



Initial Four-Year (2021-2024) Local Plan Draft



ALAMEDA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD INITIAL FOUR-YEAR LOCAL PLAN - 2021-2024

THIS DOCUMENT REPRESENTS THE ALAMEDA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD'S (ACWDB) INITIAL FOUR-YEAR LOCAL PLAN FOR YEARS 2021-2024. THIS LOCAL PLAN REFLECTS STRATEGIES THAT ACWDB WILL ENGAGE IN WITH WORKFORCE PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS IN ALAMEDA COUNTY.

INITIAL DRAFT RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARCH 12, 2021

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Executive Summary

The year 2020 was revealing to say the least. COVID-19 revealed socio-economic disparities among low-wage earners, workers of color, and small businesses. Civil and social unrest revealed deeply rooted injustices and systemic and structural racism that persistently and negatively impacts the lives of people of color. Lastly, the stark divide in politics, built over time, spilled over into 2021, revealing how far we still must go to protect democracy. These socio-economic-political upheavals can be catalysts for change and provide lessons for all segments of society.

As we absorb these lessons as a nation, Workforce Development Boards must also play a role in learning from 2020 and beyond to best serve people on fringes of the labor market. The Alameda County Workforce Development Board (ACWDB) is committed to promoting resiliency among job seekers with barriers to employment and small businesses in Alameda County. The pandemic has impacted most profoundly: low-wage earners, women and people of color, immigrants, young adults, and small businesses, and it has also disrupted training, education, apprenticeship programs, and hiring/recruiting efforts.

Some job seekers experienced disruptions in the onboarding process and others had interviews queued at the onset of the pandemic that never materialized. And still, others (especially women) had to leave the labor market altogether to care for children, spouses, partners, and/or family members who contracted COVID. As job seekers consider returning to work, some are worried about workplace safety, while others are interested in re-training to depart front-line work. Those who do want to return to work immediately, now face more labor market competition, squeezing out workers with less skills.

Some businesses have furloughed workers, others have participated in the California Employment Development Department's (EDD) Workshare program to create a system for bringing workers back as soon as possible, and some have closed their

doors permanently. While workers, job seekers, and businesses are up against enormous pandemic-related challenges and an uncertain future as the road to economic recovery has proven to be uneven, ACWDB's stance remains centered on facilitating and promoting resiliency within Alameda County.

According to Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) submitted to ACWDB by businesses with more than 75 employees undergoing downsizing activities, 34,805 workers were laid-off from businesses within ACWDB's local area since February 2020. The industries most impacted by COVID-19 within Alameda County resulting in furloughs, layoffs, and closures were: manufacturing (13,432), retail (5,291), food services (3,836), construction (2,513), and entertainment (2,571).

This presents an opportunity for ACWDB and partners to continue to locate these workers and promote pandemic resilient occupational training that will increase skills for future marketability. A similar opportunity is present to actively reach out to these impacted businesses to offer a connection to resources and present information about ACWDB's business service supports and EDD's Workshare Program to encourage retention of workers.

In response to the pandemic, ACWDB's staff have developed COVID-19 related grants to assist job seekers and businesses, formed new partnerships, and ramped up staffing to rapidly serve businesses in the process of downsizing, while attempting to save jobs and avert layoffs altogether. ACWDB's service provider community has also stepped up in major ways and took on the implementation of COVID-19 grants, developed and acquired new grants, held industry-specific virtual job fairs, formed new partnerships, shifted quickly to the delivery of virtual case management and job seeker workshops, and even literally met clients in the community to pick up documents and exchange other critical resources and information.

While 2020 was extremely busy, the end is not yet in sight as the local economy is recovering at different rates and much more still must be accomplished to equip job seekers and businesses for success. Therefore, this Initial Four-Year Local Plan reflects current programs, partnerships, and future-oriented strategies that will be refined as partners meet, discuss, and build consensus on topics to prioritize over the next four years given the fragility of the broader economy. ACWDB will assume the working role of convener, in line with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and assist in navigating referenced partners toward achieving the broader goals in this Four-Year Local Plan.

To that end, we would like to give a special thanks to all workforce partners and stakeholders who partnered to help shape the content of this Four-Year Local Plan. We are grateful to have the opportunity to engage with so many in the community who are deeply interested and concerned about similar workforce issues, bringing new perspectives into the fold, and new energies and resources to our job seeker and business communities. And, we have come to understand that partnership-building and sustaining is critical to the success of our programs that we will continue in the future. Therefore, the strategies within this Four-Year Local Plan represent a starting point for workforce stakeholders. The following strategies in this Four-Year Local Plan are aligned with directives released by the California Workforce Development Board:

- Section I addresses the America's Job Center of California and Core and Required Partners' strategies to facilitate program coordination, co-enrollments, access through technology, and access to people with disabilities.
- Section II addresses strategies with new partners in alignment with ACWDB's Two-Year Modified Plan, to meet the training and employment needs of Child Support clients, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, and CalFresh E&T participants.

- Section III addresses an overview and assessment of ACWDB's current WIOA–Title I funded programs, services, and initiatives for Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth/Young Adults, and businesses.

We look forward to partnering with agencies, departments, and the community to achieve a more stable future for job seekers, workers, and businesses.

In partnership,

Bethany McCormick
ACWDB Chair

Rhonda Boykin
Interim Director

Latoya Reed
Management Analyst

Alameda County Workforce Development Board Overview

The Alameda County Workforce Development Board (ACWDB) is a dynamic 27-member employer-led group and oversight body of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I programs and additional workforce development programs in response to job seeker and industry needs. ACWDB ensures the availability of relevant career services for job seekers, including adults, dislocated workers, youth, and young adults, and provides resources for businesses to assist in talent identification and growing, training, and retaining their workforce.

ACWDB's career services are delivered through community and education partners located within Alameda County. Job seekers learn about high-growth employment opportunities in Alameda County, acquire in-demand occupational skills and certificates through training, and find assistance with employment placement. ACWDB has two employer-focused programs that offset the business expenses associated with worker training.

The On-the-Job Training program provides a subsidy to employers who hire and onboard WIOA job seekers, while ACWDB's Customized Training/Incumbent Worker Training program provides resources to support businesses interested in training new hires or upskilling their current workforce for better and higher paying jobs. Both programs offer a win-win for employers and job seekers/workers.

ACWDB has also established re-entry programs and initiatives that aim to prepare justice-involved individuals for meaningful and successful employment and retention.

Recent partnerships and COVID-19 grants have also been developed to address the needs of workers, job seekers and businesses. Details about ACWDB's COVID-19 grants, initiatives, and partnerships are addressed on pages 37-38 of this Plan.

Vision: The best workforce development system that benefits both employers and job seekers.

Mission Statement: To provide employers and job seekers with universal access to tools, resources, and services that assist them with obtaining employment and business goals.

Section I – WIOA Core and Required Partner Strategies

Under WIOA, the ultimate vision is for core and required programs to operate as a unified system, strategically assessing needs and aligning them with service strategies to meet the necessities of workers and employers. This section of the Local Plan addresses coordination with the following WIOA core and required program partners identified under WIOA Section 121.

Coordination Efforts

How will the Local Board and America’s Job Center of California partners coordinate services and resources identified in their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?

ACWDB establishes contracts with local area providers, responsible for delivering career services to Adults and Dislocated Workers aligned with WIOA Title I policies and state directives. Career services are provided sub-regionally throughout ACWDB’s local area to ensure the unique needs of job seekers are met.¹ Rubicon Programs serves as ACWDB’s Comprehensive America’s Job Center of California (Comprehensive AJCC) Operator, while three additional providers ensure services sub-regionally.² The following providers deliver WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services on the behalf of ACWDB:

- Rubicon Programs – Comprehensive America’s Job Center of California serves residents in: Hayward, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Ashland, Cherryland, Fairview, Castro Valley

¹ ACWDB’s Local Area is state-designated and includes the cities and unincorporated areas in Alameda County outside the city of Oakland.

² Each of ACWDB’s contracted providers deliver career services to Adults and Dislocated Workers under WIOA Title I, however the Comprehensive America’s Job Center of California is required to sustain partnerships established in ACWDB’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Core and Required Partners in compliance with WIOA Title I. Other Career Services Providers are not AJCC-designated but still maintain a wide array of community partnerships to meet job seeker needs.

