



Application

141588 - WIOA Local Service Plan

163312 - Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Region 7 Local Plan

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Status: Editing

Submitted Date:

Primary Contact

AnA User Id

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Program Area of Interest

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Fax:

Agency

Organization Information

Organization Name:

Hawkeye Community College

Organization Type:

Community College

DUNS:

07-348-5716

Organization Website:

www.hawkeyecollege.edu

Address: 1501 E. Orange Road

Waterloo Iowa 50704
City State/Province Postal Code/Zip

Phone: 319-296-2320
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Fax:

Benefactor

Vendor Number

Board Details

Board Chair Name: Craig White

Title: Black Hawk County Supervisor
Provide current business title.

Business Name: Black Hawk County Courthouse
Provide current business organization name.

Business address: 316 E. 5th St. Waterloo, IA 50703
Provide current business address.

Business phone:* 319-833-3078
extension:

Board Chair business email: cwhite@co.black-hawk.ia.us

Identify counties served by Region: Black Hawk County, Bremer County, Buchanan County, Butler County, Grundy County
Indicate each county currently served by the proposed plan. Use CTRL to multi-select.

Local Area's Chief Elected Official Chair

Local Area's Chief Elected Official Chair Name: Craig White
Provide current Local Area's Chief Elected Official Chair.

Elected Title: Black Hawk County Supervisor
Provide current title.

Local Government Affiliation: Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors
Provide local area's chief elected chair current government affiliation.

Address: 316 E. 5th St. Waterloo, IA 50703
Provide local area elected official's current government affiliation address.

Phone:*

319-833-3078

Provide local area elected official's current government affiliation phone number. extension:

Email:

cwhite@co.black-hawk.ia.us

Provide local area elected official's current government affiliation email.

Core Partners

Workforce Development

WIOA (Title I) Director - Adult and Dislocated Worker Services: Christi Mason

Organization Name: Cedar Valley IowaWorks

Address: 3420 University Ave. Waterloo, IA 50701

Phone:* 319-291-2705 281
extension:

Email: christina.mason@iwd.iowa.gov

WIOA (Title I) Director - Youth Services: Christi Mason

Organization Name: Cedar Valley IowaWorks

Phone:* 319-291-2705 281
extension:

Email: christina.mason@iwd.iowa.gov

Wagner-Peyser Manager: Ronee Slagle

Address: 3420 University Ave. Waterloo, IA 50701

Phone:* 319-235-2123 317
extension:

Email: ronee.slagle@iwd.iowa.gov

Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor: Mike Howell

Address: 3420 University Ave. Waterloo, IA 50701

Phone:* 319-234-0319
extension:

Email: Michael.Howell@iowa.gov

Department for the Blind Supervisor: Joe Weigel

Address: Rehabilitation Counselor

Phone:* 515-971-7049
extension:

Email: joe.weigel@blind.state.ia.us

Adult Education and Literacy

Adult Education and Literacy Services Coordinator: Sandra Jensen

Title: Director, Urban Centers & Adult Literacy

Organization: Hawkeye Community College

Address: 844 W. 4th St. Waterloo, IA 50702
Phone:* 319-234-5745
extension:
Email: sandra.jensen@hawkeyecollege.edu

One-Stop System

One-Stop System Center Name: Cedar Valley IowaWorks
Street Address: 3420 University Ave.
City: Waterloo
Zip Code: 50701
Phone: 319-291-2705
Fax: 319-235-1068
Office Hours: M,T,Th,F 8:30-4:30 W 9:00-4:00
One-Stop Center Operator
One-Stop Center Operator Name: Christi Mason
One-Stop Center Operator Title: Workforce Development Director
One-Stop Center Operator Organization: IowaWorks - Hawkeye Community College
Attach a spreadsheet of all one-stop service locations: Region7ServiceLocationOne-StopSystem(Jan2016) (2).xlsx

Fiscal Agent

Fiscal Agent - responsible for disbursing local area WIOA (Title I) grant funds: Daniel Bogart

Provide contact name as the fiscal agent.

Fiscal Agent Title: Business Office Accountant

Fiscal Agent Organization: Hawkeye Community College

Provide the name of the associated organization.

Fiscal Agent DUNS: 73485716

By providing the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS), the agency is assuring that the it will maintain the correct DUNS number on file with the STATE (2 CFR 200.300) as well as an assurance of a valid and current Central Contractor Registration (CCR) in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) system (2 CFR 200.300).

Does the board have a separate Fiscal Agent for Administrative funds? No

Economic Analysis

Industry Sectors and Occupations

As of 2014, Iowa Workforce Development's (IWD) Region 7's largest private industry was Manufacturing, representing 19.8 percent (19,788) of the region's total covered employment of 99,709 (IWD LMI Division). The region's total employment increased by 0.4 percent since 2013, while the average annual wage increased by 2.6 percent to \$41,812 for all industries. The Agricultural industry posted the largest employment percentage increase of 8.4 percent during 2014.

Industry sectors such as construction, manufacturing, health care and transportation have large concentrations of jobs in Region 7. According to Iowa LMI data (www.iowalmi.gov), the greatest number of worksites in 2014 in Region 7 were:

Describe existing in-demand industries and occupations for the region:

Trade - 1,146

Professional and Business Services - 728

Education and Health Services -659

According to EMSI data as of November, 2015, the 10 top posted occupations in Region 7 are 1) heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers 2) registered nurses 3) first-line supervisors of retail sales workers 4) retail salespersons 5) cashiers 6) industrial engineers 7) insurance sales agents 8) accountants 9) customer-service representatives, and 10) first-line supervisors of food preparation and serving workers.

Describe emerging in-demand industries and sectors in the region:

According to Middle-Skill Jobs in Iowa, released November 2015, middle-skill jobs account for over half of Region 7's economy. It is projected that in 2022, 55% of employment in Iowa will be in middle-skill jobs. Middle skills jobs pay family-sustaining wages and provide pathways to advancement. Emerging opportunities in Region 7 are in the following sectors: information technology, healthcare, utilities, and manufacturing (IHUM). These industries provide viable jobs that are in high demand.

According to IWD's LMI Division, Region 7's top eleven occupations expected to have the largest employment growth for 2012-2022 will account for 3,030 (or 26%) of the projected 11,550 new jobs. The major occupational groups of healthcare; food prep and serving; sales; and transportation and material moving will account for 1,965 (or 65%) of the 3,030 new jobs.

Refer to question B-3.

Knowledge and Skills Needed

According to a 2014 Workforce Needs Assessment compiled by Iowa Workforce Development:

* 22.3% of employers in Region 7 are in need of workers with basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and the ability to locate and read for information

* 30% of employers in Region 7 are in need of workers with soft skills such as timeliness, responsibility, interpersonal skills, and customer service skills.

* 38.6% of employers in Region 7 are in need of workers with hard skills or occupational skills including analytical, managerial ability, physical ability, knowledge and experience.

Describe knowledge and skills needed to meet employer needs of identified existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations:

Specific credentials and licenses needed for middle skills jobs in healthcare include CNA certification, LPN and RN degree/license. In advanced manufacturing, specific credentials needed include CDL A, heavy equipment operator, welding certificate, CNC certificate, and industrial maintenance certificate.

Workforce Development Needs of Employers

A concern of employers has been the recruitment of people to live in the area as well as the readiness of the available labor force to enter employment. The Region 7 skilled labor force population is decreasing and local employers cannot find skilled workers to fill open positions. Basic skills which include literacy, numeracy, basic computer skills and organization skills, in addition to many of the soft skills necessary to be successful, were described as lacking. Included in these soft skills needs, employers identified social

skills such as basic work ethic, dependability and retention as necessary skills. Also noted by employers was a lack of availability of occupational skills including, specific occupational knowledge and experience in particular middle-skill occupations in the areas of healthcare, wholesale/retail trade, welding, information technology, education, advanced manufacturing, industrial maintenance, transportation/logistics and skilled trades.

According to IWD's Workforce Needs Assessment, skills gaps of Region 7's workforce include analytical thinking, business communication, machine operation, basic computer literacy, project management, general office software, and computer software.

Refer to question B-3. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

***OPTIONAL Additional Needs Assessment**

Attach additional documentation for regional needs:

[1461327890744_WNA Skills - IWD Region 7.pdf](#)

Upload a single PDF that includes all additional materials required to define regional needs.

Workforce Analysis

Employment and Unemployment

The unemployment rate is higher than the State unemployment rate in two of Region 7's counties: Black Hawk at 3.8% and Butler at 3.6%.

According to Iowa's Workforce and the Economy (2015), minorities and youth continued to experience the highest rates of unemployment: Blacks or African Americans (14.1 percent), youth 16 to 19 years of age (12.0 percent), and Hispanics (8.5 percent). Workers with less education also continued to experience a higher unemployment rate than better educated individuals: those with less than a high school diploma (10.9 percent), high school graduates with no college (5.8 percent), those with some college or associate's degree (4.6 percent), and those with a Bachelor's degree or higher (2.1 percent).

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data and trends in the region:

Those who experience unemployment typically have multiple barriers such as a physical or mental disability, English Language Learners, ex-offenders, lack of transportation or childcare, basic skills deficiencies or those on public assistance.

As to individuals with disabilities, individuals who are blind or visually impaired, the most current report from the State Data Center of Iowa shows the number of people in Iowa in 2013 who have some kind of disability is 357,730. The unemployment report in 2013 for Iowans with a disability was 11.0%. The unemployment rate in Iowa at that time was 4.8% making the disparity obvious.

Refer to question B-4.

Labor Market Trends

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations:

Industry sectors such as construction, manufacturing, health care and transportation have large concentrations of these jobs in Region 7. Examples of middle-skill jobs in each of these industries are carpenter, machinist, surgical technologist and truck driver. These jobs pay approximately \$770 a week. There is a critical need for workers to fill these jobs, but there is a severe shortage of workers with the desired skills and training to reach them.

Refer to question B-4.

Educational Skill Levels of the Workforce

The population of Region 7 has increased slightly by 589 in 2015 from 2014 per EMSI data. For those 25 and older, 10% have less than a high school diploma, 36% have at least a high school diploma or equivalency, 19% have some college, 11% have an Associate's degree, 17% have a Bachelor's degree, and 7% have a graduate degree or higher.

Provide an analysis of the educational skill levels of the region's workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment:

As previously noted from the 2014 Workforce Needs Assessment, Region 7 has a lack of educational and occupational skills in middle-skill occupations in the areas of healthcare, wholesale/retail trade, welding, information technology, education, advanced manufacturing, industrial maintenance, transportation/logistics and skilled trades.

Refer to question B-4.

Skill Gaps

Provide an analysis of the skill gaps for the region's workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment:

Region 7 faces a shortage of qualified workers to fill middle-skill jobs. Substantial disparities exist between the number of workers able to compete for middle-skill jobs and those struggling to find low-skill jobs. In Iowa, 34% of available workers possess low-skills, while workers with middle-skills represent 32% of the workforce. Only 12% of available jobs seek workers with low skill-sets; numerous middle-skill jobs remain unfilled. In fact, 55% of jobs require at least mid-level skills or some training beyond high school. By 2018, it is predicted that three out of five Iowa jobs (62%, up from 56%) are expected to require some training beyond high school.

Refer to question B-4.

Activities Analysis

Accomplishments in Past Year

Cedar Valley IowaWORKS accomplishments:

* We assisted with the transition of over 1,000 workers affected in a large layoff with John Deere. Through a national dislocated worker grant, we were able to open a Transition Center to assist them with training and employment. In a collaborative effort we have been able to hire 3 case management staff and 2 local union staff. The local union personnel were actually dislocated workers and will be tasked with outreach and recruitment of other dislocated workers. This innovative approach will engage and educate the John Deere workers on the different options and services that are available through Cedar Valley IowaWORKS Center and the John Deere Transition Center.

Provide a brief synopsis of the region's significant workforce development activities during the past year:

* Region 7 served 8,177 new members through Integrated Service Delivery System in FY 2015.

* Region 7 was able to make 766 new in person business contacts and provided an additional 5,175 services to businesses throughout the region.

* In WIOA Youth, nine students were placed in paid work experiences in PY2014 and 9 students graduated from high school in May, 2015. In addition, several students completed their post-secondary education and graduated from college.

