**Orange County Title II**

**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 following describes the Orange County Workforce Development Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing a skilled and educated workforce.

In accordance with the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), the OCWDB, through its grant recipients, implements several services that assist adults:

- to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
- to complete a secondary school education and transition to postsecondary education and training through career pathways;
- who are immigrants and English language learners (ELLs) to improve the English skills, including reading, writing, speaking and comprehension, and mathematics skills, leading to employment or advancement in employment, as well as knowledge of the United States system of government and concepts of individual freedom and responsible citizenship;
- who are parents or caregivers to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children, and lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their families;
- to access support services that improve the student proficiency necessary to function effectively in adult life, including areas of employment, further education, or employment-related training; and
- to expand their options for services from multiple partners in the community, thereby supporting adults in reaching personal goals and objectives.

Additionally, the OCWDB, through its grant recipients, provides adults with sufficient basic education to enable them to:

- acquire the basic education skills necessary for literate functioning;
- participate in job training and retraining;
- obtain and retain employment; and
- continue their education at least to the completion of secondary school and preparation for postsecondary education.

Under OCWDB's oversight, Adult Education Literacy (AEL) programs provide the following essential components:

1. Adult Basic education (ABE);
2. Programs for Adult ELLs
3. Adult secondary education, including programs leading to a high school equivalency certificate or a high school diploma;
4. Instructional services to improve the student proficiencies necessary to function effectively in adult life, including accessing further education, employment-related training, or employment;
5. Assessment and guidance services related to items 1-4; and

6. Collaboration with multiple partners in the community to expand the services available to adult learners, prevent duplication of services, and enable partners to provide added value to participants through service alignment.

OCWDB is committed to making long-term investments that enhance the capacity of providers to implement research-based models, including programs that support concurrent education and workforce training and distance learning, and services that result in employment advancement for students. To these ends. the OCWDB promotes innovative career pathway programs and opportunities for students to gain incremental marketable skills and reach their goals. The use of innovative strategies, often leveraging interagency collaborations, allows programs to generate positive employment and workforce training outcomes, while simultaneously serving more students at a range of functional levels.

OCWDB encourages activities that uphold the following priorities:

- Expand integration with the Board and One Stop Centers;
- Establish or expand partnerships with community colleges and other training organizations that create greater opportunities for adult learners to transition to postsecondary education and workforce training programs; and

- Develop innovative strategies to meet the needs of adult learners based on local resources, including strategies that enhance and support, and use educational delivery mechanisms that facilitate the immediate delivery of services to students; or facilitate the progress of students from standard AEL programs toward a service delivery activity that results in employment, a training certificate or certification, or college degree.

**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 Orange County Workforce Development Board has a long and successful history of serving high priority, disadvantaged youth and adults through its workforce service activities. The OCWDB, through the two certified One Stop Career Centers (located in Newburgh and Middletown) houses a significant number of Employment and Training TANF staff that are co-located there. The OCWDB-ETA provides WIOA Title I Out Of School Youth HSEQ TASC Programs in both Newburgh and Middletown. These Title I Programs are coordinated, leveraged, and packaged directly with WIOA Title II WIOA agencies and educational providers. The Title I WIOA Youth funding is contracted out to SUNY Orange (also a recipient of Carl Perkins funding and a certified TASC provider) in Middletown and Best Resource Center in Newburgh (also a State Ed. certified TASC provider). ESL services are also provided by both SUNY Orange and Best Resource Center. The American Job Centers also collaborate with Orange-Ulster BOCES in Newburgh and Middletown for TASC activities. Orange-Ulster BOCES is currently a WIOA Title II subcontractor. Orange-Ulster BOCES is also a Literacy Zone Provider in Orange County. Our American Job Centers work very closely with the above providers to develop career pathway opportunities as well as post-secondary education and certifications. Both SUNY Orange and Orange-Ulster BOCES are certified WIOA Title I vocational skills trainers for the OCWDB, and serve large numbers of WIOA Title I enrollees in high demand occupational training areas. Because both of our American Job Centers are

located in high poverty urban areas (high dropout rate, high unemployment, high public assistance, limited English speaking, disabled, ex-offenders, Food Stamp eligible, etc.), the OCWDB can readily identify, recruit, enroll, train and place the above referenced target populations. The OCWDB also offers an EN (Employment Network) Ticket to Work Program through its Disability Resource Coordinator co-located in both the Newburgh and Middletown American Job Centers.