- Tri Cities Career Center – Ohlone College Community College District serves residents in: Fremont, Union City, Newark
- Tri Valley Career Center – Chabot–Las Positas Community College District serves residents in: Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, Sunol
- North Cities Career Center – Peralta Community College District serves residents in: Alameda, Berkeley, Emeryville, Albany, Piedmont

AJCC/MOU Core and Required Partners

ACWDB maintains an active MOU with WIOA Core and Required partners (AJCC/MOU partners) and Rubicon Programs, as ACWDB’s AJCC Operator sustains a working partnership to achieve service-level components of the MOU. AJCC/MOU partners (listed below) have agreed to serve shared clients through program coordination and co-enrollment strategies, and to contribute to shared relative costs for being co-located at the Comprehensive AJCC location – Eden Area Multi-Service Center in Hayward, California. Therefore, Rubicon Programs remains at the helm of maintaining working relationships with Core and Required MOU partners and plays a major role in coordinating ongoing partner meetings to share information, troubleshoot issues, and devise coordination strategies. WIOA Title II–IV and other core and required partners are as follows:

- **WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy**
 - Mid-Alameda County Adult School Consortium (MACC)
 - Southern Alameda County Consortium (SACC)
 - Northern Alameda Consortium for Adult Education (NACAE)
- **WIOA Title III – Employment Development Department**
 - Unemployment Insurance
 - Wagner Peyser

- Trade Adjustment Act
- Veterans
- **WIOA Title IV – Department of Rehabilitation**
 - Vocational Rehabilitation
- **Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA)**
 - CalWORKs Employment Services
 - Area Agency on Aging – Title V of the Older Americans Act
- **Treasure Island Job Corps**
- **Community Service Block Grant – Oakland and Alameda County Community Action Agency**
- **Native American Programs – United Indian Nations**
- **Housing Authority of the County of Alameda**

To solicit ideas relevant to AJCC/MOU partners’ key issues over the next four years, ACWDB staff launched a Local Planning Launch Survey (LPLS).³ The LPLS revealed that several AJCC/MOU partners value and believe that active awareness building of and communication around partner programs anchor and facilitate program coordination and co-enrollment. The LPLS also contained questions that asked AJCC/MOU partners to rank their familiarity with existing AJCC/MOU partner programs, which revealed that some programs were not at all familiar with all

³ The LPLS was launched to solicit feedback from AJCC/MOU partners regarding the following California Workforce Development Board-identified Local Plan topics: program coordination, co-enrollment, expanding access through technology, and expanding access to people with disabilities. AJCC/MOU partners were also asked to rate how familiar they were with other AJCC/MOU partner programs.

AJCC/MOU partners. The knowledge gap among partners is most prevalent among the following programs:

Very Unfamiliar

1. WIOA Title III – Trade Adjustment Assistance Act – Employment Development Department
2. Title V of the Older Americans Act – ACSSA Adult and Aging
3. Native American Programs – United Indian Nations
4. Community Services Block Grant – Oakland/Alameda County Community Action Agency

Somewhat Familiar

1. Housing and Urban Development – Housing Authority of Alameda County
2. WIOA Title IV – Administered by the Department of Rehabilitation
3. WIOA Title III – Employment Development Department – Wagner Peyser Act program
4. Treasure Island Job Corps

This current knowledge gap presents an opportunity for ACWDB staff to convene AJCC/MOU partners with an overarching goal to build awareness of partner programs that lead to enhanced coordination, referrals, and co-enrollment. Through existing and new meetings held by both ACWDB staff and AJCC/MOU partners, opportunities will be facilitated by ACWDB staff to highlight program updates, eligibility, and opportunities that help to revive and enhance partnership efforts.

There is also initial interest in leveraging and utilizing newsletters/e-blasts and email communications to continue building awareness of AJCC/MOU partner programs and services. ACWDB staff will engage partners in census-building exercises to determine if there is interest and capacity to create and sustain a structure for

developing a communication tool that reflects AJCC/MOU partner programs and updates.

Co-enrollment Efforts

How will the Local Board and AJCC partners work towards co-enrollment and/or common case management as a service delivery strategy?

Several AJCC/MOU partners and other workforce stakeholders have identified that co-enrollment is best achieved when foundationally grounded in solid and frequent communication (also mentioned as a key component of program coordination). An effective system that facilitates successful referrals and communication that track when referrals are made and when efforts result in program placement, also largely expand capacity to successfully co-enroll job seeker clients.

AJCC/MOU partners can consider incorporating referral systems and tracking as a standing item on meeting agendas to continually work towards improving upon referral efforts. ACWDB staff will prompt AJCC/MOU partners to engage in scanning new or existing referral systems already in place that can be leveraged to support co-enrollment efforts. Once tools/systems are identified, ACWDB staff and AJCC/MOU partners will decide the best path forward, possibly choosing to prototype software or referral tracking tools together with a small sample of clients or review the ways in which existing referral tools and systems are functioning to meet AJCC/MOU partners' needs.

Service Access through Technology

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

Providing access through technology is a component of ACWDB's Sub-Regional Workforce Network (SWN) and has been a long-standing priority.⁴ As a result and with direction from ACWDB, service providers have made strides in working toward this priority by placing more interactive features on their websites and creating relevant job seeker content to share on digital platforms, including social media. Other AJCC/MOU partners are also leveraging online platforms to share information and reach students and job seekers.

COVID-19 has proliferated the need to sustain online presence as people work from home or utilize their smart phones to search for new opportunities. At the same time, COVID-19 has amplified the digital divide most prominently for low-wage earners and job seekers with barriers to employment.

“Adult Education was able to successfully transition to the distance learning model due to COVID. There is an abundance of resources where successful best practices have been captured.”
- AJCC/MOU partner

Digital divide issues make it difficult for job seekers to successfully engage the workforce system and continue to progress in skill development or in finding employment opportunities. Some job seekers only have access to smart phones, posing challenging to complete tasks that require a laptop or computer. Other job seekers lack internet access. Ultimately because access through technology has several dimensions, AJCC/MOU partners will need to advance solutions using a three-pronged approach that gets refined over time:

⁴ The SWN is ACWDB's current program model that places one lead coordinating agency at the helm of managing several community-based partnerships to leverage community resources that meet the needs of WIOA job seekers.

- **Prong 1 – Technology equipment and internet access**

AJCC/MOU partners maintain several networks that when leveraged, can provide solutions to technology access issues. For instance, ACWDB’s Career Services Provider at Ohlone College (Tri-Cities Career Center) and local area Adult Schools provide enrolled job seekers/students with laptops and tablets to borrow, and the ACWDB has partnered with Goodwill Industries and Corporate E-Waste Solutions to provide free laptops to low-income residents in Alameda County.

While hardware seems more accessible, the technology gap may be more prevalent around internet access. AJCC/MOU partners will need to explore together where the technology access gap is located among their clients/co-enrolled clients and then determine their next collective step. ACWDB staff will assist in driving this conversation where appropriate. The AJCC/MOU partners may be able to leverage internet access resources provided through organizations like the United Way of California.⁵

- **Prong 2 – Leveraging virtual platforms and helping job seekers navigate successfully**

COVID-19 has naturally shifted the way both the public and private sectors conduct business. From telework arrangements to distance learning – all systems have been rebooted and rewired to think and do business differently. The workforce system is no different. Some of ACWDB’s service providers have installed chat box features on their websites, engaged employers and job seekers through virtual job fairs, and shifted WIOA workshops to Zoom. Several workforce partners agree that job seekers now need assistance in successfully navigating and using technology. If this issue is prevalent, MOU/AJCC partners may consider co-creating virtual workshops to assist job seekers with digital fluency and navigation.

⁵ <http://broadband.unitedwaysca.org/resources>

- **Prong 3 – Robust and relevant website and marketing content**

Relevant website content and access to program materials online can motivate prospective and program-enrolled clients to seek or continue in critical services. Marketing literature acknowledges that up-to-date information that tells a story and adds value are essential in driving website and email traffic to reach and retain customers.

AJCC/MOU partners will need to convene to discuss these three prongs to determine if they want to co-develop e-newsletters/e-blasts and/or share their learnings about what drives clients to opening emails and searching through their websites. AJCC/MOU partners may also consider developing an email campaign strategy to reach students, job seekers, and business.

Naturally positioned in a convener role under WIOA and on the behalf of the ACWDB, staff will prompt AJCC/MOU partners to explore all three prongs together, using it as an opportunity to co-develop strategies that will engage current and prospective clients.

Integrated Supportive Services

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

The workforce system has collectively learned that when basic job seekers' or students' needs are left unfulfilled, successful skill attainment and employment outcomes are undermined and at-risk. Supportive services that are not already anchored in place, act as stumbling blocks and hindrances to job seeker clients. In this way, supportive services are not after-thoughts. Supportive services need to be forethoughts, that encourage workforce system partners to proactively build partnerships and maintain ongoing connections to service organizations that can supply some of those supportive services to job seeker clients.

AJCC/MOU partners are using different methods to connect and integrate supportive services in workforce and education programs. Some partners have an existing built-in infrastructure for supporting clients through programs. Ultimately, these partners will benefit from building awareness and becoming well-versed about each other's supportive services and the ways in which clients can access them, which will then act as a primer for coordinating and integrating supportive services.

In essence, supportive services must be integrated within existing employment and training programs, and they must also already exist in the community and be well-networked within the workforce system to support clients before entering the workforce system. This means that workforce partners must proactively establish working relationships with service organizations that provide housing, child-care, transportation, food access, and educational materials expenses, even before clients enroll into programs so that an infrastructure already exists. When the workforce system is fully aware of these programs and continues to work toward sustaining partnerships, providing on-ramps for job seekers is better facilitated. AJCC/MOU partners may also consider jointly developing materials/publications to highlight supportive services and resource availability.

ACWDB staff will explore and engage AJCC/MOU partners in enhancing or building relationships with support service organizations through an environmental scan and assist AJCC/MOU partners examine existing AJCC/MOU partner supportive services that can be coordinated and leveraged to better serve job seeker clients.

[Ensuring Access for People with Disabilities](#)

How will the Local Board and AJCC partners comply with WIOA Section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services,

technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, as outlined in WSD17-01 – Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures?