* A half time FTE was placed at the Department of Corrections, both men's and women's facilities, and the probation office, working with ex-offenders on the re-entry process.

* The DEI grant purchased 5 iPads with assistive technology for people with disabilities to utilize.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
accomplishments:

* In 2014, Waterloo Area Office (WAT) IVRS successfully placed 256 persons with disabilities in competitive, integrated jobs.

* Approximately 96% of successful WAT clients remain in Iowa; working, paying taxes, and contributing to their communities.

* The increase in annual income between application and closure was 600% for WAT Job Candidates.

* Six new Iowa businesses were started or expanded in 2014 through Iowa Self-Employment Program in the Waterloo Area Office.

* Waterloo Area Office had 496 individuals referred for services at Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services in 2014.

* Iowans with disabilities service by IVRS WAT in 2014 have an income that is an estimated \$5.13 million annually.

* In 2014, students who were successfully placed into employment in the Waterloo area office, worked an average of 33 hours a week with average earnings of \$11.42 per hour.

* More than \$635 thousand was spent on tuition assistance for Waterloo Area Office students in post-secondary training to obtain educational or occupational skills training to help compete in today's labor market.

* In 2014, 42.5% of Waterloo area office referrals were students, resulting in 114 employment outcomes.

* In 2014, of the Waterloo area office Job Candidates that completed post-secondary training, 68% successfully obtained employment

HCC Adult Education & Literacy's accomplishments:

* 2014-15 was a turning point for Adult Education and Literacy at Hawkeye Community College. It was a year in which we embraced new models for adult education and parted ways with some of our long-used traditional approaches.

* We piloted the first I-BEST CNC class at Hawkeye Community College during the spring of 2015. We were able to make use of braided funds (state adult education, federal adult education, state college funds, and college grant funds) in a large-scale effort for the first time. Adult education students learned basic reading, basic math, and English language acquisition skills contextually while also learning CNC machining skills and earning five college credits. Two sections of students totaling 31 altogether completed the I-BEST pilot in June 2015. Retention was nearly 100% and results were exemplary, leading to the decision to offer a second class in spring semester 2016. Additionally, planning was begun to offer an I-BEST course in Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) in fall of 2016. CNC and CNA were chosen due to local labor market needs.

* We served over 1, 025 students during the program year. Sixty-seven students earned High School Equivalency Diplomas and three students earned Hawkeye Adult High School diplomas. Hawkeye's AEL program attained all but one benchmark last year. It is a hallmark of the Hawkeye AEL program to make all or almost all benchmarks annually.

* 2014-15 was the first full year of utilizing the new HiSET exam rather than the GED. Assessment staff learned new protocols in order to proctor the HiSET tests. Instructional staff received training on changes with the HiSET that affect curriculum and teaching. Instructors, in turn, began preparing students for the more rigorous HiSET. The new math test, especially, has proven to be a challenge for students with its increased level of difficulty.

* Work on a new orientation system was begun for students wishing to enroll in a HiSET prep class. We wanted a longer orientation that will allow students time to learn skills needed for school success such as goal-setting and career exploration. Our old orientation was simply pretesting, information about the HiSET, and school rules. The vision for the new orientation is that students will start classes more able to succeed and with more motivation to complete. Research and design on the new orientation was begun in 2014 and staff training took place. Piloting of the new orientation was begun in 2015.

* Over 400 ELL (English Language Learning) students were served in our ELL Program during 2014-15. We piloted a hybrid ELL class utilizing Burlington English, an online curriculum for ELL. Student interest in these hybrid classes is strong and more ELL hybrid classes are scheduled for 2015-16. We piloted an ELL Student Ambassador program with much success. Peer ELLs are able to assist staff and fellow ELL students in many aspects of the program from interpreting to program evaluation while also learning leadership and workplace skills. We piloted an ELL summer bridge to college class that we hope to expand upon this coming year.

* The biggest challenge that our ELL program currently faces is the growing number of preliterate

students. These are adults who have never attended school in any language anywhere in their lives due to factors in their home countries. This means they must learn school skills in addition to learning a language. Preparing adults to be literate is somewhat the same and in other ways quite different from preparing children to be literate. Two years ago, we had several preliterate students enroll in Low Beginning classes only to quit in frustration after a short time. Teachers realized they did not have the skills to design curriculum or lessons appropriate for these adults. Textbooks are not appropriate for students who cannot read. Curricular materials appropriate for adult preliterates are not abundantly available. We sought out specific professional development on this emerging topic in language instruction. Staff committed to long-term training. As teachers learned new research-based teaching methods for preliterate adults, word of mouth spread and students began signing up for these new special classes. Just two years later, we are currently running five full classes at the preliteracy level.

* A new full time staff member providing transition assistance for students wanting to enroll in post-secondary training has been a much-needed program improvement. Our Transition Specialist assists students with goal-setting and making individualized career training plans. She has helped increase the number of AEL students entering post-secondary training. Additionally, she aids in retention by spending one day per week on main campus checking in with AEL grads who are currently in credit classes.

* Contextualized computer and financial literacy skills are taught at all levels of ELL and ABE instruction. They are embedded in our curriculum and align with College and Career Readiness Standards as well as Employability Skills.

* Our Family Literacy Program celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. Begun in 2005 with federal funds, it is now entirely locally funded. We serve 85 families annually and are looking to increase that number by hiring a full time parent educator in 2016.

Refer to question B-1 and B-5. Provide an analysis of the region's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core partners.

Mandatory and Other Partners

Attach a spreadsheet of all mandatory and other partners for the regional workforce development system:

One-Stop System Partner Contact List.docx

Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Existing workforce development activities of the Core Partners include:

1. Work in partnership with economic developers from the counties and cities in Region 7 to expand the knowledge of training opportunities available to new and expanding businesses.
2. Enhance the relationship between training providers and business employers in the region.
3. Identify and expand means to share information about training opportunities to entry-level workers - especially in tune with the preparation for under-utilized populations such as veterans, ex-offenders, disabled, non-English speaking minorities, older workers, youth and families on Temporary Assistance (TANF) in the region.
4. Increase the knowledge of employers in services that can prepare them in employing people in under-utilized populations.
5. Increase the availability of workers trained and certified in technical areas, including healthcare, wholesale/retail trade, welding, information technology, education, advanced manufacturing, industrial maintenance, transportation/logistics and skilled trades.
6. Identify those who do not have a high school diploma and encourage completion of HSED through referral to AEL. Depending upon eligibility, IWD may be able to assist with testing expenses and supportive services such as transportation and childcare.
7. Encourage and expand ways to identify businesses that can be assisted by the workforce system.
8. Reduce the occupational skills gap with computer literacy classes and tuition assistance for

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing workforce development activities of the core partners:

credential attainment.

Many job seekers are not aware of the products and services of workforce partners within their region. Jobseekers may need additional services beyond what they are able to access themselves.

Local/regional newspapers & media, regional IowaWORKS offices, internet, social media and college/university career centers are the predominant means for job recruitment. Ten percent of Region 7 workforce does not have a high school diploma or equivalency. Only 30% of our workforce has some education less than a Bachelor's degree, yet 56% of our job openings fall in the middle skills gap. Therefore, Region 7 jobseekers may need additional services to qualify for and fill the middle skills jobs available in the region.

Recommendations to address the workforce needs of area jobseekers:

1. Continue to work on marketing the availability of workforce products and services throughout the communities in the region.
2. Make a variety of workforce development partner services information available throughout the region in all partner locations.
3. Continue to work with communities to find ways to address the needs of an ever growing diversity of workforce, including veterans, ex-offenders, disabled, non-English speaking minorities, older workers, those on Temporary Assistance, and youth.
4. Continue to work to develop and market a greater variety and number of skill upgrade and short term training programs to jobseekers.

5. Continue to promote the use of the National Career Readiness Certificate as an assessment to better define job employment skills levels to the employer.

6. Continue to promote the Skilled Iowa initiative as a means of connecting validated skilled Iowa workers to current and future jobs.

Refer to question E-2.

Current Level of Integration and Alignment

Workforce development and economic development have always complimented and supported one another in the State of Iowa, but the partnership has been particularly strong in the Cedar Valley Region. In recent years, having a qualified labor pool became even more critical as a component for business expansion, and the challenge presented opportunities to strengthen current workforce development relationships and to develop new partnerships. The Core Partners strategies of integration and alignment to coordinate workforce development and economic development activities include:

- * A Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber (GCVA&C) staff person regularly attends RWIB and provides an economic development update

- * The Core partners collaborate with GCVA&C on job fairs and employer related events

- * GCVA&C are invited to all Rapid Response meetings

- * Region 7 works hand in hand with all economic developers in the region in the pursuit of Skilled Iowa community designations and Home Based Iowa designation

- * Advanced Manufacturing Sector board meets every other month

- * HealthCare Sector board meets every other month

- * The Integrated Business Services Team includes a representative from Voc Rehab to improve employer communications and assessment of needs

Describe strategies and services of the core partners used to coordinate workforce development activities with economic development programs and activities:

There are plans to provide education and training among core partners. We will continue to have a yearly Professional Development Day.

IowaWORKS Business Services Reps and IVRS staff meet weekly. IowaWORKS DEI Rep attends IVRS staff meetings. IowaWORKS staff, WIOA staff, IVRS, Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) and AEL staff will meet monthly to coordinate and provide shared clients education and vocational services. This collaborative work among core partners will expand knowledge for serving individuals with barriers.

IDB, IVRS and Dept. of Civil Rights will work with each region to perform an accessibility study to include facilities, materials and workshops to ensure that individuals with barriers to employment have access to services.

Refer to question B-5.

Post-secondary educational institutions that have campuses located in Region 7 include Allen College, Kaplan University, Hawkeye Community College, University of Northern Iowa, Upper Iowa University, and Wartburg College. Other educational opportunities exist by means of extended campuses, on-line courses, vocational training, and apprenticeships.

* On December 2, 2015, Region 7 held an Education Resources Expo at IowaWORKS to include all area colleges and universities.

* The Educational Opportunity Center is a regular speaker at our monthly Discovered Resources panel during our Six Steps workshop, as well as at Rapid Response meetings.

* We work hand-in-hand with all secondary education entities in the Region presenting LMI information to students, proctoring and giving NCRC assessments, and WIOA Youth classroom presentations.

* Region 7 coordinates with Allen College to provide training opportunities for Employer Council of Iowa. They also host a VAP site for us.

* Region 7 partners with Hawkeye Community College with the Dislocated Worker Transition Center, the Wal-Mart Foundation grant, the GAP/PACE program, DEI Grant,

* We partner with Upper Iowa University, Wartburg College, Kaplan, Hawkeye Community College, University of Northern Iowa and Allen College for ongoing Job Fairs.

* Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are located on site at UNI and Hawkeye Community College full time.

* WIOA Youth staff speak to all HSED classes at HCC's Adult Education & Literacy Center to promote co-enrollment and are available on site

Describe how the region coordinates with area secondary and post-secondary educational institutions to align strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of core partner services:

during registration week.

* WIOA Youth staff speak to all iJAG classes at Region 7's high schools to promote co-enrollment, encourage high school completion and work readiness activities.

* The region coordinates with IDB's vocational training program in Des Moines which provides training for use of assistive technology and dealing with vision loss.

* The region coordinates with AEL for High School Completion and English Language Learning classes. Occupational skills are embedded within all levels of curriculum for HSED and ELL classes. Examples of soft skills or transferrable skills addressed include teamwork on class assignments and attention to attendance and punctuality as class requirement. Computer literacy is contextualized within HSED and ELL classes. Pre-literate ELLs will learn to use tablets while practicing literacy and numeracy skills; students studying for the writing portion of the HiSET test practice keyboarding and formatting skills while writing the required essay.

Refer to question B-7.

Regional Strategic Vision and Goals

Regional Vision Statement

Provide a vision statement which demonstrates alignment with the Governor's Future Ready Iowa initiative and Iowa's Unified State Plan.

