

## North Central PA Apprenticeship Strategic Plan

*Below is the Apprenticeship Strategic Plan for the North Central PA Region which includes the counties of Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter. Aligning with the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide this plan maps and supports the apprenticeship ecosystem in the North Central Workforce Development Area to identify strategies to connect individuals to opportunities within it.*

Section 1 provides a map of the local apprenticeship ecosystem. Section 2 identifies the apprenticeship goals for the region, while Section 8 identifies the next steps for achieving these goals. Sections 3-7 are based on prompts within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local and Regional Plans, and identify local apprenticeship stakeholders and activities. Questions are provided in each section to help guide the discussion around each topic. The apprenticeship-related Local and Regional Plan prompts related to each section are also provided, along with the factors specific to registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship that the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) should consider when preparing their responses.

### **1) Identify and describe current Registered Apprenticeship (RA) & Pre-Apprenticeship (Pre-RA) programs already active in the region, and the key apprenticeship stakeholders (training providers, community organizations, etc.) that support them.**

Mapping the apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs already active can help identify existing partners engaged with apprenticeship in addition to apprentices that can be supported with Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) funds. Understanding who is already familiar with the apprenticeship training approach, as well as those that are not already engaged but may be interested, can guide outreach and partnership strategies. Mapping can also help identify specific sectors where apprenticeship is already established or primed for growth, and training providers and community organizations poised to help enable that growth.

**Note:** *The Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) can assist with identifying current RA and Pre-RA sponsors/occupations within your region, as well as the training providers they are partnered with.*

### **Apprenticeship Programs**

<b>Apprenticeship Sponsor</b>	<b>Occupation(s)</b>	<b>Program Type</b> <i>(e.g. Individual/ Group, etc.)</i>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
PITTS Electricians Local 5 JATC	Electrician, Residential Wireman	Group Joint	Local Union #5 IBEW Clearfield Training Ctr. CCAC, Western PA Chapter, NECA
O-I Plant #18 and #19	Machinist	Individual Joint	PSUD, Kahle Enterprises LLC, O-I Plant 18 & 19
Ardagh Glass	Machine Repairer, Mold Maker, Machine Operator	Individual Non-Joint	Ardagh Group

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	(Forming), Maintenance Mechanic		
Miller Fabrication Solutions	Machinist; Welder (no current enrollments)	Individual Non-Joint	Penn Foster
Christ The King Manor	CNA and LPN	Individual Non-Joint	Jefferson County Career Technical Center/CTK
Alpha Sintered Group	Tool Maker	Individual Non-Joint	NTMA
Hunter's Garage	Auto Service Technician (no current enrollments)	Individual Non-Joint	Penn Foster
Zippo Manufacturing	Machinist, Maintenance Repairer	Individual Joint	Penn Foster
SGL Carbon LLC/IUE/CWA-Local 502	Machinist, Maintenance Repairer, Industrial, Maintenance	Individual Joint	Thomason Education Direct
GKN Sinter Metals- DuBois	Die Setter (Forging)		
FAMCO Service and Machining	CNC Machinist	Individual Non-Joint	TBD

### Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

<b>Pre-Apprenticeship Sponsor</b>	<b>Occupation(s)</b>	<b>Partners</b> <i>(e.g. training provider, partner RA, etc.)</i>
DUTCH Manufacturing	Production Technician, Mechatronics, CAD/CAM	GACC, St. Marys Area School District, Penn State DuBois, and GKN
Ridgway Area School District	Tool Maker	Alpha Sintered Group, Ridgway High School, NTMA, Cengage Learning's Precision Machine Technology
German American Chamber of Commerce	Multiple	Brookville High School

### Training Providers

List all training providers in the region that have the potential to support apprenticeship.