ACWDB staff have issued guidance to service providers about Equal Opportunity (EO) and grievance policies in line with the state and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ACWDB's designated EO Officer is embedded within the ACSSA and assesses and monitors all WIOA service locations for ADA compliance to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. Service providers are assessed for their engagement in the following ADA and other inclusion-related requirements:

- Non-discrimination trainings,
- Providing secured filing systems that protect client files for job seekers who disclose existence of a disability,
- Displaying posters and signage that signal clients with disabilities that access to accommodations and adapted materials are available,
- Ensuring that marketing materials, brochures, and flyers are accessible for individuals with disabilities,
- Assuring that grievance and complaint procedures are available to all clients,
- Ensuring marketing materials, brochures, and flyers contain the proper EO verbiage to encourage participation and inclusion,
- Assurances to expand or make available language translation services, as well as auxiliary aids, and,
- Providing assurances and strategies to outreach to disadvantaged groups.

Toward this end, ACWDB's service providers maintain physical facility locations that are accessible and ADA compliant, by ensuring visible ramps and signage that signal to job seekers that auxiliary aids, other accommodations, and assistive technologies are available. In a virtual world, accessibility takes on additional elements and ACWDB staff have shared the Suddenly Virtual Accessibility Toolkit

to familiarize service providers with enabling digital access for people with disabilities.⁶

AJCC/MOU partners all play an essential role in ensuring access to people with disabilities in alignment with the ADA, and partners can continue to learn from one another. For instance, some local area Adult Schools have accessibility workgroups that are open to other workforce stakeholders. These existing meetings can expand AJCC/MOU partners' understanding about different kinds of disabilities and tools and methods to put in place to keep current with new developments in service to people with disabilities. ACWDB staff also has a role and will continue to provide guidance to service providers about EO monitoring and facilitating access to people with disabilities, including those who have language access needs.

Section II – State Strategic Partner Coordination– Two–Year Modified Plan Partner Updates

CalFresh Employment & Training Partner Update

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

The CalFresh Employment and Training (CalFresh E&T) program in Alameda County is administered by the ACSSA's Workforce and Benefits Administration (WBA) department. Participation in the CalFresh E&T program is voluntary, requiring WBA's Employment Services staff to actively build value with prospective clients, by highlighting the program's benefits. WBA staff and ACWDB staff have

⁶ The Suddenly Virtual Accessibility Toolkit shares tips for including accessibility features like screen readers, close and captioning across several apps and digital platforms.

http://heldrich.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/products/uploads/Suddenly_Virtual_Accessibility_Toolkit.pdf

agreed to target non-exempt, Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) for co-enrollment into CalFresh E&T and WIOA Title I programs.⁷

To support co-enrollment efforts, ACWDB staff worked closely to inform sections of WBA's CalFresh E&T's Handbook and CalFresh E&T's Employment Services Referral Guide, pertaining to WIOA Title I programs and services. Both documents provide a clear message to WBA's Employment Services staff for methods to use to refer participants to WIOA Title I programs. ACWDB staff have also informed service providers of the new changes. Both departments took part in cross-training efforts that provided guidance on operationalizing the new partnership and brought along specific service providers and WBA's Employment Services staff members to connect both programs. ACWDB and WBA staff have now turned their attention to evaluating co-enrollment efforts and plan to engage in an informal process evaluation to determine issues and strengths in the co-enrollment process. These efforts will be documented and will serve as a tool to strengthen co-enrollments.

Department of Child Support Services

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

Prior to the pandemic, ACWDB and the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) staff members planned to establish a process to initiate referrals from DCSS to ACWDB's service provider community. However, at the onset of the pandemic, it was noted that DCSS clients may not prioritize training and employment goals and would need to be prompted or encouraged to seek workforce development services. The departments have ventured to build awareness among DCSS' clients in hopes of encouraging them while promoting employment and training activities through ACWDB's service providers. As a result, DCSS and ACWDB staff collaborated to

⁷ Non-exempt ABAWD clients are required to participate in a work activity to satisfy program criteria and sustain their benefits beyond a three-month period.

develop a joint publication, *A Fresh Start*, written by Sacramento News and Review in consultation with both department's staff.

A Fresh Start aims to shatter myths that DCSS clients may have about employment and training services, while highlighting job seeker success stories and staff member quotes that offer a boost of encouragement. Overall, the publication sends a message of hope to DCSS clients, assuring them that support is available as they attempt to navigate the challenges of finding employment or getting back on the right path to supporting their children. Both departments are still targeting the following sub-groups for WIOA programs and services:

1. Non-custodial clients with zero-income orders

- Assist zero-income clients through WIOA programs and specifically with job search activities that lead to employment and establishes income.

2. Non-custodial payment delinquent

- Assist payment delinquent clients get back on track by incentivizing participation in WIOA programs. As a result, DCSS has the discretion to temporarily lift or suppress certain enforcement actions.

3. Low-income custodial parents

- Identify and refer low-income custodial parents to WIOA programs and services to boost income and occupational skills.

ACWDB and DCSS staff will finalize the publication and initiate a distribution strategy to target clients. The publication will also serve as a tool to both ACWDB's service providers and DCSS' staff for gaining more familiarity with programs and services. ACWDB and DCSS are now planning for the delivery of presentations to familiarize DCSS staff members with WIOA eligibility requirements and best scenarios for initiating referrals to WIOA programs. A draft referral form is also in the queue and ACWDB service providers as recipients of the form, will vet it for

relevance. Referral efforts will then be tracked and reported to ensure DCSS has enough intel to make internal decisions about targeted sub-groups listed above.

Local Partnership Agreement Members

How will the Local Board coordinate with Local Partnership Agreement partners, established in alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint, and other local partners who serve individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities?

In Alameda County, Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) meetings are led by the Regional Center of the East Bay, the Department of Rehabilitation, and local education partners. Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) efforts by LPA members initially had been centered on identifying high-growth career pathways for youth and young adults with disabilities and informing students with disabilities and their families about ways to sustain safety-net benefits while engaging in employment. To build service level traction with LPA members, ACWDB's WIOA In-School and Out-of-School Providers attend LPA meetings to discuss referrals and co-enrollment opportunities.

Since LPA efforts are geared toward the needs of school-enrolled youth and young adults, ACWDB staff are attempting to approximate the number of students with disabilities that have dropped out of school altogether and have initiated conversations with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and additional conversations will take place with Workability Coordinators. ACWDB staff is also attempting to better-align WIOA youth strategies to LPA strategies, by engaging Workability Coordinators within the local school districts to facilitate referrals and co-enrollments. This information will then drive strategies for ACWDB's WIOA Out-of-School Youth service providers, enabling them to identify students with disabilities who have dropped out of school and re-engaging them in WIOA services. Specifically, ACWDB staff members are planning on exploring the gaps

between both the WIOA Title I Youth Program and the Workability program to examine the best way to bridge program gaps.

Other Efforts

HIREABLE Meetings

ACWDB's Career Services Providers engage in HIREABLE meetings to stay apprised of new developments in service delivery strategies, programs, and efforts to serve job seekers with disabilities. HIREABLE is a collaborative comprised of community-based organizations, Adult Schools, the Regional Center of the East Bay, Department of Rehabilitation representatives, and other education and workforce stakeholders, who meet regularly to address the employment and training needs of people with disabilities. HIREABLE meetings provide a mechanism for information exchange about job fairs, consumer and client training and employment needs, program eligibility, and co-enrollment strategies.

Disability Accelerator Grant

Project Search

In 2019, ACWDB partnered with the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County on a regional initiative through the Disability Accelerator grant, to serve job seekers with disabilities through East Bay Innovations' (EBI) Project Search program. ACWDB's service providers assisted EBI staff in joint case management and collaborated to support the placement of eight participants with disabilities in Alameda County agencies and departments to gain work-based experience in clerical support positions. Project Search participants made progress throughout the program and ACWDB's involvement in the grant contributed to the participants' and the East Bay Region's success.

Expanding Your Talent Pool



ACWDB partnered with EBI and held an employer panel event to highlight stories of workers with disabilities and their employers – showcasing EBI’s program model and inspiring employers and partners. ACWDB will focus efforts on scaling similar events in the future to support workers with disabilities through employer engagement and education that help to shatter attitudinal barriers.

“Accommodations at the workplace may be needed...to put it bluntly, workers with disabilities face attitudinal barriers of low expectations.”

*-Public Input Session
Participant*

New Arrivers, Refugees, and Immigrants

How will the Local Board coordinate with community-based organizations and other local partners that serve individuals who are English language learners, foreign born, and/or refugees.

ACWDB's partnership strategies to serve immigrants and refugees are aligned with ACSSA's Refugee Services County Plan, drafted by the WBA in compliance with federal legislation. ACSSA's refugee services generally include employment-related activities paired with Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) instruction. Other service components include: case management, social adjustment and supportive services, and senior social isolation activities for older refugees. WBA's immigrant funding targets the following three sub-groups:

- Newly arrived refugees (entered the United States within the past 12 months);
- Refugees who are receiving cash assistance and who are unemployed; and,
- Unemployed refugees who are not receiving cash assistance and have not been in the U.S. for more than 60 months.

ACWDB and WBA staff have agreed to facilitate the placement of immigrant clients into middle-skilled employment opportunities, while informing clients about opportunities within the labor market. Both departments' service providers (WIOA Career Services Providers, the International Rescue Committee, and La Familia) engage in meetings, share information, initiate referrals, and co-enroll clients. This intentional connection has already led to enhanced outcomes, but more is still needed.

Over the next four-years, ACWDB staff will address some of the issues that immigrant clients face with the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL), as current training offerings are not entirely expansive for refugee clients. In 2018, ACWDB members approved staff's recommendation to adopt activity code 330, which allows

Local Workforce Development Boards to use discretion in permitting training offerings if not currently included on the ETPL. Adoption of this policy provides bandwidth to WIOA-aligned training programs, giving job seekers more options that are not limited to the parameters of the ETPL.⁸ While in effect for over two years, ACWDB staff will bring more awareness to the workforce system to alert stakeholders that ACWDB has a mechanism for expanding training offerings through this WIOA program policy change.

