



WORKFORCE ALLIANCE
OF THE NORTH BAY
DRIVING WORKFORCE TALENT

WIOA LOCAL STRATEGIC PLAN

PY 2025-2028

WORKFORCE ALLIANCE OF THE NORTH BAY

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INTRODUCTION

The Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (hereafter referred to as the Workforce Alliance, Alliance, or WANB) was established in May 2016 as a Joint Powers Agency representing Marin, Napa, and Lake Counties. Mendocino County officially joined in June 2017. The Governing Board of the Workforce Alliance, serving as the Chief Local Elected Official, consists of two members from the Board of Supervisors of each member county, totaling eight members. The 24-member Regional Workforce Development Board (RWDB) includes representatives from businesses and partner organizations across the member counties, ensuring compliance with statutory membership requirements. Each member county hosts an America's Job Center of California (AJCC) under the CareerPoint North Bay brand.

The Workforce Alliance RWDB strives to create a sustainable equilibrium between job seekers' employment needs and employers' business demands, fostering a self-sufficient, skilled, and diverse workforce in the region. Recognizing that economic prosperity relies on the presence of well-paying jobs and a skilled workforce, the board emphasizes workforce development as a key component of economic success for both businesses and workers.

Aligned with the State of California's workforce development objectives, the Alliance's vision prioritizes the following:

- Supporting High Road Workforce Systems that include job quality, worker voice, equity, and environmental sustainability.
- Fostering "demand-driven skills attainment" via regional sector-based career pathways.
- Enabling upward mobility and economic self-sufficiency.
- Aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs and services.

To effectively serve job seekers and businesses while meeting Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance accountability goals, the Alliance collaborates closely with organizations, core partners, and stakeholders to align resources in support of career pathways and the regional strategic vision. The Alliance's approach is informed by labor market data,

industry insights, and feedback from businesses and stakeholders. The Alliance has identified six goals to achieve the above vision:

Goal One: Stay equipped with the most current labor market analysis, improve the responsiveness of the workforce system to meet the workforce needs of priority sectors within the local and regional economy, provide employers with skilled workers and expand employment opportunities for North Bay residents.

Goal Two: Work with economic development efforts to improve the quality of services available to businesses to promote hiring and support economic vitality in the region.

Goal Three: Increase access to workforce services for populations with barriers to employment.

Goal Four: Re-engage youth disconnected from the education system and labor market to help them achieve academic credentials, transition into post-secondary education, and/or secure living wage employment.

Goal Five: Streamline and coordinate policy and administration across core partners/funding streams.

Goal Six: Strengthen policy and programmatic coordination between the workforce system and the region's education system, to ensure that students and graduates are prepared to enter the region's workforce, and are earning industry valued credentials, certificates, and degrees.

I. WIOA CORE AND REQUIRED PARTNER CO-ORDINATION

The Workforce Alliance is dedicated to developing strategic solutions to workforce challenges, fostering economic prosperity for both workers and businesses across Lake, Marin, Mendocino, and Napa counties. In its role as a convener, the Workforce Alliance brings together the partners specified under Section 121 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA).

The following is a list of all required partners:

- WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy
- WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser
- WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation
- Carl Perkins Career Technical Education
- Title V Older Americans Act
- Job Corps
- Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)
- Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)
- Veterans
- Youth Build
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act
- Community Services Block Grant
- Housing and Urban Development
- Unemployment Compensation
- Second Chance
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs

Partner Involvement

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

The purpose of WIOA is to better align the workforce system with education and economic development to create a collective response to economic and labor market challenges on the national, state, and local levels. The WIOA partners are critical components of the workforce development system. The Workforce Alliance envisions a system where there is no “wrong door,” and AJCCs in each county as well as partner organizations seamlessly cross refer and serve job seekers in a coordinated manner. The Workforce Alliance works with WIOA partners to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, including those with barriers to employment.

The Workforce Alliance retains operational MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) with WIOA core and required partners in each of our four AJCCs to assure a system that offers:

- **A resource rich career and training center aligned to the regional economy** - that empowers individuals with access to quality orientation, screening and staff assisted services.
- **Contextualized learning** - focused on curricula and instructional strategies that make *work* a central context for learning and help students attain work readiness skills.
- **Industry recognized skills development** - leading to the attainment of employer endorsed credentials that have value in the labor market.
- **Multiple entry and exit points** - enabling workers of varying education and skill levels to enter or advance in a specific sector or occupational field.
- **Intensive wraparound services** - incorporating academic and career counseling and wraparound support services (particularly at points of transition).

- **Stackable educational/ training options** - that include secondary, adult, and post-secondary education and training that is arranged or "chunked" in a non-duplicative progression of courses, clearly articulating one level of instruction to the next. This strategy provides opportunities to earn post-secondary credits and post-secondary credentials that have value in the labor market.
- **Designs for Working Learners** - to meet the needs of adults and non-traditional students who often need to combine work and study, the AJCCs can provide access to childcare services, offer flexible and non-semester-based program scheduling to accommodate work schedules, including alternative class times and locations, and innovative uses of technology.
- **Earn while you Learn** - allowing students to earn money while also completing their training plan (i.e., apprenticeship model).

The Alliance's strategy is to create a local workforce system that is skill-based and moves AJCC customers through value-added services designed to increase their employability, chances of retaining jobs, and opportunities to advance in their careers.

The One-Stop Operator will play a critical role in fulfilling the promise of the One-Stop Partner MOU as they routinely meet with partners both individually and collectively to ensure that the tenants of the MOU are upheld, and both partners are contributing to and benefiting from the comprehensive One Stop delivery system.

Co-enrollment Efforts

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

The Workforce Alliance strongly believes that working together with all partners is crucial for many of the services the AJCC offers. Meetings are scheduled on a regular basis between partners to build relationships through referrals and working cooperatively together to meet the

needs of mutual clients. In addition to regular communication channels, such as case meetings, and One-Stop partner collaboration, the Alliance has a shared data system that allows easy referrals, called CommunityPro Suite. CommunityPro Suite was adopted in 2020 as a partnership between the following organizations:

- Napa Valley Adult Education Consortium,
- North Central Adult Education Consortium,
- Marin Adult Education Consortium,
- Mendocino Lake Adult and Career Education Consortium,
- Workforce Alliance of the North Bay.

All AJCC adult, dislocated workers, and youth clients are managed using CalJOBS software. The system allows partners to co-enroll in WIOA Title I and Title III (Wagner-Peyser) programs. Moreover, all AJCC partners, as noted above, maintain regular communication between organizations to foster strong partnerships. The goal is to reduce replication of services and facilitate strong support of clients on their path to achieve their objectives.

In September 2024, Napa County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and the Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB) inaugurated CareerPoint Napa, an American Job Center of California (AJCC), within the HHSA campus at 2751 Napa Valley Corporate Drive. This co-location facilitates seamless referrals and coordinated service delivery between HHSA programs and CareerPoint Napa.