<b>Training Provider</b>	<b>Occupations / Sectors Supported</b>	<b>Associated RA &amp; Pre-RA Sponsors</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>
Penn State DuBois	Manufacturing, CNC Lathe, Die-Setter	DUTCH Manufacturing
Jefferson County Career Tech Center	Manufacturing- Welding & Metal Fabrication, Precision Machining, Healthcare	Christ the King- CNA & LPN

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Clearfield County Career Tech Ctr.	Manufacturing, Electrical, Welding & Metal Fabrication; Healthcare Practical Nursing (?)	N/A
Seneca Highlands Career and Technology Center	Engineering Technology, Welding, Auto Mechanics, Construction	N/A
Butler County Community College @ Brockway	TBD	N/A
Community Education Center for Elk & Cameron Counties	Dental Assisting	N/A at this time
Potter County Education Council	Dental Assisting	N/A at this time
Northern PA Regional College	Industrial Maintenance, EMS	N/A at this time
Indiana University of Pennsylvania-Punxsutawney Campus	TBD	N/A
University of Pitt at Bradford	TBD	N/A
Lock Haven University at Clearfield	TBD	N/A
Triangle Tech	TBD	N/A
Clearfield County Career and Tech Center	TBD	N/A

### **Community Organizations**

List all community organizations in the region that have the potential to help recruit and support apprentices.

<b>Community Organization</b>	<b>Relevant Services Provided</b>	<b>Associated RA &amp; Pre-RA Sponsors (if known)</b>
Northwest Industrial Resource Center	Training and assessment for MFG, business improvement, STEM, Tech development	N/A
Penn West Small Business Development Center	Consulting and Training	None
North Central PA Regional Planning and Development Commission	Economic Development	None
Community Education Center of Elk & Cameron	Coursework and Training Opportunities	None
Potter County Ed Council	Coursework and Training Opportunities	None
PA CareerLink® Centers across North Central Workforce Region	Business Services, Customized Career Readiness, workshops, Networking WIOA, TANF and more	None
Stackpole Hall Foundation	Funding and Networking	None

## **2) Apprenticeship Goals for Region**

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Using the information in Section 1 as a foundation to build upon, identify the major short-term and long-term goals for apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship within your region. Questions to consider include:

- How does the LWDB want to position itself within the apprenticeship ecosystem?
- How will the LWDB's strategies and goals for apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship align and support one another, particularly for pre-apprentices continuing on into a registered apprenticeship program?
- How will you prioritize your apprenticeship goals for your region (e.g. based on HPOs, sectors with existing programs, focusing on multi-employer group-sponsored programs, etc.)?
- What are the metrics associated with the services the LWDB and its associated PA CareerLink® One-Stops will provide?
- What are the specific goals associated with these metrics? How will they change over time?
- What stakeholders will have to be engaged to meet these goals (e.g. training providers, organized labor, etc.)?
- Are there existing networks in which the LWDB participates that can be leveraged (i.e. industry partnerships, business education partnerships, community networks, etc.)?
- How will the LWDB's staff capacity have to be increased to meet the identified goals?
- What else will have to occur to meet these goals?

The Apprenticeship Goals for the North Central PA Workforce Region will center around the **metrics** listed below. The applicable goals are listed in the section that follows this list of metrics:

1. Increasing the number of Registered Apprenticeships (RAPs) and Pre-Apprenticeships (Pre-RAPs) in the north central workforce region and improve awareness of the value of RAPs and Pre-RAPs
2. Increase number of RAPs for the Healthcare Industry in our region
3. Increase the number of Registered Apprenticeships for companies and organizations who have inquired, but have not followed through on completing a registration packet
4. Boost support for existing apprenticeship programs and apprentices with grant funding for individuals and programs who are eligible to receive supportive service and/or OJL funding
5. Promote inclusion in apprenticeship programs

The Apprenticeship **Goals** for the North Central Workforce Region will continue to evolve and adjust over the coming two years. To support the metrics listed above, the board staff and staff at the PA CareerLink® will:

1. Increase awareness of the value of apprenticeships via sponsoring an Apprenticeship Summit in fall 2023; subsequent follow up with employers who attended will increase the number of RAPs registered in the north central region by 20% or two new RAPs

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2. Increase the number of Pre-RAPs in the north central region by 5% or one new Pre-RAP
3. Increase the number of RAPs that are specific to the healthcare industry by 100% or two new RAPs
4. Engage and revisit with 100% of active apprenticeship sponsors in the north central region to provide support to apprentices and provide funding for OJL for programs that meet specific grant criteria
5. Improve diversity and inclusion efforts through development of a pre-apprenticeship program aimed at leveraging greater opportunities for individuals with barriers to enter manufacturing and trade apprenticeships in our area
6. Apprenticeship ecosystem will continue to grow; participation in staff development, training and tools will be acquired by board staff and CareerLink® staff to enhance skills when discussing apprenticeships with employers

