



Richmond Workforce Development Board

LOCAL PLAN

2021 - 2024

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Introduction

The Richmond Workforce Development Board (RWDB) has a strong history of serving the workforce development needs of job seekers and employers in the city of Richmond and the surrounding region. The economic contraction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has substantially increased the need for workforce development and supportive services in the local community and nationally, while at the same time requiring an abrupt shift to virtual education, training, job search and support. Changes in the economy resulting from the pandemic mean that large numbers of individuals will need to be trained for new occupations, and will also need to develop digital skills to enable them to seek employment and to function successfully in a transformed workplace. It is also clear that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy has fallen disproportionately on workers who are low-income, female and persons of color. As the economy moves towards recovery, the workforce system will need to focus explicitly on delivering effective services to these populations to ensure that the recovery is equitable. Without an equitable recovery, we face the prospect of ever-widening inequality that undermines our efforts to build a democratic society. The plan that follows provides an outline of the strategies that the RWDB will use to address the interconnected economic and workforce challenges that we face, from a framework of racial equity and economic justice.

(1) Local Overview

Workforce Development Activities in the Local Area

The Local Board and Key Partners

The RWDB local workforce development and education programs and services are designed to meet the needs of job seekers and businesses based in the Richmond Local Area. The RWDB includes a diverse Board membership of employers, labor, community organizations, education, and government who provide guidance, input, and support to workforce development and education needs of the community. These Board members are also deeply rooted, engaged, and committed to helping the Richmond community and the local economy thrive. Key partners include:

- EAST BAY Works One-Stop Career Centers
- Business Community
- Labor Representatives
- Community-Based Organizations
- MOU Partners
- Educational Leaders
- Local Government
- State Government
- Local Economists
- Employment Development Department (EDD)

- Adult Schools
- Community Colleges
- California State Universities (CSUs)
- Economic Development Organizations

Programs and Services

All RWDB activities begin in the local One-Stop Career Centers (AJCC's) and fall under the following WIOA requirements:

Title I (Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth)
Title II (Adult Education and Literacy)
Title III (Wagner-Peyser)
Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation)

Under these titles, the RWDB provides a variety of workforce development services aimed at empowering and promoting economic mobility among the community's most vulnerable residents, such as individuals who are:

- Low Income Youth and Adults
- Skills Deficient
- English Language Learners
- Justice System-Involved
- Dislocated Workers
- Veterans
- Cognitively or Physically Impaired
- Housing Insecure

The RWDB and its partners are engaged in a wide array of programs and services to address the workforce needs of the Local Area. A description of these services is provided below.

Accelerating Careers through Essential Skills Academy (ACES): Professional and personal development focused on soft skills for job seekers with input from the employer community.

Digital training and fluency: Developing and implementing digital training workshops to address the digital divide. This includes digital training workshops at the AJCC as well as collaborating with Adult Education Partners to provide these training workshops.

Career and Technical Education is provided by Contra Costa College: Career education programs through the college provide and prepare residents for careers in high-demand fields. They combine technical, job-specific skills with core academics.

ESL, GED as well as basic skills is provided by Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP) and West Contra Costa Adult Education (WCCAE): Both LEAP and WCCAE provide WIOA Title II services. The programs accelerate achievement of diplomas and credentials for local residents including immigrants and individuals with limited English skills.

Occupational skills training: Training for in-demand occupations is provided through Title I from training providers on the State's Eligible Training Provider list. Occupational skills training provides vocational skills training to adults and youth to help them gain the necessary skills to compete in the job market and gain sustainable wages.

Pre-apprenticeship construction training through RichmondBUILD (RB) for adults: RB is a public private partnership focused on developing talent and skills in high growth, high wage construction and renewable energy fields. RB provides a twelve-week pre-apprenticeship construction training to adults who receive hands-on training as well as industry recognized certifications.

Pre-apprenticeship construction and high school education for youth through YouthBUILD: RB YouthBUILD assists youth ages 16-24 in transforming their lives. Program participants can work toward their GEDs or high school diplomas, learn job skills, and work on community projects. Participants receive hands-on construction training and industry recognized certifications related to the construction field.

Self-Awareness and Recovery (SAR) training: Training that reduces the recidivism rates of incarcerated individuals, focused on helping adult and youth offenders to heal from emotional wounds and trauma. This program has been offered to select participants in RichmondBUILD and other RWDB training programs.

Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS): Job preparedness, career exploration and paid work experience for youth with disabilities. This program has been operated with state grant funding for several years, in partnership with the West Contra Costa Unified School District and the Department of Rehabilitation.

Paid work experience and work-based learning for adults and youth: Paid work experience is a structured format and designed for adults to gain on-the-job knowledge, experience, and technical skills that otherwise might not be afforded to them. Work-based learning (paid or unpaid) is an educational approach that uses the workplace to provide students with the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities.

On-the Job Training (OJT): OJT is provided under contract with an employer or registered apprenticeship program sponsor in the public, non-profit, or private sector. Through the OJT contract, occupational training is provided for WIOA participants in exchange for reimbursement, typically up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and supervision related to the training.

Academic, life skills and career training for youth through Job Corps: Tuition-free training and education focused on basic reading and math as well as providing courses in independent living, employability skills, and career success skills connecting eligible youth with the skills and educational opportunities they need to establish careers.

Financial literacy: For both adults and youth through SparkPoint. SparkPoint is a financial education center that helps individuals and families who are struggling to make ends meet by providing information on developing a budget, achieving financial goals, improving one's credit rating, and reducing debt.

College and career academies programs for youth: Operated by West Contra Costa Unified School District, the career academies include themes such as Health, Information Technology, Law, Media, Engineering, Hospitality, ACET (Architecture, Construction, Engineering and Technology), Biotechnology, GEET (Green Engineering and Energy Technology Pathway), Environmental Studies, and Creative and Performing Arts.

Kaiser Permanente School of Allied Health Sciences: Offers degrees and certificate programs in health and medical careers, including: certificates in Medical Assisting and Phlebotomy, and degrees in Sonography and Radiologic Technology.

Local Adult Education: Provides a co-investment strategy between basic skills upgrading and occupational skills training. The RWDB partners with West Contra Costa Adult Education on a number of workforce training programs.

The FLOW (Forklift, Logistics, Operations, and Warehousing): Offered by Contra Costa College, this program is designed to prepare workers for rapidly growing opportunities in transportation and logistics in the region.

The Contractors Resource Center (CRC): A center for individuals who want to start their own business. The CRC offers a wide range of training opportunities for entrepreneurs in areas that are key to business success, including topics such as bidding, contracting, back-office operations, etc.

Strengths of the Local Workforce System

Commitment to Job Seekers With Barriers to Employment

The RWDB prides itself on impactful workforce development service delivery to individuals with barriers to employment. Providing culturally relevant services at every stage of the training, job search, and career placement process, to position disadvantaged workers for successful long-term employment, is a primary objective of the RWDB.

Justice Involved Youth and Adults

A significant portion of participants (more than 30%) in the RichmondBUILD (RB) and YouthBUILD pre-apprenticeship construction programs are individuals with previous justice system involvement. A high proportion of participants in these programs have gone on to construction employment at sustainable wages. Strong partnerships with unions to employ graduates, and a partnership with SARS Academy, which offers personal development and healing from emotional trauma focused on individuals in reentry, have contributed to this strong record of achievement. In recognition of this level of success, the RichmondBUILD program received an FBI Director's national award for crime prevention. Funding to support these efforts has included Workforce Accelerator grants, the Community Benefits Agreement through the Chevron Corporation, and foundation funding.

The RWDB, through its AJCC, is also operating the "Prison to Employment" grant program. This program provides resources for direct services, supportive services, and earn and learn opportunities to the formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals. In addition, components of the ACES Academy focused on personal and professional development are also offered to this population.

Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

The City of Richmond adopted a Tiny Homes Ordinance and is in the planning stages of creating a transitional village for those experiencing homelessness. In addition, RB has received a Workforce Accelerator Fund grant (WAF 8.0) to provide pre-apprenticeship construction training to individuals who are homeless and involved in the justice system, and enable them to participate in the construction of the Tiny Homes. Once the Tiny Homes are complete, RB students may be eligible to live in the Tiny Home.

English Language Learners

Strong partnerships with Adult Education and various CBOs enables the RWDB to serve the diverse population of immigrant and English Language Learners in Richmond. A key emphasis of the program is helping ELLs and immigrants navigate through the education and training systems that would otherwise not be accessible to them. This population is served through co-enrollment in both Title I and Title II programs. A strength of the community is the ability to serve English Language Learners through the ACES Academy, which focuses on personal and professional development before entering into the workforce and during employment.

Individuals with Disabilities

The RWDB is committed to utilizing a human-centered design approach to working with individuals with disabilities. Through a strengths-based perspective, the frontline staff and program administrators focus on the unique talents and skills of program participants instead of physical or mental challenges. The STEPS program, operated in partnership with West Contra Costa Unified School District and the DOR, offers opportunities for employment training and work experience to K-12 youth with disabilities. Strong employer partnerships are an essential part of providing these opportunities to young people.