One-Stop Delivery System

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

One-Stop Delivery System is described in detail in [One-Stop Vision](#) section on page 33. The Workforce Alliance strongly believes that coordination between partners allows us to streamline services and more effectively serve clients. To this end, the One-Stop Operators work with AJCC service providers and cultivate and nurture partnerships that fully engage all partners in the vision and its full execution.

To adapt to the new reality caused by COVID-19 pandemic a few years ago, AJCC services are now also offered in a virtual setting. The Regional Plan Implementation Grant allowed for revamping the Workforce Alliance website <https://www.workforcealliancenorthbay.org/> to better inform communities about available services and facilitate access to those services. To satisfy the need for remote services, AJCC staff prerecorded workshops allowing career seekers to access them through the website and YouTube channel <https://www.workforcealliancenorthbay.org/video-library/>. Additionally, a Business Directory that can be accessed here: <https://www.workforcealliancenorthbay.org/business-directory/> was created to help businesses to triage their needs and find appropriate resources.

In addition to CalJOBS, tools like EconoVue and Lightcast enhance job seeker support and employer outreach. Lightcast provides a real-time job posting report, pulling from sources like Indeed and LinkedIn to help job seekers find active opportunities. EconoVue helps identify businesses that may qualify for grants, require workforce services, or show signs of financial risk, allowing proactive outreach. These insights enable workforce staff to connect with employers about hiring needs, available funding, or support services. All assistance—whether job search guidance, grant awareness, or business support—can be provided virtually via phone or email, ensuring clients receive help without needing to visit a CareerPoint Center.

The Workforce Alliance will continue investing time and effort to create and promote relevant marketing content for job seekers, businesses, and communities at large.

Supportive Services

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

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides program guidelines for supportive services for adults and dislocated workers at WIOA Sections 3(59) and 134(d)(2) and (3). A supportive services policy was established to guide service providers in the process and clarify detailed requirements. Based on funding availability, individuals who are enrolled in WIOA programs might be eligible to receive assistance under supportive services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and assistance with uniforms and other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye wear, and Needs Related Payments that enable individuals to participate in WIOA Title I activities. When supportive services funds are not available through WIOA programs, AJCC staff uses a referral process to seek assistance through partner organizations.

In 2020, the Workforce Alliance was a recipient of COVID-19 Supportive Services special grant that allowed us to serve workers that have been terminated, laid-off, had a reduction of hours or were self-employed and unable to work due to COVID-19. The Workforce Alliance recognizes this type of assistance as valuable and needed and is committed to providing it as additional funds become available.

Physical Accessibility of AJCC Facilities, Programs, and Services

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

The Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB) and its America's Job Center of California (AJCC) partners are committed to ensuring that all workforce services are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. Compliance with WIOA Section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a top priority, ensuring that AJCC facilities, programs, and

materials remove barriers to participation. By following the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures (WSD17-01), WANB takes proactive steps to create inclusive environments that support individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment and career goals. WANB ensures that all AJCC locations comply with ADA physical accessibility standards to accommodate individuals with disabilities. This includes facility design, assistive technology, and reasonable accommodation to create an inclusive environment for all job seekers. To maintain compliance, WANB and its AJCC partners implement the following measures:

- Conduct annual accessibility assessments of all AJCC locations to verify compliance with ADA physical access standards.
- Ensure that all AJCC facilities are ADA-compliant, including accessible entrances, restrooms, parking spaces, pathways, and workstations.
- Working towards assistive technology at all AJCC locations, including screen readers, magnifiers, speech-to-text software, and adaptive keyboards.
- Make reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities, including language line being available for all partners.
- Include accessibility improvements in any facility upgrades or relocations to ensure ongoing compliance.

By maintaining compliance with WIOA Section 188, the ADA, and WSD17-01, WANB ensures that individuals with disabilities have equal access to career services and workforce programs, fostering a more inclusive and accessible workforce system.

Programmatic Accessibility of AJCC Services and Materials

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

Beyond physical accessibility, WANB is determined to ensuring that all programs, services, and materials are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes training staff to provide equitable service delivery, offering alternative formats for program materials, and working with disability service providers to improve access. The following measures support programmatic accessibility:

- Staff training on language access to ensure equitable service delivery and coordinate staff training on the use of ADA-compliant assistive technology and equipment to enhance accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- Ensure that all outreach materials, program documents, and digital resources are available in alternative formats (e.g., audio, screen-reader compatible PDFs).
- Provide reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to accommodate individuals with disabilities, ensuring they can fully participate in workforce programs and services.
- Maintain strong partnerships with the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and disability advocacy organizations to enhance accessibility and service coordination.
- Working on conducting periodic customer feedback surveys and accessibility reviews to identify and address potential barriers to service delivery.

By implementing these strategies, WANB ensures that individuals with disabilities have equal access to career services and workforce programs, fostering a more inclusive and equitable workforce system.

II. STATE STRATEGIC PARTNER COORDINATION

County Health and Human Services Agencies & CalFresh Employment and Training Services

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

All four AJCC MOUs recognize Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies in their respective counties as required partners. As CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) service providers, these agencies play a critical role in supporting WIOA clients who meet eligibility criteria. Additionally, clients may benefit from other HHS programs that provide complementary services.

At the end of PY 2023-24, 38% of enrolled Adult and Dislocated Workers received CalFresh assistance. To strengthen support for these individuals, the Workforce Alliance will encourage AJCC staff to collaborate with local CalFresh providers, expand the use of the referral process, and explore co-enrollment opportunities. These efforts will help maximize limited resources and enhance service delivery for shared customers.

Furthermore, new AJCC staff will be trained to effectively promote employment and training services to CalFresh recipients. They will also develop a strong understanding of CalFresh eligibility criteria and available services to facilitate better integration and outreach.

Local Child Support Agencies

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

AJCC staff have a long-lasting relationship with Child Support Agencies in the Workforce Alliance region, and they work together to ensure that a good referral process is in place for clients who need workforce services. AJCC staff promote WIOA programs and the available resources and make sure that child support clients who utilize the AJCCs can access the full range of AJCC services, including career counseling, job search assistance, training, supportive services, and referrals to other community services. To establish a framework for collaboration, communication, and capacity building to better serve recipients of child support services, the Workforce Alliance signed a partnership agreement with partners identified as:

- Adult Education Block Grant consortia,
- community college consortia,
- child support agencies,
- community-based organizations,
- social enterprises,
- public or private employers from in-demand sectors.

Partners agreed to the following methods and practices to guide their partnership:

1. Provide opportunities for capacity building and staff development activities, specifically for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) system, under which the WANB provides job seeker and employer services to ensure partners feel confident in their knowledge and ability to navigate the system.
2. Share agency contact information from a local to state level to ensure Partners can confidently direct and/or refer clients to the correct staff and locations for services.
3. Share aggregated program data, excluding individual client information except what is allowable undersigned releases of information.
4. Meet as necessary to ensure consistent opportunities to share information, discuss issues, and discuss projects for collaboration.
5. Provide agency and program updates, specifically those that may affect the client referral and participation process.

This agreement will continue in effect and will serve as a foundation to build upon as we continue to work with child support agencies and partners to address the employment needs of non-custodial parents.