Additionally, ACWDB staff will explore remedial math training options for immigrant clients, as well as digital fluency instruction by connecting with local area adult schools and Metrix Online Learning. Along these lines, ACWDB and stakeholder partners will address bridging immigrant clients from CBO service providers, to Adult Schools, and WIOA programs, possibly using [journey maps](#) as a tool to dissect connection points between partner programs that mitigate service connection issues and enhance client outcomes.

Section III – WIOA Title I Coordination

This section of the Local Plan should describe strategies for staff preparation, training, and ongoing professional development to effectively respond to participant needs.

This section of the Local Plan should also address the services, activities, and administrative requirements established for Local Boards under WIOA Title I.

What kind of training and/or professional development will be provided to frontline staff to gain and expand proficiency in digital fluency and distance learning?

Digital fluency

Since the pandemic, ACWDB's service providers have developed and learned new techniques for engaging job seeker clients virtually – i.e., hosting virtual workshops

⁸ ACWDB's Local Board Determination policy can be found in [Action Bulletin \(AB\) 18-04 R3](#) in alignment with State guidance. AB 18-04 R3 also provides criteria that enable ACWDB staff to waive ETPL requirements.

and industry-specific job fairs, and embedding chat box features on their websites to actively communicate with job seeker clients needing immediate assistance. Since shifting to virtual activities has been in place for one year since the start of the pandemic, service providers have become well-versed in operating online. Therefore, ACWDB staff will need to assess the digital training needs of all service providers and encourage peer-learning.

ACWDB staff will scan existing partner networks to discover virtual tools and learning communities already established that can be leveraged. For instance, adult school partners have made advancements in establishing robust distance learning techniques and strategies, enabling their students to learn seamlessly online. Once staff locate gaps in digital training needs, efforts will be made to close those gaps by leveraging the workforce system.

Cultural Humility and Trauma-Informed Services

The East Bay is an incredibly diverse region and represents people of all walks of life and various organizations and resources that have deep commitments to the Bay Area's diverse communities. Some Bay Area communities have survived traumatic events through protective factors in the community (family support, religious institutions, and social support/networks).⁹ And still, some communities are marginalized and need support in navigating successfully through the negative and lasting impacts of trauma (sometimes generational). It is critically important that workforce practitioners engage and continuously learn how to serve diverse job seekers who may have varying degrees of trauma.

ACWDB staff members are in process of scanning and identifying internal and external agencies and departments that have engaged in cultural humility service delivery through a trauma-informed lens to facilitate appropriate program linkages.

⁹ Protective factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk.

For instance, the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Agency has an Office of Ethnic Services, which is committed to “continue to promote culturally and linguistically sound policies and practices that are aligned with the needs and values of the community,” could be leveraged in this work, if appropriate. Once doing a scan across departments and agencies, ACWDB staff will establish training offerings to service providers.

Access and Equity

The social unrest following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black individuals, has broadened our collective awareness of inequities and systemic and structural racism that disproportionately impact communities of color. Several organizations in the Bay Area are invested in dissecting inequities to better serve their clients and communities, which offers ACWDB a rich landscape of organizations to learn from that ACWDB can leverage. ACWDB and the broader workforce system are also grappling with these issues.

ACWDB is fortunately a department within the ACSSA, which is well-networked with other county agencies and departments that deliver services committed to ensuring access and equity.

...TO MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON NEED



While ACWDB has targeted WIOA Title I funding toward local area sub-regions with higher concentrations of poverty, prioritized workers with barriers to employment, and aligned recent COVID-19 grant development with the needs of low-income job seekers, more can and will be done to ensure that programs and services are accessible and equitable. Toward this end, ACWDB staff members are exploring questions about equity to establish appropriate goals, indicators, and strategies targeting job seekers of color and other marginalized individuals for success in Alameda County's labor market and beyond.

Leaning on the strength of the East Bay Regional Planning Unit (EBRPU), ACWDB staff have invited the Director of the Oakland Workforce Development Board to share strategies and goals from the City of Oakland's Office of Racial Equity, with the intent of learning how to develop equity measures for ACWDB's local area.

In addition to city and county departments, community-based organizations like Policy Link, have anchored their efforts in equity.¹⁰ ACWDB is committed to chart this course to better understand how to make programs more accessible and equitable. This work starts with learning about tools already developed and leaning on the expertise of workforce system partners. ACWDB staff will ultimately develop an [equity framework](#) for WIOA Title I programs. Complementary to this effort, ACWDB staff are also in progress of establishing a quality jobs framework to guide program policies consistent with recommendations within the [Future of Work in California – A New Social Compact for Work and Workers](#) report.

Business Engagement Model and Rapid Response Activities

How will the Local Board coordinate workforce development activities carried-out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities, as outlined in WSD16-04 – Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities.

Business Engagement Model

ACWDB staff leads an internal Business Services Unit (BSU) aligned with an ACWDB-approved Business Engagement model in effect through 2024, tasked with:

1. Providing employer services activities currently implemented by ACWDB's BSU;
2. Serving as intermediary to a collaboration of internal and external partners known as the Alameda County Business Engagement Team (ACBET) to better coordinate employer-focused services to have maximum impact on hiring, skills development, and intensive use of incentive programs for all job seekers;

¹⁰ Policy Link has developed an Equity Manifesto that could be leveraged in ACWDB's equity work: <https://www.policylink.org/about-us/equity-manifesto>

3. Building and utilizing existing employer relationships with four primary sector partnerships focused on Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Biomedical; Manufacturing and Construction;
4. Leveraging employer resources with AJCC/MOU partners including the California Employment Development Department (EDD) and the ACSSA in the short-term, and other County agencies and industry partnerships in the long-term;
5. Continuing a long-term focus on anchor institution “relationships” as a strategy for facilitating access to entry-level jobs, workforce solutions, and for building overall strength in the community as significant contributors to the local economy.

ACWDB’s Business Engagement Model consists of a two-tiered approach for engaging Alameda County employers:

- **Tier I services** are those offered by the BSU and include: Customized Training, Rapid Response and Rapid Re-employment activities, Layoff Aversion, building industry partnerships and referring employers to resources and incentives to help their businesses thrive.
- **Tier II services** are facilitated by BSU staff and include collaborative work with agencies that are involved in workforce-related outreach activities and/or serving Alameda County businesses. To best leverage staff capacity and resources in this demand-driven model, Tier II services focus on workforce solutions to large numbers of employers through the coordinated efforts of key partners. Tier II services offer a “no wrong door” approach through which employers can access high-impact services, solutions, and resources.

Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion

California WARN laws require businesses with 75 or more employees to inform their Local Workforce Development Boards and issue a 60-day WARN when a layoff is

bound to occur. The statutory requirement was waived by Governor Newsom due to the pandemic, but some Alameda County businesses are still participating. WARNs trigger Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion services rendered by the local workforce system, to mitigate the impact of dislocation and connect affected workers to various resources, employment and training opportunities, and career services. WARN reports reflect those businesses required to file as well as those with the desire to inform their LWDBs.

According to WARNs submitted to ACWDB by businesses with more than 75 employees undergoing downsizing activities, 34,805 workers were laid-off from businesses within ACWDB's local area between February 2020 and January 2021. The industries most impacted by COVID-19 within Alameda County resulting in furloughs, layoffs, and closures were: manufacturing (13,432), retail (5,291), food services (3,836), construction (2,513), and entertainment (2,571).

Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion activities as mentioned previously, is a Tier I service in ACWDB's Business Engagement Model. Affected companies interested in receiving support are assisted by ACWDB's Rapid Response Coordinator, who assembles a Rapid Response Team consisting of ACWDB's service providers, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Employment Development Department. The Rapid Response Team convenes Virtual Rapid Response orientations to address company downsizing activities and convey information to impacted businesses and workers regarding: 401K options, applying for unemployment benefits, Covered California/health benefits, accessing WIOA Title I programs, and Trade Agreement Assistance programs for workers laid-off due to foreign competition, and more.

Jaslyn's Story

Jaslyn was laid-off from the North Face, due to the company's plan to relocate out of state. She wasn't sure about her next step until she met with one of our career service providers - College of Alameda Career and Employment Center at a Rapid Response event (a service offered by ACWDB staff to mitigate impacts to recently laid-off workers, with a goal to rapidly reconnect laid off workers to employment opportunities and other resources).

The College of Alameda Career and Employment Center worked quickly with Jaslyn and offered her career coaching, professional resume assistance, interview preparation assistance, and paid training to earn a Project Management certificate at CSU East Bay.

Jaslyn earned a Project Management certificate and found a Project Management/Product Development position with Athleta (owned by the Gap), making more than she earned previously – over \$80k per year. This was her dream company and position being that she has worked in the apparel industry for over 20 years.



"I learned that my company would be moving from California to Denver. I was not prepared for the rapidly changing job market. I needed new skills to navigate the new world of recruiters, social media networking and resume screening. The support I received from the WIOA team was positive and encouraging. I felt empowered and more confident about the possibilities ahead. I have now accepted a job and will also receive a certificate in Project Management with the help of the WIOA team to further my career. The WIOA program helped me clarify what I wanted for the next chapter of my life, pinpoint the necessary skills and requirements for my desired career, overcome feelings of low self-confidence about my skills, and presenting myself in interviews effectively to showcase my skills and experience in a confident manner."