“The City of Richmond YouthWORKS program has been really great in hiring our students with disabilities, and the STEPS program has served them well. I would of course like for those services to continue” K-12 Education participant, Public Input Session

Adults Who Are Low Income and Basic Skills Deficient

A significant portion of those served by the RWDB are low-income adults and youth who are basic skills deficient. The RWDB offers individuals from this population career planning guidance and workshops. Co-enrollment in LEAP and Adult Education provides the opportunity for workshops on basic skills in language and math and provides programming that leads to a GED or High School diploma. Providing access to supportive services is also critical for this population, which often lacks the resources to pay for things like work clothing or transportation. Participation in Work Experience and Work-Based Learning are important resources for this group, whose lack of previous employment experience can limit their competitiveness as job seekers. The ACES Academy’s focus on soft skills training also addresses the lack of workplace skills that may result from limited experience in the work environment.

Dislocated Workers

Services for dislocated workers are designed to address the loss of a job and wages and have become even more important as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While dislocation from employment has not traditionally been seen as a barrier to employment, the scale of business closures during COVID-19 has created a new priority for these services. The RWDB has received a total of 18 WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) from businesses, totaling 1,739 layoffs since the start of the pandemic. This does not include the unprecedented number of smaller employers who either went out of business or are continuing to struggle to keep their business afloat. Important services for this population include career planning, since job dislocation may require decisions about preparation for and entry into a new occupation. Once an individual has determined their career direction, they are provided with occupational skills training (including OJTs and in-class training) leading to entry into a new employment sector. Information on financial resources and assistance in filing for Unemployment Insurance are also important services provided to dislocated workers. A key part of the dislocated worker program also includes Rapid Response services provided in advance to workers when RWDB has advance notice of layoffs.

Veterans

Veterans are a high priority for service at the AJCC. The AJCC partners with the EDD's Veterans program and Swords to Plowshares to provide additional Veteran services. The RWDB also partners and refers homeless Veterans' to Shelter-Inc for housing assistance. The RWDB currently provides employment and training services to Veterans under the Veterans' Employment-Related Assistance Program (VEAP) and the other WIOA programs. As mentioned, the RWDB is partnered with Swords to Plowshares and will continue to play an integral role in co-enrolling Veterans in Title I services.

Areas for Improvement

Virtual Service Delivery

It is difficult to predict how long the current COVID-19 pandemic will continue, but there is common agreement that the ability to operate in a virtual setting will be an important part of work and service delivery in the future. It is imperative that the RWDB continue to strengthen its ability to deliver services in a virtual setting to meet the urgent short-term needs of the pandemic and to create a virtual infrastructure for the future. The RWDB is developing training for staff in digital skills such as social media and ensuring that staff have up to date skills needed for digital delivery of services. Digital workshops are being created for resume, application support, and interview preparation. In addition, career counselors are on call and now provide assistance through ZOOM for job search and general customer support. Job and employer search assistance is also being revamped to include virtual recruitments.

The following comment was provided at a Public Input Session by a participant:

“COVID has really changed how we do business, with a lot of things being done virtually, so I think it is essential that we make adjustments to offer more virtual workshops for job seekers. Because we're no longer confined by location, we could also reach out to other AJCC's in the county to collaborate on providing these virtual workshops for job seekers” Workforce System Staff, Public Input Session

Beyond the need for virtual services during the pandemic, the RWDB will need to enhance its digital presence to attract a broader audience. The following comment was provided by a Public Input Session participant from the education sector:

“Creating a social media presence to advertise what services are available is one way for the RWDB to strengthen outreach. In terms of delivery of workshops, the establishment of a YouTube Channel could be a helpful strategy, because a large proportion of residents know how to access YouTube. This could be a good vehicle for service delivery for people who do have the digital skills and need help” K-12 Education participant, Public Input Session

With the onset of the pandemic, the RWDB began to develop its social media presence in the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Trainings are underway to educate staff on the best effective ways to utilize these platforms in order to attract and engage customers. In addition, staff are being trained on how to utilize social media as a means of marketing and advertising events, services, and accomplishments.

Furthermore, the RWDB is looking to its neighboring WDB's to glean best practices in virtual service delivery. Staff are currently collaborating with the regional EASTBAY Works partners to learn and share on different strategies and ways to market and provide services.

The effects of the pandemic on in person service delivery has created opportunities to expand the ways in which the RWDB delivers services. Post COVID-19, the RWDB will continue to provide virtual services along with in-person services. This will allow a diverse means of service delivery focused on the customers' choice.

Diversifying Training Opportunities

Jobseekers who come to RWDB workforce centers do not all have the same training and employment needs, interests, or goals. Therefore, expanding RWDB training, education, and job placement options could provide greater opportunities for program participants.

“The job market is quite different from what it used to be, with many jobs including an information technology component, so it will be important for people to have more data management skills or knowledge of technology, not just retail and warehousing”

Workforce System Staff participant in Public Input Session

RWDB is redesigning the ACES Academy to include digital skills training to address the basic technology skills needed in order to function successfully in the workplace. The RWDB will further advance these efforts by working with Adult Education and Community Colleges to address the skills and training gaps in other areas, based upon business needs. This will be accomplished by bringing together the RWDB's Business Advisory Group. The Business Advisory Group will encompass key business leaders such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Council of Industries. Members will include a wide variety of businesses from small enterprises to large corporations representing the health, technology, logistics, construction, manufacturing, clean energy, and biotechnology sectors. Bringing together all of these partners will be crucial to develop training programs that are in alignment with employer's needs, address gaps in training, industry trends, and job growth, especially as we move into life post-COVID-19.

(2) Strategic Vision

Supporting Economic Growth and Economic Self-Sufficiency

The RWDB's mission statement reads as follows: "The Richmond Workforce Development Board will, through private industry and public agency **partnerships**, contribute to the **economic growth** of the region by promoting and overseeing a **flexible and responsive** workforce system, which aligns jobseekers' **skills** with current and future **employer needs**."

During a time of great social, political, and economic change, the RWDB will work diligently to promote equity through workforce development services. Committed to job seekers, employers, and the broader Richmond Community, the RWDB will ground all of its efforts over the next four years in its vision.

The RWDB will serve the needs of employers and workers in Richmond and the surrounding region by working with key partners from city government, business, industry, education, economic development, organized labor, and community organizations to develop innovative ways to identify and address those needs. The RWDB will ensure a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce, provide education and workforce training to give youth and adults the opportunity to achieve their career goals, and contribute to the success of local businesses through a range of direct services. The RWDB's goals are to prepare an educated and skilled workforce that will increase economic self-sufficiency while advancing equity within the workforce and education system ensuring greater opportunity for upward mobility for local residents.

Activities that will support RWDB's goals and vision fall under the following four pillars:

Pillar 1: Building Partnerships

- **Strengthening Partnerships:** The RWDB will collaborate with key/core partners to streamline education and training opportunities for candidates to address basic skills deficiency and support English Language Learners through coordinated services with Title II – Adult Education and Literacy. Collaboration also will include working with community-based organizations that serve individuals who lack basic skills and English language skills.
- **Engaging Industry Leaders:** The RWDB will engage industry leaders to develop training programs and create stronger connections between employers and the workforce system.
- **Strengthening Co-Enrollment:** The RWDB will streamline the process of co-enrollment between Title I and Title II, to co-invest and co-case manage participants in collaboration with partners, in order to address basic skill deficiency and language barriers while the participant is seeking employment and skills training.

Pillar 2: Addressing Community and Employer Needs

- **Engaging Businesses:** The RWDB will collaborate with businesses to determine local hiring needs and design innovative initiatives and trainings that are responsive to those needs, in order to start job candidates on a career path.
- **Engaging Labor Unions:** The RWDB will collaborate with local labor unions to improve employee representation, essential for high-quality jobs, and strengthening apprenticeship programs which are a critical route to developing needed skills.
- **Utilizing Data, Measuring Performance, and Assessing the Labor Market:** The RWDB will set and measure progress toward goals for creating a skilled, inclusive, and competitive workforce. The RWDB will continuously evaluate training, employment, and earnings outcomes to ensure excellent services and positive economic impact. The RWDB will survey business and labor market data to drive in-demand services to businesses and candidates.
- **Increasing Digital Literacy and Fluency:** The RWDB will provide workshops to teach adults and youth on the different digital platforms and how they interconnect with training and employment.

Pillar 3: Flexibility and Responsiveness

- **Increasing Flexibility and Adaptability:** The onset of the pandemic, the ongoing challenges of stay-at-home orders, increased COVID-19 cases in Richmond, high unemployment, and business closures and layoffs have all negatively impacted the workforce system and the economy. The RWDB has adopted and adapted protocols and policies to address new safety and health measures. In addition, distance learning and digital learning are now the new norm and practice by RWDB and partners.
- **Preparing Local Residents:** RWDB will collaborate with community members and prepare them for the current realities of the changing labor market and the future of work by creating new opportunities for low-wage workers and businesses in the changing economy.