**3) Describe how the local area will connect adults, dislocated workers and other targeted populations, especially youth and individuals with barriers to employment, to Registered Apprenticeships.** *See answers/responses to this question in narrative following the reference to Regional Plan 1.6*

WIOA provides a variety of support for apprenticeship, including wage reimbursements to employers or wrap-around services for apprentices. Support for apprenticeship in WIOA includes:

- **Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)** – ITA funds can be used to support the related technical instruction (RTI) component of an RA program, including tuition, fees, books, equipment, and other training-related costs.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT)** – OJT contracts with employers can support on-the-job learning components of RA through wage reimbursements up to 50%. OJT may be used with both job seekers and current workers already employed by the business, depending on the funding available in your region.
- **Incumbent Worker Training** – Local regions may also have additional WIOA, Rapid Response or Industry Partnership funds available to support incumbent worker apprentices.
- **Customized Training** - Supports RA by meeting the special requirements of one or more employers.
- **Support Services** - WIOA-eligible individuals can receive additional services that help them participate in an apprenticeship, including fees, books, supplies, child care, transportation, tools, and uniforms.

A few questions to consider when deciding on how best to leverage existing Title I funding and services in support of apprenticeship include:

- What types of apprenticeship support are priorities to provide to job seekers (i.e. access to information, ITAs, OJTs, etc.)?

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- What other strategies will the LWDB employ to connect job seekers to apprenticeship opportunities? Examples include:
  - Ask employers/sponsors to post open RA jobs on CareerLink’s website.
  - Share information about the process of how/when to apply to building trades RAPs.
  - Encourage local RAs to have their programs included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
  - Host informational sessions to educate RA sponsors about the services and funds they provide that support RA programs.
  - Host job fairs that only lead to RA opportunities.
- What existing programs and funding streams are available and best positioned to support RA and Pre-RA?
- How will local LWDB and PA CareerLink® staff be trained to provide these services? (*also described in Section 7*)
- How will these activities support the goals & metrics outlined in Section 2?

The following **Regional and Local Plan** prompts related to RA/Pre-RA can be developed from the answers to the questions above:

- **Regional Plan 1.6:** Describe how the region will connect employer labor force requirements and occupational demands with the region’s labor force, including individuals with barriers to employment.
  - Factor:** How the region will connect targeted populations, especially youth and individuals with barriers to employment to in-demand occupations and Registered Apprenticeships.

Regarding both Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship, we will increase our efforts to ensure that apprenticeship opportunities are available in underserved communities including those with low skilled workers, low-income populations, people with disabilities, and formerly incarcerated individuals, TANF Youth, and other individuals with barriers. Populations of those with barriers to employment are among the populations that employers are not actively recruiting from – they are missing this pool of available workers.

We will strategically target these populations in several ways. First, we will ensure front line staff have the knowledge and tools to educate employers on best practices of how to engage these populations. Making them aware of the funding available through On the Job Training Work Experience, Registered Apprenticeships, etc. and sharing best practices of companies who have successfully engaged these populations. Second, we will ensure that employers are aware of these programs as well as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Federal Bonding program for employers hiring the previously incarcerated. This information will also be shared with our Industry Partnerships and other committees and partnerships we are involved in, including the North Central PA PREP network, the Community and Economic Development System (CEDS), and Criminal Justice Advisory Boards (CJABs). Third, we will continue to apply for funding to support Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeship

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programs. Workforce Solutions has applied for several grants over the past few years to increase the funding and programs have increased with other agencies assisting in our applications.

Employers have been telling us they cannot find a skilled workforce for several years now – even prior to the pandemic. According to WorkingNation.com almost half of all employers (46%) are reporting talent shortages. Creating more opportunities for the underserved (including the underemployed) will increase the talent pool for companies struggling to find a skilled workforce. It is more important than ever for the workforce system in North Central PA to ensure that Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships are targeted towards populations with barriers and could be the answer to the talent crisis we are facing.