Region 7's Core Partners have adopted the vision statement and goals of Iowa's Unified State Plan:

Region 7's Workforce delivery system will collaborate to build a Future Ready Iowa - a pipeline of skilled workers who are prepared to meet the workforce needs of Iowa's current and emerging industries. In alignment with the National Governor's Association Talent Pipeline vision and goals, this plan will ensure individuals are prepared for dynamic careers through an emphasis on lifelong learning while

meeting the needs of employers. Future Ready Iowa will help more Iowans attain the "new minimum" of high-quality education, training, and work readiness by bringing together education, workforce, and economic development resources and ensuring that all Iowans have access to an integrated and efficient workforce delivery system. Future Ready Iowans will be ready to meet the employment challenges of today and into the future.

Regional Vision Statement:

Description of Regional Strategic Vision

GOAL 1: Iowa's workforce will represent the most advanced, skilled, and Future Ready workers in the nation.

Strategy #1: Provide workers with the skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, and supports needed to secure and maintain self-sustaining employment.

- * Develop a needs assessment for businesses and share results with the system partners in order to develop meaningful training opportunities throughout the system.

- * Voc Rehab counselors will be trained to teach IowaWORKS workshops to offer in the field.

- * Adult Education & Literacy will provide contextualized adult education classes on an on-going basis.

Describe the regional boards strategic vision and goals and priorities for preparing an educated and skilled workforce including youth and individuals with barriers to employment:

Strategy #2: Create affordable options for workers to obtain education, training, skills, including personal and soft skills, necessary to entering and maintaining self-sustaining employment.

- * The system partners will provide soft skills training at every entry point.

- * Develop a Region 7 System marketing plan to increase public awareness of system-wide training options.

- * Increase collaboration with core and required partners to create affordable training options for skills upgrading.

- * Connect system customers to GAP and PACE programs.

Strategy #3: Ensure all Iowans have full access and direct connection to programs that work to address

essential components of reading instruction and literacy.

- * Develop a Region 7 System outreach plan to reach customers in outlying counties, offering system-wide services.

- * Offer training programs via virtual technology in all Region 7 counties.

- * Increase collaboration with core partners to enhance reading instruction and literacy opportunities.

Strategy #4: Create affordable options for workers to obtain education, training, skills, including personal and soft skills, necessary to secure and maintain self-sustaining employment. ? (Same as statement #1)

Strategy #5: Implement a data collection effort that streamlines data collection aids in accurate performance measurement.

- * Follow State leadership's lead in implementing common intake system/member profile in order to increase efficiency and accuracy of data collection.

- * Utilize Region 7 Core Partners Referral Form and follow up with core partners at monthly meetings concerning customer follow through and shared services.

- * Share data collected at job fairs and Rapid Response meetings with entire system to improve the workforce delivery system.

- * Core partners will continue and enhance current data collection systems in place.

Strategy #6: Identify duplication of services and

gaps within the current workforce delivery system and draft policies and collaborative agreements that foster a more unified and consistent approach to the provision of workforce delivery services.

- * Region 7 workforce partners will meet bi-monthly to discuss new products/services to increase collaboration, reduce duplication of services, and offer a consistent approach.

- * Continue to emphasize shared customers, shared services, and use of Region 7 shared referral form.

- * Core partners present One-Stop services in orientations.

Strategy #7: Identify and quantify employers? education, training, and workforce needs and capture those needs in a Talent Supply & Demand Dashboard to be driven by a public-private collaborative.

- * Utilize existing and develop new sector boards to be the driving force in developing workforce training and education in high demand fields.

- * Develop an integrated business service team and work collaboratively with economic development agencies throughout the region.

- * IowaWorks Business Services Team will include members of IVRS so individuals with barriers to employment will be included in the employment pool for consideration as qualified job candidates.

Strategy #8: Provide individuals and small businesses with guidance in the start-up, operation and effective management of entrepreneurial pursuits.

* Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) Business Development Specialist will present to customers on Small Business startup and resources available.

Strategy #9: Introduce Iowans to entrepreneurial skills, concepts, and provide opportunities for connection with Iowa's business leaders.

* Partner with UNI Small Business & Development for training opportunities.

* Partner with Employer Council of Iowa (ECI) to provide a variety of employer targeted workshops (i.e. writing a business plan, Unemployment Insurance for employers, etc.)

* IVRS will offer an Introductory to Small Business Startup workshop in collaboration with the core partners.

GOAL 2: Iowa youth will be afforded the best educational and career opportunities in the nation.

Strategy #1: Cultivate, develop and align work-based learning opportunities through public-private partnerships that provide learners with a combined approach to learning which infuses experiential learning into classroom instruction.

* Partner with local employers to create work experience and classroom training opportunities in high demand short term training, such as C.N.A. training.

* Create a job fair with employers who offer apprenticeships or internships to provide work experience for youth.

* Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) will provide I-BEST classes that include tours, employers as guest speakers, and job shadowing.

* Provide opportunities for disabled youth to transition from school to work-placed learning opportunities, such as job shadowing, on-the-job training, and supported employment.

* IVRS will provide Pre-Employment Training Service to all eligible and potentially eligible enrolled High School students with disabilities in Region 7.

* IVRS will provide the Transition Alliance Program Services along with Waterloo and Cedar Falls High School staff to students receiving special education services in West Waterloo, East Waterloo, and Cedar Falls High Schools.

Strategy #2: Increase availability of high quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to all youth, including disconnected youth.

* Partner with all CTE programs to offer more training locations throughout Region 7 to increase availability and accessibility.

* Co-enroll youth who have not completed high school into WIOA Young Adult Program for case management purposes and to provide incentives for completion of High School Equivalency Diploma and post-secondary education.

* IVRS will provide career counseling and guidance, career pathways information, and employment and training services to eligible youth with disabilities.

Strategy #3: Create a communication and information dissemination strategy targeting Iowa's workforce and various stakeholders including youth, parents, employers and others.

- * Increase use of social media efforts to boost communication about all system training opportunities available to the public.

- * Increase our presence in all media outlets and public presentations to disseminate system products and services.

- * Create a "youth center" or area designated for the Youth Program for participants to gather to get more information and/or be involved with the program.

- * Voc Rehab counselors will meet with parents, students, and school staff at IEP meetings and provide a system orientation.

Strategy #4: Align CTE programs for youth with current labor market needs.

- * Create an integrated business services representative team involving core partners to develop appropriate training programs for youth based on LMI needs.

Strategy #5: Introduce youth to entrepreneurial skills development and concepts, while providing opportunities for connection with Iowa business leaders.

- * Host an entrepreneur panel for young adults to educate them on business and start up strategies.

- * Partner with Voc Rehab to offer entrepreneur skills development training.

Strategy #6: Identify and conduct appropriate assessments for use in assisting youth in identifying their career goals, aspirations and the development of a career path.

- * Train staff on development of career pathways throughout the system.
- * Identify the best career assessment tools to be utilized within the system and make these available to Core Partners and those in outlying counties.
- * Career exploration and goal-setting will be a component of adult education and literacy classes.

Strategy #7: Incorporate financial literacy education and experiential learning opportunities as standard components of youth services.

- * Offer Money Smart classes within the system through virtual technology and incorporate guest speakers from the financial and credit counseling industry.
- * IVRS will work with high schools to provide Financial Literacy information into high school curriculum.
- * Financial Literacy will be included in curriculum for adult education and literacy classes.

GOAL 3: Iowa will improve the structure and administration of workforce delivery systems across the state.

Strategy #1: Create a service delivery model which is business-driven, user-friendly, and meets the evolving needs of employers.

- * Provide feedback on business needs regularly received by the Business Services Representative (BSR) team to system partners in monthly meetings.

- * Develop annual training for businesses, i.e. Employer Summit, as well as center trainings based on business needs, such as Dress for Success workshops.

- * Lesson plans in adult education and literacy classes must align to 21st Century Employability Skills and College and Career Readiness State Standards.

Strategy #2: Offer a variety of innovative options designed to meet the wide array of talents and needs represented among Iowa's current and future workers. Apprenticeships, earn-while-you-learn and other programs will engage and support Iowans in moving towards self-sustaining career goals.

- * Increase use of social media to reach customers more efficiently and to maximize learning potential.

- * Provide recognized credentials for clients upon completion of training.

- * Connect customers with businesses offering training to provide them with a pool of workers to hire from.

- * Create a partner list of services in order to promote referrals and remove duplication of services.

- * Develop a skill transfer guide to create customer awareness of the benefits of transferrable skills, including military skills.

- * Connect IowaWorks workshops via technology to

outlying county offices and customers.

Strategy #3: Bring a Diversity of stakeholders together to review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa's current and future workforce.

- * Provide opportunities for businesses to be stakeholders, such as Sector Board members and Employer Summits, to assess their needs and engage in the workforce system.

- * Host an annual discussion between Core Partners, RWDB and ECI to identify needs and create opportunities.

- * Provide updates from Core Partners at RWDB meetings.

Strategy #4: Support current and future workers in their efforts to enter into self-sustaining employment.

- * Develop career pathway plans not just employment plans and utilize labor market information (LMI) to help direct customers towards growing career fields.

- * Utilize new and existing grants to assist customers in overcoming barriers specific to job attainment process, including interview clothing, transportation assistance, etc.)

Strategy #5: Develop a referral process that allows for direct connections by and between key agency staff, which includes holding agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success.

- * Meet monthly with core partner agencies to

review referrals and report on services provided, in order to hold the customer and agencies accountable.

- * Co-enroll individuals in partner programs and collaborate to share data and track progress to ensure customer success.

Strategy #6: Create advanced training certification programs for One-Stop Center staff to ensure all One-Stop centers are operating consistently and that staff have access to the same knowledge, resources, and supports across the state.

- * Implement One Stop standards to ensure high quality customer service to job seekers, workers, and businesses.

- * Host joint professional development days with core partner staff.

Strategy #7: Create demand-driven labor market responsive strategy for the investment of workforce development resources.

- * Monthly meetings of core partners, RWDB members, and integrated BSR team for improved responsiveness to business needs.

- * Bring Rapid Response survey information to core partners to develop training strategies.

- * Provide Core Partner Referral Form at Rapid Response meetings.

Strategy #8: Minimize the participatory burden to system users through the creation of and implementation of a common intake and reporting system among core partners and relevant agencies

- * Utilize the new software system developed by the State for common intake and reporting among core partners.

Refer to question C-1.

Vision Alignment to State Vision and Goals

Cedar Valley IowaWORKS regional vision aligns with the Governor's Future Ready Iowa Initiative, in that our workforce delivery system will collaborate to build a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the workforce needs of Iowa's current and emerging industries.

Describe how the regional board's vision aligns with the States Strategic Vision and Goals in the Unified Plan:

Region 7 is adopting the State Unified Plan's three goals. During Wednesday morning all staff meetings, IowaWORKS staff broke into three WIOA Transition Committees each responsible for one of the goals and developed local strategies that will be implemented to align with the strategies of the State Unified Plan. Our core partners, IVRS & AEL, also involved their staff in the creation of local strategies. During an implementation committee meeting, we discussed the local strategies our staff developed and agreed upon the ones to implement as part of Region 7's local plan.

Refer to question B-2.

Regional Strategies

Strategic Alignment of Resources

All career services offered through the IowaWORKS center are designed to meet the strategic vision and goals of the Regional Workforce Development Boards. These services are reviewed regularly by the IowaWORKS management and the RWDB to ensure they are aligned with the goal and vision of the board. The RWDB provides oversight to ensure the following career services are available at the center:

Eligibility for services

Outreach, intake, orientation

Initial assessment

Labor exchange services

Referrals to programs

Labor market information

Performance, cost information

Supportive services information

UI information and assistance

Financial aid information

Follow-up services

Comprehensive assessment

Individual employment plan

Career planning, counseling

Short-term prevocational services

Internships, work experiences

Taking into account the analyses described in the Regional Strategic Planning section, describe strategies of the core partners to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals:

Out-of-area job search

Foreign language acquisition

Workforce preparation

The Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Programs at Hawkeye Community College (HCC) provide services that focus on the following outcomes:

- * 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; mathematics skills; and acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) provides services that focus on the following outcomes:

* IVRS staff assigned to every high school and providing services to all students with disabilities, including career counseling on employment and training opportunities, training on work readiness and employer expectations, and on self-advocacy. Job shadows and part time work opportunities are encouraged.

* IVRS staff, in collaboration with partner agencies, provides counseling to individuals with disabilities to help them make informed career decisions. Information on in demand careers and career pathways is utilized and assistance with training is provided that leads to successful employment.