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

Career Pathways align major education, training, and workforce development programs to meet the skill needs of students, jobseekers, and workers; and the skill requirements of employers in high-demand industries and occupations.

Career Pathways provide a valuable strategy for organizing and improving the effectiveness of education and training:

- Raising skill levels, credential attainment, employment, and career advancement for all students, jobseekers, and workers, but particularly for low-skilled populations;
- Boosting the effectiveness and relevance of education and training;
- Meeting employers' needs for skilled workers, spurring productivity and economic growth of businesses, industries, and regions; and
- Building a comprehensive, coherent workforce development system;
- Collecting, analyzing, and sharing labor market information;
- Providing skills assessments, skills matching, and career navigation functions, including the identification of skills gaps where training is needed;
- Providing counseling and support services;
- Providing access to and funding for training; and
- Providing job search assistance;
- Providing support for research, development, and capacity building;
- Convening or assisting in the convening of key program partners;
- Using labor market information to identify high-demand employers and industry sectors in the state or region;
- Facilitating or convening sector partnerships;
- Working with partners to identify a common vision, mission, and goals;
- Sharing existing community asset audits or participating in such audits;
- Comparing the skills requirements of employers to the education and skills levels of the population, and identifying skills gaps;
- Collaborating with other partners to assess the region's education and training capacity;
- Coordinating with partners on career navigation and support services;
- Helping to identify and pursue leveraged funding and partnerships; and
- Continuously reaching out to community stakeholders, including employers, to build support for the career pathways system and initiatives.

Career pathways systems offer a clear sequence of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work-readiness standards and competencies. Career pathways feature the following characteristics:

• **Sector Strategies:** Career pathways education and training aligns with the *skill needs of industries important to the regional or state economies* in which they are located. They actively engage employers in targeted industry sectors in determining the skill requirements for employment or career progression in high-demand occupations.

• **Stackable Educational/Training Options:** Career pathway systems include the full range of secondary, adult education, and postsecondary education programs, including registered apprenticeships; *they use a non-duplicative progression of courses clearly articulated from one level of instruction to the next. They provide opportunities to earn postsecondary credits. And they lead to industry-recognized and/or postsecondary credentials.*

• **Contextualized Learning:** Career pathways education and training focuses on curricula and *instructional strategies that make work a central context for learning* and help students attain work-readiness skills.

• **Accelerated/Integrated Education and Training:** As appropriate for the individual, career pathways systems combine occupational skills training with adult education services, give credit for prior learning, and adopt other *strategies that accelerate the educational and career advancement* of the participant.

• **Industry-recognized Credentials:** Effective career pathways lead to the attainment of industry-recognized degrees or credentials that have value in the labor market.

• **Multiple Entry and Exit Points:** Career pathways systems enable workers of varying skill levels to enter or advance within a specific sector or occupational field.

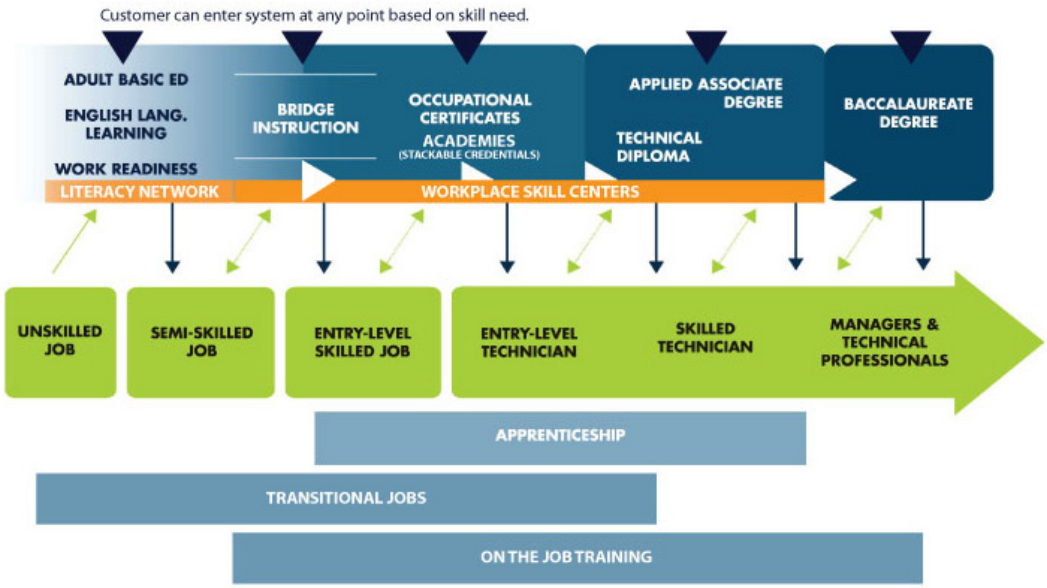
• **Intensive Wraparound Services:** Career pathways systems *incorporate academic and career counseling and wraparound support services* (particularly at points of transition), and they support the development of individual career plans.