Pillar 4: Skills and Training

- **Strengthening Services for Those with Barriers:** RWDB will focus on addressing and determining appropriate pathways for low-income adults and youth who have limited skills, lack work experience, and face other barriers that prevent them from achieving economic success.
- **Earn and Learn:** RWDB will focus on work-based training strategies and employment approaches to benefit low-income individuals. Work-based training provides adults and youth the chance to earn income while also receiving training and developing essential skills that are best learned on the job.

- **Promoting Project ACES (Accelerating Careers through Essential Skills):** RWDB will work with business and educational institutions to design and offer candidates necessary and in-demand work ethic and learning opportunities, contributing to the creation of a pipeline of candidates with the essential skills businesses require.
- **Designing Career Pathways:** RWDB will design and deliver pathways that prepare candidates to reach their full career potential.

Service Delivery Strategies to Ensure Equitable Access

The RWDB will incorporate various ways to strengthen service-delivery to ensure equitable access to sector pathways and industry recognized post-secondary credentials. The RWDB seeks to make the current service delivery system more effective and accessible to those with barriers to accessing services that lead to employment and in-demand occupations, by engaging in the following strategies:

- The AJCC is designing workshops focused on digital literacy to be braided into the ACES Academy Program. ACES primary focus is on work etiquette and now will include digital access and skills.
- The AJCC is collaborating with the local libraries to work on providing hot spots for Wi-Fi in various areas of the community.
- The Business Advisory Council and business members of the Board will help identify areas of improvement to educate employers on how to accommodate those with barriers and provide solutions to empower both the worker and the employer.
- The AJCC is collaborating on joint projects with Adult Education (LEAP) to strategize ways to provide easy seamless access to adult literacy.
- ELL Navigators will provide one-on-one assistance to help navigate those who have difficulty with speaking and understanding English.
- Potential additions to the existing service delivery system include; improving referrals and other linkages between partners and service providers, tracking referrals, and ensuring warm hand-offs between providers.
- Emphasize training that leads to credentials in targeted growth sectors in the East Bay region.
- Connect job seekers with employers by shortening the time from credential to employment and integrating workforce services across program providers for one-stop customers.
- Better collaboration with regional boards to expand existing regional career pathways. Continually review the existing pathways to determine where in-demand pathways exist. Upon identification, target credential training resources to ensure equitable access for individuals, including those with barriers.

The RWDB RichmondWORKS Career Services program strives to provide equitable access and opportunity for placement in state-approved apprenticeships and post-secondary education programs for all program participants.

RWDB staff will develop a memorandum of understanding to build partnerships in an array of local Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) training programs designed to prepare WIOA clients for employment in emergent high-sector occupations in the Richmond area. In addition to establishing strong partnerships with ETPL training providers, RWDB will continue to form partnerships with community-based service providers to provide training services to Richmond residents via the Workforce Accelerator and English Language Learner Pathways grant funded programs.

The RWDB will also continue to pursue a number of strategies to facilitate equitable access to regional sector pathways for individuals with language barriers. These are described below.

Project IMPACTO (Immigrant Participants Accessing Career Training Opportunities)

Project IMPACTO, funded by state of California English Language Learner grant funds, helped address and provide equitable access for customers experiencing English language difficulties. A key component of this program was the use of the Navigator model. Navigators are specifically trained to provide in-depth informational intakes to help individuals navigate services, including; English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, immigration services, as well as access to job search and training avenues offered at the AJCC. Navigators work with individuals to assess their needs and then provide a warm hand off to Title I and/or Title II services. Navigators also follow up with participants to ensure that they are continuing on a career pathway and have opportunities to participate in additional trainings that lead to a recognized post-secondary credential.

Project IMPACTO 2.0

Project IMPACTO 2.0 will build upon the work of the original Project IMPACTO by incorporating an Earn and Learn component through engagement with local businesses that are a part of the Business Advisory Council. Partnering with businesses on this initiative will help provide guidance on additional knowledge and skills that participants need to be successful in employment. Participants will also participate in the ACES Academy, focused on personal, professional development as well technical skills. Employers will assist with input, interviews, and by providing paid work experience to participants.

LEAP (Literacy for Every Adult Program)

LEAP is a highly successful program serving English language learners as well as basic skills deficient WIOA participants. This free literacy program is sponsored by the Richmond Public Library and funded through the Adult Education and Literacy Program administered by the Department of Education under WIOA Title II.

“Technology and remote work have become a priority during the pandemic, yet we have many people in the community who don't have access to a computer or

the skills to work remotely. We need to collectively figure out a way to help them transition into this new workplace . . . whether it be through a computer lab or providing access to Wi-Fi to people that don't have the means.”

“I think we need to look at the conditions of people who are dealing with issues like low literacy, lack of experience in the workforce, and limited knowledge of workplace etiquette...we can address it from two perspectives--we can concentrate on educating the worker so they can come to the table with the skills they need to be able to function, but we also need to educate the employer...we need to empower everyone, empower the worker and the employer to be able to create an equitable game plan for all.”

Public Input Session Participant

(3) Core Program Partner Coordination

Coordination with Adult Education and Literacy Activities Under WIOA Title II

RWDB will continue its strong history of collaboration with its Title II partners including West Contra Costa Adult Education (WCCAE) and Richmond’s Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP), in developing a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce. The existing MOU and resource sharing agreements define how Title II partners refer and collaborate in co-enrolling WIOA participants. These partner services include English language learner (ELL) tutoring and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) to determine a person’s skill level and aptitude. The following are examples of the coordination efforts between the RWDB and adult education and literacy activities:

- The RWDB ELL Project IMPACTO (Immigrant Participants Accessing Career Training Opportunities) grant’s success with client referrals and co-enrollments was primarily due to the strong partnership with its Title II partners, LEAP and the WCCAE.
- RWDB will continue with the robust co-enrollments and co-case management between Title I and Title II programs, which provides a co-investment with the participant, thereby improving outcomes for the participant and both programs.
- Project ACES (Accelerating Careers through Essential Skills) was developed through the Workforce Accelerator fund and modifications were made with the funding of the ELL grant to include a personal development component. The ACES Academy also includes a Business Advisory Group whose members include Title II partners (LEAP and WCCAE), Contra Costa Community College, and employers. The Business Advisory Group serves to help address and create innovative ideas and curriculum for individuals who lack basic skills and have language barriers in order for them to be better prepared for employment.
- RWDB will also collaborate with Contra Costa Community College in the ELL 2.0 grant. The new grant will include cross referrals, information sessions, and career technical education, such as Medical Assistant certification and Forklift, Logistics, Operations, and

Warehouse (FLOW) training. These activities will be in coordination with Title II partners to ensure the success of program participants enrolled in Title I training.

- Through its partnership with West Contra Costa Adult Education, the RWDB is able to ensure access to adult education classes including training in viable careers.
- The RWDB's partnership with LEAP has been highly successful in serving English language learners as well as basic skills deficient WIOA participants. This free literacy program is sponsored by the Richmond Public Library and funded through the Adult Education and Literacy Program administered by the Department of Education under WIOA Title II.

RWDB staff will continue to participate in the review of local applications (as outlined in WSIN19-34 - Local Board Review of the WIOA Title II AEFLA Applications) for adult education providers and provide input on aligning and building stronger partnerships and services to continue to address the needs of residents in the community, thereby creating a better prepared workforce.

The RWDB is in the planning phase with West Contra Costa Adult Education regarding ways to develop occupational skills training based upon employer demand and alignment with regional growth sectors. This will be accomplished by including industry partners and the business community in these conversations, in order to gather input on what is needed to train their workers, keep up with most recent technological advances, and look ahead to future demand, while staying current with immediate needs to be profitable and viable in today's economy.

Coordination with Employment Services Under WIOA Title III

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, RWDB staff has incorporated creative ways to provide critical workforce development services to its customers. These include use of technology and social media. RWDB staff will continue to work very closely with our WIOA Title III partner to provide virtual and online services to our mutual clients while ensuring there is no duplication of services. These services include:

- Providing WIOA Individual & Training Career Service registration that is completed remotely via CalJOBS data tracking system, using an electronic signature process;
- Connecting clients to online job boards, labor exchange information, and virtual EDD Unemployment assistance via CalJOBS; assisting clients to successfully connect with EDD staff via computer-based applications and the telephone;
- RWDB staff provide virtual career advising appointments for individual clients via telephone and online through Zoom webinars.