Local Partnership Agreement

How the Local Board will 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.

The goal of the partnership between the AJCCs and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) is to improve opportunities for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Regular Local Partnership Agreement (LAP) meetings bring together partners from the Redwood Empire District, California Department of Rehabilitation, North Bay Regional Center, and educational organizations. Workforce Alliance and AJCC staff support LAP group efforts to provide employer engagement services that include sharing information on employer incentives, requirements, and best practices for hiring individuals with disabilities. Additionally, DOR staff are co-located in the AJCCs and provide support during in-person and virtual job fairs organized by the Workforce Alliance and AJCC staff. To streamline services and avoid duplication, the One Stop Operator will collaborate with DOR and promote available services to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

English Language Learners, Foreign Born, and/or Refugees

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

According to data from the end of PY 2023-24, of the 356 individuals enrolled in the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in the WANB region, 42% identified as Hispanic or Latino and 21% were English Language Learners. This data highlights the importance of ensuring that a variety of employment and training services are available to our Hispanic and Latino community, including English Language Learner (ELL) individuals. Workforce Alliance will work with AJCC bilingual staff to improve service to our ELL population, foreign born, and/or refugees. Additionally, the Alliance will work with community partners to further understand the unique needs and barriers of marginalized groups as well as their assets as they differ from the broader population of potential clients and will look to strategies and policies that mitigate access to services and facilitate equitable service provision for marginalized populations. These, and other concerns noted in public comment statements to the regional plan from partners will be further addressed.

Furthermore, the Workforce Alliance welcomes collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs) and educational partners to strengthen services to this targeted population. Nurturing existing partnerships, the Alliance will continue to work with adult education programs to offer, or possibly directly sponsor Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language (ESL), Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL), or any other remedial education needed. When working with enrolled individuals, AJCC staff will consider and promote workforce career pathways and training, including academic programs based on individual career interests and financial needs.

The Alliance will explore bridging gaps in serving ELL individuals and immigrants by collaborating with CBOs service providers, California Human Development, Adult Schools, and WIOA programs on mitigating service connection issues and enhancing client outcomes. Effort will be put into searching for partnerships that ensure deeper focus on these historically underserved populations.

Enhancing Workforce Services for Veterans

How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Veteran Affairs, community-based organizations, and other local partners who serve veterans.

The Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB) is committed to ensuring that veterans receive priority of service and equitable access to employment, training, and supportive services. According to [data](#) from CA Census, California is home to more than 1.8 million veterans, the largest veteran population of any state in the nation. At the end of PY 2023-24, veterans comprised 1% of enrolled Adult and Dislocated Workers in the WANB region.

Recognizing the importance of serving this population, WANB collaborates with local Veterans Affairs offices, community-based organizations, and other partners to connect veterans with career pathways, wraparound services, and opportunities for economic mobility. Through these partnerships, WANB aims to enhance outreach efforts and strengthen support systems that empower veterans in their transition to stable, fulfilling careers. To support veterans in their transition to civilian employment, WANB and its America's Job Center of California (AJCC) partners implement the following strategies:

- Partnering with local Veteran Representatives to provide specialized employment support, with the LVER maintaining relationships with veteran-serving community-based organizations.
- Ensure veterans receive priority access to WIOA-funded services, including training, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities.
- Host veteran-focused hiring events and information sessions in partnership with local employers, Veteran Affairs, and business associations.
- Offer dedicated case management for veterans through AJCC staff trained in veteran-specific workforce needs.
- Further coordinate with state and federal veteran programs (e.g., Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, Jobs for Veterans State Grants program) to align services and maximize support.

By fostering strong partnerships and prioritizing veteran engagement, WANB ensures that veterans can successfully transition into high-quality careers, access necessary support services, and achieve long-term economic success.

Integrating Environmental Sustainability into Workforce Development

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

The Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB) recognizes that environmental sustainability plays a crucial role in shaping the region's economy and workforce. In alignment with California's climate goals, WANB collaborates with Strategic Planning partners to integrate sustainability into workforce strategies by supporting green job growth, promoting sustainable business practices, and expanding training programs that prepare workers for careers in clean energy, climate resilience, and environmental conservation.

CDBG-DR Workforce Development Program

WANB demonstrates its commitment to environmental sustainability through disaster recovery and workforce resilience efforts, particularly in wildfire-affected Lake County. With over \$4.7 million from the CDBG-DR Workforce Development Program, WANB launched the Lake Workforce Program to support sustainable economic recovery.

A key partnership with the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance (TERA) provides training in conservation, ecological management, and wildfire prevention. The program will train 100 low- to moderate-income residents, offering 14 supportive services to ensure long-term employment success. Emphasizing wildfire mitigation, it equips participants with skills in prescribed burns, defensible space creation, and habitat restoration, fostering careers in fire-adaptive land management.

Additionally, the program includes acquiring a 140-acre site as TERA's permanent base, repurposing structures for offices, training facilities, and gathering spaces, with four ADA-accessible parking spaces to enhance inclusivity.

High Road Clean Transportation Career Pathways

The High Road Clean Transportation Career Pathways project aims to research, design, and pilot a model for expanding equitable access to clean transportation careers in San Rafael and Oakland, where transportation contributes over 60% of greenhouse gas emissions. This initiative aligns with California's Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Action Plan and the San Rafael Equitable Low Carbon Economy Plan, which identify green transportation careers as a priority for economic and environmental sustainability.

WANB supports this effort by providing not only labor market data (LMI) but also regional insights from our workforce programs and business engagement efforts across Marin, Mendocino, Napa, and Lake counties. Through tools like Lightcast, EconoVue, and CalJOBS, as well as feedback from AJCC services, employer outreach, and industry partnerships, WANB helps assess regional job demand, workforce gaps, and employer needs. This ensures that clean transportation career pathways are developed based on both data-driven analysis and direct input from local businesses, job seekers, and workforce stakeholders, making them more relevant, accessible, and scalable across the Bay Area.

Marin Community Foundation

Additionally, WANB has partnered with the Marin Community Foundation to explore climate-related worker training programs. These discussions aim to develop workforce strategies that support environmental sustainability and economic resilience, particularly through clean energy and conservation.

Beyond these initiatives, WANB and its partners are committed to advancing sustainability-focused workforce development through strategic initiatives that align training programs with the evolving green economy:

- Strengthen partnerships with industry leaders and training providers to develop workforce pipelines in wildfire mitigation, ecological restoration, and sustainable infrastructure.

- Partner with economic development organizations to support workforce training in sustainable industries by aligning programs with regional economic priorities and employer needs.
- Collaborate with community-based organizations (CBOs) and workforce partners to expand access to sustainability-focused career pathways for priority populations.

By integrating environmental sustainability into workforce development strategies, WANB ensures that the region's workforce is equipped for the jobs of the future while actively contributing to California's long-term sustainability goals.