Workforce Solutions is actively securing resources through several grants that will leverage funding for apprenticeships with the goal of maximizing the amount of support available to job seekers and employers in our region. Our agency is currently managing two grants that are specific to apprenticeship growth and development that will continue to support apprentices by providing reimbursement for apprenticeship RTI and OJT. The ABA grant award has allowed us as a workforce board agency to support apprentices with supportive services in occupations that we might not have had the right resources to provide this need with our previous grants. The ABA grant will allow us to support 27 apprentices over the three year grant cycle with necessary supportive services and OJT to help with retention of apprentices and growth for the employers who hire these apprentices. In addition, we are managing a Pennsylvania Nursing Pathway Apprenticeship Industry Grant. While we are in the early stages of this project, the opportunity to support a regional need to shore up the labor shortage in nurse aid and nursing occupations through this grant is significant.

In order to expand the bandwidth for connecting job seekers and employers with the appropriate resources and funding opportunities, our workforce board has worked with and engaged the PA CareerLink® staff to access and participate in training provided by the Apprenticeship and Training Office to secure the necessary skills to help grow the apprenticeship ecosystem. Business Service Team members and other staff from each of our comprehensive CareerLink® center locations are committed to expanding their knowledge in the apprenticeship arena to support the workforce board and regional goals that are critical for the north central workforce area. Several training sessions will be concluding before December 2023 to train the staff in methodology to engage employers and job seekers regarding apprenticeships.

- **Local Plan 2.3:** How will the local board’s vision and goals align with, support and contribute to the governor’s vision and goals for the state’s workforce development system, as well as any of the goals and strategies articulated in the regional plan?

**Factors:** How the system will improve access to services and to activities that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential including Registered Apprenticeships. How the local area will connect adults, dislocated workers and other targeted

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populations, especially youth and individuals with barriers to employment, to in-demand occupations and Registered Apprenticeships.

The mission of Workforce Solutions is to serve as the premier facilitator of an innovative workforce development system that meets the changing human capital needs of our employers and provides resources for our job seekers that maximizes their career potential and focuses on customers' needs. The goals that we have established to support are mission are aligned with the governor's vision and goals as articulated in the Commonwealth's WIOA combined state plan.

The Board's Goal #4, "Identify Career Pathways in major industry sectors to enhance career counseling that will result in training opportunities for our customers through skill, credential and degree attainment" speaks directly to the Commonwealth's goal to establish Career Pathways. The Board recognizes the value of Career Pathway Plans and contracted this past program year to have Career Pathways developed for each of our twelve Industry Sectors. In addition to the tools that were developed and shared with all PA CareerLink® staff, the board organized multiple training sessions to discuss strategies for utilizing the Career Pathways when meeting with customers as well as developing customized tools for employers.

Our board fully supports Registered Apprenticeship programs and understands the value for our employers. We continue to educate employers on the benefits and offer our assistance in developing RAs and over the past 2 years have successfully assisted in implementing Registered Apprenticeship programs in both Healthcare and Manufacturing as well as Pre-Apprenticeships in Manufacturing. We currently have a staff attending the Registered Apprenticeship Navigator Program through the Keystone Development Partnership (KDP) and the goal is for this staff to share what is learned with all of our Business Services Team members to further increase the awareness of Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships in our region.

- **Local Plan 3.3:** How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to: 1) Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment; and 2) Facilitate the development of Career Pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (specify on-ramps from adult education).

Workforce Solutions, North Central Workforce Development Board is committed to increasing the number of RAPs and Pre-RAPs in our region because it is evident that employers who sponsor these programs will be positioned to build a pipeline of workers who are better retained and invested in their job. Apprenticeships can aid in reducing recruiting costs and improve work productivity. We view this as a partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers, and in particular the Business Services Teams and Title I staff as well as the board, staff and the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO).

Workforce Solutions encourages the use of WIOA funding for Registered Apprenticeships and has revised our Individual Training Account Policy (ITA) and On the Job Training Policies (OJT)



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to include an exception to our training cap allowance of \$7,500. For individuals participating in Related Technical Instruction (RTI) through a Registered Apprenticeship that is on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and on the job training – we have increased the training cap to \$9,000. Workforce Solutions has successfully funded registered apprenticeship programs utilizing WIOA funding and will continue to do so. We are in the process of creating a policy specifically addressing the Registered Apprenticeship program that will assist our Title I provider with the process including data entry in CWDS.