• **Designed for Working Learners:** Career pathways are designed to meet the needs of adults and nontraditional students who often need to combine work and study. They provide childcare services and accommodate work schedules with flexible and non-semester-based scheduling, alternative class times and locations, and innovative uses of technology.

Six key elements for Developing and Implementing Career pathways Systems:

1. Build Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles
2. Identify Sector or Industry and Engage Employers
3. Design Education and Training Programs
4. Identify Funding Needs and Sources
5. Align Policies and Programs
6. Measure System Changes and Performance

# Career Pathway Platform




The OCWDB has a very successful proven track record of delivering Career Pathways Programs. The OCWDB has been the grant recipient of two Career Pathways subcontracts with a regional partnership with the Westchester Community Opportunity Program (WESTCOP). The OCWDB prepared trainees for careers in Retail, Healthcare, Leisure and Hospitality, Business Services and Protective Services.

OCWDB's goal was to help eligible individuals to prepare for and complete at least one or more of the following objectives as required by the Career Pathways Program. For example,

- Complete 60 hours of classroom instructions;
- Complete the Test Assessing Secondary completion (TASC) high school equivalency assessment;
- Complete the National Work Readiness Competencies (NWRC), or a comparative alternative work readiness credential program;
- Complete a career pathway in one of the career tracks identified in this project;
- Place participants on a respective career track;
- Retain employment for at least 60 and 120 days on the job.

The program participants benefited greatly from the Career Pathways II Program training. The comprehensive training, which consisted of educational, technical and vocational disciplines, enhanced participants' skill-sets. Ultimately, these newly developed skills prepared the program's participants for career in Retail, Healthcare, Leisure and Hospitality, Professional and Business Services and Protective Services.

The OCWDB is currently a WIOA regional partner with the Westchester WDB Jobs Waiting Career Pathway Program. The Career Pathways are primarily delivered for the Healthcare Industry. Target population is WIOA long-term unemployed. Job Waiting trainees are enrolled in a comprehensive Boot Camp (6 weeks) and then transitioned to vocational skills classroom training, OJT, or direct job placement. Trainers can be Voc Tech Schools, Post-Secondary, or Proprietary Schools.

**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 following is a description of how the OCWDB will support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with entities carrying out the core programs and other workforce programs, including Carl Perkins.

Title II of WIOA reauthorizes the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). AEFLA, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, is designed to create a partnership among the Federal Government, States, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy activities.

These activities are designed to:
• Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
• Assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children and lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
• Assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
• Assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in: Improving their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English, as well as mathematics skills; and
o Acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

WIOA provides new opportunities for the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the Employment Service to partner with Title II AEFLA providers. WIOA sec. 134(c)(2) authorizes career services to be provided with Title I adult and dislocated worker funds. Some of these services are activities that are also allowable under AEFLA, including workforce preparation activities, English language acquisition programs, and integrated education and training programs. In order to ensure consistency across the services for the benefit of participants and service providers, ETA is aligning the definitions for these services with those used by the AEFLA program.

This allows Title I programs and the AEFLA program to coordinate in the development of career pathways and to co-enroll participants so they receive the full spectrum of services for their education and employment needs.

For example, an individual could receive adult education services while at the same time receiving services from the OJT program funded by Title I. If individuals are unable to receive services from the AEFLA program, but are determined to be in need of those services by the career planner, then Title I may provide those services the program is authorized to provide.

As one of six core programs under WIOA, the AEFLA program plays an integral role in the workforce development system by providing access to educational services for adult learners through the one stop delivery system. The program seeks to increase opportunity in the educational and workforce

development of adults as workers, parents, and citizens. While playing a critical role in adult attainment of a secondary school diploma, the program also aims to assist in the transition to postsecondary education and training through the use of career pathways.