* IVRS provides consultation to partner agencies to ensure programs and areas are accessible. Consultation is provided to employers on disability needs to assist with recruitment and hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities and retaining valued employees.

Strategies to align resources among programs:

* AEL serves English Language Learners, those lacking a High School Equivalency Diploma, and those in need of basic reading and math skills. These services are offered in locations that are accessible to Workforce clients.

* The Workforce, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Youth Employment intake process collects educational needs of clients. Students are referred to Adult Literacy classes on a regular basis. Workforce provides funding for educational barriers including daycare, transportation, and testing fees.

* The Adult Education/Literacy program provides student progress and completion information to Workforce and Promise Job staff.

* The Adult Education/Literacy Services assesses student barriers and refers students to Region 7 Workforce classes, Youth Employment services, and Vocational Rehabilitation services.

* Career Ready 101 online study is offered to Adult Literacy students in preparation for the National Career Readiness Certificate assessment. The assessment is at no cost to students who are enrolled in Region 7 workforce and is administered at the Region 7 Iowa Works One-Stop.

* HSED and ELL students are referred to GAP/PACE and participate in classes such as C.N.A. training.

Refer to question C-2.

Expanded Access

Workforce Development system can be accessed through any core partner program within the region.

Multiple points of access will be established, both physical and through electronic means, throughout the region. Region-developed referral and verification forms will assist to document access to services. Orientation sessions that describe the workforce development system will be developed and available at any partner location within the region at a future date. All core partners are focused on ensuring services are delivered and available to all eligible individuals, including eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

Describe strategies the regional board, working with the core partners will expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals including youth and individuals with barriers to employment:

Expanded access to AEL services includes:

- * Annually increasing number of hybrid and online classes offered to allow students in High School Completion and English Language Learning classes access to studying 24/7 without need for transportation.
- * Additional summer and short-term HSED and ELL class offerings.
- * Number and times of ELL classes offered has increased annually since 2012.

Refer to question C-4.

Facilitate Career Pathways and Co-Enrollment

Through community partners and working with Hawkeye Community college, Region 7 RDWB has developed Career Pathways in advanced manufacturing and healthcare. Sector Boards for both these career fields meet regularly to gain business input and assess employers' needs for ongoing curriculum development.

Core partners will utilize career pathways in career development activities and counsel clients to consider short term training and skill certificates in pathways that are portable and stackable, in order to attain a family sustaining income. Staff development efforts will be provided to review the pathways and to encourage co-enrollment in order to leverage funding and to encourage credential attainment.

Describe strategies the regional board will facilitate with the core partners in the development of Career Pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, to improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate, portable and stackable:

Region 7 will continue to develop and expand career pathways in various industry sectors, particularly in high demand areas based on local labor market needs and trends. Input from business experts serving on Sector Boards will be factored into the development of curriculum and desired industry recognized credentials. Communication and collaboration to include and utilize current information will be incorporated into core programs and activities. Some Board members may serve a dual role or be called upon as a resource person to assure communication is shared in a timely manner.

Co-enrollment in multiple programs, such as AEL & WIOA Youth, GAP & Promise Jobs, are already occurring due to the established Core Partner joint application and referral process. As a result, participants have greater access to services and effective case management to ensure follow through of credential attainment.

IVRS is in support of continuing to develop and provide STEM and career pathways experiences to students with disabilities in transition. 21st Century Work Skills are a core value of the coordinated services and co-location between IVRS and IWD, and this allows for the exchange of labor market information for in-demand industries, occupations, skills and knowledge.

AEL will provide I-BEST classes in CNC and CNA for contextualized learning to assist ELL and those with basic skills deficiencies to progress in their career pathway. I-BEST participants are co-enrolled in AEL and postsecondary education.

Refer to question C-4, Part B.

Additional Regional Board Strategies

Identify any additional regional board's strategies relative to local workforce development, education and training needs not otherwise included:

Strategy Alignment to State Strategies

After the Greg Newton training in September, 2015, in Des Moines, the core partners began meeting monthly and then every two weeks to discuss ways to collaborate and align strategies and vision. A joint application was created that allows customers to access the system from any of the partner locations. The application includes a release that allows for the sharing of personal information including name, contact information, SSN and date of birth, between the core partners. The core partners are working on creating a system orientation so that regardless of which door the customer enters, they will have access to all system programs and services.

Describe how the regional board's strategies align with the States Strategies in the Unified Plan:

Region 7 is adopting the State Unified Plan's three goals. During Wednesday morning all staff meetings, IowaWORKS staff broke into three WIOA Transition Committees each responsible for one of the goals and developed local strategies that will be implemented to align with the strategies of the State Unified Plan. Our core partners, IVRS & AEL, also involved their staff in the creation of local strategies. During an implementation committee meeting, we discussed the local strategies our staff developed and agreed upon the ones to implement as part of Region 7's local plan.

Performance Goals (Joint Goals across Core Programs)

*****State Joint Performance Goals Pending.*****

Required performance measures are primarily focused on job seeker customers. Iowa Workforce Development and Region 7 are committed to achieve and exceed our negotiated performance indicators.

The Partners will collaborate to develop policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices with respect to staff training. The Partners shall train One-Stop Center Region 7 Staff as part of an ongoing learning process that will develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to provide superior service to workers and job seekers, including those with disabilities, and businesses in an integrated, regionally focused framework of service delivery. Cross-training allows staff from differing programs to understand every program and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations so that all staff can better serve all customers. One-Stop Center staff will be routinely trained and keenly aware as to how their particular function supports and contributes to the overall vision of the local board.

How will core partners contribute toward the State's expected level of performance based on primary indicators:

Core partners will contribute towards the State's expected level of performance through co-enrollment. When participants receive wrap-around services from multiple partners it only enhances their outcomes and success in credential attainment and measurable skill gains.

Refer to question E-10.

Assessment for Continuous Improvement

Tracking Performance Outcomes and CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The following methods will be used to track performance measures and for continuous improvement of performance:

*** Membership process is tracked through Business Objects**

*** Quarterly performance reports are shared with the RWDB**

*** Statewide data system IWorks - tracked by region**

*** Better data sharing between core partners, co-enrollment of participants for increased communication and case management for goal attainment**

Describe how the regional board will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce investment system in relation to the strategic vision, goals, and strategies and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous improvements:

The RWDB and the CEO boards will receive performance and fiscal data on a quarterly basis and as requested. The boards will use that information and public comment to evaluate performance and to determine the need for continuous improvement activities.

IowaWorks staff has developed and implemented performance tracking documents that helps to ensure that the region will meet the negotiated performance standards. In addition, the Core Partners will conduct ongoing training for staff relative to good enrollment decisions and WIOA performance. Performance reports will be run to monitor progress toward meeting the negotiated standards.

Region 7 has a long history of working collaboratively with various partners within the region. Ongoing partner meetings have been

held with multiple providers to determine what services are currently being offered through various programs and identify gaps within the current service structure. In this way, partners are able to maximize services and funding levels and the participants benefit by having a more complete, comprehensive service plan to reach self-sufficiency. In turn, the region is more likely to meet performance goals.

The Performance Oversight policies of the CEO and RWDB include:

HCC will provide quarterly reports to the CEO and RWDB, updating the boards on the region's performance and progress towards meeting performance standards.

The RWDB and CEO boards will evaluate the performance and, if necessary, determine actions to be taken to improve performance. If a significant problem with WIOA performance is identified, the RWDB/CEO will conduct an evaluation of the service provider.

The RWDB and CEO will review and if appropriate make comment on all federal and state monitoring reports as provided by those monitoring/auditing entities.

Region 7 will implement changes as part of the statewide data management system restructuring. The information received through this statewide system will be reviewed and tracked by the region.

Finally, the Core Partners will utilize the Standards developed by the State to create a baseline for workforce services for one-stop certification.

Implementation of Strategies

Regional Workforce Development Board

The State of Iowa is developing an integrated technology-enabled intake and service management information system for core programs carried out under WIOA and by IowaWORKS Center partners. This system will be utilized by the Region 7 IowaWORKS center and by the core partners as appropriate.

The following strategies will be implemented by the Core Partners collaborating together to deliver career services to the region by leveraging resources. Ongoing monthly meetings will allow partners to discuss services, challenges and find ways to avoid duplication among these activities.

Describe how the regional board will implement its identified strategies:

The integrated case management system will help streamline service delivery and avoid redundancies. This will help to maximize resources so that they can be directed toward providing high-quality career services to job seekers, employees, and employers that are responsive to real-time and future labor market needs.

One redundancy Region 7 has been able to eliminate is requiring young adults co-enrolled in WIOA and HCC AEL Program to take both the TABE and CASAS basic skills test. HCC AEL has enabled WIOA Young Adult staff access to their computer system for sharing of data, specifically to eliminate duplication of services with basic skills tests.

Refer to questions D-3 and D-7. Include how the One-Stop centers are using integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management, and how career services are provided.

Core Partners

Describe how the regional board will implement its identified strategies with regard to Wagner-Peyser:

Iowa works under the integrated service delivery model and Region 7 adopted this service delivery model in 2012. This model is designed to eliminate duplication of services and provide a more streamlined approach to serving customers. The partners in this model include Wagner-Peyser, Trade, Veterans, and WIOA Title 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and are designed to remove silos and funding streams so that IowaWorks partner members work together in this functionally-organized service delivery model. This model includes an Integrated Customer Pool. All Center customers will move through a standardized process that co-enrolls individuals into multiple programs based on eligibility. This unified customer pool will be shared and served by multiple partners within a Center. Increased automation solutions and reductions in redundant processes are targeted, so that staff can spend more time serving customers.

Labor market information, job openings, job fairs, career readiness training, is shared with Core Partners on a monthly basis through electronic newsletters and Core Partner meetings to assist in job development and job placement.

Refer to question C-9. Include how improved service delivery and avoidance of duplication of services will be achieved.

The following efforts are being taken to enhance the provision of services such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers for improved service delivery and avoidance of duplication of efforts:

*** Joint Professional Development Days - Presidents Day & Columbus Day**

*** AEL Spoke at Wednesday morning all staff meeting**

*** AEL staff presents at Iowa WORKS orientations monthly**

*** AEL orientations will incorporate information/staff from Iowa WORKS and IVRS**

*** Young Adult Program staff on-site for quarterly AEL registrations**

*** Core partners will continue to explore options for increased presence at each other's sites**

*** AEL and Iowa WORKS will continue to explore options for shared delivery of workshops**

*** AEL and Iowa WORKS will continue to partner on initiatives and trainings that involve GAP and PACE**

*** Core partners attended Iowa 2015 AEL COABE Conference**

*** AEL hosted RWDB in September to learn about their programs**

*** AEL attended Mary Ann Lawrence Board Training**

*** Region 7 will invite AEL to all continued**

Describe how the regional board will implement its identified strategies with regard to **Adult Education and Literacy:**

training opportunities

- * AEL staff attend ongoing WIOA training opportunities at the state and regional level**
- * Ongoing meetings of core partner group within region**
- * Creation of Partner Referral form**
- * Core partner development of local workforce plan**
- * Core partners leading Memorandum of Understanding process**

Comprehensive adult education services are offered in Region 7. High School Completion classes and English Language Learning classes are offered morning, afternoon, and evening five days a week which include access to online study materials that are available 24/7. Embedded in core standards-based HSC and ELL curriculum is training on financial literacy, digital literacy, US Civics, literacy, and numeracy. Classes are leveled to provide students the opportunity to progress at their individual ability and pace. Contextualized career training coupled with AEL is offered in the career pathways of manufacturing and health care. Additionally, Region 7 has a comprehensive Family Literacy Program available to those who access adult education services.

Individuals who access core partner services and are shown to need AEL services are informed how to access these. Cooperation during program recruitment by all core partners

ensures that individuals needing AEL services are identified to AEL staff for subsequent enrollment into AEL classes. AEL incorporates computer literacy contextually within appropriate class curriculum as described earlier in the plan. AEL provides contextual learning opportunities such as CNC and CNA I-BEST classes. AEL provides 23 leveled ELL classes weekly ranging from pre-literacy class for those individuals who have never attended any schooling to advanced class for those individuals ready to enter HSC classes, post-secondary training, and/or the workforce. Partners work diligently at communication and collaboration to ensure those who need English Language Learning services are aware of services available through AEL.