ACWDB's Career Services Providers are an integral component in Rapid Response orientations and play a role in informing laid-off workers about WIOA Title I services and rapidly connecting them to re-employment, training, or other requested services. Employers are sometimes open to holding job fairs onsite to assist laid-off workers.

These events are organized and supported by ACWDB's Rapid Response Coordinator, service providers, and other members of the Rapid Response Team. WARNs are addressed immediately and Rapid Response activities are reported and filed to the state on a quarterly basis.

Layoff Aversion

ACWDB's Rapid Response Coordinator shares information about Customized Training/Incumbent Worker Training (CT/IWT) programs with employers reporting layoffs as an alternative to laying off staff. As a practice, the BSU continuously promotes CT/IWT programs through outreach, presentations at employer events and through referrals in the hopes that they will take advantage of resources to support upskilling to maintain staff.¹¹

Early Warnings and Partnerships with Local Economic Development Agencies

ACWDB's BSU utilizes Dun & Bradstreet and Urban Explorer to identify and scan for companies in Alameda County that are in high-risk categories for downsizing or closing their doors permanently. In this way, the tool functions as an early warning system that signals ACWDB's BSU to filter data into day-to-day workflow to improve staff efficiency, increase outreach effectiveness, and build credibility with employers and businesses.

During COVID-19, the relationship between ACWDB and the economic development agencies has strengthened, and ACWDB staff participate in weekly and bi-weekly calls with these agencies and chambers in the area to stay abreast of the changing economy and share resources and opportunities to assist businesses. ACWDB's BSU also engages in ongoing communications and coordination with economic development agencies to avert layoffs and closures, accelerate re-employment of affected workers, and provide a resource for financial and technical consultation and support. Economic development departments also communicate with the BSU to relay information about companies undergoing downsizing

¹¹ ACWDB's Customized and Incumbent Worker Training programs promote worker re-skilling as services are targeted toward businesses that are interested in customizing training programs that equip workers with new on-the-job skills. ACWDB's [CT/IWT flyer](#) is used by the BSU to promote the program.

activities and then contacts the company to build a working relationship and offer assistance.

To support Rapid Response activities, ACWDB's BSU is a member of the Greater Bay Area Rapid Response Roundtable, which meets quarterly to discuss best practices, utilize Rapid Response funds for strategy development and implementation and facilitate partner connections with unionized labor groups.

Looking Ahead

Over the next four years, ACWDB's BSU will work toward the following short, mid, and long-term goals to continue to engage businesses and workforce partners:

Short-Term

- Increased and more effective communication with businesses through a BSU news e-blast to inform employers of job fairs, events, industry panels, webinars, etc.;
- In collaboration with the California Employers Association, host webinars that aim to inform businesses about Human Resource matters (laws on wage and hourly pay, leave of absence, inclusivity, etc.); and,
- Continue to market of no-cost HR Hotline for Alameda County businesses (COVID-19 response and strategy).

Mid-to-Long Term

- Increase engagement and coordination with ACWDB's Career Services Providers around business services to better represent the entirety of BSU services to businesses, and leverage regular meetings to relay industry trends and workforce needs to inform training programs;
- Scale the Business Assistance Program in partnership with the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (MANEX) for small-to-mid-sized manufacturers with declining or stagnant revenue and growth; and,

- Establish a multiple employer contract with the Employment and Training Panel to serve a small number of biomedical manufacturers in Alameda County. Funds would support training/upskilling for incumbent workers or new hires in this industry.

Continuous engagement with Industry Sector Partnerships (Bay-ICT, AmBayArea-Manufacturing), and employer-facing groups through the ACBET, and with city economic development departments and chambers through East Bay Economic Development Alliance meetings.

Local Area Programs and Assessment

A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the Local Area. This includes how the Local Board will ensure that priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as outlined in WSD15-14 – WIOA Adult Program Priority of Service.

Sub-Regional Workforce Network Model and WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker

Service Providers

ACWDB relies on continuous quality improvement as a general practice for meeting the changing needs of local area job seekers, which also allows for pivoting to new approaches. Along these lines, ACWDB transitioned to a Sub-Regional Workforce Network (SWN) model from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021, for the delivery of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The intention of the SWN was to enable ACWDB's America's Job Center of California and Career Services Providers' (service providers) reach into the community and collaborate with external stakeholders to coordinate efforts and serve local area job seekers, therefore facilitating a mechanism for agile career service delivery.

The SWN model places ACWDB's contracted service providers at the helm of their sub-regions (as Lead Coordinators), to deliver community based WIOA services, co-enroll job seekers, leverage resources, utilize technology to reach a broader base of clients, and develop joint strategies in coordination with the following community partners:

- Adult Schools
- Community Colleges
- Community-based organizations that serve:
 - Veterans
 - People with disabilities
 - Re-entry populations
- Libraries
- Employers/Businesses
- Alameda County Social Services Agency
- Mandated Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I-IV partners

ACWDB selected the following service providers through a competitive procurement process to implement the SWN model and establish WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Workers services in specific sub-regions through a three-year cycle, from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2021:

- Rubicon Programs – Comprehensive America's Job Center of California serves residents in: Hayward, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Ashland, Cherryland, Fairview, Castro Valley
- Tri Cities Career Center – Ohlone College Community College District serves residents in: Fremont, Union City, Newark
- Tri Valley Career Center – Chabot-Las Positas Community College District serves residents in: Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, Sunol

- North Cities Career Center – Peralta Community College District serves residents in: Alameda, Berkeley, Emeryville, Albany, Piedmont

Available WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

Generally, there are two levels of WIOA service delivery through ACWDB's existing SWN model:

Basic Career Services generally require less staff time and attention and are universally accessible and available to all individuals seeking employment and training services. These services include:

- WIOA eligibility determinations;
- Initial skill assessments;
- Labor exchange services; and,
- Information on several programs and services as well as program referrals.

Individualized Career Services are available to enrolled WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker participants. Generally, these services involve significant staff time and are customized to the needs of the individual job seeker:

- Specialized and comprehensive skills assessments to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- Customized Individual Employment Plan that identifies the participant's employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve employment goals, including providing information on eligible providers of training services and career pathways to attain career objectives;
- Counseling and case management;
- Work experience (including transitional jobs), to assist the participant in achieving employment goals and making decisions regarding employment and/or training opportunities; and,

- Supportive service dollars to cover transportation, work-related clothing, and safety items costs, as well as funds to cover the cost of required work-related documentation.

WIOA Case Managers determine the appropriateness of training for program participants as reflected in the goals set forth in job seekers' Individual Employment Plan (IEP). Job seekers are also informed of and connected to Individual Training Accounts and On-the-Job Training opportunities once it is established in the case management working relationship that training will improve the job seeker's employment prospects.

WIOA training services are conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, align successfully performing training providers, and demonstrates alignment with ACWDB's Industry Sector & Occupational Framework (a policy framework adopted by ACWDB to prioritize high growth/livable wage occupations in Alameda County). WIOA-enrolled job seekers also receive follow-up services for up to year after their WIOA case is closed to monitor process and provide additional services if needed.

Priority of Service Policy

ACWDB has adopted a local priority of service WIOA program policy in line with state guidance, that requires 51% of those enrolled in the WIOA Adult funding stream to represent the following prioritized populations (in ranked order):

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of cash public assistance or are otherwise low-income
2. Low-Income or Basic Skills Deficient
3. Veterans or Eligible Spouses of Veterans
4. Individuals with Disabilities
5. Re-Entry Population
6. All other applicants who do not meet any of the priority populations referenced above.

Assessment of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Sub-Regional Workforce Network Model and WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Providers

As mentioned previously, ACWDB transitioned to a SWN model from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021 for the delivery of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The SWN model allows America's Job Center of California and Career Services Providers (service providers), to reach further into the community and collaborate with external stakeholders to coordinate efforts and serve local area job seekers, therefore providing a mechanism for agile career service delivery.

Critical to ACWDB's core business practice of continuous improvement, staff engaged in an evaluation of the SWN model, focusing research and qualitative analysis on the level of fidelity contracted service providers had with the SWN model over the course of the contract cycle. ACWDB staff surveyed service providers and their community partners, generally asking questions related to the depth and quality of their working SWN relationships. These assessments tools attempted to measure key components of the SWN model.

The following findings were presented to ACWDB's committees and shed light on areas of strength and needed improvement in the SWN model. These findings have been incorporated into the next iteration of ACWDB's procurement of service providers for the delivery to WIOA Title I programs and services:

Research Question 1

Did ACWDB’s Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Service Providers adhere to the fidelity of the SWN model, by implementing core components of the model as Lead Coordinators within their sub-regions, and developing in-depth working relationships with SWN partners?

Career Services Providers more prominently engaged adult schools, employers, community colleges, and libraries but will need to do the following to better align with the SWN model:

- 1. **Build more robust partnerships** with community-based organizations that serve people with disabilities, re-entry, and veterans.

- 2. **Make greater strides** with the Social Services Agency

- 3. **Formalize their partnerships** by establishing a co-enrollment process

- 4. **Garner more partner interest** to have successful and well-attended partnership meetings.



Research Question 1 Cont'd

5. Information and Referrals

CSPs scored highest on their ability to provide relevant information, attending to referred clients, and coordinating services.

6. Community Presence and Offsite Services

CSPs generally scored the lowest in community presence, indicating that partners were neutral or disagreed that CSPs had robust presence with their organizations. While some CSPs had examples of offsite service delivery, such as partner orientations or outreach, CSPs generally scored lower on statements related to in-person interactions or offsite program connections within the community.

