. Training on security awareness and multi-factor authentication will also continue to be provided.

Stakeholder input underscored the importance of frontline staff, especially career coaches, possessing solid computer and data management skills. A focus on computer literacy training for both staff and participants was deemed essential to navigate various digital platforms. Additionally, the potential of leveraging AI to facilitate interview preparation, resume updates, and software training was recognized as a way to modernize and accelerate the training process. A WDBCCC staff member has attended a training on AI in education to understand its impact and how to limit its misuse. Stakeholders pointed out it is necessary to address specific training needs promptly and implement

ongoing training protocols, regular presentations, and inter-agency collaboration to keep staff current with emerging technologies and practices, especially as job turnover rates remain high. The WDBCCC remains committed to staying informed of current and emerging technologies, and leveraging AI and other tools to responsibly improve its services.

### **V.b. Training in Cultural Competency and Serving Trauma-Exposed Populations**

*Training and/or professional development that will be provided to frontline staff to ensure cultural competencies and an understanding of the experiences of trauma-exposed populations.*

All staff have received customer service training, and most have had customer-centered design training. AJCC staff are cross-trained in partner program eligibility and services. A series of 13 staff trainings, supported by regional funding, covered topics such as cultural competency, serving youth, and serving trauma-exposed populations. The WDBCCC is researching trainers and developing a formal professional development plan to track ongoing staff trainings to ensure alignment with changing workforce needs.

The WDBCCC will provide comprehensive training and professional development for frontline staff that enhances cultural competencies and deepens their understanding of the experiences of trauma-exposed populations. To provide frontline staff with the necessary skills to engage effectively with diverse communities, the WDBCCC, in collaboration with CBOs and regional partners, will offer trainings and professional development designed to increase cultural competencies and improve staff members' understanding of trauma-exposed populations. Training will explore DEAI initiatives targeting priority populations such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, low-income individuals, formerly incarcerated persons, and multicultural communities.

The WDBCCC and EDD have hired bilingual staff, and are working with bilingual liaisons to enhance cultural competency through better communication with ELL individuals. Additionally, the WDBCCC is excited to renew its partnership with STAND! For Families Free of Violence to support survivors of interpersonal and domestic violence by integrating essential career services and resources.

Additionally, frontline staff are mandated to participate in training modules that cover essential areas such as the National Voter Registration Act, confidentiality, civil rights, labor relations, anti-harassment policies, injury and illness prevention, and implicit bias awareness. Specialized training for Rubicon Programs staff will include topics aimed at promoting anti-racism, breaking cycles of poverty, and effectively working with justice-involved or formerly incarcerated individuals.

Stakeholder feedback suggested offering options to meet individuals in their home environments to assess the unique challenges faced at home. Recommendations also included leveraging telehealth services and incorporating art and music programs to broaden the range of support available. Additionally, they mentioned providing the California Institute of Integral Studies trauma-informed care training to improve staff skills and understanding. The WDBCCC is in talks with the county's Mental Health Department to explore possible in-service trainings on trauma-informed care, and will explore new ways to build this competency among its staff.

### **V.c. Coordination of Local Workforce Activities with Statewide Rapid Response Efforts**

*How the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities, as outlined in Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities (WSD16-04).*

The WDBCCC will continue to collaborate with mandatory partners such as the EDD, as well as voluntary partners like Covered California and the DOL, to build a robust support system. It actively engages in various initiatives to support employees affected by layoffs, beginning with the verification of Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notices and direct outreach to employers. The WDBCCC also offers no-cost Rapid Response Transition Orientation sessions to displaced workers. These orientation sessions cover essential topics, including employment and training programs, healthcare options, and financial benefits like the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. Additionally, the WDBCCC provides confidential outplacement services tailored to the needs of displaced workers at no cost.

The WDBCCC partners with EASTBAYWorks to provide workers with virtual presentations on available resources at one-stop career centers. The WDBCCC and EASTBAYWorks also offer workshops with WIOA information, resume writing assistance, job search strategies, and support for veterans. EDD representatives are present at workshops to guide employees through unemployment insurance processes.

In January 2025, the WDBCCC successfully organized the Greater Bay Area Rapid Response Roundtable, bringing together Rapid Response and Business Services staff from across the nine-county Bay Area. The event featured presentations from two Contra Costa County representatives, along with insightful updates on regional and state developments. Notable speakers included the East Bay's LMI consultant from the EDD, the Director of Workforce and Economic Development from the California Federation of Labor Unions, and the Regional Advisor and Statewide Rapid Response Coordinator from the EDD.