Once the State's shelter-in-place orders are lifted, and we are able to provide more in-person career services, the RWDB staff will work with EDD staff to coordinate WIOA service delivery strategies including job readiness training, job placement events, and labor exchange services. The coordination of these and other vital workforce development services will alleviate service duplication within the comprehensive career center. RichmondWORKS AJCC staff consistently

coordinate AJCC services with Wagner-Peyser staff to avoid duplication of services. The goal is to streamline services in order to promote efficiency and optimize performance by leveraging resources and cost sharing. RWDB staff will continue to:

- Meet quarterly with AJCC service partners to discuss service delivery, including how to improve WIOA and Wagner-Peyser Act services and ensure access to services for all residents.
- Use the CalJOBS Data Tracking & Reporting System effectively to eliminate duplication of services between WIOA and Wagner-Peyser partners; all client services are tracked in this statewide system, which allows collaborating partners to confirm services being rendered to individual clients prior to providing additional services. Cross referrals of potential program participants within the CalJOBS system and coordination of services will help avoid duplication and assure maximum efficiencies in services being offered.

Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation Programs Under WIOA Title IV

RWDB staff have consistently maintained communications with its Title IV partner, which has allowed them to regularly coordinate service delivery and ensure overall strategic alignment. The RWDB Youth Services Provider has been partnering with the East Bay District of the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR-EB) and the Employment Training Panel on the Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS) grant program to serve West Contra Costa County Unified School District (WCCUSD) students with disabilities. The STEPS grant collaboration has enabled the RWDB to partner with DOR-EB and WCCUSD to extend the RWDB Youth Program to provide critical workforce readiness training and work experience to students with intellectual or developmental disabilities (ID/DD) in Richmond. Youth and Adult Program participants with disabilities receive pre-employment and transition services (including workshops, shadowing, training, and financial literacy.)

Through the STEPS grant and other collaborations, the DOR district partner works with the RWDB and local businesses to provide internships and permanent employment to ID/DD program participants. In addition, RWDB and DOR staff meet regularly to develop strategies to successfully serve the ID/DD population of youth and adults. The RWDB has worked with the DOR to host annual job fairs for adults with disabilities at the AJCC, where staff worked with participants to review resumes. Employers with a history of hiring people with disabilities interview job candidates at the job fairs.

The RWDB is currently developing its own employer engagement strategy to initiate contacts with employers and provide them with an employer perspective about working with individuals with ID/DD. Training modules for employers and staff will be developed to promote greater understanding of what it means to hire an individual with ID/DD.

(4) AJCC System Partner Coordination

Roles and Resource Contributions of Local Board and AJCC MOU Partners

The RWDB is committed to aligning its core programs to those of the AJCC partner services, thus allowing the AJCC to operate as a unified system. The RWDB Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines current partnership processes for service collaborations for mutual clients.

RWDB has increased its collaboration efforts with core partners such as EDD, Adult Education, and DOR to strengthen its service outreach and provide seamless core program services to Richmond residents. The RWDB Career Service Provider will work with its core partners, using its customer-focused service delivery system, to assist clients referred to RWDB AJCC by effectively assessing their skills, aptitude level, barriers to employment, supportive service needs, and developing an employment and counseling plan that will lead to permanent employment and program completion. This collaboration will include updates to the existing WDB Partner's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to memorialize the terms of staff cross-training, referral processes, client tracking, and client skills development via enrollment in the WIOA training program.

The role and resource contributions of the RWDB members toward the development and maintenance of the Richmond Local Area operation and career services are outlined in the RWDB by-laws and ratified in the Richmond City Council Resolution affirming these by-laws.

The RWDB and City of Richmond's Chief Elected Official entered into a Written Agreement which outlined the roles of each party in the planning, establishment and oversight of the Richmond Local Area comprehensive workforce development system in accordance with WIOA and federal regulations. The Written Agreement was ratified by the Richmond City Council, July 16, 2019.

Ensuring Continual Improvement of Eligible Service Providers

The RWDB and its staff are committed to continuous quality improvement in its AJCC service delivery system for the Richmond Local Area. A wide-range of guidance and direction is provided to AJCC eligible service providers by RWDB staff to ensure that the needs of local employers, workers and job seekers are met. Quarterly meetings take place with eligible service providers and the RWDB to discuss continuous improvement, which encompasses WIOA performance measures, collaboration, challenges, and strategic planning as it relates to the local and regional plans. In addition, training is provided for continuous improvement focusing on customer service, WIOA Regulations, Performance Measures, and the CalJOBS data tracking system.

WIOA Program monitoring and guidance training classes are conducted by RWDB's Management Information System (MIS) Administrator. Semi-annual quality reviews are

conducted to assess the excellence and effectiveness of services provided to all customers (employers, workers, job seekers, and partners). If any issues are identified, a determination of a corrective action plan takes place, specifically outlining areas of improvement and training to correct any shortcomings.

The RWDB will implement a continuous improvement survey to distribute to all customers as a means of evaluating customer satisfaction. The results will be shared at the partner quarterly meetings that include eligible service providers. “What’s working” and “what’s not working” within the AJCC delivery system will be addressed along with a plan of action for continuous improvement of services.

Strengthening Linkages Between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance Programs

The RWDB AJCC partners have a robust partner relationship with the Employment Development Department (EDD) Unemployment Insurance (UI) program staff. Regional EDD staff services are currently accessible electronically via the telephone, EDD website, and CalJOBS system to assist AJCC clients and UI benefit recipients. Historically, workshops are held weekly at the Contra Costa County, Concord AJCC office location. These workshops are specifically for UI claimants; however, since the COVID-19 pandemic, EDD staff are available to meet virtually with participants regarding their needs. RichmondWORKS AJCC staff have been trained by EDD staff and receive continuous guidance regarding how to assist UI claimants with information on all EDD UI services, including filing UI claims. As of March 2020, these services are also provided virtually and via telephone. Once the State’s shelter-in-place orders are lifted, we will resume in-person WIOA Title III services for the Richmond Local Area.

In order to strengthen the existing collaboration in serving qualified claimants, RichmondWORKS AJCC Career Center offers a full array of reemployment and training services to help UI recipients and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants transition back into the workforce. These services range from Wagner-Peyser core services to WIOA individualized services that include skills training in demand occupations. The Wagner-Peyser core services include the use of computers and resource materials, staff-assisted job search, assessments, access to staff-assisted workshops and job clubs, and community referrals.

The City of Richmond conducts a yearly survey of residents and employers in the Local Area to identify needs and areas of improvement. RWDB incorporates and aligns the City of Richmond’s goals in response to the needs of the community and local employers focusing on continuous improvement and providing excellent customer services.

Coordinating Relevant Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs & Activities

The RWDB will coordinate education and workforce activities in relation to secondary and post-secondary education programs through coordinated efforts in career pathway development

that include West Contra Costa Adult Education and Contra Costa Community College District. Employer and partner input will also be included in these efforts. RWDB will collaborate with AJCC partners and local businesses on the development of the following strategies to enhance certification training activities, while avoiding service duplication:

- Understand the immediate hiring and training needs of regional employers in order to create a pipeline of qualified candidates;
- Identify and map career pathways within each industry sector, in partnership with adult education, community colleges, employers, and other partners.

We seek to expand on the model created with our partners at West Contra Costa Adult Education, Contra Costa Community College, Kaiser Permanente School of Allied Health Sciences, Martinez Adult School, and local training providers. We will work with businesses to ensure that local business needs are met, and will build upon the existing partnership with community colleges and training providers, to ensure that credentials are developed with industry engagement that will benefit the Richmond businesses and those who seek employment in specific sectors.

Existing RWDB “Earn and Learn” strategies will continue to be incorporated into this collaboration:

- Use of On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Work Experience as Earn and Learn models to provide knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job. The OJT curriculum will continue to be designed to be responsive to the needs of business, while giving Earn and Learn opportunities to jobseekers in the city.
- Work Experience will be used as a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period.
- Continue to collaborate with Title II and Carl D. Perkins partners for Youth and Adult program participants who enter certification programs for specific industry sectors; these activities would include:
 - Occupational skills training, with a focus on recognized postsecondary credentials and in-demand occupations; and,
 - Postsecondary preparation including transition activities.

The RWDB will collaborate with its AJCC Partners to support students in conjunction with efforts focused on receiving certifications in identified career pathways, and efforts will be made at the local and regional levels to ensure that services are not duplicated.

Coordinating Workforce Development Programs and Economic Development Activities

The RWDB continues to strengthen its linkages to local and regional economic development entities and activities. Engaging with the City’s Economic Development division to gather and share information that will strengthen the local economy and participation in the Eastbay Planning Unit is important in supporting the RWDB goal of coordinating its local workforce

investment activities with what is happening in the economy in the greater East Bay region. Partnerships with the East Bay Economic Development Alliance and other regional economic development entities, as well as ongoing access to regional economic data, will continually inform the local strategy of the RWDB.

The Business Retention Program, managed by the RWDB, strengthens businesses in Richmond through a comprehensive economic development plan that includes general marketing, focused business attraction, business retention, and business assistance. Ongoing management tasks include:

- Directing businesses to public and private sector resources, including but not limited to Target Employment Area information, RichmondWORKS Program, Revolving Loan Program, Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Administration, and other federal and state resources.
- Collaborating with public and private sector sources, such as the Chambers of Commerce and the Richmond Economic Development Commission, to gather and share information and strengthen the local economy.
- Engaging with the City's Economic Development Administrator to carry out joint planning.