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III. WIOA TITLE I COORDINATION

Digital Fluency

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

The COVID-19 pandemic brought additional barriers in serving the most vulnerable populations. Workforce Alliance and AJCC staff had to pivot to virtual services and learn new techniques for engaging with job seekers and employers. In early May 2020, staff was attending a week-long *Training Online Essentials* offered by UC San Diego Extension. The purpose of this training was to provide trainers with fundamental strategies and proven tools to support online delivery of sessions and workshops. *Training Online Essentials* is built upon a solid foundation of best practices in adult learning and online teaching and can be used with any learning platform in synchronous and asynchronous environments.

Additional resources to learn best practices and training topics are blogs, webinars, and workshops from Workforce GPS, EDD, and California Workforce Association. Workforce Alliance will utilize any available resources to help staff increase their digital literacy.

Cultural Competencies & Trauma-Exposed Populations

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

The Workforce Alliance will continue to identify training opportunities that address cultural competency and sensitivity. We will work with our other regional Workforce Boards to continue the practice of opening up training opportunities to all North Bay regional staff and we will send our

AJCC staff to other partner provided training professional development sessions in this arena. Specifically, we will seek to:

- Ensure mandatory training for all staff and partner staff in Trauma-Informed Care, equity and inclusion, including cultural competency, mental health, and best practices on how to serve/engage with our priority populations.
- Ensure training to better understand justice involved individuals and their needs.
- Ensure a rotation of guest speakers from local and regional partner agencies that will present at partnership meetings on topics that will better prepare us to understand and address trauma exposed populations and cultural competencies.
- We will continue to educate ourselves on best practices within the industry to better address the needs of trauma exposed clients and increase our cultural competencies. An example is provided here <https://nationalfund.org/learning-evaluation/publications/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-workforce/> by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

Rapid Response & Layoff Aversion Activities

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

The Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB) coordinates workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response efforts to proactively support businesses and workers impacted by layoffs or closures. This coordination ensures a timely, data-driven approach to workforce transitions, minimizing economic disruptions in Marin, Mendocino, Napa, and Lake counties.

Regional Rapid Response Coordination

WANB collaborates with the California Employment Development Department (EDD) and other state partners to deliver rapid response services aligned with WSD16-04. Key coordination efforts include:

- Engagement with the Bay Area Rapid Response Roundtable (BARRR) – WANB maintains active communication with EDD’s Workforce Services Division and BARRR to align local activities with statewide rapid response initiatives.
- Utilization of WARN Act Notifications – WANB monitors Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act filings and proactively reaches out to impacted businesses.

Delivery of Rapid Response Services

Rapid response services provided in WANB’s four-county region include:

- Employer Support – Providing layoff aversion strategies, business retention resources, and connections workforce development programs.
- Worker Assistance – Conducting one-on-one services to connect dislocated workers with training and reemployment opportunities.
- Industry-Specific Responses – Tailoring rapid response efforts based on local labor market trends, particularly in industries vulnerable to economic downturns.

Presenters and Partners

WANB’s Rapid Response Zoom sessions for impacted employees within the WANB region are supported by key workforce and economic development professionals, including:

- AJCC staff – Providing direct workforce services and job placement assistance.
- EDD Workforce Services Branch representatives – Offering UI claims support and workforce transition resources.
- Department of Labor representatives – Covering federal workforce policies and worker rights.

- Community Health Initiative representatives – Addressing healthcare coverage concerns for dislocated workers.

Layoff Aversion Strategies

WANB prioritizes layoff aversion by:

- Early Identification of At-Risk Businesses – Partnering with economic development organizations and chambers of commerce to assess early warning signs of potential layoffs.
- Training and Upskilling Initiatives – Facilitating incumbent worker training programs to help businesses transition workers into new roles rather than resorting to layoffs.
- Business Process Improvement Support – Providing access to California’s Workforce Development Board (CWDB) layoff aversion programs, which help businesses improve operational efficiency and workforce sustainability.

Data-Driven Approach

WANB integrates labor market intelligence from:

- EDD Workforce Services – Tracking WARN Act notices and unemployment claim data.
- Lightcast – Analyzing real-time labor market trends and identifying at-risk industries and occupations.
- EconoVue – Using business financial health data to detect struggling businesses and initiate proactive outreach.
- CalJOBS reports – Assessing dislocated workers and UI claimant trends to guide rapid response strategies.

Alignment with WSD24-09 and the 2024-2027 State Plan

WANB’s rapid response coordination aligns with California’s 2024-2027 Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan, ensuring that local workforce investment strategies:

- Promote equity and economic justice in response efforts.

- Support High Road Training Partnerships (HRTPs) where applicable.
- Enhance sustainability and resilience in local labor markets.

By leveraging state-level partnerships, data-driven insights, and layoff aversion strategies, WANB ensures a coordinated, proactive rapid response system that supports both employers and workers across the region. More detailed information can be found in the [Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Policy #1030](#).

Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment & Training Activities

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 WIOA Adult Program Priority of Service (WSD24-06). Additional priority groups may need to be considered to serve the local area better. The Economic and Workforce Analysis section of the [State Plan](#) identifies workforce targets such as low-wage or high-unemployment industries that could be relevant to the local area's needs.

WIOA Title I adult and dislocated worker employment training activities in the Local Area include job search and placement assistance (including career counseling); labor market information (which identifies job vacancies, skills needed for in-demand jobs, and local, regional, and national employment trends); initial assessment of skills and needs; and information about available services and follow-up services to help participants keep their jobs after placement in employment. Each program year, Workforce Alliance must spend at least 30% of the combined total of their Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA allocation on training services as defined in WIOA section 134(c){3}(D) and may apply up to 33.3% of that amount as designated leveraged

resources used for training and supportive services (up to 10% of the Workforce Alliance combined total allocation for Adult and Dislocated Worker formula programs).

Workforce Alliance adopted the [Priority of Services Policy](#) that requires at least 51% of the enrolled WIOA Adult participants, that receive Individual Career Services and/or Training Services, meet the Priority of Service requirements. To qualify as Priority of Services, the job seeker must be one of the following:

- Basic Skills Deficient
- Low-Income
- Recipient of Public Assistance

Within the classification of meeting Priority of Services, Veterans and their qualifying spouses will receive priority as described in [Priority of Service for Veterans and Spouses Policy #1010](#).

Job seekers have access to three-levels of employment services. Basic Career Services are universally accessible and available to all individuals seeking employment and training services. Basic Career Services include:

- Eligibility Determination
- Outreach, Intake, Orientation
- Initial assessment of skill levels and supportive service needs
- Job search assistance (self-directed)
- Job search assistance (staff-assisted)
- Placement assistance (includes “Referred to Employment) (staff-assisted)
- Career Counseling (includes “staff-assisted career guidance”)
- Providing information on in-demand sectors, occupations, or non-traditional employment)
- Provision of referrals and associated coordination of activities with other programs and services

- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information
- Provision of information on job vacancies
- Provision of information on job skills necessary to fill vacancies
- Provision of information on local demand for occupations, with earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs
- Provision of performance and program cost information for providers of education and training
- Provision of information on local performance
- Provision of information on availability of supportive services or assistance
- Referral to supportive services
- Provision of information and meaningful assistance filing for Unemployment Insurance benefits
- Assistance establishing eligibility for financial aid

To receive Individualized Career Services, one must be eligible and enrolled in WIOA program. These services are tailored to the customer's needs and do not require the job seeker to use basic services first. Individualized Career Services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments
- Development of Individual Employment Plan
- Group Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Career Planning
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships and work experiences (including transitional jobs)

- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance
- English-language acquisition and integrated education and training programs
- Follow up services

Training Services are available to job seekers who do not possess the knowledge or skills to obtain employment that leads to a self-sufficient wage. This includes skills upgrade training. All WIOA funded training shall lead to employment in a demanded occupation.