Through WAF initiatives, the WDBCCC will continue to provide rapid employment and training solutions tailored to the needs of both employers and job seekers, such as the East Bay Youth Technology Apprenticeship. Following a WARN notice, the WDBCCC will collaborate with employers to assess the skill profiles of at-risk employees. To minimize the impact of job displacement, the WDBCCC will identify potential job matches within the priority industry sectors. Additionally, the WDBCCC will organize customized job fairs designed for dislocated workers wanting to connect with relevant industry employers who are actively hiring. Additionally, the new Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Fund (DOGWF) initiative will help increase the WDBCCC's capacity to plan responses to possible layoffs.

Stakeholder feedback emphasized the importance of strengthening collaborations between the EDD and various stakeholders. Recommendations included improving awareness of WorkShare and other rapid-response resources. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of comprehensive training for presenters at rapid response events, as well as improved communication through detailed WARN notices. Consistent information sharing between agencies like the EDD was also emphasized to ensure access to up-to-date notices and services. In the coming years, the WDBCCC will increase proactive planning to help anticipate layoffs and will respond with coordinated strategies to minimize workforce disruption. iBEST, which consists of WDBCCC, Rubicon Programs, and EDD, is exploring new opportunities to engage with other stakeholders, which include presenting at WIN meetings, as well as hosting additional job fairs and on-site recruitments to include CCWC partners.

#### **V.d. Assessment of Adult and Dislocated Worker Training Activities in the Local Area**

*A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the Local Area, including how the Local Board will ensure that priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other income low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as outlined in WIOA Adult Program Priority of Service (WSD24-06).*

The WDBCCC engages in various adult and dislocated employment and training activities. Business engagement efforts include visiting businesses and attending AMBayArea events. Additionally, the WDBCCC will continue leveraging its access to the Econoview database and AMBayArea partners to connect with manufacturers in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The WDBCCC facilitates access to basic career services, which includes registration assistance for WIOA services in the CalJOBS system. This assistance will be available at the comprehensive AJCC and any other access points that offer job recruitment, outreach, and orientation services. The WDBCCC will conduct WIOA

eligibility determinations, provide initial assessments of worker skills and ELL proficiency, and identify individuals in need of additional support during the intake process.

The WDBCCC meets the Priority of Service Requirement as outlined in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E) concerning individualized career services and training services funded by WIOA adult funds. Priority of service is provided to Veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, ELL individuals, and those unable to compute or solve problems at an 8th-grade level or below.

The WDBCCC will also provide assistance with unemployment insurance claims and information on the performance and cost of eligible training providers. Participants will undergo thorough assessments to identify employment barriers and service needs to create an Individual Employment Plan. This plan outlines specific employment goals and the services required to achieve them, and helps to ensure that training programs and credential attainment remain within reachable distances for participants. Transportation support will also be provided, particularly in underserved areas like eastern Contra Costa County, to further alleviate barriers to services. The AJCC will also provide financial literacy services, and post-program follow-up to address ongoing needs for training, coaching, or resources.

In the coming years, the WDBCCC will offer a number of job training programs for underserved populations in sectors such as maritime, healthcare, construction, and advanced manufacturing. Each program year, training funds will be set aside for individuals demonstrating specific deprivations, which helps support training initiatives, including Paramedic for Equity, Health Ambassadors, and FutureBuild. The WDBCCC will also identify short-term training opportunities tailored for low-income individuals, maintain an Eligible Training Provider List with accessible programs, and approve shorter-duration courses that will allow participants to secure a job sooner. The WDBCCC recently secured funding from the Employment Training Panel to launch two new healthcare initiatives. The Community Clinics Upskilling Project and The Allied Health Incumbent Worker Upskilling Project will enhance medical staff retention at local employers and support career advancements in local healthcare jobs.