The RWDB will continue to actively pursue opportunities to support training in entrepreneurship and the development of microenterprise as follows:

- Partnering with the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center (REC) in Richmond. The REC provides training on how to start a small business enterprise as well as entrepreneurial skills training.
- Richmond's CoBiz is a business acumen work space which offers an Incubator Program that prepares entrepreneurs (including veterans and individuals interested in starting non-profit organizations) and students with the mindset and skill sets necessary to launch a business, execute a business plan and attain a successful exit.
- Richmond Main Street Initiative is a community-based non-profit dedicated to revitalizing downtown Richmond by building and strengthening relationships with all stakeholders which includes residents, community members and business owners.
- The Richmond Contractor's Resource Center (CRC) builds regional small business development capacity through its partnership with the growing Oakland Contractors Resource Center, a past recipient of a Workforce Accelerator grant. For example, the CRC offers training and support to enable local construction contractors to expand their businesses.
- The RWDB will also continue to expand its partnerships with the WCC Business Development Center to further advance micro-entrepreneurial training in Richmond and West Contra Costa County.

Transitioning to an Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management System

The RWDB continues to use the CalJOBS system to facilitate the process of integrating data systems to improve customer service. In using all aspects of the CalJOBS systems to capture client data, we have successfully streamlined intake, case management, and service delivery and minimized the requirement for duplication of data.

The RWDB Management of Information Systems (MIS) unit provides meaningful information about program participants to inform program operations staff. RWDB strategies for transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA include a detailed technology-based intake system that minimizes client face-to-face time with MIS technicians and allows secure transfer of client documents, including a secure electronic signature encryption process.

The RWDB staff's goal is to ensure that any sharing of data or information with AJCC partners be consistent with the confidentiality requirements in 20 CFR part 603. RWDB staff fully supports any efforts to evaluate the potential for common/shared application or intake forms with its partners to streamline the intake process and better serve our common customers.

RichmondWORKS AJCC partners with access to the CalJOBS data collection system can easily view case notes and services provided to all WIOA-enrolled clients. This shared data system allows other staff who might come into contact with a shared client to see the range of services a particular client is accessing, and enables a Career Counselor to supplement, rather than duplicate, services for those clients who are co-enrolled. The CalJOBS shared data system also allows managers and administrators to see and run real-time reports on multiple aspects of program operations for better efficiency.

Facilitating Access to One Stop Services Through Technology and other Means

The RWDB AJCC Career Service Provider has facilitated the development of a paperless system that will enable AJCC staff to operate more efficiently and with greater accountability. The AJCC's basic career service clients currently access WIOA services via a technology-based platform that will allow AJCC clients to complete various program orientations, including the WIOA Individual services application, online.

RichmondWORKS AJCC career services information is provided to clients at-large via the RichmondWORKS website and through social media (including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). Updates to existing clients concerning new job postings, programs, recruiting events, and job fairs, are provided via social media apps, texts, and email.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face meetings with clients have been discouraged; however, RichmondWORKS AJCC Career Service Provider staff members have been able to contact clients via technology such as conference calling and on-line virtual meeting events.

Virtual job search preparedness workshops are currently being developed in both English and Spanish, enabling job seekers to access services that had previously been available only in person.

The need for implementation of these new strategies was confirmed by a participant in the Public Input Session:

“I want to call out the fact that we need to go virtual with a lot of services. We need to apply to offer a combination of in person and virtual services. We need to take into account EPT inclusion and access to resources. Considering all that, how can we ensure that our job seekers have access to the resources to help them apply, interview, and possibly work virtually? That should be a strong conversation to have in this new age.”

Workforce Staff, Public Input Session

Compliance with WIOA Section 188 to Provide Accessible Facilities, Programs and Services

The RWDB provides physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for individuals with disabilities. We make every attempt to provide reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities with regard to aid, benefits, services, training, and employment, unless providing the accommodation would cause undue hardship such as a significant expense.

The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DOR) remains a core RWDB partner in services to individuals with disabilities. DOR is represented on the RWDB Board and is an AJCC partner. The RWDB provides auxiliary aids, services, and assistive technology and continues to collaborate with DOR in these efforts.

The RWDB has a designated Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer who coordinates and updates ADA requirement activities with the State. In addition, the RWDB's EO Officer meets and assesses facility access compliance with the City of Richmond's Public Works Department, the owner, or the building. The RWDB works to continually improve facility access and maintain compliance with all federal and state requirements. The RWDB works closely with the State's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Specialist to identify and address ADA accessibility guidelines of our building and facility. The physical and programmatic accessibility of the building will continue to undergo a required assessment at least every three years in order to better focus on the needs of those with disabilities.

Through RWDB's collaboration with the DOR in the Employment Training Panel on the Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS) grant program, Richmond youth with disabilities receive extensive pre-employment transition services so they can successfully obtain competitive integrated employment.

Annual training is provided to staff and partners on disability etiquette, as well as ensuring that staff and partners are informed and updated on promoting disability access. Staff and partners will be directed to <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/ccda> (California Commission on Disability Access), where they can further educate themselves on Disability Access. The RWDB will also collaborate with the DOR to coordinate future training that DOR will provide to staff and partners.

Providing Indian and Native Americans with Equal Access to AJCC Services

The RWDB and its partners are committed to ensuring equal access to all of Richmond's residents; however, there are currently no WIOA Section 166 grantees located within the City of Richmond.

Once an Indian and Native Americans (INA) organization is located within the City of Richmond, the RWDB AJCC will provide equal access to the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs and will consistently work to provide Indian and Native Americans equal access to AJCC services and WIOA service provider opportunities, and will engage the INA grantees and EDD in discussions about aligning client tracking and reporting systems.

Providing Eligible Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers with Equal Access to AJCC Services

The RWDB and its partners are committed to ensuring equal access to all of Richmond's residents; however, currently there are no WIOA Section 167 grantees located within the City of Richmond. In support of the State's Plan, the RWDB will endeavor to provide all WIOA services and access to partner service providers for any WIOA Section 167 grantees in our Local Area. The RWDB will also ensure equal access to the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

In the event that a WIOA Section 167 grantee is located in the City of Richmond Local Area, the RWDB will carry out the following steps:

- Share employer, labor market information, and job training opportunities within the local region;
- Support growers by listing farm-related job openings within the agricultural community; and
- Co-recruit, co-enroll, and co-case manage Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) who can benefit from workforce development services at the local level and develop opportunities for leveraging funding to acquire the support service needs of MSFWs and other low-income individuals in job training and long-term employment sustainability.

(5) Strategic Partner Coordination

Coordination with County Health and Human Services and Other Local Partners to Serve Local CalFresh Populations

The RWDB's AJCC staff and its Contra Costa County, Employment and Human Services Department (CCC EHSD) service partners continue to be successful in leveraging and braiding funds to provide individual career and training services to CalFresh program participants. AJCC partners in this endeavor include Contra Costa Community College, San Pablo Economic Development Corporation, the City of Richmond Economic Development and Planning Departments, and Rubicon Re-entry Success Center. AJCC partners have developed a strong collaboration to provide the following cross-referral program services:

- Project FLOW (Forklift, Logistics, operations and Warehouse) program.
- ACES (Accelerating Career through Essential Skills), career exploration and job preparedness workshops presented at the Richmond AJCC.
- Continued collaboration between partners surrounding the Strong Workforce Initiative.
- Cooperation regarding community outreach in support of the shared training programs.
- Referral of EHSD clients for participation in AJCC workforce Development services.
- Developing and ensuring access to Adult Education Classes via CalJOBS – ETPL (Employment and Training Provider List).
- Participation in outreach efforts focused on serving the re-entry population.
- Participation in coordinating referrals for career technical training, including RichmondBUILD pre-apprenticeship with RichmondWORKS and RichmondBUILD staff.
- Collaborating on and co-investing co-enrollments and co-case managing strategies to eligible program participants to leverage services, including supportive services as well as facilitating successful outcome and completion of the program.
- Integrating CalFresh program participants into Career Pathways in emergent high-sector occupations for the Richmond area.

Coordination with Local Child Support Agencies and Partner CBOs to Serve Non-Custodial Parents

The RWDB currently coordinates with the Contra Costa's Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) to ensure that WIOA program services are available to noncustodial parents who need training and employment that include a livable wage. DCSS is also a MOU partner and participates in our quarterly partner meetings.

A referral process has been established to track the client's process and progress. Upon referral, the AJCC staff complete basic skills assessment and eligibility verification for WIOA training services for individuals. To ensure a seamless process, the RWDB and DCSS work together with other partners such as CBOs and Adult Education to educate and train on the challenges that non-custodial parents face and to discuss strategies on how to provide employment and training opportunities to this population.

Non-custodial parents have access to and are provided with the following services:

- The AJCC and all service partners.
- Employment opportunities that include employer on-site recruitments.
- WIOA Title I and Title II enrollments that include education, training and supportive services.