Training Services include:

- Occupational skills training (provided through an Individual Training Account),
- On-the-Job (OJT) training.
- Incumbent worker training.
- Training programs operated by the private sector.
- Skills upgrading and retraining.
- Entrepreneurial training.
- Customized training .
- Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition but must be provided concurrently or in combination with services described above.

WIOA Youth Program Assessment

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

The system of youth workforce activities available in the Workforce Alliance's service area are provided in conjunction with education partners, community-based organizations, and Juvenile Probation. The Workforce Alliance funds several youth service providers, who provide either directly or through referral the 14 program elements required of youth programs under WIOA. Those elements are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies.
2. Alternative secondary school services.
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience which may include: summer employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, job shadowing, on the job training.
4. Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to industry recognized post-secondary credentials.
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation and occupational cluster.
6. Leadership development opportunities, community services and peer-centered activities.
7. Supportive services.
8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation.
9. Follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation.
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling.
11. Financial literacy education.
12. Entrepreneurial skills training.

13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area.

14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

Future plans for the Workforce Alliance include regionally based annual workforce development conferences for staff and partners. Tracks will include youth services and best practices, in addition to rapid response and adult services. The goal is simple: to nurture and expand the innovative service strategies occurring within the region – throughout the region.

Grant 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.

The Workforce Alliance is responsible for the disbursement of all WIOA funds under this plan. The Workforce Alliance procured WIOA service providers from eligible parties utilizing a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Each solicitation document issued by the Workforce Alliance clearly describes the services being procured; required criteria that bidders must meet; expected outcomes per program or service category as appropriate; anticipated investment levels for each program or service category; proposal submission requirements; a summary of the review criteria; conditions under which bidders may protest the funding decisions and the process they must follow to protest a funding determination.

To ensure transparency and maximize participation, the Workforce Alliance employs a comprehensive outreach strategy for all RFPs. All RFPs are advertised extensively through local news outlets, through direct outreach, and through the Workforce Alliance's social media and website to ensure that the maximum numbers of potential applicants are reached. For large RFP solicitations, it is the Alliance's practice to hold a public bidders conference. The Alliance subsequently posts questions, answers, and additional guidance to give bidders a chance to incorporate the guidance into their proposals. Standard scoring rubrics are created for each solicitation and provided to all proposal readers with extensive directions to ensure that the review process is fair

and equitable. Reviewers are asked to disclose all conflicts of interest. Proposals are evaluated according to the criteria set forth for the RFP and funding recommendations are presented to the Workforce Alliance Regional Workforce Development Board and Governing Board for discussion and confirmation where required.

Career Service Providers

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

In August 2024, the Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB) released its WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Requests for Proposals (RFP) to competitively procure career services in each of our member counties for PY 2025 to 2028, with an option to extend for an additional three years pending performance and board approval. The process followed the Workforce Alliance, State and Federal procurement policies and regulations that provide guidance and direction for full and open competition consistent with the standards provided in [section 200.319 of 2 CFR 200](#).

The RFP process resulted in three total proposals across all four counties. In accordance with our published process, the proposals were scored and ranked by a team of evaluators based on review of materials and interviews against stated scoring criteria. Subsequently, at its November 12th, 2024 meeting the Workforce Alliance Regional Workforce Development Board (RWDB) unanimously approved the highest ranked proposer for contract negotiations with staff:

1. Career Service Provider (Marin, Napa, Lake, Mendocino) Career TEAM
2. One Stop Operator (Marin, Napa, Lake Mendocino) EQUUS

Consistent with the RWDB's action, the Workforce Alliance Governing Board at its meeting on 12/20/2024 ratified approving Career TEAM as the WIOA career service provider for

Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs and directed Workforce Alliance staff to enter contract negotiations.

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APPENDICES

Stakeholder & 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.

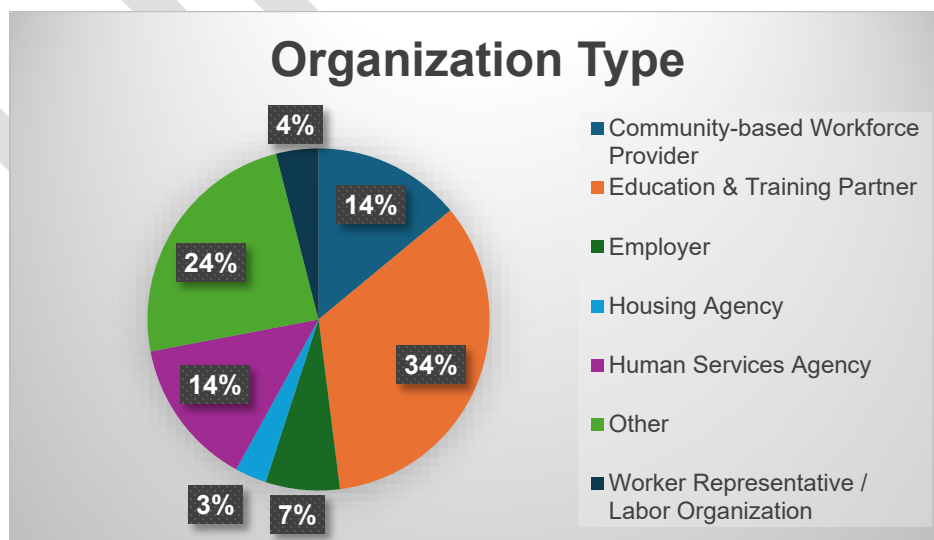
Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Workforce Development Board Partners Online Survey (Email campaign, Website)	Workforce system partners in Lake, Marin, Mendocino, and Napa counties.	WANB received 29 responses	The survey was launched on Dec 9th, 2024.

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Businesses/Employers Online Survey (Email campaign, Website)	Businesses in Lake, Marin, Mendocino, and Napa counties	WANB received 30 responses	The survey was launched on Dec 9th, 2024.
Job seekers/General Public Survey (Email campaign, Website)	Entities interested in sharing insights and ideas about the regional workforce system	WANB received 47 responses.	The survey was launched on Dec 9th, 2024.

Workforce Development Board Partner Online Survey

The Workforce Alliance reached out to workforce partners to receive insight into the workforce system design. The online survey was launched on Dec 9, 2024, and was active for four weeks. The survey was sent out in several email campaigns to over 1,300 recipients. There were 29 responses submitted. Fig.1 shows what type of organizations took part in the survey.