7. What role do you think your local Career Center/CSP can play in assisting your clients with COVID-19 related issues?

Partners believe that CSPs can host virtual job fairs (most common response), provide information, online resources, help them understand opportunities and employers who are hiring, and help them understand transferrable skills.



Research Question 2

Which themes and concepts surfaced that suggest emerging promising practices related to the SWN model?

1. **Service delivery, orientations, and workshops onsite at partner location** seems to yield promising results in terms of co-enrollments, building partner trust and rapport, and ensuring visibility in the community. As seen with the Eden Area AJCC, this level of community visibility seems to be positively linked to garnering partner interest and attendance in their quarterly partner meetings.
2. **Establishing a co-enrollment process** with SWN partners is a complement to the referral process, likely resulting in better outcomes.
3. Providers who have a **staff-person dedicated to outreach**, at least part time, seem to have a better presence in the community.
4. **Employer engagement tactics**, particularly Coffee Breaks with Employers in the Tri Valley, seems to yield positive responses from job seekers.
5. A **Community Newsletter** seems to be a key strategy in keeping partners and their clients well-informed about services and programs.



Research Question 3

Which findings serve as recommendations that can be leveraged to develop promising practices, service improvements, and partnership enhancements?

1. Require dedicated Outreach Worker to staffing, to ensure that frequent community-based reach is possible and intentional;
2. Deliver services offsite much more often particularly with a focus on community-based organizations, (in light of COVID-19, attend partner virtual meetings often);
3. Establish a co-enrollment process that complements referral processes that lends itself to successful co-enrollment of clients;
4. Develop and distribute a community newsletter and share often to SWN partners and clients, and,
5. Continuously develop and evolve robust strategies to adapt services, in light of COVID-19 impacts, with considerations to those whose Unemployment Insurance benefits may be on the brink of exhaustion and in closer partnership with SWN and Local Plan partners.



Findings from the SWN model evaluation/assessment revealed that the SWN model generated some emerging promising practices that could be leveraged to inform new program design and models. Specifically, while service providers had marked improvement in establishing their presence in the community, that presence was somewhat uneven with community-based organizations serving target groups and somewhat generally leaner with the ACSSA (a prominent partner in the workforce system that administers several safety-net programs to CalWORKs, CalFresh, and General Assistance participants).

The use of a dedicated Outreach Worker was both a recommendation to enhance service delivery and a promising practice that establishes more community-based presence as seen with ACWDB's AJCC Operator, Rubicon Programs, who successfully maintains working relationships with several stakeholder organizations. ACWDB's other service providers also exhibited promising practices, for instance, the Tri-Valley Career Center maintains robust communications through the use of social media platforms and regular newsletters, while the Tri-Cities Career Center held strong connections to local employers and facilitated virtual employer job fairs throughout the pandemic. ACWDB's provider in north county- the North Cities Career Center at the College of Alameda, sustained strong enrollments and had a no-wrong door approach- often literally meeting job seekers clients within the community at the onset and throughout the pandemic.

All service providers had undeniable strengths and all also had some areas to evolve. Overall, the SWN evaluation paired with feedback from other local areas, led to ACWDB's new Career Services Collaborative (CSC) model for the delivery of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services over the next four years (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025).

Career Services Collaborative

ACWDB’s CSC places a Lead Coordinating Agency (LCA) at the helm of a collaborative service delivery model, to coordinate employment and training services through the mechanism of sub-contracting with key workforce stakeholders. In close consultation with ACWDB staff, the LCA will select CSC partners based generally on the strength of their services, their community-based presence, and ability to serve diverse job seeker clients from key target groups. In theory and in conversation with other local areas, this new model (in ACWDB’s local area) is intended to help WIOA Title I investments go further and deeper into communities affected by COVID-19 impacts.



WIOA In-School and Out-Of-School Youth and Young Adult Programs

A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the Local Area, as outlined in WSD17-07- WIOA Youth Program Requirements. This includes any strategies the Local Board has about how to increase the digital literacy and fluency of youth participants, including youth with disabilities.

ACWDB establishes contracts with community-based providers to serve WIOA In-School Youth (ISY) for youth and young adults from the of ages 16–21 and Out-of-School Youth, ages 16–24. In ACWDB’s local area, the WIOA ISY program is called the Youth Innovation Program and the WIOA OSY program is called the Future Force Program. The following organizations have been funded from July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2021 to deliver WIOA ISY and OSY services within sub-regions in ACWDB’s local area:

Future Force Program for WIOA OSY

ACWDB currently allocates 85% of its WIOA youth formula funds to Out-School-Youth (OSY) providers to bolster re-engagement strategies with youth and young adults who are out of the school system or marginalized in the labor market. As displayed in the table above, WIOA OSY are served sub-regionally to meet the unique needs of young adults within Alameda County’s diverse neighborhoods and communities.

Service Provider	Service Geographies
Berkeley Youth Alternatives	Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Piedmont.
Hayward Center for Education and Careers (Hayward Adult School)	Hayward, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Castro Valley, Ashland, Cherryland, and Fairview.

La Familia	Tri-Cities and the Tri-Valley areas: Fremont, Newark, Union City, Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, and Sunol.
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Youth Innovation Program for WIOA ISY

ACWDB allocates 15% to the WIOA ISY program to serve as complementary funding to the various and existing in-school programs. The Eden Area Regional Occupational Program leverages its close relationship with local educational agencies to enhance occupational skills development for WIOA ISY participants.

Service Provider	Service Geographies
Eden Area Regional Occupational Program	Hayward, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Castro Valley, Ashland, Cherryland, and Fairview.

WIOA Youth/Young Adult Service Components:

Both the Youth Innovation and Future Force programs are required to include the following fourteen elements in alignment with the WIOA or establish a memorandum of understanding with an entity to provide services:

1. **Tutoring**, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of secondary school or its recognized equivalent or for a recognized post-secondary credential;
2. **Alternative secondary school services**, or disconnected student recovery services, as appropriate;
3. **Paid and unpaid work experiences** that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which include the following:
 - i. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
 - ii. Pre-apprenticeship programs;

- iii. Internships and job shadowing;
- iv. On-the-job training opportunities.

4. **Occupational skill training**, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials aligning with in-demand industry sectors or occupations;
5. **Education** offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. **Leadership** development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility, and other positive social and civic behaviors;
7. Supportive services;
8. **Adult mentoring** for the duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after-program participation;
9. **Follow-up services** for no fewer than 12 months after the completion of participation;
10. **Comprehensive guidance and counseling**, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, gang diversion strategies/counseling, and referrals to counseling, as appropriate to meet the needs of the individual youth.
11. Financial literacy education;
12. Entrepreneurial skills training;
13. **Labor market and employment information** about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling and career exploration services; and,
14. **Activities that help youth prepare for and transition** to post-secondary education and training.

Sebastian's Story

Sebastian received support from the Youth Enrichment Services program at the Hayward Adult School, in partnership with the Eden Area Regional Occupational Program, to make his dream of starting a career as an Electrician a reality! Sebastian worked full-time in the day and attended school in the evenings to earn a certificate in General Electrician Studies. He is now well on his way to a successful career and is thankful of the support and care he received along his journey!



“I did not have money or resources to go to a proper college to get my certification to become an Electrician. The WIOA program helped me to pay for my training but it also helped me find a school to quickly get my certification and begin my career. My Case Manager was very helpful, supportive, and resourceful. I was able to get all my questions answered and felt supported throughout the process of earning my certificate. I have completed my training, and now I have my certification to begin my career as an Electrician and my family has encouraged me to keep going in this direction. I am very happy with the outcome.”

Assessment of WIOA In-School and Out-of-School Programs

Working closely with youth/young adult service providers, reviewing, and incorporating literature and stakeholder feedback, ACWDB staff have taken stock on improvements needed within ACWDB's existing WIOA ISY/OSY programs. The following gaps have been identified and will be addressed in ACWDB's new four-year procurement and funding cycle (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2025) in WIOA ISY/OSY programs:

- **21st Century Skills/Work Readiness**

Establishing competencies in adaptability, analysis/solution mindset, collaboration, communication, and digital fluency

- **Earn and Learn Opportunities**

Affording youth and young adults the opportunity to engage in contextualized learning experiences: (internships, pre–apprenticeships, apprenticeships)

- **Intentional Partnerships**

Establishing intentional partnerships with secondary and/or post–secondary educational entities, employers, and business/industry associations.

In line with 21st century work readiness skills, ACWDB’s WIOA ISY/OSY providers will focus efforts on increasing digital literacy of youth/young adult participants (including those with disabilities), by assessing current technology needs and then putting a plan in place to address those needs. This emphasis on 21st century work readiness skills will be reviewed by ACWDB staff as programs enter a new program funding cycle.

Marginalized youth and young adults who have barriers to work readiness supports and employment are central to ACWDB’s WIOA ISY/OSY programs and prioritized for services. With equity at the forefront, these programs and services will continue to focus on in–school and out–of–school youth with barriers and consider the needs of justice–involved and foster youth and young adults. To this end, ACWDB recognizes the significant barriers that systems–involved youth and young adults experience in connecting to workforce services, 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. ACWDB 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 the critical service and opportunity gaps these young people face.

