

Capital Region

a. Provide a description of the LWDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, specifically addressing how to improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, as well as other strategies for serving out-of-school youth and adults who have low literacy skills, are English Language Learners, or lack a high school diploma or the equivalent.

The Capital Region's strategic vision is to ensure that local residents and participants are up-to-date with the latest job trends, training opportunities, and available services offered within the Capital Region LWDB and its One Stop Career Centers. This vision involves identifying the local industries of education and healthcare, leisure and hospitality, and trades, which have seen an up-tick in job demand. The LWDB will then be able to identify the necessary skills and develop training programs that help increase the skill sets of employees within the given industries. Additionally, this plan involves strengthening the relationships between the LWDB and Title II service providers in the Capital Region, to ensure that all participants who may lack basic education, be out-of-school youth, and English Language Learners have the opportunity to reach his/her career goals and become self-sufficient by entering post-secondary education or training.

By partnering with businesses in the chosen industries and identifying the skills gaps of area job seekers, the LWDB will bring the Title II Educational providers together with the businesses to develop curriculums and engage those identified individuals to fill that regional skills gap. This industry-led training will ensure that the businesses have direct input into the training to receive a trained workforce, thus resulting in industry-recognized post-secondary credentials.

The Capital Region LWDB has a prime goal of improving access to activities leading to recognized post-secondary credentials. The LWDB will accomplish this by:

- Maintaining and updating the Eligible Trainer Provider List and distribute to community service providers.
- Developing and maintaining rooted relationships with Title II service providers who deliver services to low-literate, English Language Learners, and out-of-school youth.
- Creating career pathway training and workshop materials that will be distributed to community partners. The materials would highlight trainings and workshops such as: resume writing, how to navigate the NYS job bank, interviewing techniques, career assessments, training opportunities, available funding, etc.

b. Provide a description of how the LWDB will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services provided through the NYS One-Stop Career Center system for Title II participants with barriers to employment.

The Capital Region WBD has a long-standing collaborative relationship with the current area Title II providers and will look to continue and strengthen this partnership. The Title II providers in the past have been not only approved training providers, but also integral catalysts in creating and ensuring the

skill enhancement of participants with barriers to employment, through partnerships with our One Stop Career Centers on various programs and initiatives. We highly value the Title II providers' expertise in our region and given their important role in our community, one of the Capital Region WDB positions is reserved for a Title II provider. The current appointed provider has played an integral role and been very active participant in promoting the collaboration of education and workforce development in the Region.

The Capital Region WDB will continue these partnerships, as well as work to expand access to these participants through:

- Collaboration directly with case managers or counselors of Title II programs to help transition participants to post-secondary education or training programs.
- Co-creation of a Participant Career Plan that will help identify participants' career goals and barriers.
- Conducting off-site sessions to Title II sites to help alleviate transportation barriers and increase cross-program referrals.
- Inviting Title II staff to the One Stop to meet with Career Center staff and potential participants.
- Identifying funding opportunities for Title II participants.
- Assisting in identifying higher-education credential evaluators for English Language Learners who have degrees from their home countries.
- Collaborating with local childcare facilities to support adult learners who have children under the age of 5 years.

For the Title II participants with barriers to employment, some may have disabilities. The Capital Region LWDB is one of two areas in the State awarded the Disability Employment Initiative. Funding from USDOL under this grant is used to support two regional Disability Resource Coordinators and healthcare career pathways training for individuals with a disability. The purpose of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) is to expand the capacity of American Job Centers (AJCs) to improve employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities (including those with significant disabilities). It will accomplish this by increasing their participation in career pathways systems and successful existing programs in the public workforce system in partnership with community colleges and other education partners, human services, businesses, and other partners. These career pathways systems are capitalizing on the flexibility that the career pathways model provides, to use innovative service delivery strategies. The Capital Region DEI Project supports job-driven approaches to equip individuals with disabilities with the skills, competencies, and credentials necessary to help them obtain in-demand jobs, increase earnings, and advance their careers. This is accomplished by:

- Improving the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, who are unemployed, underemployed, or receiving Social Security disability benefits, by refining and expanding services available through the AJCs to connect them to existing successful career pathways programs;
- Providing more and diversified job-driven training opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including work-based training approaches such as on-the-job training,

summer youth employment, Registered Apprenticeships, internships, and other paid work experience;