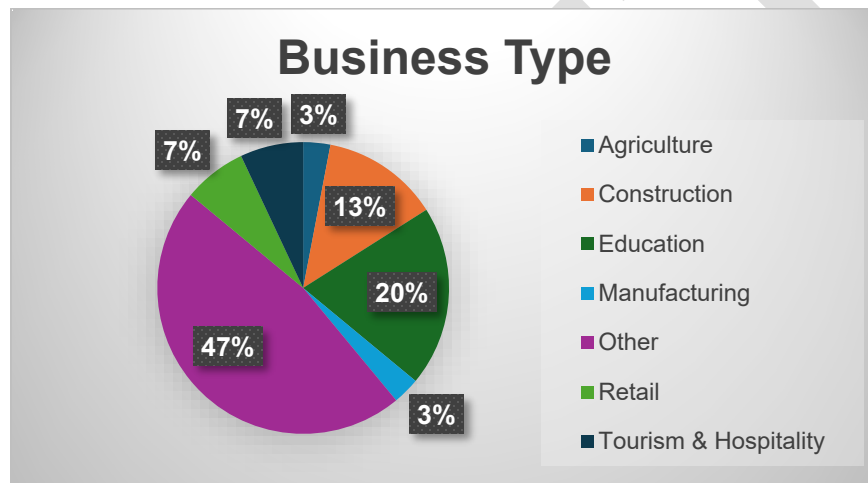
Fig.1 Organization Type *Source: Workforce Development Board Partner Online Survey*



Business/Employer Online Survey

The Workforce Alliance reached out to Business/Employers to receive insight into the labor market. The online survey was launched on Dec 9, 2024, and was active for four weeks. The survey was sent out in several email campaigns to over 10,000 recipients. There were 30 responses submitted. Fig.2 shows what type of Businesses/Employers took part in the survey.

Fig. 2 Organization Type *Source: Business/Employer Online Survey*



General Public Online Survey

The Workforce Alliance reached out to Job Seekers/General Public to receive insight into the community from a workforce perspective. The online survey was launched on Dec 9, 2024, and was active for four weeks. The survey was sent out in several email campaigns to over 13,000 recipients. There were 47 responses submitted.

Opportunities for AJCC Enhancement Based on Survey Feedback

The survey responses highlighted several opportunities for AJCC to strengthen its impact and better serve job seekers, employers, and community partners. Some respondents emphasized the need to connect more qualified job applicants with businesses, particularly for in-demand roles. Expanding vocational training programs and fostering stronger employer engagement

could help bridge this gap. Additionally, there is a great opportunity to improve outreach efforts and ensure equitable access to workforce services, especially for justice-involved individuals, low-income families, and other underserved populations.

Areas for Growth:

- Strengthening connections between job seekers and employers to ensure the right talent meets industry needs.
- Expanding vocational training programs to equip individuals with the skills needed for high-quality jobs.
- Enhancing outreach efforts to engage more employers and job seekers, especially in rural communities.

Potential Enhancements:

- Expanding training programs in emerging industries and high-growth sectors.
- Hosting more networking and engagement opportunities, such as employer roundtables and community events.
- Increasing accessibility to workforce services through localized support and digital engagement.

By focusing on these opportunities, AJCC can continue to enhance its services, support a more resilient workforce, and build stronger partnerships across the region.

Public Comments

The Local Plan 30-day Public Comment period is effective from February 12th, 2025 - March 13th, 2025. Comments may be emailed with “Local Plan Comment PY 25-28” in the email subject line to info@workforcealliancencorthbay.org.

One-Stop Vision

Introduction

The CareerPoint North Bay One-Stop Career Center system is an existing network of employment and training service providers that work with local businesses. It represents a partnership of organizations that strive for common outcomes that reflect the specific needs of the community. Unemployed workers, under-employed workers, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) clients, students and out of school youth, older workers, businesses, and industry all must to have access to the Centers to meet their needs. In order to more effectively provide services to these customers, the Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB) is seeking to strengthen the One Stop Career Center to address critical issues and advance to the next level—a professional and demand driven system of integrated employment and training service offerings in order to give the WANB counties of Lake, Marin, Mendocino, and Napa a more competitive workforce.

The WANB believes that the CareerPoint One-Stop career center system is ready to move beyond the compliance stage where partners co occupy space but tend to operate their siloed programs. WANB believes it is time for the system to evolve into one that truly provides integrated and quality services.

As such, this paper touches on the need for more effectively delivered job seeker services, business services, unified management and planning, infrastructure and marketing. These areas were identified as potential One-Stop improvement categories from WANB Staff based largely on the *Guide to Improving One-Stops through Benchmarked Critical Success Factors* that was developed by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW).

The WANB, in conjunction with program partners, seeks to assess our One-Stop system and determine how to best address the necessary characteristics of a high performing One-Stop that are identified in this paper. The WANB together with program partners will work collaboratively through the One-Stop Partners Committee to implement all of the following categories for comprehensive centers. The vision arrays service functions that need significant resources and attention down to those that require limited resources and attention. It is equally important that the One Stop Operator, as the lead agency for the One-Stop partnership fully support the direction and recommendations outlined in this paper.

Strategic Alliances

A high performing One-Stop will minimally include partnerships/collaborations between the WANB and local entities representing mandatory One-Stop partner programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including Title 1B programs, Wagner-Peyser, VETS, Trade Act, Unemployment Insurance, Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Ed and Literacy, etc.

Business services partnerships, at a minimum, will include local colleges, economic developers, and WIOA formula funded staff, as well as WANB business representatives. Firmly established and committed partnerships are vital to the success of a One-Stop Career Center. Strong linkages and leveraging with economic development partners is a critical factor in achieving a successful, balanced, and aligned workforce development system.

The following categories represent mandatory characteristics for a comprehensive and high performing one-stop career center based on effective and proven practices.

JOB SEEKER SERVICES

1. Integration – Front-line

By refocusing WANB's performance assessment from individual program performance measures to universal outcome measures (see page 7 "Performance Outcomes"), service integration can be enhanced. To further enhance integration, the WANB will direct the One Stop Operator to jointly develop a common measures training for all of the One-Stop partners' staff, and facilitate that training to partner staff.

The WANB envisions that by assessing the system at the center wide level rather than the individual program level, that the One-Stop will be able to design a more comprehensive client centered set of services that will be "service-focused" and will invigorate efforts toward integration.

Individual program goals will not be lost; they will simply fit within the overall business philosophy of the center and will be shared by all. The models listed below are not intended to diminish the need for specialization, but rather to call attention to collaboration. These approaches are from CSW's guide and can be used to assist the One-Stop Partners Committee as they implement the vision and design the One-Stop. Two options/approaches to consider...

Option 1 - Generalist Approach: This approach utilizes a “generalist” (also referred to as navigator) staff person to follow a job seeker as they go from the resource room, to assessment, to enrollment in one or more programs, and then with follow-through. The customer has a primary person to contact and develops a one-on-one relationship with that staff person. Advantages include a more seamless delivery from the customer's perspective, a more comprehensive set of services so each customer has access to all services, less staff burn-out and greater sense of fulfillment, and reduced customer losses as they move from one referral point to another within the Career Center.