COVID-19 Responsiveness

ACWDB’s service providers have pivoted and adapted services by offering virtual one-on-one case management meetings, virtual WIOA workshops, enhanced website content, and hosted virtual employer panels to showcase businesses still hiring during the pandemic. In addition to service level adaptations, ACWDB staff have developed the following COVID-19 grants and initiatives in response to pandemic-related needs of workers, job seekers, and businesses:

Grant/Initiative	Award and Description/Initiative
COVID-19 Emergency Response Supportive Services (CERSS)	<p>Awarded \$153,000 in state Dislocated Worker Funds to provide supportive services to individuals whose employment or wages were impacted by the pandemic. Funds were also made available to aid eligible individuals through direct cash payments to cover living expenses such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent and Mortgage Expenses • Utility Bills • Equipment Necessary to Telework • Childcare Costs • Transportation Assistance
COVID-19 In This Together Grant	<p>Awarded \$300,000 to provide services to individuals and businesses impacted by COVID-19.</p>
COVID-19 Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant.	<p>Awarded \$400,000 to provide temporary jobs and related services to individuals impacted by COVID-19, through employment at the Alameda County Community Food Bank as Food Security Workers.</p>

Business Hotline	Established a free employer hotline in partnership with the California Employers Association to assist businesses with their human resource needs throughout the pandemic.
Tech-For-Good	Collaborated with Corporate e-Waste Solution and Goodwill of the Greater East Bay to provide free, refurbished laptops for low-income residents in Alameda County.
Business Assistance Program	Re-ignited a partnership with the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (MANEX) to help small manufacturers avoid layoffs and strengthen operations.

Grants Administration

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

All grant funds are disbursed by the Alameda County Auditor-Controller's Office, in accordance with the CEO agreement between the County of Alameda Board of Supervisors and ACWDB. The County of Alameda Board of Supervisors function as ACWDB's Local CEO in line with requirements set forth in WIOA. Fiscal oversight responsibilities for WIOA and other workforce development fund sources are specified in the CEO agreement. The ACWDB initiates requests for disbursement of grant funds, subject to review and approval by the Alameda County Auditor-Controller's Office. All disbursements of grant funds are issued by the County Auditor-Controller's Office; all controls on disbursements are maintained by the Auditor-Controller. Check disbursements are auto generated by the County's ALCOLINK payment system, after three levels of approval have been completed in the County system.

ACWDB uses a formal competitive process (Request for Proposal/RFP) to award all contracts to WIOA sub-recipients and contractors over \$100,000, in accordance with Alameda County procurement policies and procedures and applicable federal

and state directives. RFPs for WIOA Career Services, Comprehensive AJCC Operator, and WIOA Youth service providers are issued every 3–4 years. RFPs are released widely within the community, using several methods to disseminate the information, including: ACWDB’s website, email distribution, social media, and newspapers. Informal competitive processes (RFI, RFQ, small purchase) may be used to award contracts under \$100,000. All awards resulting from competitive processes are approved by ACWDB and subsequent contracts are approved by the County of Alameda Board of Supervisors.

AJCC Operator

A description of how the Local Board fulfills the duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider as outlined in WSD19-13 – Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers. This should include the name(s) and role(s) of any entities that the Local Board contracts with.

ACWDB administers WIOA Title I funding, through a competitive procurement process to secure and contract with community-based providers that deliver career, employment, and training services sub-regionally to Adults and Dislocated Workers, Youth, and Young Adults. Service providers are selected based on attaining the highest score and prevailing through the bidding and procurement process.

ACWDB’s WIOA Title I contracts are funded for three to four years and are aligned with the Department of Labor’s Uniform guidance and state directives. Program models are developed based on extensive research, community feedback, and continuous quality improvements.

Proposals submitted to ACWDB during the RFP solicitation process must generally demonstrate a plan to achieve WIOA performance negotiated between ACWDB and state partners, implement scope of work activities, demonstrate ability to collaborate with community partners, and meet other stipulated contract provisions. ACWDB’s local area consists of one AJCC and three Career Services Providers, referenced earlier in this Local Plan (see pages 37–38).

Rubicon Programs, ACWDB's AJCC Operator, is responsible for delivering both basic and individualized services for Adults and Dislocated Workers, while sustaining relationships with ACWDB's MOU WIOA Core and Required partners (referenced in section I of this Plan). Three additional service providers (referenced in the table above) also provide basic and individualized services for Adults and Dislocated Workers and maintain collaborative working relationships with community-based partners. Contract performance is monitored throughout the year and over the course of the funding cycle. ACWDB staff also initiates ongoing training and technical assistance to all contracted service providers to proactively address any issues with WIOA program implementation and delivery.

Appendix

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

The development of comprehensive Local and Regional Plans entails building broad and inclusive partnerships with regional and local entities in a variety of sectors. This includes engaging with employers, labor organizations, and community-based organizations, as well as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core, required, and strategic program partners. This will ensure the inclusion of person-centered approaches to address multifaceted barriers to employment by utilizing input from the communities.

Stakeholders participating in the planning process should include, but are not limited to, employers, labor organizations, education partners, human services, and housing partners, as well as community-based organizations that provide services to target populations, such as justice-involved, English language learners, refugees, immigrants, youth, older adults, veterans, people with disabilities, and any other entities supporting historically unserved or underserved communities.

Using the template below, Regional Planning Units and Local Workforce Development Boards should provide a detailed description of how meaningful

stakeholder involvement and community engagement was achieved when developing the Regional and Local Plans. This summary should be included as an attachment to both the Regional and Local Plans. Details are included below:

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
RFP Planning – Email, Website, Social Media	Entities interested in contributing ideas toward ACWDB’s RFPs for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs	Over 200 stakeholders were targeted, and 60 stakeholders attended virtually on Zoom. Job seekers were also reached and participated by completing a survey. Additional stakeholders were reached on social media platforms and ACWDB’s website.	This event was held on July 29, 2020 to inform ACWDB’s RFP process by soliciting ideas from workforce partners and stakeholders. Ideas generated in this process were also leverage for local planning efforts. Details are provided on pages 54–56 of this plan.
Local Planning Public Input Session – Email, Website, Social Media	All workforce stakeholders including job seekers, employers, partner organizations, and entities interested in partnering	Over 200 stakeholders were targeted, and 50 stakeholders attended virtually. Additional stakeholders were reached on social media platforms and ACWDB’s website.	This event was held on January 28, 2021 to engage workforce partners and stakeholders in ACWDB’s four-year local planning efforts. Details are provided on pages 56–59 of this plan.

Local Planning Kick-off Survey with Core and Required MOU partners	Core and Required MOU partners received a Survey to address key issues that are central to their working relationships and goals. These partners are listed on page 8 of this plan.	11 individuals, representing 9 out of 14 MOU programs, completed the survey. This survey was targeted toward MOU Core and Required Partners on specific issues they must address together over the next four years.	This survey was launched on January 20, 2021. More detail about this survey is referenced on pages 11-12 of this plan.
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Request for Proposal (RFP) Planning

As a standard practice, ACWDB engages workforce stakeholders in advance of releasing RFPs for the procurement of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, ISY and OSY programs. **On July 29, 2020**, ACWDB staff initiated a [public input session](#) to generate ideas and feedback on services, needs, and strategies (see image below). The RFP input process is intentionally collaborative and inclusive to ensure that multiple stakeholder perspectives are used in shaping service design and delivery.

To this end, staff engaged both job seeker clients and workforce system partners through different methods. Staff developed a Job Seeker Survey and reached participants through CalJOBS messaging, to get a sense of job seeker needs aligned with the following “Re-imagining Workforce Services” themes in mind:

- COVID-19 Responsiveness in the Workforce System
- Worker Upward Mobility
- Quality Jobs
- Access to Technology

- Equity
- Employer Engagement

Staff engaged workforce partners in a virtual zoom input session, accompanied by a survey, aligned with the same Re-imagining Workforce Services listed above. Job seekers, identified and reached through CalJOBS, were surveyed for feedback about COVID-19 related concerns, job quality, and supports. Survey results are included in the [Stakeholder Report](#).



Local Planning Public Input Session

In line with state requirements, ACWDB staff held a Virtual Zoom Public Input Session on January 28, 2021, from 10:00am-12:00pm to solicit ideas from workforce system stakeholders to incorporate in this Four-Year Local Plan. Fifty individuals representing diverse organizations and agencies were in attendance (adult schools, chambers of commerce, local economic development agencies, ACWDB members, apprenticeship programs, and community-based organizations that serve youth, people with disabilities and immigrants/refugees).

ACWDB staff facilitators led Zoom break-out room discussions across four relevant workforce development topics, allowing participants to share feedback in various ways (whiteboard and discussion). Attendees expressed gratitude for being able to communicate with other stakeholders and gave good feedback about the format of the break-out room discussions and topics. The following emerging themes and feedback are reflected to some extent, in this Local Plan or will be incorporated as ACWDB moves forward over the next four years with community partners:

Emerging Themes from the Local Planning Public Input Session

<p>How has COVID-19 affected your community's/client's employment status and prospects?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workers have safety concerns regarding returning to work. ○ Overall, there is more competition in the labor market, making it more difficult for job seekers who are still developing skills. ○ Youth job seekers have left the labor market or quit their jobs. ○ Lower-income workers have been hit the hardest. ○ Several jobs and internship opportunities have disappeared. ○ Specific groups (older workers and immigrants) encounter barriers in securing employment.
<p>In your experience what enables and hinders successful referrals, program coordination, and co-enrollments?</p>	<p>Enables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cross-training and collaboration ○ Awareness-building of program opportunities ○ Networking ○ Regular partner meetings and warm handoffs ○ Strong relationships, referrals, and outreach <p>Hinders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Silos ○ Inconsistencies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bureaucracy ○ Poor communication ○ Eligibility restrictions ○ Lack of information
<p>What are your ideas for expanding access for people with barriers to employment? And expansion to services through technology?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mobile services ○ Increasing awareness of programs ○ Engaging employers ○ Project Labor Agreements ○ Collaboration and co-enrollments ○ Providing technology devices ○ Target-group specific job fairs ○ Ask job seekers and center programs about their needs ○ Cultural sensitivity training for staff
<p>What are your ideas for engaging employers and businesses in workforce development?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted outreach with employers and regular communication ○ Build awareness with businesses about workforce services and programs available to assist. ○ Industry fieldtrips ○ Engage employer early on in program development



Notice of Public Meeting



Virtual Public Input Session

JOIN US!