Coordination with Local Partners to Improve Services for Jobseekers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Greater East Bay District has been a key source of knowledge regarding service for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD) and remains a core partner of the RWDB for providing services to this population. DOR staff serve as board members of the RWDB and also participate in our quarterly MOU partner meetings. DOR has also provided WINDMILLS (Disability Awareness Training), that encompasses and promotes understanding of ID/DD to the RWDB staff, AJCC partners, and other MOU partners and employers. DOR and the RWDB work closely to design tailored services for individuals with disabilities. DOR has also provided guidance on the design of our AJCC to accommodate individuals with disabilities, such as computers with adaptive technology and reasonable modifications to the tools and interior of the AJCC.

Supportive services, Work-Based Learning/Work Experience and employer engagement are all elements and services that are included with the coordination of efforts to improve services for jobseekers with ID/DD. An important RWDB project includes the Summer Training and Employment Program (STEPS) funded through the Employment Training Panel in coordination with DOR. This program has been funded over multiple years, and provided career exploration, job readiness, essential skills such as soft skills, and paid work experience for ID/DD students 16 to 21 years of age in the West Contra Costa County Unified School District (WCCUSD). Employers are educated and informed through employer roundtables by members of the RWDB's Business Advisory Group on the positive impact of hiring individuals with IDD to their companies.

Another project is the Veterans Employment Assistance Program (VEAP). This project has served a substantial portion of disabled veterans in the Local Area. Supportive Services are made available to participants who are experiencing hardships that could prevent them from participating in Title I career or training services. Coordinating support also includes partners, such as Swords to Plowshares in addition to DOR.

Coordination with Local Partners to Improve Services for English Language Learners, Foreign born and/or Refugees

Coordination of efforts by the RWDB to serve ELLs, foreign born and refugee individuals has been supported most recently through an English Language Learner (ELL) grant funded by the State of California. The RWDB has collaborated with two Title II programs: Literacy for Every

Adult Program (LEAP) and the West Contra Costa Adult Education (WCCAE) to deliver this grant-funded program. Coordinated services include a referral process, co-enrollment process, co-case management between Title I and Title II, data sharing, and follow-up services. In addition, partnerships with CBO's include Weigh of Life, Multicultural Institute, Familias Unidas, Catholic Charities, and IM HOPE. These organizations are access points to English Language Learners, foreign born and/or refugees to seek immigration and/or citizenship assistance, training, employment, mental health, ESL, and fitness and nutrition programs.

With the funding from the ELL grant and the development of the partnerships described elsewhere in this plan, the RWDB has instituted a Navigation model that provides ELL, foreign born and/or refugees an access point that includes a comprehensive intake process to ascertain the individuals' barriers to employment as well as their needs for support services offered through one of our community partners. The implementation of a warm hand-off referral process has contributed significantly to the success of the program. It has improved outcomes related to individuals' immigration status, English language skills, obtaining a GED, and occupational skills training and employment.

(6) Title I Services

Type and Availability of Adult and Dislocated Worker Services in the Local Area

The RWDB is the provider of the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services in Richmond. All Adult and Dislocated Worker services are designed to start, advance, or transition individuals on a pathway to employment in high-growth and high-skill occupations in the in-demand industries in the region.

The RWDB offers many options to adult and dislocated workers, including emerging and transitional workers who need training in essential skills, career exploration, basic academic skills and life skills. Incumbent workers and transitional workers benefit from skills-upgrade training and retention services. In addition, all services are designed and are flexible to meet the needs of those individuals who have barriers to employment and training.

Services for Adult and Dislocated Workers

Tier 1: Basic Career Services begins in America's Job Center of California

- Outreach, intake, and orientation to the information, services, programs, tools, and resources available through the Local workforce system. Including access to computers/internet for all job search activities.
- Information about job openings, job search workshops, and resume preparation assistance.

- Workshops designed to educate clients on digital and virtual tools, including social media, for job search and job preparation.
- Initial assessments of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs.
- On-site employer recruitments.
- Access to employment opportunity and labor market information.
- Labor market information including career paths.
- Performance information and program costs for eligible providers of training, education, and workforce services.
- Information on performance of the local workforce system.
- Information and assistance on Unemployment Insurance claim filing.
- Navigation system that includes determination of potential eligibility for workforce partner services, programs, and referral(s).

Tier 2: Individualized Career Services

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs.
- Development of an individual employability development plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve the employment goals.
- Referral to training services.
- Supportive Services such as child care, transportation, housing, uniforms, etc.
- Group counseling.
- Literacy activities related to work readiness.
- Individual counseling and career planning.
- Case management for customers seeking training services, individual in and out of area job search, referral and placement assistance.
- Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships, and internships.
- Workforce preparation services - Accelerating Careers Through Essential Skills (ACES): development of learning skills, punctuality, communication skills, interviewing skills, soft skills, personal maintenance, literacy skills, financial literacy skills, and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.

Tier 3: Training Services

- Occupational skills training for in-demand occupations through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).
- Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition provided in combination with the training services described above.
- On-the-Job Training (OJT).
- Paid work experience training.
- Incumbent Worker Training.
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction which may include cooperative education.

- Training programs operated by the private sector.
- Skill upgrading and retraining.
- Entrepreneurial training.
- Customized training, conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

Coordination of Workforce Investment Activities with Statewide Rapid Response Activities

The RWDB works closely with the established State Boards' Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion workgroup. This workgroup includes representatives from each LWIOA to consolidate various state guidance, which includes recommending policies, proactive business engagement, lay-off aversion strategies, layoff and business closure trends, and potential grant funding availability to transitional workers. It is the policy of the RWDB to provide Rapid Response Services to all employers and impacted employees located within our jurisdiction. The services will be provided utilizing the full resources of the RWDB, the AJCC, and the local community, including cooperative efforts with adjacent Workforce Development Boards.

In partnership with the Employment and Development Department (EDD), the RWDB is fully equipped and educated to provide Rapid Response resources to those covered by the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA). This includes the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) notice announcement received by the City of Richmond and the RWDB. Layoff Aversion focuses on saving jobs, putting people back to work, shortening the length of layoff, and revitalizing the community.

Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion is designed to prevent or minimize unemployment for employees of companies that have announced layoffs or are struggling and at risk for layoffs. Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion also provides early intervention and strategic support to assist businesses faced with closure.

Currently, the RWDB is utilizing Econovue - a digital platform that collects data and uses information gathered from Dun & Bradstreet. The use of Econovue helps to zero in on companies that need help before their situation becomes critical. In addition to the predictive insights it provides, Econovue is also used in business services and employer outreach. The RWDB also works closely with business organizations, such the Chamber of Commerce and the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, in order to gather information regarding local business trends.

Rapid Response Activities

- Examining potential alternatives for averting the closure/layoffs.
- The Rapid Response team provides on-site presentations including pre-layoff services and Dislocated Worker services (career and training services) to all employers and impacted employees located in the City of Richmond and the surrounding region when needed.
- Assessing the employment history and assistance needs of the workforce.
- Examining reemployment prospects for workers in the local community.
- Identifying resources to meet the short and long-term assistance needs of employees
- Provides information on Unemployment Insurance benefits (how to file a claim) including the California Training Benefits (CTB).
- Depending on the employees impacted, the WDB coordinates all Rapid Response activities with organized labor, unions and the Trade Adjustment Act, as appropriate.

Conversations surrounding Rapid Response service delivery during the public input process focused largely on information - both providing information to workers and employers, and receiving information. One participant suggested that detailed information about Rapid Response should be physically on display outside where it is easy for the public to access, particularly for those who are unable to access the information online, and come to the AJCC in person during COVID-19.

Accessing timely information about business closures was commonly discussed as a challenge among public comment participants. When workforce staff are not aware of closures immediately, it is difficult to provide quick outreach and services to workers who are laid off. One participant suggested communicating with employers that, in the event of a layoff, the RWDB could help to provide their employees with information about rapid response services.

One participant emphasized the importance of having Rapid Response team members who could communicate in languages other than English to ensure equitable access to Rapid Response services. The RWDB will explore the availability of funding sources to make services in different languages more widely available.

Type and Availability of Youth Workforce Investment Activities in the Local Area

The RWDB is committed to enabling the youth in our community to grow into productive, skilled adults who are able to pursue meaningful careers. Our YouthWORKS Program offers a variety of programs and services that are especially designed for youth and include the 14 WIOA program elements.

14 Youth WIOA Program Elements

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies.

14 Youth WIOA Program Elements

2. Alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services.
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences with academic and an occupational education component
4. Occupational skills training, with a focus on recognized postsecondary credentials and in-demand occupations.
5. Leadership development activities (e.g., community services, peer-centered activities)
6. Supportive Services.
7. Adult Mentoring.
8. Follow-up services for at least 12 months after program completion.
9. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling.
10. Integrated education and training for a specific occupation or cluster.
11. Financial literacy training.
12. Entrepreneurial skills training.
13. Services that provide labor market information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
14. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities.