- Increasing the number of individuals with disabilities who earn credentials, including high school diplomas, industry-recognized certificates, and two-year and four-year postsecondary degrees that enable them to compete for employment along a career pathway in high-demand and emerging occupations;
- Facilitating academic and employment transitions, including among individuals who may have low literacy and low skills proficiency or other challenges to employment;
- Incorporating flexible approaches to designing and providing training, supportive services, and innovative workplace strategies that fit the schedule, learning styles, and life circumstances of all participants, including individuals with disabilities;
- Testing customized employment service strategies within the public workforce system to help jobseekers with significant disabilities participate in career pathways programs;
- Building effective community partnerships and collaborations across multiple service delivery systems that leverage public and private resources to improve services to individuals with disabilities;
- Promoting more active engagement with the business sector to identify the skills and support that workers with disabilities need and to better communicate these needs to the workforce system and its partners, education and training providers, job seekers, and state decision-makers;
- Promoting and document the effective “blending” and “braiding” of resources and cost-sharing across systems to increase and improve services to individuals with disabilities;
- Creating systemic change by establishing partnerships, processes, policies, and programs that better connect education, training, workforce, and supportive services to improve employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities in existing career pathways programs; and
- Strengthening the connection between the AJCs and VR state grants through co-location, joint training, and other partnership activities.

c. Identify how the LWDB will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment in academic and training programs.

The Capital Region LWDB has always looked at Career Pathways as an end goal for participants to gain self-sufficiency. Recently, the LWDB was one of two areas in NYS awarded the USDOL Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Career Pathways Project to serve individuals with disability barriers to employment. The potential for multiple career pathways in the health care industries as well as a ladder to self-sufficiency, have made this an excellent avenue for participants. Through this career pathways project, we have collaborated with Schenectady County Community College’s Health Professional Opportunity Grant (HPOG) for co-enrollment and partnership of academic and training programs. This federal grant serves individuals in healthcare career pathways training based on what the industry is demanding for skill sets.

As part of a NYSDOL grant the greater Capital Region received, a career pathways tool was developed to expand what we are doing in healthcare to other occupational areas. A major portion of this project focused on the advanced manufacturing industries and the skills gaps for entry-level manufacturing workers – the first rung of the manufacturing career ladder. The study commissioned concluded that a basic manufacturing skills training program is needed and that this training program should include a two- or three-step process, to ensure advancing up the career ladder in the manufacturing field. This echoes what we have been hearing from the business community on not only their lack of entry-level workers, but also the lack of retention and advancement of their current workforce that is aging out. The next step in this process is bringing together our academic partners in higher and adult education to develop industry-led and recognized manufacturing career pathways training programs.

In addition, the Capital Region WDB, in collaboration with the Capital Region Business Services Team and the Capital Region Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC) has been consistently working and meeting with area businesses to create career pathways in the demand industries identified. Listening to the needs of businesses is paramount for successful career pathways projects and needs to be led by the businesses in partnership with academic and training programs.

To ensure successful career pathways through co-enrollment in academic and training programs, the Capital Region WDB will:

- Identify entry-level positions and training opportunities within the local industries for participants who do not have their high school diploma or equivalent.
- Ensure that Title II service providers are incorporating employability skills through case management and instruction.
- In addition to providing out-of-school youth with internships through the Youth Build Programs, participants will also be co-enrolled in Title II programs so they can achieve the High School Equivalency Diploma.

d. Provide a description of how the LWDB will “support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including those authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to support service alignment.”

The over-arching goal of the Capital Region WDB is to ensure successful workforce development and training programs which meet the needs of the community and the businesses. This is consistently done in the Capital Region through collaborations with many different partners and the LWDB will often act as the facilitator to bring these partners together to develop successful programming. Several of our staff serve on Higher Education and Perkins Advisory Boards, where input is necessary in dove-tailing workforce development, education and training, and economic development and empowerment.

The Capital Region LWDB will continue to foster these relationships and serve as the catalyst in bringing the workforce development needs of the community to the forefront. This can be accomplished by:

- Continuation of the Greater Capital Region Workforce Coalition whose purpose is exactly what is described in the State Plan; that of bringing the core partners together. The Greater Capital Regional Workforce Coalition has developed out of collaboration between the four local workforce development boards of the Capital Region; Saratoga-Warren-Washington; Columbia-Greene; and Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie that goes back to 2001. In addition to the WDBs, other partners have included: state, regional and local economic development agencies, educational institutions, local government, organized labor, education, and private businesses. While the core partnership has undergone a number of changes as its mission has evolved, the commitment to developing a highly skilled and technologically sophisticated workforce that is aligned with the current and future needs of business and industry remains. This Coalition, which meets 4 to 6 times a year, has through the Greater Capital Region Workforce Development Boards, sponsored two Regional Workforce Summits and a Regional State of the Workforce Report.
 - The Capital Region LWDB, in conjunction with the Capital Region One Stop System Operator, will hold partner meetings throughout the year, also bringing the core partners and Perkins programs together to ensure seamless delivery of services to all participants. During these meetings, we will seek to share best practices, identify other critical needs and areas of improvement such as recruitment and retention, better prepare for unforeseen jobs and business shifts in the area, plan for training accordingly to meet those shifts as well as any deficiencies identified for “just in time” training, among other pertinent job market issues.