The AEFLA program will provide the following critical services and activities to support adult learners with the goal of improving access to education and training opportunities, as well as to employment:

- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- Support the educational and skill achievement of parents and family members to participate in the educational development of their children and improve economic opportunities for families;
- Assist immigrants and English learners in improving their English and math proficiency and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and
- Assist incarcerated individuals in strengthening their knowledge and skills to promote successful re-entry into society.

A central focus of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the establishment of sector strategies – regional, industry-focused approaches to building a skilled workforce. For years, many state and local workforce systems have carried out sector initiatives to meet the workforce needs of critical industries in their regions. However, WIOA sets the expectations that all workforce systems will develop and implement sector strategies and become involved in the facilitation of industry partnerships.

Implementing successful sector strategies, as envisioned by WIOA, requires a transformation in how workforce systems function at the strategic and operational levels. At a strategic level, the OCWDB can play a visionary regional role in launching and catalyzing sector partnerships as they focus on addressing regional skill gaps and creating meaningful career pathways for workers.

In a sectors approach, services are also delivered differently. Businesses within target industries may be prioritized, and services like skills matching, worker assessments, and curriculum development are all done at scale, and more in-line with demand. Business service representatives, career counselors, and a host of others must do their jobs differently within a sector strategy approach.

WIOA requires that the OCWDB engage in regional planning to develop and implement sector approaches. WIOA also gives WDBs explicit authority to engage with employers and other entities to develop and implement strategies such as industry and sector partnerships to meet the employment and skill needs of workers and employers in demand industries; and to focus training activities using a sector's approach.

**Sector Strategies and Contextualized Learning**

Building pathways around high-demand sectors is critical to system design. The OCWDB is well positioned to identify the industry sectors and clusters to target for career pathways development. Once identified, the OCWDB can help facilitate the formation of sector partnerships to identify the skills needed by key employers; engage employers in the design of pathways programs and curricula; gain employer support for pathways programs and funding; and expand employment opportunities for participants.

Career pathways curricula and instructional strategies should be designed around the jobs for which the students are training, making work a central context for learning and for helping students attain work-

readiness skills. Use of work-related content motivates students, showing them the relevance of their schooling. Contextual learning prepares students to perform at least some of the tasks required by technical courses and jobs. Combined with the use of authentic workforce materials, this familiarizes students with the world of work.

In addition to contextual learning, certain instructional methods impart the work-readiness, thinking, and reasoning skills that employers value. Adults learn best when information is relevant and practical and the objectives are clear and they learn best by doing Project-based learning, student study circles, and other active learning strategies enable students to develop a range of work-readiness skills including working in teams, solving problems, organizing sequential activities, and taking initiative. The more that curricula and instructional methods relate to the occupational areas for which students are studying, the better.

Strategies to accelerate training include:

- Compressed training
- Dual enrollment (e.g., integrated learning, concurrent classes)
- Credit for prior learning
- Non-semester-based classes

Additional strategies for meeting the needs of adults include:

- Classes offered evenings and on weekends
- Alternative locations for training, including on-site at businesses
- Multiple entry and exit points along career pathways, providing flexibility around course completion when students encounter unforeseen barriers
- Web-based training for individuals who may lack easy access to education and training facilities but can complete online coursework from home; and
- Mobile or satellite training sites for individuals in rural areas who may lack access to home computers and/or broadband internet connections

The OCWDB coordinates services with SUNY Orange's Carl Perkins activities. SUNY Orange has an excellent sector strategic vision for responding to local and regional workforce needs. The OCWDB's Employment Brokers and Business Services Team help support and deliver services here along with SUNY Orange. The OCWDB offers a variety of sector-based local and regional job fairs. Some are localized and specific industry centered, and others are regional and large scale. The OCWDB coordinates and leverages with the SUNY Orange credit and non-credit programs. The primary SUNY Orange Lead Unit is the Adult and Continuing Education Division. SUNY Orange also leverages into the regional sector partnership delivery system through the Mid-Hudson SUNY network.

Key, high-demand sector partnerships include Healthcare, Manufacturing, Info Services, Software Development, Tourism, Food and Beverage, Energy and Distribution.

In building and developing sector partnerships, the OCWDB coordinates with the Orange County Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Development Authority, Empire State Development and the Orange County Business Accelerator.