Refer to question C-10. Include what efforts are being taken to enhance the provision of services such as cross-training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers for improved service delivery and avoidance of duplication.

The following efforts will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination:

*** Joint Professional Development Days - Presidents Day & Columbus Day**

*** IVRS spoke at Wednesday morning all staff meeting**

*** Attended 2015 Disability Conference**

*** IVRS attended Mary Ann Lawrence Board Training**

*** Region 7 will invite IVRS to all continued training opportunities**

*** IVRS staff attend ongoing WIOA training opportunities at the state and regional level**

*** Ongoing meetings of core partner group within region**

*** Creation of Partner Referral form**

*** Core partner development of local workforce plan**

*** Core partners leading Memorandum of Understanding process**

*** IVRS will provide training, consultation, and technical expertise to partner agencies on accommodations, accessibility, and understanding on how to effectively provide services to participants with disabilities**

Describe how the regional board will implement its identified strategies with regard to **Vocational Rehabilitation**:

*** An IowaWORKS staff member will attend monthly IVRS staff meetings.**

*** IVRS counselors are being trained to facilitate IowaWorks workshops to enhance service delivery in the region, such as schools in outlying counties.**

Refer to question C-11. Include what efforts are taking place to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Recommendations to address the workforce needs of area low-income adult and dislocated workers:

- 1. Increase the number of participants in programs that result in credential attainment.**
- 2. Enhance assessments for career development, upskilling with short term certificates, work-based learning opportunities (apprenticeships, OJTs and work experiences) referrals for wrap around services, job development/placement and follow-up to increase retention rates.**
- 3. Develop and refer older workers to more retraining opportunities in an effort that will allow them to reenter the workforce.**
- 4. Encourage the creation of industry-recognized training programs by local approved training providers which lead to credentials.**
- 5. Build the capacity of frontline workforce staff to help customers seeking training to invest their time in programs that will lead to industry-recognized credentials for jobs in demand in the regional labor force.**
- 6. Continue linkages among WIOA, TAA, PROMISE JOBS, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Ticket to Work to facilitate access to workforce services and educational programs.**
- 7. Collaborate with Core Partners at monthly meetings to communicate training and employment opportunities to enhance service delivery throughout the region and avoid duplication of services.**

Describe how the regional board will implement its identified strategies with regard to **Adult and Dislocated Worker services**:

Refer to question E-2. Include how services are provided and the capacity to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers.

Region 7's Young Adult Program (ages 14-24) assists young people who face significant barriers in making a successful transition to self-sufficient adulthood by successfully entering and being retained in the workforce, higher education, or advanced training. WIOA Young Adult Program has an increased focus on serving out-of-school eligible youth. In addition, there is an increased emphasis on co-enrollment with AEL, IDB, Voc Rehab, Promise Jobs, iJAG, and GAP/PACE. Core Partners will identify clients for co-enrollment during monthly staff meetings and through on site visits, such as during HiSED registration week at HCC Metro's Center (AEL).

Describe how the regional board will implement its identified strategies with regard to Youth services:

WIOA Young Adult Program seeks to provide young people with customer-centered, high quality services to enhance their skill sets and likelihood of gaining and retaining meaningful employment and attaining self-sufficiency. WIOA young adult programs are meant to provide participants with a continuum of services to help them navigate between the educational and workforce systems. Services are based on individual needs of each participant. It is also critical for the participant to be closely involved in the design and implantation of the services they participate in to ensure their voice is being heard and needs are being met.

The required fourteen program elements will be made available to youth by the following:

1. WIOA partners with UNICUE (University of Northern Iowa Center for Urban Education), the Educational Talent Search and Classic Upward Bound Programs, which helps high school

students prepare for and acquire a college education. These programs are designed to empower program participants with the academic skills and motivation necessary to be successful in high school and to ultimately complete college. Both programs offer tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential. If a student has a disability, they are referred to our partner agency, Vocational Rehabilitation, for assistance with these services as well. For students that have either dropped out of high school or are enrolled in postsecondary education, they are referred to the Education Opportunity Center whose mission is expand awareness about educational opportunities and to assist eligible students to enroll in a high school equivalency program or post-secondary institution.

2. Alternative secondary school services and dropout recovery services are both provided within both the Waterloo and Cedar Falls Community School districts. The Waterloo Community School District offers multiple education programs or options that are available for students that would prefer or benefit from a non- traditional approach to taking high school courses. The Cedar Falls School District also offers an alternative high school within their district for students that need or desire a different environment for learning towards their high school completion. Our partner agency for AEL/ELL, Hawkeye CC

Metro Center AEL Program, offers a high school completion program and services to provide dropout recovery. WIOA and AEL partner with UNICUE to provide dropout recovery services.

3. Region 7 WIOA Youth Program offers both paid and unpaid work experiences that have an academic and occupational education component. Pre-employment training for youth on basic employment skills are offered through workshops on leadership, ethics and values in the workplace, work readiness training, and development of goals specific to job position. These work experiences are offered to students with limited work histories along with having a need to enhance or upgrade their employability skills, develop successful work habits, and gaining knowledge and experience through hands-on learning. Such opportunities include both summer and year round employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on the job training opportunities.

4. Occupational skills training which leads to an occupational specific credential is available to youth that need specific skills, experience, and training in an area to become employed in an in-demand career related industry.

5. Education is offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Short term training for high demand jobs is being offered through the GAP program located with our local center. Additionally a variety of workshops including Customer Service and 30 hour Computer Basics Training are available for participants to

attend. Pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships are also offered to participants that need this training in order to secure employment in a career related industry.

6. Leadership opportunities including but not limited to bi-monthly leadership workshops are held at the local Region 7 Center specifically for the WIOA Youth participants. These events have included community service and volunteer opportunities for our participants as well as peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors. There are also many workshops offered through our local center that our participants are encouraged to attend that address these same topics.

7. Support services are available to WIOA Youth participants that are in need of additional assistance to address barriers to their educational or occupational goals.

8. Mentoring is encouraged especially for those participants that have little to no support system in place. The Waterloo Community Schools offers a mentoring program to students in need within the district. For participants outside of this district or who are no longer attending secondary school, we refer to other agencies that are able to provide this assistance if the youth is not already involved in any other social service agencies that can offer mentoring. Most often, many participants are already working with partner programs or agencies (Promise Jobs, Vocational Rehabilitation, Hawkeye Metro Center AEL Program, UNICUE, iJAG, Job Corps, FaDDS) when they are referred to the WIOA Youth

Program however.

9. Follow up services will be provided for 12 months after the WIOA Youth participant has ended their program participation. Assistance with securing employment, retention, or skill upgrading are some of the issues that can be addressed during follow up services as well.

10. Referrals for comprehensive guidance and counseling, including substance abuse assessment and counseling, are available to participants that need this assistance. Pathways Behavioral Services is an agency that provides substance abuse assessment, counseling, and treatment to individuals in our community. There are many other agencies, offices, and clinics that can provide mental health counseling and crisis intervention that we refer participant to also.

11. Financial literacy education is being offered through workshops facilitated at our local center. The WIOA Youth program also has guest speakers that come in and share information on money management, budgeting, and using credit wisely.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training information is available to WIOA Youth participants. Tours of the University of Northern Iowa's Entrepreneurial office and guest speakers that work with the entrepreneurial industry share their knowledge and expertise with our youth.

13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand

industry sectors or occupations available in the local area is provided both individually to WIOA Youth participants and in group settings (leadership workshops). We encourage participants to complete career assessments (My Next Move, Career Scope, I Have a Plan Iowa) in order to access their interests and aptitudes in helping them make an informed decision about in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

14. Event such as Experience Hawkeye, tours of local colleges, and workshops on transitioning to college are all activities that we offer to help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. We also partner with other agencies like UNICUE to assist with financial

Refer to questions E-5 and E-7. Include identification of successful models of such youth workforce activities being used and/or planned, and describe how each of the required fourteen program elements will be made available to youth.

All center staff provide services to persons with disabilities. Those who need additional services such as benefits navigation or Ticket to Work are referred to the DEI Disability Resource Coordinator. The DEI grant enabled the purchase of iPads with assistive technology, such as Natural Reader TTS HD, which turns an iPad into a text to speech reader for those who are vision impaired. Anyone requiring more intensive services is connected to IVRS or the Department for the Blind (IDB), as needed, through our established referral process. Ongoing communication and collaboration occur in order to best meet the needs of our mutual customers.

IDB will collaborate with Core Partners in implementing the following strategies:

Describe how the regional board will implement its identified strategies with regard to the **Department for the Blind**:

- * assist with an accessibility study with Region 7 clients who are blind or have visual impairments.
- * assist with staff development for the use of assistive devices and technology and provide a tour of the IDB
- * provide a week-long training for use of assistive technology and dealing with persons with vision loss.
- * provide Region 7 with electronic formats for use with individuals with disabilities. Can assist with digital literacy skills.
- * IDB staff/counselors can bring clients to the One-Stop center and provide assistance with job clubs/workshops, i.e. can assist with PowerPoint presentations and workshop materials into accessible formats. Will provide technical assistance to programs and classes (will provide training to workshop facilitators to

ensure the presentations and materials are accessible).

Describe efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with vision disabilities.

Integrated Customer Service

In the integrated center in Region 7 the customer flow will be as listed below:

Greet/Identify Purpose of Visit

Determine One-Stop Customer Status and/or

Conduct Service Triage

Recommend Services

Registration

Self-attestation

Co-enrollment evaluation

Introduce to Career Services and/or

Provide Appropriate Partner Referrals and/or

Determine WIOA eligibility for intensive/training services

Integrated Customer Flow - Based on an initial basic assessment, customers will progress through services in a unified, standard flow organized by 'function' rather than 'program'. Customers start with registration (stream-lined program enrollment and initial triage); advance to career services (to build occupational and job seeking skills), and then either referral to placement services (with connections to hiring employers) or referral to more individualized career service and, if warranted, training services.

All Integrated Center customers will move through a standardized process that co-enrolls them into multiple programs based on eligibility. This unified customer pool will be shared and served by multiple partners within

Describe how the partners will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals in the workforce system.

the one-stop system. When eligibility permits, every member must be co-enrolled into all qualifying programs for individualized career services.

Within this flow, customers will be provided career services to gain necessary skills needed by employers within the region. Services will continue to be customized to meet individual customer needs.

Individualized Career process steps and procedures are designed to meet one of the core missions of the one-stop system: that all individuals have the opportunity to know their skills, grow their skills and get the best job possible with their skills. To that end, an assessment of skills is a universal service delivered to all customers. The outcome of career service delivery is a relevant pool of talent with skills in demand and job-search know-how.

If additional services are identified as needed, the career services team will make the appropriate referrals to participate in WIOA funded individualized career services and/or training services.

Supportive Services that are needed to meet employment goals are available for dependent care, transportation, clothing, financial assistance, health care, counseling, miscellaneous services, and services for individuals with disabilities. Please see Region 7's attached supportive services policy.

The Core Partners will meet monthly to discuss clients who have been referred for services for

follow up purposes. Each Core Partner will keep a spreadsheet for tracking those who are referred to provide feedback and progress reports as needed.

In addition, core partners maintain secure cloud based files in order to share safe information amongst partners for enhanced customer service.

Refer to question D-14.

The Core Partners will utilize the following strategies to meet the strategic needs of employers in the region and ensure that special populations such as persons with disabilities, ex-offenders, veterans and immigrants receive the services needed:

Persons with disabilities, including individuals who are blind or visually impaired - All center staff provide services to persons with disabilities. Those who need additional services such as benefits navigation or Ticket to Work are referred to the DEI DRC. Anyone requiring more intensive services is connected to IVRS or IDB through our established referral service process.

Returning veterans and skilled military retirees - All center staff provide services to veterans. Those who have significant barriers to employment are referred to our DVOP.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients - Anyone receiving TANF is automatically enrolled in Promise Jobs which is integrated into our Center. PJ Orientation happens twice a week and case managers ensure that their clients become registered members and are following their Financial Investment Agreement (FIA) Plan.

Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) and Rapid Response Activities - All TAA and Dislocated Workers are made members upon their first visit and develop employment plans with team members. They are then co-enrolled in WIOA and Trade where applicable.

Individuals with other barriers to employment, including those that are basic skills deficient -

Describe how the core partners and regional board connects services to special populations:

The Center serves all individuals and gives priority of service to those who are basic skills deficient and follows the established referral process to connect them with more intensive services at Adult Education & Literacy (AEL).

Additional specific populations - The Center has two bilingual staff, both in Spanish and Croatian. In addition, we utilize the language line as needed. We have a migrant seasonal farm worker on staff to reach out to this population. We have a culturally diverse workforce in our Center similar to the demographics within our Region. Additionally, Region 7 is partnering with Embarc to provide services to the Burmese population in their language.

Ex-offenders - A half time FTE is placed at the Department of Corrections, both men's and women's facilities, and the probation office, to assist ex-offenders on the re-entry process.

Ex-offenders are accepted in all AEL programming and efforts are made to address the individual needs of this population. Regular AEL presentations to staff at area correctional agencies assists in appropriate referrals. Veterans are identified at AEL program intake in order to ensure appropriate services are provided by AEL. Awareness by the local immigrant community of ELL classes provided by AEL is promoted through AEL staff presentations at the following: area employers such as Tyson Fresh Meats, meetings of local groups who collaborate in refugee resettlement such as EMBARC, local K-12 schools, churches, hospitals, colleges, and community agencies such as Operation Threshold.

Refer to question D-12. Special populations include: persons with disabilities, returning veterans and skilled military retirees, Temporary Assistance to Need Families (PROMISE JOBS) recipients, Trade Adjustment Act and Rapid Response activities, individuals with other barriers to employment (including those that are basic skills deficient), additional specific populations.

Attach the core partner's area flow chart of services to individuals, including service to youth and those with barriers to employment: **One Stop System Flow Chart.pptx**

Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services

Employer Focus

Skilled Iowa Initiative - This is a public- private initiative supported by the Governor's Office, Iowa Workforce Development, and the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) in partnership with ACT, the Iowa STEM Advisory Council, and numerous Iowa businesses. NCRC is a system developed by American College Testing (ACT) for documenting and improving work place skills. The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is the work-related skills credential. The certificate provides fair and objective measurement of workplace skills that can be accepted nationwide.

*** On-the-Job Training (OJT) provides opportunities for participants to train in an actual work situation that has career advancement potential in order to develop specific occupational skills or obtain specialized skills required by an individual employer.**

*** Employers' Council of Iowa - This group of local employers holds regular meetings to discuss common concerns and to sponsor seminars on topics of interest.**

*** 260 E&F- Hawkeye Community College's Contract Training department strives to identify new businesses entering the region as well as existing businesses experiencing growth and may benefit from the New Jobs Training Program (260E) and/or the Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F). For 260E eligibility we work with county Economic Developers and closely with an existing portfolio of businesses to identify opportunities to provide training funds for the businesses to recoup some initial on-the-job training as well as developing a training plan to ensure skill development. For 260F eligibility we work to identify businesses with**

Describe the use of initiatives, designed to meet the strategic needs of employers in the region:

existing workforces committed to designing a training plan to eliminate skills gaps and improve safe operating practices on the job. The department is exploring ways to incorporate Department of Labor recognized apprenticeship training into training plans and is working with one 260E eligible company to design and submit for approval a new Apprenticeship for their niche industry. All trainings focus on ensuring Iowa employees are gaining valuable skills to increase their earning potential.

* **Career Pathways - WIOA incorporates career pathways as part of both the objective assessment and development of the individual service strategy. When WIOA Title 1 funds are expended, clients will be referred to GAP and Pathways for Academic Career and Employment (PACE) for funding assistance for upskilling and credential attainment as they progress in their career pathway.**

* **Sector Boards - Hawkeye Community College created sector boards in Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare. Key stakeholders and industry partners meet regularly with a focus on employers' needs for skills, recruitment and retention to support their sector's economic vitality. Core Partners are invited to attend Sector Boards.**

* **Future Ready Iowa Initiative - Cedar Valley IowaWORKS regional vision aligns with the Governor's Initiative in that our workforce delivery system will collaborate to build a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the workforce needs of Iowa's current and emerging industries.**

*** Integrated Business Services Team - Under WIOA, the new integrated Business Services Team includes staff from Vocational Rehabilitation and the program coordinator from the Apprenticeship program.**

Refer to question C-5. Examples: incumbent worker programs, OJTs, customized training programs, sector strategies, career pathways, business services strategies (including integrated business services teams)

*** The small business development center provides ongoing entrepreneurial training and assistance throughout the region.**

*** Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation provides ongoing entrepreneurial training through Iowa Self Employment program.**

*** IowaWORKS promotes and explores opportunities for center customers to establish self-employment.**

Describe how the regional board coordinates and promotes entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services:

*** WIOA Title 1 Adult/DW offers tuition assistance for customers to obtain necessary business building skills for small business operation.**

*** Referrals to and engagement of the Small Business Development Center for one-stop customers.**

Refer to question C-6.

The Integrated Business Services Team promotes and educates employers on the benefits of apprenticeships and serve as the liaison between the Department of Labor and employers. We offer bi-monthly orientations at IowaWORKS for anyone interested in an apprenticeship and direct job seekers to the Registered Apprenticeship worksite for available opportunities.

Registered Apprenticeship is a tried-and-true approach for preparing workers for jobs and meeting the business needs for a highly-skilled workforce that continues to innovate and adapt to meet the needs of the 21st century. Region 7 received a two year Job Driven NEG Apprenticeship grant in 2015. The grant originally focused on just the construction field but is now open to all fields with registered apprenticeships. The Workforce Development Specialist who administers the grant is a member of the Integrated Business Services Team.

Describe how the regional board enhances the use of Registered Apprenticeships to support the regional economy:

The job-placement strategy for Region 7 is to match Dislocated Workers with registered apprenticeship opportunities. The strategy adopted serves two purposes. The first is to bridge the gap between unemployed workers in declining job markets with booming career fields in need of skilled employees. The second is to provide re-training opportunities for Program participants, which will ultimately lead to both the career security of a trade and a nationally recognized certification. To achieve this, the Program will provide:

*** Pre-screening of participants for specific occupations.**

*** 50% reimbursement of wages to the employer for up to 6 months or 1,040 hours of On the Job (OJT) Training.**

*** OA-approved classroom training for the life of the Program.**

*** Individualized skills-upgrading for participants (i.e., safety training, English as a Second Language classes, etc.), which will make the employee more successful on the job.**

*** Certifications, as identified, which are either required or preferred to enter a specific apprenticeship program (i.e., National Career Readiness Certification @Bronze/Silver, Commercial Drivers? License-A, CPR).**

*** Purchase of specialized tools or equipment for the participant as required by the employer.**

*** Transportation allowances/reimbursements.**

*** Dependent care allowances/reimbursements.**

*** A Training Plan and step-increase salary schedule for the employee to follow.**

*** Quarterly monitoring of the apprenticeship for the life of the Program, which follows the employee's progress and the employer's adherence to the Training Plan.**

Registered apprenticeships are currently being offered in Region 7 in Plumbing, HVAC, electrical, along with many other occupations.

For individuals with disabilities, including individuals who are blind or visually impaired, co-enrollment will occur with IVRS and IDB in

order to ensure the appropriate accommodations and services are provided.

Refer to question C-7. Include how Registered Apprenticeships will support an individuals career advancement.

Rapid Response is a proactive, business-focused, and flexible strategy designed for two major purposes: to help growing companies access an available pool of skilled workers from other companies that are downsizing or who have been trained in the skills Iowa companies need to be competitive, and to respond to layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and the affected workers.

Rapid Response provides early intervention to worker groups who have received a notice of layoff or closure. Region 7 has a Rapid Response Team consisting of staff from Title 1 Adult/Dislocated Worker, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation and Trade Adjustment Assistance (once the petition has been certified) and local service organizations that may provide other assistance to the dislocated worker and family, such as Operation Threshold, the Department of Human Services, Hawkeye Community College, Consumer Credit Counseling of Northeast Iowa and others.

Provide a description of how the regional board coordinates workforce activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities:

Whenever possible, the team conducts on-site presentations at the business location. Every effort is made to provide information sessions prior to the commencement of the lay-offs and/or plant closure. The presentation consists of an overview of the benefits and services that can be expected from each of the partner groups. During these sessions, the emphasis is how the partner agency staff will be working together as a team to offer the customer individualized comprehensive re-employment benefits and services. Afterwards, customers begin to engage in further orientation and intake sessions.

The Dislocated Worker program provides retraining and re-employment services to individuals who have been dislocated from their jobs. Job seekers have access to computerized resources centers for career exploration, resume preparation, skill assessment and testing, job search, on-line work registration and on-line unemployment insurance claim filing. Job seekers also have access to a variety of skill building workshops, job search assistance and individualized career services.

Effective January 1, 2012, Governor Branstad changed the participant enrollment policy under the older WIA legislation to mandate co-enrollment for all Trade-certified and National Emergency Grant dislocated workers so that all customers would benefit from the service integration, functional alignment, and resources among these programs. All customers receive assessments, review labor market information, establish employment goals, and develop Individual Employment Plans that are shared and agreed upon among all partners/counselors involved. Leveraging of resources is utilized by having Core Partners conduct and share assessments (i.e., basic education levels, aptitudes, interests, financial situation, barriers to employment success) from which the results guide all partners/ counselors in developing re-employment plans with the customers. These plans identify whether Trade Adjustment Act training is necessary to secure employment, any possible barriers to employment/training success, and how those barriers will be addressed. Both Title 1 Adult/DW and Wagner-Peyser staff conduct re-employment workshops for customers needing additional assistance in job search resources, resume writing, interviewing skills, etc. Furthermore, all Trade Adjustment Act customers have access to any

other resources provided by Wagner-Peyser and Title 1 Adult/DW. Because specific Wagner-Peyser or Title 1 Adult/DW staff may have ongoing direct connection to local and statewide employers and job openings, customers may be assigned to additional staff persons for assistance with intensive job search activities.

Case Management is shared between Title 1 Adult/DW counselors and Wagner-Peyser representatives. IowaWorks partners/staff have access to the Trade Adjustment Act computer system, case notes are accessible by either program, allowing staff to determine if monthly contact has been made. If contact has been made and the documentation shows ongoing progress toward goals with no issues, the contact will satisfy all program requirements. Ongoing communication is stressed among all partners Title 1 Adult/DW, Wagner-Peyser, and the State Trade Adjustment Act office. Examples include: periodic combined staff meetings to reinforce the open communication and staffing between a customer and relevant program representatives as needed to address customer needs or issues while working toward an integrated approach to address such needs and issues.

When it is determined that a customer needs retraining to be more competitive in the job market, Title 1 Adult/DW takes the lead in development of the training plans in accordance with the six criteria for Trade Adjustment Act-approved training. Thereby, the training plans are developed and justified based on test assessments, labor market information, assessment of the customer's personal qualifications and financial ability, and training information. The State Trade Adjustment Act office then reviews all training requests and

issues determinations. While Trade Adjustment Act will be the primary funding source for an individual's training, Title 1 Adult/DW may offer assistance with supportive services (e.g., childcare, counseling, utility and rental assistance) as needed for a customer to be able to be successful in the chosen training program. Co-funding of training also may occur, if it is necessary to meet a customer's needs. Once a customer enters approved training, there is additional coordination with Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment Insurance for an individual's ongoing income support.

Re-Employment Services

Worker profiling and Reemployment Services are offered within the region and are designed to help persons identified as being at risk for long-term unemployment insurance eligibility to return to the workforce as quickly as possible. A variety of services are available, including but not limited to: career assessment, job search workshops and job search/job placement assistance.

Refer to question C-8.

Education and Training Focus

Post-secondary educational institutions that have campuses located in Region 7 include Allen College, Kaplan University, Hawkeye Community College, University of Northern Iowa, Upper Iowa University, and Wartburg College. Other educational opportunities exist by means of extended campuses, on-line courses, vocational training, and apprenticeships.