Option 2 - Team Approach: This approach can take the form of a service function team or a case management team. A service function team is comprised of staff from multiple One-Stop partners who work in teams based on a specific services component. A common type of team is a business services team, but there are also resource room teams, job search teams, etc. Many of the programs provide these service functions independently, and delivering them in teams will reduce resource consumptions, increase access, and avail the team of best practices and expertise.

A case management team approach in fact is patterned after approaches found in the medical care industry, where a team of experts are assembled to meet the holistic needs of the customer. With the team approach, several staff from different agencies meet regularly to assess a customer's case. Note: The State of California is encouraging this model under their “integrated service delivery initiative”.

2. Resource Room Services

Staff in the resource rooms need to be knowledgeable on the materials available in the resource room, trained on the use of all equipment in the room, including ADA equipment, and have a

thorough understanding of the programs and services offered through the Career Center. These staff will also need to be trained on observing any special needs that customers may have and subsequently know the services available to them within the center. Resource room staff are available in the center, not volunteers, administrative assistants, or program participants. They will assist and guide customers regardless of the programs those customers are eligible for or enrolled in.

3. Re-Employment Services

In an effort to reduce the length of time on unemployment compensation, Employment Development Department staff need to be on site, providing services in the career center. The WANB believes that this integration will bolster the re-employment services provided at the One-Stop. Further, by blending the business centered focus that Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act envisioned, the WANB expects more effective job matching and quicker re-employments.

4. Ensure the Availability of Universal Workshops/Classrooms

WANB and the One-Stop Partners Committee(s) will work collaboratively with the One Stop Operator and other community service providers to identify common trainings/workshops and develop an efficient and effective training delivery schedule that takes advantage of the staffing resources within the center. Suggestions include:

- Development of new services and workshops to attract new and different customers;
- Expansion of universal services whereby customers do not have to be enrolled; and
- More effective leveraging of existing universal workshop providers in the community including the Adult School(s), College(s), Family Resource Centers, Banks, Independent Living Program(s), County Office(s) of Education and more.

BUSINESS SERVICES

The evolution of business services integration has not matured to the point where business service is a clear priority with dedicated staff time and resources from all partner programs. Ideas developed by WANB staff, based on CSW's guide to assist are listed below.

1. Business Marketing Teams

Cultivate a fully integrated Business Marketing Team that includes representatives from the Adult school, economic developers, WANB Business Representatives & Rapid Response staff and Veteran's Representatives.

2. Standardized Business Services Packet

Develop a standardized business services packet of all workforce and training services available to businesses in the region so all One-Stop staff are familiar with the services, fully understand how businesses can access those services, and are able to relay the information to businesses with a clear and consistent message.

3. Benchmarks

Establish benchmarks and set goals to assist the One-Stop in enhancing the quality of business services. Example benchmarks include local business market penetration rate and the number of repeat business customers beyond job orders.

4. Customer Management System

Increase common tracking software and provide training to partner staff, as necessary. Business data needs to be collected under one centralized tool that all partners can access. (CalJOBS)

5. Job-Shadowing

Broaden staff exposure to the business community and its needs through methods such as job-shadowing with human resources professionals, successful business services staff or local economic developers. This allows for staff development and a better understanding of the business customer.

6. Company Visits

Business services staff will visit businesses and tour facilities when possible to get a better understanding of business operations and needs.

7. Ensure Credibility with the Business Community

Ensure the enhancement, streamlining and credibility of business services. This can be assisted by sharing responsibilities with the business services staff among partner agencies. Only staff

with experience and skills in business marketing and outreach will be dedicated to working with businesses, just as those staff with counseling experience will be dedicated to counseling. Working with businesses and being credible with them requires a special knowledge and unique skill sets, therefore, only those staff best qualified will be utilized for business services.

8. Single Point of Contact

Determine how business services staff will be assigned so that marketing and outreach will be most effective. Business services staff will determine the most appropriate method to provide the best and most efficient services to businesses. Assignments may be made based on geography, industry sector, company size, etc.

9. Customer Satisfaction

Ensure customer satisfaction through a non-invasive approach to gather input from businesses. Business services staff will strive to identify what services and/or delivery mechanisms may be lacking and offer solutions for change to better serve the business customer. Methods might include utilizing employer organizations already in place, such as chambers of commerce, business consortiums, facilitated focus groups, and industry summits. *Business customers, however, will not be inundated with an abundance of unnecessary, lengthy and duplicative surveys, meetings, and other burdensome requests.*

UNIFIED MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

This category includes ideas that can assist the One-Stop Partners in the management and oversight of the Career Center.

1. One-Stop Operator/Functional Manager

The One Stop Partners agree to assign One-Stop operation duties to a single person with clear responsibilities. These responsibilities will include conducting on-site staff meetings, coordinating program services, developing referral procedures, managing common functions and common areas, developing program evaluations and outcome reports for the board, and managing center resources to ensure that center objectives are met. (See WANB One Stop Manager Contract).

In their Benchmarking report, CSW defines this One-Stop operator role as a functional manager. The person in this role exhibits strong leadership skills. Key functions for this position will be defined collaboratively by the One-Stop Partners, in accordance with the WANB's vision for an integrated Career Center. According to CSW, "while a manager may have to manage across the rules of various programs, the overall function is still considered a single process. The One Stop Operator provides clarity of functions to all partners and their staff who perform the function, even though formal supervision (hiring, firing, and appraisal) may be done by an agency supervisor of record. The formal supervisor confers with the One Stop Operator/functional manager in writing performance appraisals." Should the One Stop Partners agree to transition to the single, functional manager concept, the manager will act on behalf of the consortium and will not create another layer of bureaucracy.

2. Planning

It is critically important that the One-Stop have a corporate identity, mission and goals that are exponentially greater than the sum of its individual programs. In the eyes of the community, the One-Stop will be viewed as though it were a unified program with its own goals, objectives, management structure, and outcome measurement system. This synergy must be captured in an actionable **One-Stop Business Plan**. Optimally, this plan would be developed with a process that engages all center staff and becomes the "company line" for the work of the center as a whole. All partner staff will be given an opportunity to provide input in the development and review of this plan.

In the beginning of the planning process, the One Stop needs to identify its niche market in the community. WANB recommends that the following elements be included in the One-Stop Business Plan:

- Define the Business of the Center;
- Products and Services Available through the Center;
- Administration of the Center (Organization, Management and Finance);
- Operational Procedures of the Center;
- Benchmarks and Goals to Define Success for the Center;
- Continuous Quality Improvement Plan for the Center; and
- Marketing Procedures for the Center.

Once the plan is finalized, it will be distributed to all One-Stop partner staff. By getting staff involved in the plan and ensuring they each receive a copy, the One Stop will obtain employee “buy-in” to the plan.