In addition to these 14 WIOA elements, youth participants receive intensive career, job planning guidance, and case management that include peer to peer workshops addressing barriers to education and employment, and training in soft skills.

Providing information and advocacy related to worker rights for youth was identified as a potential role for the RWDB by a participant in the Public Input Session:

“Young people often are the people that take on the most precarious jobs, since they are likely to do entry level work. I often think about how young folks have managed; how do they navigate this moment as youth workers knowing their rights? Navigating these rights with regard to things like the obligation of employers to provide PPE (personal protective equipment), or safety protocols is certainly challenging. It would be great to be able to look to the Workforce Development Board as a hub for information and advocacy around worker rights for young people.”

Nonprofit Organization Staff, Public Input Session

Additional Youth Strategies and Programs

Increasing Digital Literacy and Fluency of Youth

Digital literacy has become a critical need especially in light of the worldwide pandemic. For instance, students are now required to utilize digital platforms such as Zoom for classroom instruction. YouthWORKS is utilizing a 5 Step Ladder Method to help increase digital literacy and fluency of youth, outlined in the table below.

5 Step Youth Digital Literacy Ladder Method	
Step 1	Teach the basics on how to use a computer and the internet.
Step 2	Teach youth digital communication tools and proper etiquette used to write emails as well as proper behavior for digital communication while on platforms like ZOOM.
Step 3	Help youth become critical consumers because youth are many times susceptible to subliminal messages and misinformation with online news and social media.
Step 4	Teach how to use social media for learning and collaborating and how social media can be used for career networking and job opportunities, such as LinkedIn.
Step 5	Teach youth to manage their online identity, such as using privacy settings to safeguard their privacy, as well as educating them on what the public sees as their online presence.

Youth with Disabilities: Summer Training & Employment Program for Youth (STEPS)

RWDB receives funding from the Employment and Training Panel and Department of Rehabilitation to provide career exploration, work readiness and paid work experience to students with disabilities. Our YouthWORKS program developed a Youth Empowering Skills (YES) strategy utilizing the Person-Centered Team approach to increase positive outcomes in recruitment and retention. YouthWORKS also works collaboratively with the West Contra Costa School District's high schools and often will meet with the students at their high school to promote trust and comfort for the student.

In addition, YouthWORKS has made reasonable adjustments to ensure that youth with disabilities have equal access to the usage of computers and copiers, for example. Furthermore, staff has received sensitivity training to better understand youth who have disabilities. This training was conducted by the Department of Rehabilitation.

Summer Youth Employment and Year-Round Work Experience

The Work Experience Youth Program includes the opportunity for job shadowing, along with workshops focused on job exploration, job preparation, money management, and soft skills.

Self-Assessment tools, such as the Interest Profiler through the California Career Zone, are utilized to help youth discover their interests and how they relate to the world of work. Youth are placed in meaningful Paid Work Experience at a variety of nonprofits, City Departments, and other local businesses. The work experience is a planned, structured learning experience for four weeks to six months, resulting in youth gaining valuable career information and workplace skills.

Richmond Fund for Children and Youth

The RWDB is a partner with the City's Richmond Fund for Children and Youth (RFCY), an initiative approved by Richmond voters. This program provides funding opportunities to address barriers and provide youth with additional support to achieve their goals. YouthWORKS will have the opportunity to obtain additional funding and support for youth through this initiative.

Richmond Promise

The Richmond Promise Collaborative connects local graduating high school seniors with scholarships designed to fund the cost of post-secondary education. As a partner, YouthWORKS supports the Richmond Promise by hosting workshops and participating in outreach efforts.

Public Sector Academy

The YouthWORKS Program, in collaboration with the City of Richmond, is planning to create a Public Sector Academy designed to educate youth on careers in the public sector. A curriculum will be developed that will include a variety of career opportunities in the public sector, along with education and career paths necessary to gain a public sector career. Youth will also have an opportunity to be placed in a city department where they will obtain paid work experience as well as mentoring from a trained supervisor of the department.

K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12SWP)

YouthWORKS is part of a collaborative partnership with the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) Pathways to College and Careers. YouthWORKS is working in partnership with ACOE to design the K12 Strong Workforce Program, a Work-Based and Earn and Learn program focused on providing paid work experience for youth with barriers to employment.

Providing Training Through Individual Training Accounts

WIOA establishes the requirement that "training services... shall be provided in a manner that maximizes consumer choice in the selection of an eligible provider of such services", (WIOA 134). Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are made available to WIOA participants enrolled in the Adult, Dislocated Worker or Out-of-School Youth. Customers have a choice in the selection of training programs through the California's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The ETPL provides customer-focused employment training resources for eligible WIOA participants. The ETPL is a statewide list that includes qualified training providers who offer a wide range of

educational programs, including classroom, correspondence, online, and apprenticeship programs. ITAs may be issued after the following determinations have been made:

- The participant has been assessed and identified as someone who needs training that will lead to self-sufficiency wages and that the participant has the skill level and qualifications to successfully complete the training program.
- The participant has completed research on labor market information to help them make the choice on the type of training that will lead to employment.
- The participant has completed the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that identifies the selected training program.
- The participant is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay for costs of training such as from a Pell Grant.

The RWDB contracts with the Oakland Private Industry Council, which acts as the fiscal agent for ITA payments made to the training providers on behalf of the RWDB.

Addressing the Needs of Former Foster, Homeless and Justice-System Involved Youth

The RWDB recognizes the significant barriers that system-involved youth and young adults experience in connecting to workforce services and career pathways, and eventual entry and advancement in gainful employment. These populations include current and former foster youth, those involved with the justice system, and young adults experiencing homelessness.

The RWDB will seek to increase the engagement of and provide meaningful opportunities to these populations in WIOA and other program services through the application of emerging and innovative strategies and approaches, the adoption and replication of quality practices from across the state and country, and active participation in regional efforts to address challenges faced by these populations.

Ensuring Priority for Adult Career and Training Services will be Given to Recipients of Public Assistance, Low Income Individuals and Those who are Basic Skills Deficient

The RWDB's local partners include CalWORKS (TANF), CalFresh, Employment and Human Services, Adult Education, and veteran's organizations as well as other CBOs that serve these priority groups. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is signed by our local partners establishes these common goals:

1. Ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient;
2. Coordinating efforts between organizations that serve the priority groups and with Title II, Adult Education to promote a seamless referral process and co-enrollment strategies.

The referral process was established to help coordinate services between agencies to add a tracking mechanism to further increase positive outcomes for participants. Furthermore, these collaborations are a commitment to prioritize services for all of those with barriers to employment.

The RWDB will continue to build upon strong current partnerships with our MOU partners, employers, educational systems, unions, and CBOs in order to leverage resources, attract funding, and better serve all the priority groups listed above.

Coordination of Workforce and Education Activities with Provision of Supportive Services

The RWDB provides supportive services that are necessary to enable WIOA eligible individuals enrolled in the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs to complete workforce and education activities. Supportive services are made available to participants who are experiencing hardships and cannot afford to pay for items such as work clothes, tools, transportation, and other necessary items needed and required in order to participate in Title I career services or training activities.

Communicating with those receiving the services is an important aspect when developing a menu of services that is aligned with the needs of residents. As one participant in the Public Input Session indicated:

“I would like to see the Workforce Board give more surveys to Richmond residents to find out what it is that they want, and what kind of services they need to advance their lives.” Literacy Program staff, Public Input Session

The planning process for supportive services must include exploration with the WIOA participant of viable alternative resources or programs available in the community before approval of supportive services funding. Also in the planning process, the supportive service will be outlined in the IEP or case notes identifying the need and barrier of the participant and why the supportive service is necessary for the participant to receive.

All supportive services are additionally contingent upon the customers’ satisfactory performance while participating and completing WIOA career services or training activities, as well as upon available funding.

During a feedback session on the Local Plan, a Board member pointed to the importance of finding ways to help people with multiple supportive service needs also get workforce services:

“We may have community members who are housed at a hotel looking for employment who have mental health, housing, child care, transportation issues, all in the midst of a pandemic. We need to include consideration of all of those things, and figure out how we support access to those other services at the same time that we’re working on employment.”

RWDB Board Member, Public Input Session

An online survey conducted during the Public Input Session asked for participants to rank the effectiveness of Title I services in comparison to one another. The results that follow show that ITAs were considered the most effective, while Adult and Dislocated Worker services were considered the least effective

(7) Title I Administration

Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds

As administrative entity for the City of Richmond Workforce Development Board, the City of Richmond is responsible for the disbursal of grant funds.

Competitive Process that will be Used to Award Sub-Grants and Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities

The RWDB shall conduct all procurements in compliance with federal and state regulations governing the Final Rule of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). All provisions of the WIOA Proposed Rule became effective in the summer of 2016. All Richmond Local Area WIOA-funded programs and activities comply with applicable provisions sets forth in the requirements provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Final Rule Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations; 2 CFR 200. Further, the City of Richmond Local Area shall conduct all procurements in compliance with the Final Rule governing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grant provisions.