*** Region 7 hosts an Education Resources Expo at IowaWORKS to include all area colleges and universities.**

*** The Educational Opportunity Center is a regular speaker at our monthly Discovered Resources panel during our Six Steps workshop, as well as at Rapid Response meetings.**

Describe how the regional board will engage local education and training providers, including community colleges and area career and technical education schools as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system:

*** We work hand-in-hand with all secondary education entities in the Region presenting LMI information to students, proctoring and giving NCRC assessments, and WIOA Youth classroom presentations.**

*** Region 7 coordinates with Allen College to provide training opportunities for Employer Council of Iowa. They also host a VAP site for us.**

*** Region 7 partners with Hawkeye Community College with the Dislocated Worker Transition Center, the Wal-Mart Foundation grant, the GAP/PACE program, and the DEI Grant.**

*** Region 7 partners with Upper Iowa University, Wartburg College, Kaplan, Hawkeye Community College, University of Northern Iowa and Allen College for ongoing Job Fairs.**

*** Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are located on site at UNI and Hawkeye Community**

College full time.

Through RWDB's partnership with Hawkeye Community College, the core partners have enhanced access to workforce development programs for:

*** Persons with disabilities through the Disability Employment Initiative Round 6**

*** Dislocated Workers through the Job-Driven Apprenticeships - registered apprenticeships are currently being offered in Plumbing, HVAC, Electrical, and a wide variety of other industries in Region 7.**

*** Those who don't qualify for WIOA funding - persons whose incomes is 150% or above the FPL - can receive training assistance through GAP/PACE.**

Describe how the regions strategies will enable the board and core partners to leverage other federal, state and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the institutions listed above:

Additional State and Federal funds will be leveraged to enhance existing workforce development programs, such as the Iowa Food Assistance Employment & Training grant to provide additional funding for the GAP/PACE program. In addition, Region 7 will be meeting with Mayor Hart regarding the possibility of City funding to enhance the WIOA youth program, specifically for paid Work Experiences for youth during the summer months.

Describe how the regions strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized post-secondary credentials including Registered Apprenticeship certificates:

Hawkeye Community College is the fiscal agent for GAP and PACE funds, which provides three career navigators housed at IowaWORKS to assist those in selecting a career pathway and earning a recognized post-secondary credential. GAP recipients earn certificates in high growth occupations such as C.N.A., Medical Coding & Billing, CNC Machining, Production Welding, Industrial Maintenance, and CDL. Students advancing in their career pathways can go on to take credited courses through assistance from PACE career navigators. For instance, after earning a C.N.A. the individual can earn additional stackable and portable credentials such as LPN and RN. Participants can step and step off their career pathway as life circumstances dictate, but maintain an ongoing relationship with their career pathway navigator.

Hawkeye Community College is also the fiscal agent for the Job-Driven Apprenticeship program which provides dislocated workers with on-the-job training in conjunction with classroom training to earn an industry recognized credential.

Include a description of credentials that are industry recognized certificates and licenses that are portable and stackable.

Economic Development Focus

Workforce development and economic development have always complimented and supported one another in the State of Iowa, but the partnership has been particularly strong in the Cedar Valley Region. In recent years, having a qualified labor pool became even more critical as a component for business expansion, and the challenge presented opportunities to strengthen current relationships and to develop new partnerships.

*** A Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber (GCVA&C) staff person regularly attends RWIB**

*** We partner with GCVA&C on job fairs and employer related events**

*** GCVA&C are invited to all Rapid Response meetings**

*** Region 7 works hand in hand with all economic developers in the region in the pursuit of Skilled Iowa community designations and Home Based Iowa designation**

*** Advanced Manufacturing Sector board meets every other month**

*** HealthCare Sector board meets every other month**

*** Integrated Business Service Representatives team to improve employer communications and assess their needs.**

Describe how the activities identified will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the region:

Regional Workforce Development Board Functions

The five members of the Region 7 Chief Elected Official Board are responsible for many activities, including nominations and making selections for Regional Workforce Development Board (RWDB) vacancies. The CEO Board also accepts liability for any misuse of WIOA funds and provides input to the Governor on designation of local workforce investment regions.

The Region 7 Workforce Development Board (RWDB) grandfathered the existing board structure under WIA, with the understanding that they will move to the new board structure under WIOA in the future. The RWDB and CEO Board are jointly responsible for the oversight of the Workforce Development Center system. Part of the planning process includes determining the level of WIOA expenditures and enrollments each program year, in addition to negotiating the performance measures for the WIOA programs.

There are currently no standing committees of RWDB but the plan is to make the Youth Advisory Council a standing committee in the near future, which will be chaired by a RWDB member who will report back to RWDB. In addition, a disability accessibility committee will be established.

Board training has been provided through Mary Ann Lawrence. Additional training will be provided to define the roles and responsibilities of the board.

Describe the regional board's operational structure and decision making process under WIOA to ensure such functions are carried out:

Include any standing committees which are currently in existence or planned which will support this effort.

Provide a brief overview of the regional board's oversight and monitoring procedures, include oversight of the One-Stop Center:

The two Boards evaluate the service delivery process to determine if local needs and priorities are being met and to ensure that quality improvement is ongoing. The Boards also review and approve the WIOA budgets. Hawkeye Community College IowaWORKS supplies the Boards with verbal and written reports regarding expenditures and enrollments. The performance standards are presented at RWDB meetings and progress since the last report is reviewed. Federal, state, and local monitoring and auditing results are copied as attachments to Board agendas and discussed at RWDB meetings. WIOA staff provides program updates and participant success stories periodically to RWDB to encourage Board dialogue and questions. The Directors of Region 7's core partners, IVRS & AEL, are ex-officio members of RWDB and provide regular updates to the board on collaboration efforts to ensure quality customer service.

The monitoring system for each program ensures that at least ten percent (10%) of all participants who register or are enrolled during each quarter, and who are still active at the time of verification, receive a complete verification of eligibility as part of a quarterly monitoring process conducted by the WIOA Management. The verification must be completed by the end of the quarter following the quarter being sampled (e.g., the first quarter verification must be completed by the end of the second quarter). For this monitoring process, sampling procedures are in place for drawing a random sample of participants newly registered or enrolled in a particular quarter. These procedures ensure that the sampling is random and that the requirements of this subsection are met.

The RWDB will review the Coordinating Service Provider's performance and budget on an annual basis. This evaluation will occur after the past Program Year closeout and will include program performance and budget management. Generally this will take place in the fall of the year.

Refer to questions F-1 and D-6. Include processes for ensuring quality customer service and frequency of such reviews. Only provide a summary of procedures here as you will need to upload your actual Oversight and Monitoring Policies in a separate attachment.

Region 7 will transform the existing Youth Advisory Council that has been in operation since 2011 into a standing committee of RWDB that will be chaired by a RWDB member. Under the direction of the RWDB, the roles and responsibilities of the Youth Standing Committee will include coordinating youth activities in the local area, developing the portions of the Regional Workforce Development Customer Service Plan relating to youth activities, recommending eligible youth service providers to the RWDB, conducting oversight of the youth program that is housed at IowaWorks, ensuring that youth are co-enrolled and have access to a variety of services such as work-based learning opportunities, and carrying out other duties, as authorized by the chairperson of the RWDB.

Describe how the regional board will provide services to youth and whether a standing committee or Youth Council will be used to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth:

a) If yes, please provide the committee's purpose/vision, planning meeting schedule, and list of members to include members' agency/organization, one of which must be a community based organization with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth.

b) If no, will the Workforce Development Board have a formal Youth Council or Youth Advisory group? Please provide a list of members to include members, agency/organization and contact information.

The current regional Youth Advisory Council is made up of representatives from Region 7 youth service agencies. These include juvenile justice, local public housing authorities, former WIA Youth participants, out of school youth providers, AEL, local school districts, and

youth serving community organizations. The following is a list of the Youth Advisory Council members and the agencies they represent.

*** Ruth Frush- Department of Juvenile Corrections**

*** Tony Stevens-Educational Talent Search/Trio Program**

*** Ellen Vanderloo-Waterloo Community Schools Mentoring Program**

*** Laura Gray-Vocational Rehabilitation**

*** Mona Krugger- Pathways Behavioral Services**

*** Darci Krouse- GAP/PACE program**

*** Nancy Kehoe-AEL at Hawkeye Community College**

*** Marileigh Fisher-Community Housing Initiative**

*** Marsha Watters-Waterloo Community Schools Performance Based Diploma Program(PBDA)**

*** Brooke Olson-Unity Point Healthcare**

Refer to question E-4. Be sure to provide the purpose/vision statement, and any other pertinent information.

The regional board facilitates access to services provided through the One-Stop Center through:

- * Multiple points of access are available through partner affiliated sites**
- * IowaWORKS staff provides outreach and enrollment in all outlying counties within the region on an itinerant basis**
- * Virtual Access Points are established throughout the region for customer access through technology at accessible sites for persons with disabilities, such as libraries**

- * Partners provide services through the One-Stop physical center on an as needed basis**

- * Partners provide one-stop system services ongoing through various partner affiliated locations**
- * Partners participate in ongoing referral, co-enrollment and performance management through the state-developed profile system**

- * Partners developing common application processes to ensure co-enrollment opportunities are streamlined**

- * Partners have created a virtual shared site where each partner can place electronic documents to be viewed by all partners.**

- * once enrolled, assistance with public transportation can be provided by Core Partners as part of supportive services**

Describe how the regional board facilitates access to services provided through the One-Stop Center:

Refer to question D-8. Include how services are provided to remote areas, how technology is used and describe any other methods used to ensure full access to the entire service area and populations.

The Partners recognize that the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA), Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act), and Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965, as amended (ICRA), impose legal obligations with respect to workforce services delivery to individuals with disabilities. Further, a substantial portion of WIOA focuses on individuals with disabilities gaining increased and maximized access to workforce services. Individuals with disabilities constitute a population that has traditionally been underserved or unserved by the workforce development system. As such, the Partners shall develop policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices to create maximized physical and programmatic access and opportunity for individuals with disabilities.

Describe how the regional board will work with core partners to ensure compliance with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities:

The equal employment opportunity statement is on the membership screen. Training is provided biannually to system staff.

The Region 7 One-Stop system prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color or national origin. The system promotes accessibility for all customers of the center and program services and is fully compliant with accessibility requirements. The EEO processes are reviewed quarterly, at a minimum, by local management, staff and EEO State staff. Adjustments are made as necessary to ensure compliance.

The following assistive technology is available at the One-Stop Center for persons with disabilities to utilize:

Sono Flex (turns iPad into an augmentative communication device using pictures)

Voice Dream Reader (turns iPad into a reading tool)

Typ-0 HD (turns iPad into a word prediction device)

iTranslate Voice-Translator & Dictionary (turns iPad into a translator, over 90 supported languages)

ASL Swiipekeys (toggles between alph-numeric keyboard to ASL keyboard for fingerspelling)

Verbally Premium (Turns iPad into an augmentative communication device using preset text)

Built-In Voice Recognition (Enables users to verbally say what they want to write)

Natural Reader TTS HD (Turns iPad into a text to speech reader)

Voc Rehab and Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) staff will provide staff training on assistive technology as needed.

The IDB library can provide regions with electronic formats for use with individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The IDB can assist with digital literacy skills.

Refer to questions' D-13 and F-3. Be sure to include information on how the center will ensure that lowans are not discriminated against on the basis of age, sexual orientation, gender, disability, sex, race, color, national origin or religion.

Regional Workforce Development Board Policies

Describe how the regional board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible training providers and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers:

Refer to question F-2.

Attach the regional board's process to meet priority of service requirements:

Refer to question F-9.

Provide the regional boards definition of self-sufficiency. Describe the process used to define self-sufficiency:

Refer to question F-10.

Attach the regional board's Individual Training Account Policy:

Attach the regional board's policy(ies) on supportive services for core partners:

Refer to question F-5.

* Hawkeye Community College will provide quarterly reports to the CEO and RWDB, updating the boards on the region's performance and progress towards meeting performance standards.

* The RWDB and CEO boards will evaluate the performance and, if necessary, determine action to be taken to improve performance. If a significant problem with WIOA performance is identified, the RWDB/CEO will conduct an evaluation of the service provider.

* The RWDB and CEO will review and if appropriate make comment on all federal and state monitoring reports as provided by those monitoring/auditing entities.