3. Cross-Training

Staff in successful One-Stop centers identify with the service offerings of the center as a corporate entity and are cross-trained on all mandated partner programs in the One-Stop system. Additionally, cross-trained staff can have improved morale since they are able to deliver services to clients in a more holistic team approach. The One Stop Partners will embark on an aggressive cross-training solution. Meaningful cross-training is an on-going process that includes job-shadowing, applicant role-playing and temporary internships in the various program services. There will be no staff person who is the single repository of knowledge for a given program or service – everyone will have a “back-up.”

INFRASTRUCTURE

Given the current state of the existing One-Stop space, modification of the facility is viewed as imperative. The One-Stop Partners must advocate and obtain new and better furnishings, appropriate technological equipment, space for key features of the One-Stop and supplies.

1. Physical Design

Many successful One-Stops across the country have put a great deal of thought and investment into the layout and furnishings of their business and career resource center. Design choices greatly impact the center’s image and customer perceptions and traffic flow. Internal signage can assist with customer flow by pointing out the various locations of services throughout the facility. In addition, providing a physical layout map to customers gives them an overall view of the center’s operation and helps the customers navigate through the center.

A good One-Stop Career Center does not need a waiting area because all customers are busy with constructive activity. That is, customers filling out forms will be sitting at tables in the resource room or an area/room out of the flow of traffic. By doing this, long lines can be avoided, which can cause customers to turn away from the One-Stop Center. Also, an open, inviting, and professional One-Stop Center begins satisfying customers the minute they walk through the

door. From a welfare to work standpoint, a good center focused on employment at all times, will be considered toward work participation requirements of clients.

The business and career resource rooms will be one of the first things the customer sees when entering the center and it is important that it is large enough to accommodate customers during peak periods. These rooms are the One-Stop Center's *flagship product(s)* and consequently it is important they look professional with comfortable furnishings and an adequate number of computers and appropriate materials for customers to use. The Career Resource Center should have a feel of an employment skill center, and not a public benefits office.

It is important that all partners advocate for and work to create a more comfortable, professional and inviting environment that elevates both client and staff motivation. Without question, the following components are necessary.

- Internal Signage - Signage that can assist customers in clearly understanding what services are offered at the various locations within the center;
- Children's Area (If feasible) - A safe area with activity centers for children;
- Orientation Room - Space dedicated for viewing Career Center orientation videos and staff presentations regarding the center;
- Resource Room – Tables, workstations, display racks, books, materials, and other furnishings that would be used by clients in this room;
- Business Resource Center - Space dedicated for use by local business customers. Ideally, this center would have a separate outside entrance. The Business Resource Center should be adequately equipped to allow for interviewing, business meetings, business assistance materials and employee training. The center should also have reference materials available for businesses to use, as well as telephones, fax machine, computer, printer, copy machine and audio-visual equipment;
- Universal Classroom Spaces – Dedicated room for universal workshops; and
- Friendly and professional staff who make the center more inviting.

2. Technology

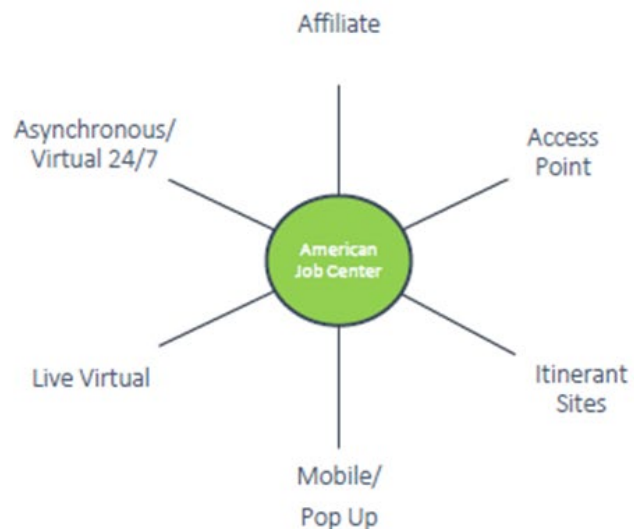
The WANB recognizes the importance of technology and the role it has on improving services at the Career Center. The following technological components will be available at a minimum:

- Computers for job search
- Projection equipment
- Audio-visual equipment
- Telephones
- Opinion meters (to measure customer satisfaction as a unified activity)
- Career Center orientation video
- On-line resource manual

3. MOBILITY

The WANB will seek to deploy a “hub and spoke” model approach to facilitate the delivery of place-based services. This approach will be made possible by the meticulous coordination of the One Stop Coordinator.

“Hub and Spoke” Model



MARKETING

Successful One-Stops have a clear brand identity that the public knows and associates with quality. In WANB counties, the many names of workforce serving agencies and their separate marketing activities leads to confusion and a lack of true identify for the public workforce system. In addition, the system perpetuates confusion on its own by the continued use of an array of names other than CareerPoint North Bay (including the WANB) on doors and signs. The strongest brands are found in communities in which a common community wide brand is used. The

competitive advantages that the One-Stop Career Center will have over the competition need to be identified (in the business plan) and made known to customers. Such advantages include career counselors that can assist job seekers in accessing skill improvement services; business representatives that can conveniently assist businesses locate skilled workers; Certified Workforce Development Specialists that have met the standards of workforce professionals; friendly, professional staff that can provide guidance and information over the phone; and the multitude of other resources found in Career Centers, that add significant value to the system.(i.e. supportive service resources) Furthermore, it is a good business practice to unify the brand name of the on-line store in the same fashion as the physical location.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

If all of the above recommendations are implemented, the WANB believes that the following performance outcomes will be enhanced.

- Improvements in core performance (Entered Employment, Retention and Earnings) achieved by customers, regardless of the programs funding (alone or jointly) in the One-Stop center.
- Increased market penetration **so that the One-Stop system is the primary resource in the community where businesses and job seekers turn** for workforce development services (i.e. # of repeat customers, # of new customers).
- Decreased cycle time to ensure that customer flow and productivity enhancements lead to customer service efficiencies (i.e. average time in days between first staff assisted service and hire date, average time between job order open date to first staff referral posting)
- Services provided are market-driven and increase the value added to economic development (increase # of registered job seekers that obtain employment in targeted industries as a result of service offering, increase # of clients obtaining wage increases in targeted industries as a result of service offering; increase in employer customer satisfaction.)
- Services are integrated at the front-line level and managed in a unified way at the supervisory level (increase # of co-enrollments; increase # of cross-trained staff; evidence of team and/or generalist approach at front-line levels; evidence of single one-stop operator

at supervisory level; utilization of redesigned Toolbox to reduced customer handoffs—integrated intake, assessment, eligibility determination, follow-up, referral process across programs).

- Increased system capacity through well-trained staff and expanded universal services, including re-employment services to Unemployment Insurance (UI) (# of UI clients who enter employment as a result of new service, # of UI clients who reduce duration as a result new service, increase # of clients attending universal workshops).
- Improved physical design and technology that supports the vision and philosophy of the One-Stop center system (specific improvements in productivity as a result of physical design and technology investments; increase in customer satisfaction).

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