The WDBCCC will continue to engage with providers, such as the Ohlone Career Center, to develop manufacturing sector partnerships and an upcoming manufacturing training program. In 2024, the WDBCCC hired a Regional Manufacturing Careers Specialist, who has been meeting with employers, educators, associations, and other stakeholders to get feedback. Details of this work can be found in the Regional Plan. Through discussions with economic development departments, the WDBCCC curates and maintains a database of contacts for manufacturing events for job seekers who have

technical manufacturing skills. The WDBCCC participated in several events and conferences, including the AMBayArea Fall Forum, the California Battery Manufacturing Summit, Oakland Manufacturing Month events, the Bay Area Life Science Workforce Symposium, the East Bay EDA Manufacturing Summit, and the Prison to Employment (P2E) Connection Employer Day, showcasing its focus on regional manufacturing.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for diverse training approaches in addressing the unique needs of underrepresented communities. They advocated for more apprenticeships, mentorship opportunities, and industry-specific certifications. They emphasized the importance of cost-effective online skill-building platforms, especially for entry-level workers, and advocated for stronger partnerships with community colleges that offer accessible career counseling and low-cost or free programs. Stakeholders also underscored the value of WBL experiences and personalized career mapping. They expressed enthusiasm for developing non-traditional career pathways, including multilingual support in sectors like healthcare. The WDBCCC will continue to pursue new funding opportunities for training programs that benefit adult and dislocated workers in the local area, connecting them with sustainable careers in industries with growing demands for a skilled workforce.

#### **V.e. Youth Workforce Investment Activities Assessment in the Local Area under WIOA**

*A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the Local Area, as outlined in WIOA Youth Program Requirements (WSD17-07), including any strategies for increasing the digital literacy and fluency of youth participants, including those with disabilities.*

The full range of WIOA Youth Services/14 Youth Elements is available to Contra Costa youth, including youth with disabilities:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
- Alternative secondary school offerings;
- Education concurrent with workforce preparation;
- Labor Market and Employment Information for Local Area;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
- Occupational skill training;
- Financial literacy;
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during

- non-school hours;
- Entrepreneurial skills;
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol counseling and referral;
- Supportive services;
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completing participation; and
- Activities that prepare youth to transition to post-secondary education and training.

The WDBCCC currently contracts with two providers for the WIOA youth program. MDUSD serves central Contra Costa County, while the Contra Costa County Office of Education serves the east and west areas. The WDBCCC's youth workforce development activities encompass a comprehensive array of services designed to support youth in their academic and professional journeys. Youth will have access to tutoring, study skills training, and guidance. In order to facilitate increased secondary school completion, youth programs will utilize dropout prevention strategies and alternative school offerings, such as General Educational Development (GED) attainment. Youth providers will partner with Adult Education to offer GED preparation for these students. Youth will also have access to work experience and employment preparation services, such as paid work experiences, internships, and job shadowing opportunities. The WDBCCC will continue to provide wraparound services targeting in-school and out-of-school youth and young adults, with increased efforts to engage foster system and justice-involved individuals by strengthening partnerships with juvenile justice and independent living programs.

As previously mentioned, the WDBCCC policy requires that work experiences and internships compensate participants at rates above the minimum wage, and the WDBCCC will encourage providers to extend the duration and hours for these experiences, with a goal of up to 500 internship hours. Increasing the paid work experience wage to a minimum of \$18 has effectively encouraged youth to remain on their chosen career paths and stay enrolled in WIOA programs. By treating work experience participants as regular employees with hourly wages and the potential for wage gains after a specified number of hours, this approach offers a genuine work experience to youth rather than a stipend-based arrangement.

Occupational skill training, financial literacy, leadership development opportunities, and other skill development programs will further enhance youth employability. Through these offerings, youth will participate in community service and collaborative activities while expanding entrepreneurial skills

training, particularly in coding and web development tailored for the information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry. The WDBCCC is a partner of the OWDB-led Bay Area Tech Career Initiative, which equips participants with the skills needed for thriving careers in ICT-centered jobs in various sectors. The program covers essential ICT skills such as technical support, data science, database administration, and cybersecurity. Mentoring and support services will be offered throughout the program, alongside counseling and financial assistance for required educational purchases. Follow-up services will be provided for a minimum of 12 months following program completion to smooth transitions to post-secondary education and unsubsidized employment.

Stakeholder feedback highlighted the importance of communication between schools and partner organizations using email listservs, newsletters, and flyers. The feedback also emphasized the importance of providing hands-on experiences, such as site visits, and offering free ESL and financial literacy courses to empower youth. Stakeholders underscored the importance of talking to youth about their career interests while ensuring they clearly understand wages and job opportunities. They also stressed the importance of collaboration between adult education and workforce development counselors, as well as providing comprehensive training to case managers. Additionally, stakeholders noted there is an increased LGBTQ+ population among students in adult education programs. The WDBCCC is exploring ways to leverage its connection with CBOs, such as Rainbow Community Center, located near the comprehensive AJCC, to reach this population. The WDBCCC is dedicated to enhancing its youth outreach efforts. It will continue to utilize feedback from the public and from youth participants to refine its program offerings, maximize retention, and provide youth with meaningful opportunities to enter the workforce and sustain employment.