Priority of Service Process.docx

Region 7 defines financial self-sufficiency as 150% of poverty guidelines for Adult Self-Sufficiency according to the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) as provided annually by the Department of Labor.

Region 7 CedarVallary IowaWORKS Individual Training Accounts Policy.docx

Region 7 CedarValley IowaWORKS Supportive Services Policy.docx

Regional Workforce Development Board Fiscal Policies

Procurement Policy and Procedures

A. Contracts for training and program services and sub grantees:

A Request for Proposal and/or Qualifications will be used in those circumstances where it has been determined that an outside provider is required to provide a program services to clients. An example of this would be a specialized youth program geared to a targeted group. However, before this would proceed, it would first have to be determined that such a program was needed and supported by the RWDB. If this determination is made, then the service provider would prepare either a RFP or a RFQ depending on conditions set at the time by the RWDB. These documents would then be mailed out to potential proposers and then proposals would be collected by the service provider. The final proposals would then be presented to the RWDB, at a regularly scheduled meeting, for their recommendation. The proposals will be weighed against established criteria and the RWDB will then select the winning proposal based upon this scoring.

Describe the regional board's process for awarding service provider contracts for activities carried out under WIOA Title I:

The RFP competitive bid process was posted on Region 7's Regional board website by March 1, 2016. Debra Harmon-Hodges, an IWD employee, led the process and met with RWDB to create a Review Committee. Bidders were notified when the RFP was posted. Bidders were allowed to ask questions about the RFP through March 15, 2016. Answers to these questions were responded to by March 18, 2016. Grant proposals were due by April 8,

2016. The RWDB selection committee then met to review and score the proposals. On April 26, 2016, following the RWDB meeting, there will be a closed session where the selection committee will present their findings to the RWDB and a vote will be made to identify the new service provider.

B: Contracts for on-the-job training services provided by an employer, or customized training:

The RWDB will authorize the service provider to enter into such contracts as a need is determined by the participant eligibility and enrollment process.

C: Contracts for training services in the region where the RWDB determines there are an insufficient number of training providers to accomplish the purpose of ITAs:

The RWDB has never made such a determination and thus reserves this section until such time that such action occurs.

D: Contracts for training services provided by community-based organizations, faith-based organizations or other private organizations for special population groups that face multiple barriers to employment:

Currently, the only training services provided by community-based organizations relates to PROMISE JOBS service provision. PROMISE JOBS is not a Department of Labor WIOA program and thus, this contractual situation does not apply. Should this situation change,

the same process will be followed as under section A. Contracts for training and program services and sub grantees will apply.

E: General Provisions:

For all contracts: any contract that is over \$10,000 in obligations, the RWDB will be informed and approval will be sought.

In all circumstances, the provider will adopt and adhere to OMB circulars and follow GAAP for governmental entities.

Sole source or non-competitive procurement may be used only when competitive procurement processes are not feasible or they may have a negative impact upon the program. In those limited situations, procurement may be conducted on a negotiated rather than a competitive basis.

All steps of the procurement process will be documented in accordance with 29 CFR Part 95 or 29 CFR Part 97.

Public Input Process and Legal Notices

A detailed input process was followed by the Region 7 Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Officials in the development of this plan. The process began with copies of the plan being provided to various individuals and made available to the public on the regional board website. This began a 30 day public comment period, notice of which was published through the Regional Workforce Board Website

and in the Waterloo Courier. A Public Hearing was held on Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. The formal comment period ended on Monday, April 11, 2016, after a 30 day comment period that was posted on the regional board's website.

The website pages contain information pertaining to this comment period, including proofs of publication and minutes of the Public Hearing and the formal meeting that followed in order to adopt the plan.

Refer to question C-12. Include the notice of availability, where and for how long notice is published, the evaluation methodology for selection and what specific considerations were used for making awards. Include process for contract review.

Program Year 2015 is a transitional year and Region 7's Young Adult program is focusing 50% of its time and budget on recruiting and enrolling out-of-school youth in order to achieve 50% OSY and 50% ISY by end of year. In PY 2016, the goal will be to achieve 75% OSY and 25% ISY. By partnering with our Core Partners and co-enrolling youth with disabilities, those who are basic skills deficient, and English Language learners, Region 7 is achieving the new goal of serving young people who face significant barriers as they transition to self-sufficient adults.

Since WIOA Youth has been tasked with spending 75% of funding on out of school youth, a concerted effort has been made to connect with this population, specifically those registering for HiSED classes. WIOA Youth Staff were stationed at the HCC Metro Center to meet with students ages 16-24 that had signed up for HiSED classes. AEL staff continue to refer students to us through our joint application and referral process. Staff follow up by coming in to the homeroom classes to speak about the WIOA Youth program. At the beginning of every quarter, WIOA Youth Staff will meet with new HiSED students.

In addition, 20% of the Young Adult budget will be spent on work based learning, such as Work Experience, in their chosen career pathway. To-date, Region 7 has started 8 Work Experience participants, one of whom is working in our integrated Center. Our success is due to increased partnerships with HCC AEL, Promise Jobs, GAP, and co-enrollments.

Supportive services will be provided to engage older youth, such as childcare and

Provide the regional board's plan to meet the required 75% minimum youth expenditures for out-of-school youth, as well as the plan to meet the required 20% minimum for work experience:

transportation, to ensure their continued success.

Refer to question E-6.

The monitoring system for each program ensures that at least ten percent (10%) of all participants who register or are enrolled during each quarter, and who are still active at the time of verification, receive a complete verification of eligibility as part of a quarterly monitoring process conducted by the WIOA Management. The verification must be completed by the end of the quarter following the quarter being sampled (e.g., the first quarter verification must be completed by the end of the second quarter). For this monitoring process, sampling procedures are in place for drawing a random sample of participants newly registered or enrolled in a particular quarter. These procedures ensure that the sampling is random and that the requirements of this subsection are met.

Provide a brief overview of the regional board's fiscal oversight and monitoring procedures:

The RWDB will review the Coordinating Service Provider's performance annually. This evaluation will occur after the past Program Year closeout and will include program performance and budget management. Generally this will take place in the fall of the year.

HCC will provide the RWDB and the CEO boards with performance and fiscal data on a quarterly basis and as requested. The boards will use this information to evaluate performance and to determine the need for continuous improvement activities.

HCC staff has developed and implemented performance tracking documents that helps to ensure that the region will meet the negotiated performance standards. In addition, HCC

conducts

ongoing in-house training for staff relative to good enrollment decisions and WIOA performance. HCC staff regularly runs performance reports to monitor progress toward meeting the negotiated standards.

The Performance & Fiscal Oversight policies of the CEO and RWDB include:

HCC will provide quarterly reports to the CEO and RWDB, updating the boards on the region's budget and performance, as well as progress towards meeting performance standards.

The RWDB and CEO boards will evaluate the budget and performance and, if necessary, determine

actions to be taken to improve budget and performance. If a significant problem with WIOA

performance is identified, the RWDB/CEO will conduct an evaluation of the service provider.

The RWDB and CEO will review and if appropriate make comment on all federal and state monitoring reports as provided by those monitoring/auditing entities. When corrective action is required, the WIOA Director will respond in writing to RWDB and the State outlining the steps that will be taken to rectify the findings.

Additional Documentation

Attach a spreadsheet of all Board Members:

Attach a copy of the current Regional by-laws:

Attach a copy of the current Priority of Services policy:

Attach a copy of the current Oversight and Monitoring policy:

Attach a copy of the current Supportive Services policy:

Attach a copy of the current EEO Grievance procedure:

Attach a signed copy of the Certificate Regarding Debarment:

Attach a spreadsheet of all public and State partner comments with the Board's response:

Attach a signed copy of the Signatory Page:

Regional Workforce Development Board General Assurances

The Board and CEO agree to the General Assurances:

Title:

Name:

Date:

WORKFORCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT: IWD REGION 7

SKILL LEVEL OF JOB APPLICANTS

The 2014 Iowa Workforce Needs Assessment survey asked employers about their perceptions on the degree to which job applicants possessed soft, basic and occupational skills. In addition, employers were asked if applicants, who may or may not possess the necessary skills for the job vacancy, were being disqualified due to the results of controlled substance testing or background checks.

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS THAT PERCEIVE A LACK OF SKILLS AMONG APPLICANTS

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Applicants fulfill all necessary requirements for the job | 8.3% | 26.9% | 28.5% | 30.1% | 6.2% |
| Applicants possess the basic skills required for the job | 2.1% | 20.2% | 26.4% | 40.4% | 10.9% |
| Applicants possess the soft skills required for the job | 6.7% | 23.3% | 37.9% | 28.0% | 4.1% |
| Applicants possess the occupational skills required for the job | 9.4% | 29.2% | 30.2% | 26.0% | 5.2% |
| Applicants are often disqualified due to controlled substance testing | 50.3% | 13.1% | 26.2% | 7.3% | 3.1% |
| Applicants are often disqualified for failure to pass a background check | 34.6% | 15.2% | 22.4% | 17.3% | 10.5% |



22.3%
BASIC SKILLS

(Includes: literacy, numeracy, basic computer skills and organization)



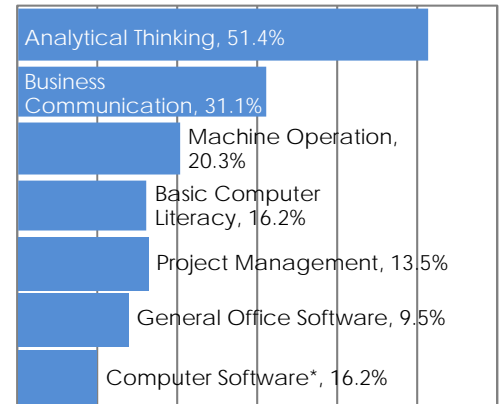
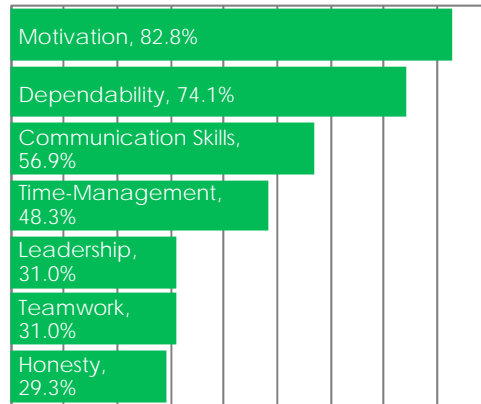
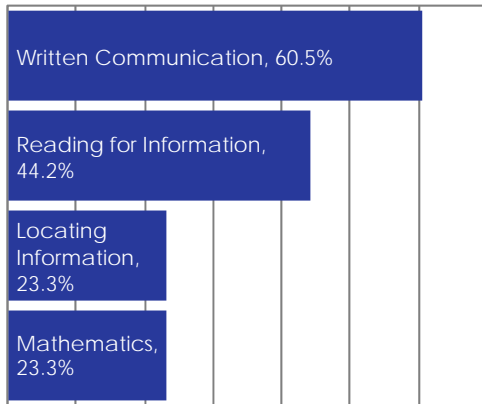
30.0%
SOFT SKILLS

(Includes: timeliness, responsibility, teamwork, integrity and self-esteem)



38.6%
HARD SKILLS

(Includes: analytical skills, physical ability, knowledge and experience)



*Job specific

Basic skills are those skills developed during the elementary and middle part of an individual's education. These skills include literacy, numeracy (the ability to do arithmetic and reason with numbers), and the ability to locate and read for information. The Skilled Iowa initiative, through the National Career Readiness Certificate testing program, provides a means to benchmark and certify applicants' skills in Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information and Locating Information. For more information on Skilled Iowa visit www.skillediowa.org.

Soft skills are skills associated with an individual's habits, personality and character. Soft skills include timeliness, responsibility, integrity and self-esteem. Also included are interpersonal skills such as leadership, customer service and teamwork. Individuals with strong soft skills are well suited to working with others.

Occupational skills are the technical and know-how skills that apply directly to a job. Occupational skills are often referred to as "hard skills" and are primarily job-specific. In general, occupational skills include analytical skills, managerial ability, physical ability, knowledge and experience. The exact definition of these skills varies, depending on the job in question.