The RWDB, in association with the City of Richmond Finance Department/ Purchasing Division, shall develop and maintain a list of qualified vendors and consultants for delivery of core and intensive (and training, where applicable) services and programs, under WIOA guidelines of WIOA grant provisions. Procurements shall be conducted as often as necessary to meet the needs of participants and the requirements of the One-Stop delivery system. All procurements shall be conducted in such a manner as to ensure open and free competition (29 CFR 95.43 and 97.36 (c); (2 CFR 200.321)).

The City of Richmond procurement practices encourage the utilization of small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises whenever possible. The City of Richmond Local Area shall conduct all procurements in accordance with its Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

Procurement records for each funding period are retained for three years following the date on which the City of Richmond Local Area submits its final expenditure report for that funding period. Records for non-expendable property are retained for three years after final disposition of the property.

Responsibility for AJCC Operations

The RWDB and its administrative entity internally fulfill the role of AJCC Operator for the City of Richmond Local Area. This structure was approved by the Secretary of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, on behalf of the Governor through June 30, 2021. In addition to the existing Written Agreement between the Chief Elected Official and the Richmond Workforce Development Board, ratified July 2019, the RWDB and City of Richmond will, as of March 2021, petition the Governor to allow the RWDB and its administrative entity to retain responsibility for AJCC Operations and WIOA Career Services in the Richmond Local Area through June 30, 2023.

Copies of Executed Cooperative Agreements Regarding Service Delivery for the Local One-Stop System

The City of Richmond entered into a written agreement between its Chief Elected Official and the RWDB, ratified by the Richmond City Council, as of July 16, 2019. The agreement was developed to outline the roles of each party in the planning, establishment and oversight of a comprehensive workforce development system according to WIOA and federal regulations promulgated to implement WIOA services that will lead the Area to this vision. Per the ratified document, the agreement shall continue until modified or terminated by a majority vote of both the RWDB and the Richmond City Council.

For three consecutive program years, the RWDB Youth Program has received funding from the Employment and Training Panel (ETP) and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) in support of the Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS) project which provides job preparation training, including job exploration, workplace readiness skills training, and work-based learning experiences, as well as summer paid work experience to students with disabilities. The program has been very successful in assisting youth with disabilities to receive employment training, as well as permanent employment placements. The RWDB STEPS project is funded through April 2021; however, the RWDB expects the agreement to be extended through April 2022.

(8) Staff Training and Capacity Building

Training and/or Professional Development for Targeted Sectors and Promoting Job Quality

The RWDB and its staff are dedicated to the principles of universal, customer-centered service design, which provides workforce development support, space, and materials to ensure access for all to AJCC employment services regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence, or educational level. RWDB staff and partners receive annual training regarding targeted sectors and promoting equality in the workplace.

RWDB in-service staff development training regularly includes information regarding Local Area sector strategies for in-demand job placements, career pathways training, job quality and the

development of training partnerships. RWDB staff participates in webinars and training sessions designed to consistently relay information regarding the importance of a customer-centered Career Center. Staff is required to review EDD Directives and Information Notices that provide the latest information on Workforce Development service delivery.

A comment from the Public Input Session for the development of the Local Plan emphasized the importance of providing training for staff to enable them to understand the community they're working in:

I think it's important for staff and employers to understand our community, so they know what our culture is, and are able to reach out from one community to another. So we understand each other.

Local Workforce System staff, Public Input Session

Training and/or Professional Development to Ensure Cultural Competency and Understanding of Trauma-Exposed Populations

The RWDB administrative entity will infuse trauma-informed care training into its existing training schedule for the AJCC frontline staff. Trauma-informed practices will be even more critical during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Richmond residents that require workforce development services are more likely to have been working in COVID-19 affected sectors (either as frontline workers or as those who were laid off), have suffered disruptions in employment, and the loss of social support.

RWDB staff will work with non-profit organizations such as the Family Justice Center, RYSE Center, Familias Unidas, and Catholic Charities to provide trauma-informed care training events for frontline staff serving its Adult and Youth program participants. These curricula are specifically designed to teach trauma-informed practices to those serving clients who have been exposed to traumatic life experiences. The training classes are designed to equip staff in providing trauma-informed care activities alongside workforce development services to promote healing from trauma, allowing clients to become successfully reconnected and improve employment related outcomes.

Trainings and/or professional development classes that frontline staff have completed, and are expected to complete in the future, include:

- Department of Rehabilitation - WINDMILLS Training: Disability Awareness and Sensitivity Training
- Anti-Harassment Training – California (SB1343) City of Richmond
- Disability Employment Awareness Conference & Training
- The Homeless Emergency Assistance Program: California's Newest Strategy to Address Youth Homelessness
- Family Justice Center - Virtual Learning Opportunity in January: Sex and Labor Trafficking: A Deeper Look at California Crimes and Contra Costa Trends

- Family Justice Center - Immigration 1: Family Preparedness and Removal Defense
- Training collaborations with Contra Costa County Department of Child Support Services, Employment and Human Services, Mental Health Crisis Services, and Probation Administration

The RWDB recognizes the importance of providing these types of training sessions in support of its frontline staff and AJCC partners to ensure that they are informed and updated on cultural competencies, and have a firm understanding of multi-faceted experiences of the trauma-exposed populations we serve. The goals or expected results for frontline staff and AJCC partners who participate in these programs are to:

- Foster an environment of team building and collaborative case management, while assisting them in creating needed change in the lives of the clients they serve.
- Develop a sense of flexibility and willingness to think outside-the-box to tailor WIOA services to the client's needs.
- Build staff capacity through partnerships that support referrals to valuable and trustworthy community resources, and case management approaches to ensure AJCC clients successfully complete WIOA career services.
- Cultivate a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive organizational culture within the RWDB AJCC.

Training and/or Professional Development to Provide Proficiency in Digital Fluency and Distance Learning

The RWDB understands that digital literacy is an important element of providing workforce development services in the 21st century. Since the pandemic, digital demands in providing effective workforce development services have only increased, from workers from frontline staff to management positions being asked to quickly adapt to new tools and technologies. RWDB staff will receive training on administering online computer-based assessments, completing grant eligibility processes and providing workforce development counseling via virtual meetings. Staff regularly participates in EDD Capacity Building webinars and virtual training meetings.

Digital fluency is becoming much more important as our society continues to move toward a more digital world. Most of AJCC staff's daily tasks require the internet, so we will ensure that RWDB staff are prepared to use it wisely. Being digitally competent requires capabilities that go beyond the basic skill level. Being able to manipulate technologies so we can develop and navigate client information successfully is supported by our ability to work collaboratively with AJCC partners within the state's CalJOBS client data tracking system to solve virtual data collection problems creatively, and thus successfully assisting our clients.

Frontline staff will receive training in digital fluency and distance learning which will include web-based training modules, as well as classroom style (Zoom or in-person) courses. Since these tools have become a vital way of connecting, sharing, and learning within workforce development, courses will cover how to utilize various digital tools, including social media. In

addition, the City of Richmond offers additional courses on utilizing web-based and distance learning techniques.

RWDB staff is currently being trained to create and develop digital job preparation workshops in both English and Spanish. These workshops will be available for access via the internet and can also be accessed through emails sent to job seekers. Staff is also receiving training on “how to create webinars” for the business community to access information regarding job hiring assistance, as well as layoff aversion.

The development of skills related to online communication has become an important priority as a result of the shift to online training and work during the COVID-19 pandemic. As one Public Input Session participant indicated:

I would suggest training on things like Zoom etiquette, because it's not something that everybody knows about working on the Internet, and it can be a hard thing to grasp.

Workforce Development professional, Public Input Session

Training and/or Professional Development on Common Case Management and Co-Enrollment Strategies

RWDB staff management team consistently provides training and professional development opportunities for its WIOA services frontline staff. Training webinars are accessed via the CalJOBS Alison Online Training Program, EDD Capacity Building Unit, and other outside agencies. RWDB AJCC Frontline staff also receives annual professional development training opportunities presented by the City of Richmond and the WIOA (Management of Information Systems) MIS unit.

The RWDB AJCC partners share a common mission of assisting mutual clients with employment career pathway services. Annual training sessions are provided to AJCC Partner staff regarding partner services, including techniques on how to effectively serve our mutual clients via co-enrollments. These partners include: Wagner-Peyser, Veterans programs, Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), and Richmond’s Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP). Other AJCC partners, who are not co-located, meet and collaborate on a regular basis regarding serving mutual clients; they include: West Contra Costa County Adult Ed, Job Corps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Rubicon’s Reentry Success Center, Swords to Plowshares’ Veteran’s program, and Contra Costa Community College District.

Additionally, RWDB staff has received City of Richmond support to facilitate training services designed to assist eligible individuals, specifically individuals with barriers to employment. As a result of our partnerships, RWDB staff is well prepared to continue maximizing resources, via co-enrollments, to expand access to activities such as training, supportive services, and career

pathway strategies, that result in attainment of education credentials and permanent employment for the clients they serve.