The Alameda County Workforce Development Board is hosting a virtual public input session to discuss strategies to include in our new Four-Year Local Plan. We will cover topics related to enhancing workforce program coordination, expanding access to services, employer engagement, addressing COVID-19 impacts on job seekers in Alameda County, and more!

Date: January 28, 2021 | Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Please RSVP on Zoom at:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJerc-isrjksH9CZRHzvxWzOeqBA-ZFAwfC6>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Questions about this event? Contact Latoya Reed at: latoya.reed@acgov.org or at (510) 259-3833.

This WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity is an "Equal Opportunity Employer Program." Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. If you require specific accommodations due to a disability and language needs, please contact Sheraza Haniff at: Sheraza.haniff@acgov.org or by phone at: (510) 259-3842.

Public Comments

If you have comments, you would like to submit regarding this Initial Four-Year Local Plan Draft, please do so by sending an email to alacoworkforce@gmail.com and put “Local Plan Comment” in the email subject line. Public Comments will be summarized and submitted to the California Workforce Development Board as required.

Email Announcement of Public Comment Period

Dear Esteemed Workforce Partner,

We are pleased to announce the release of our East Bay Regional Planning Unit (EBRPU) Four-Year Regional Plan and Alameda County Workforce Development Board (ACWDB) Initial Four-Year Local Plan Draft. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to develop a Four-Year Local Plan, driven by requirements set forth by the California Workforce Development Board (State Board), and the California WIOA requires a Four-Year Regional Plan, also overseen by the State Board.

EBRPU

There are fourteen Regional Planning Units in the state – all designated by the State Board. The East Bay Regional Planning Unit comprises the four East Bay WDBs serving Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and the Cities of Oakland and Richmond. These four WDBs collaborate to initiate, plan, and implement regional projects and initiatives that are aligned with the East Bay region’s labor market. The EBRPU Four-Year Regional Plan was developed with input from partners and stakeholders and describes goals and strategies for building regionally coordinated workforce services to meet the needs of employers and job seekers anchored by equity and inclusion.

ACWDB

The ACWDB is a 27-member employer-led oversight body, established to oversee WIOA Title I programs in Alameda County. ACWDB develops strategic partnerships to address workforce issues and sets local program policies in alignment with WIOA to ensure comprehensive services for job seekers, youth, and businesses. ACWDB's Initial Four-Year Local Plan Draft was also developed in partnership and collaboration with workforce partners and stakeholders.

30-day Public Comment

Fulfilling requirements of the State Board, both plans are now open for public comment. Please see details below for instructions for locating both plans and submitting public comments:

- The EBRPU Four-Year Regional Plan is attached and can also be found at: [EBRPU Four-Year Regional Plan](#). Public comment is being accepted through April 19, 2021. If you have comments you'd like to submit regarding the EBRPU's Four-Year Regional Plan, please submit directly to: regionalplancommentebrpu@gmail.com.
- ACWDB's Initial Four-Year Local Plan Draft is attached and can also be found at: [ACWDB Initial Four-Year Local Plan Draft](#). Public comment is being accepted through April 16, 2021. If you have comments you'd like to submit regarding ACWDB's Initial Four-Year Local Plan Draft, please put "Local Plan Comment" in the subject line of your email and submit directly to: alacoworkforce@gmail.com.

We want to thank you for your engagement and involvement in this process and we look forward to partnering with you!

Public Comments Summary

Three public comments were received between March 12, 2021, when ACWDB's Local Plan was released and April 16, 2021 when the public comment period closed:

Comment 1

Comment 1 originated from Bay Area Transitional Age Workforce Initiative, who prompted ACWDB to include content that reflects the critical needs of justice-involved and foster youth and young adults in programs and strategies:

“Given the tremendous economic and social impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is even more imperative that local workforce boards address the critical needs of current and former foster youth, those involved with the justice system and young adults experiencing homelessness. We are hoping your plan has *specific* strategies to engage and support these populations, even though it was not specified in the state guidance on local and/or regional plan development.”

Suggested Sample Plan Language:

“The (BOARD NAME/REGION) recognizes the significant barriers that systems-involved youth and young adults experience in connecting to workforce services, 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 (BOARD NAME/REGION) 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 the critical service and opportunity gaps these young people face.”

ACWDB Response: Comment 1 is critical and has been incorporated on page 49 of this Local Plan.

Comment 2

Comment 2 originated from our partner at the Department of Rehabilitation, who shared comments related to accessibility and specifically asked to add content to this Local Plan related to the accessibility of marketing materials and ensure that all documents are accessible. Specifically:

“I would hope that we could include – ensuring that marketing materials, brochures, and flyers are accessible for individuals with disabilities.”

And in checking the accessibility of both ACWDB’s Four-Year Local Plan and the East Bay Regional Planning Unit (EBRPU) Four-Year Regional Plan, the commenter added a tip:

“PDFs need to have structure in order for assistive technology to navigate the contents in the document. This structure comes from the tags. The EBRPU Regional Plan contains very little tags which will need to be addressed, in order for the document to be accessible. The ACWDB Initial Four-Year Plan contains tags but you may want to check the reading order and tag type to ensure 1) the logical flow of the document is correct and 2) the correct tags are assigned. There is a screen reader software, Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA), that you could download for free to test the documents.”

ACWDB Response: Comment 2 is a critical and ensures inclusion. ACWDB staff took immediate actions to incorporate the suggested language regarding accessible marketing materials, which can be found on page 18 of this Four-Year Local Plan.

ACWDB staff also took steps to update this Four-Year Local Plan with accessibility features, while alerting and prompting the EASTBAY *Works* Coordinator to ensure that the Four-Year Regional Plan would also be updated to meet accessibility standards. ACWDB's Four-Year Local Plan and the EBRPU Four-Year Regional Plans were updated to include accessibility features. An announcement that both plans had been revised to include accessibility features was released on March 26, 2021:

“Dear Esteemed Workforce Partners and Stakeholders,

This is an update to a previous email sent on March 12, 2021 to inform you that the Alameda County Workforce Development Board's Initial Four-Year Local Plan has been updated to include accessibility features, which can be found on our website at: [Accessible Four-Year Local Plan](#).

The East Bay Regional Planning Unit's Four-Year Regional Plan has also been updated to include accessibility features which can be found at: [PY2021-24 Regional Plan](#).”

Comment 3

Comment 3 originated from the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Oakland, who shared the following comments:

“Serving the Bay Area's refugee and immigrant communities since 1975, the IRC is a leading expert in providing client-centered, culturally and linguistically responsive, and trauma informed services, including: employment and career development, financial education and training, asset building and income supports, food security, housing assistance, vocational ESL, health and wellness, and immigration legal services.

IRC serves approximately 900 English language learners per year across Alameda and Contra Costa counties. IRC's approach to economic

empowerment services includes 1) workforce development programs to help people find jobs and build careers 2) Financial capability programs including financial education and coaching, and 3) Integrated mission-aligned financial products; because refugees and immigrants are so often shut out of mainstream financial institutions and access to credit, IRC offers financial products through its subsidiary the Center for Economic Opportunity.

We appreciate the thoughtful research, analysis, and planning reflected in the Alameda County Workforce Development Board's 2021-2024 Local Plan draft. We were particularly heartened by the draft plan's discussion of specific strategies to better serve immigrants and refugees, including coordinating more closely with immigrant-serving [community-based organizations] CBOs and raising awareness of the increased flexibility regarding the ETPL, which in our experience has been a barrier for English language learners to accessing WIOA-funded trainings.

Finally, although refugee resettlement numbers saw a historic decline under the Trump administration, the Biden administration pledged to restore the refugee admissions ceiling to 125,000, and refugee resettlement agencies like IRC expect a markedly higher number of arrivals in the coming years. It is therefore critical that the ACWDB continue to engage with local immigrant-serving CBOs and dedicate adequate resources to ensuring refugee and immigrant jobseekers enjoy equal access to the WIOA system and WIOA Title I services in particular.

ACWDB's Response: Comment 3 is an important reminder that demographic shifts will take place and service providers need to be equipped appropriately. Starting on July 1, 2021, ACWDB is shifting to a new program model (Career Services Collaborative), which was referenced in this Local Plan, that calls for greater traction with CBOs that have expertise in working with specialized groups with

barriers to employment. This program model shift will assist in reaching those in our local area who are marginalized in the local labor market and help us reach equitable access.

We also look forward to continuing our working relationship with the Workforce and Benefits Administration and their service provider community (including providers like the IRC), to promote synergies between programs, while removing as many barriers as possible within existing WIOA title I programs, so that all participants can flourish and succeed in the labor market.