Workforce Solutions has committed time and resources to ensure that we have the staff capacity to accomplish this work. We have created and implemented a Registered Apprenticeship Guidance document that has been shared with all PA CareerLink® staff to outline the process for RAP and Pre-RAP development and implementation and to provide information and other resources to increase the knowledge of RAPS and Pre-RAPS so they can assess and refer employers to board staff for further assistance as well as assess and refer job seekers to established RAPs and Pre-RAPs. Workforce Solutions is also committed to utilizing WIOA and other identified funding to support RAPS and Pre-RAPs in our region through all programs including: TANF Youth Development, WIOA Youth, EARN. Likewise, RAPs and Pre-RAPs are considered essential to all of the work we do around career pathways, co-enrollment and services for those with disabilities.

#### **4) Describe efforts to identify and improve access to Registered Apprenticeships.** *See answers below in the narrative following the Regional Plan 1.2 prompt.*

Based on the responses above, consider how the LWDB would like to position itself to support the stakeholders in the wider apprenticeship ecosystem:

- How will the LWDB support employers with existing RA programs? Pre-RA programs?
- How will the LWDB support employers interested in RA/Pre-RA?
- How will the LWDB support training providers, and particularly Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs, interested in RA/Pre-RA?
- What type of convening role will the LWDB play around apprenticeship?
- What are the key sector or industry initiatives, partnerships, registered apprenticeship ecosystems, next-generation sector partnerships and any other sector-based initiatives that may support apprenticeship in all or part of your region?
- How will you engage local unions around apprenticeship? For example:
  - Establishing new connections to workforce programs and PA CareerLink®.
  - Help to develop new joint programs or expand existing ones.
  - Activate labor-management board members to engage and provide connections or introductions as needed.

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- How will the LWDB engage community and faith-based organizations who serve underrepresented populations, immigrants and refugees seeking career opportunities?

The following **Regional and Local Plan** prompts related to RA/Pre-RA can be developed from the answers to the questions above:

- **Regional Plan 1.2:** Based on the analysis of the regional labor market and economic conditions, describe the region's workforce and economic development-oriented vision and goals.

**Factor:** How the local board will expand the use of apprenticeships as part of the local board's business/employer engagement strategy.

We will continue to increase our efforts to ensure that apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities are available to underserved communities including low-skilled workers, low-income populations, people with disabilities, and formerly incarcerated individuals, TANF Youth, and other individuals with barriers. Populations of those with barriers to employment are among the populations that employers are not actively recruiting from – they are missing this pool of available workers.

We will strategically target these populations in several ways. First, we will ensure front line staff have the knowledge and tools to educate employers on best practices of how to engage these populations. Making them aware of the funding available through On-the-Job Training Work Experience, Registered Apprenticeships, etc. and sharing best practices of companies who have successfully engaged these populations. Second, we will ensure that employers are aware of these programs as well as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Federal Bonding program for employers hiring the previously incarcerated. This information will also be shared with our Industry Partnerships and other committees and partnerships we are involved in, including the North Central PA PREP network, the Community and Economic Development System (CEDS), and Criminal Justice Advisory Boards (CJABs). Third, we will continue to apply for funding to support Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeship programs. Workforce Solutions has applied for several grants over the past few years to increase the funding and programs have increased with other agencies assisting in our applications.

Employers have been telling us they cannot find a skilled workforce for several years now – even prior to the pandemic. According to WorkingNation.com almost half of all employers (46%) are reporting talent shortages. Creating more opportunities for the underserved (including the underemployed) will increase the talent pool for companies struggling to find a skilled workforce. It is more important than ever for the workforce system in North Central PA to ensure that Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships are targeted towards populations with barriers and could be a solution to the talent crisis we are facing.

- **Regional Plan 1.4:** Describe the regional service strategies aimed at achieving the vision and goals established for the region.

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**Factor:** Broad-based, overarching sector and industry strategies, including an apprenticeship strategy.