#### **V.f. Entity Overseeing Grant Disbursal and Competitive Sub-Grant Awarding for WIOA Title I Activities**

*The entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official (CEO) or the Governor and the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.*

Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) continues to be the designated fiscal agent for the WDBCCC and, as such, is responsible for the disbursement and reporting of all grant funds. The WDBCCC adheres to Uniform Guidance and DOL Exceptions and follows the Manual of Fiscal Policies and Procedures issued by EHSD. If there is a conflict between local and federal policy, the order of authority is recognized. Sub-awards for WIOA Title I Activities are competitively procured and include such solicitation methods as Requests for Proposals (RFPs),

Requests for Quotes (RFQs), Invitations for Bids (IFBs), or Requests for Information (RFIs).

RFPs invite proposals from potential service providers for the delivery of a specific type of service(s). Proposals are evaluated, scored, and ranked by a panel of impartial readers/raters.

Recommendations for funding are considered by the WDBCCC. Contracts exceeding \$200,000 require County Counsel review and authorization by the Board of Supervisors. Procurement for the WDBCCC will continue to be conducted in a manner that ensures the most effective service provider is selected. Procurements will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner and in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws.

#### **V.h. Responsibility for AJCC Operations**

*A description of how the Local Board fulfills the duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider as outlined in Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers (WSD22-13). This should include the name(s) and role(s) of all entities with whom the Local Board contracts.*

The roles of the AJCC Operator and the Career Services Provider are established through an open and competitive process to select the AJCC Operator. The Local Board issues an RFP for the operation of the AJCC and the provision of career services for adults and dislocated workers. Currently, Rubicon Programs serves as the AJCC Operator and coordinates service delivery among the required AJCC partners and service providers. Rubicon Programs has developed strong partnerships with CBOs, educational institutions, and training providers, facilitating access to services across Contra Costa County and creating multiple pathways into the workforce system. Rubicon Programs, as the Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services Provider, and its partner organizations within the CCWC offer a range of basic career services. These services include participant intake, orientations, initial assessments, employment services, and referrals to additional partners and resources. The partners in the CCWC include Rubicon Programs, Opportunity Junction (OJ), Lao Family Community Development (LFCD), San Pablo Economic Development Corporation (SPEDC), Martinez Adult Education, Mt. Diablo Adult Education, Pittsburg Adult Education, Liberty Adult Education, and the Contra Costa Community College (4CD) system.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The 2025-2028 Local Plan, aligned with state and federal objectives, provides a framework for how the WDBCCC will enhance workforce development and support equity, a healthy economy, and environmental sustainability in Contra Costa County. It focuses on priority sectors, including advanced manufacturing, healthcare, construction, energy, ICT, and transportation; and addresses

how the WDBCCC will coordinate with core and required WIOA and state partners, and administer Title I services in the years to come. It showcases collaboration among key stakeholders such as businesses, educational institutions, labor organizations, and CBOs, that are working together to leverage their strengths and explore new opportunities that meet the needs of local workers and businesses. It presents equity-focused strategies, including professional development for the WDBCCC staff, wrap-around supportive services for customers, and cutting-edge training initiatives that are aligned with the needs of workers and emerging industries. Person-centered services and targeted outreach are emphasized, specifically for priority and underserved populations, including veterans, youth, low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, formerly incarcerated individuals, and multicultural communities.

As the WDBCCC implements this plan, ongoing community engagement and feedback will be instrumental in refining strategies and measuring success. Through a collaborative and continuous improvement approach, the WDBCCC advances its vision of supporting a network that creates and promotes a dynamic education system, high-performing businesses, and a prosperous local economy with an abundance of high-quality jobs and the skilled workers to fill them. As regional labor needs continue to shift with the changing economy, the WDBCCC aspires to adapt as well, using its strong foundation of community engagement to continuously deliver the resources and supports that are needed. The WDBCCC is hopeful that this plan can serve as a guide over the coming years, providing staff and partners with program goals, benchmarks, and the community feedback that informed each decision. Ultimately, the Local Plan represents a commitment to the county's people and businesses to develop career pathways and address labor market needs in ways that empower individuals, support environmental sustainability, and promote economic growth.