Workforce Solutions continues to support the value that Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships can provide to assist our region's employers and job seekers. We have continued to provide awareness regarding the benefits of RAP's in several ways. Our Business Engagement Coordinator and Program Manager position that was created in 2019 has an integral responsibility to provide communication regarding the awareness of RAP's and Pre-RAP's for employers in our region in addition to being a liaison for the Business Services Teams. The Business Engagement and Project Manager role continues to highlight the value of Apprenticeship development as evidenced by the individual in this role having recently acquired a certification as a Registered Apprenticeship Navigator. Together with the CareerLink® staff, there is full engagement for training that is offered by the Apprenticeship and Training Office to secure additional skills to better assist our job seekers and employers in our region. Also, a guidance tool that provides the CareerLink® staff with information needed to assist in the recruitment of employers continues to be updated and shared with all those who are working directly with job seekers and employers.

Through our Industry Partnership Initiative, Workforce Solutions will continue to convene employers from targeted industry sectors to identify the apprenticeship needs for employers. We will continue to encourage employers to develop and implement Registered Apprenticeship programs and work swiftly with employers to get them apprenticeship resources, and get them connected to the Apprenticeship and Training Office Representative to develop their program as needed. The Navigator and PA CareerLink® staff will assist employers with preliminary guides and resources, while collaborating with the ATO in a timely fashion to grow the apprenticeship ecosystem in the north central region.

- **Regional Plan 1.5:** Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

**Factor:** The identity and description of key sector or industry initiatives, partnerships, registered apprenticeship ecosystems, next-generation sector partnerships and any other sector-based initiatives that support all or part of the region.

The local area's priority sectors of manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance and building and construction provide residents with a broad array of career choices. Workforce Solutions has a strong employer network which enables us to consider additional sector partnerships for other industries that face labor and workforce shortages, such as tourism and hospitality. Our current industry partnership initiative has solid engagement from the members that regularly bring together companies from the shared industry who offer similar products, resources and workforce development concerns.

The purpose of the Industry Partnership initiative (IPs) is for Pennsylvania and our local region to address the economic and workforce needs of employers through a collaborative effort to

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help grow the industries and create opportunities to increase productivity. Pennsylvania was one of the first states to extend training and career-building efforts to incorporate networks of companies in specific industries. IPs foster collaboration for incumbent worker training, school-to-career and other workforce pipeline initiatives, and are a ready made and engaged group to create apprenticeships that will strengthen skill alignment, and improve employment opportunities for high wage jobs.

See 1.4 for additional information.

- **Local Plan 3.4:** What strategies will be implemented in the local area to improve business and employer engagement that:
  - i. Support a local area workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;
  - ii. Manage activities or services that will be implemented to improve business engagement;
  - iii. Better coordinate regional workforce and economic development strategy, messaging, engagement and programs; and
  - iv. Strengthen linkages between the PA CareerLink® service delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs.

Workforce Solutions has been successful in increasing the awareness of Registered Apprenticeships as a recruitment and retention tool for employers from all industries through the PA SMART grant opportunity, and more recently with the Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) and Nursing Pathway Industry Partnership Grants. We have implemented a guidance tool that provides all PA CareerLink® staff with the information needed to assist in the recruitment of employers to consider implementing a Registered Apprenticeship program to assist with their workforce challenges. One of our regions' apprenticeships is for an Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) occupation. We were able to utilize WIOA funding to support the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) for the apprentices which leveraged additional funding.

Workforce Solutions is working to increase opportunities for pre-apprenticeship programs in our region. We continue to reach out to our local Career and Technical Centers to collaborate and discuss strategies for growing and developing their curriculum/programs to become approved pre apprenticeship programs that align with Registered Apprenticeships in our region.

We agree that employers who sponsor apprenticeship programs will be positioned to build a pipeline of workers who are better retained and invested in their job. Apprenticeships can aid in reducing recruiting costs and improve work productivity. We view this as a partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers, and in particular the Business Services Teams and Title I staff as well as the board, staff and the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO).

Workforce Solutions has committed time and resources to ensure that we have the staff capacity to accomplish this work. We have created and implemented a Registered

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Apprenticeship Guidance document that has been shared with all PA CareerLink® staff to outline the process for RAP and Pre-RAP development and implementation and to provide information and other resources to increase the knowledge of RAPS and Pre RAPS so they can assess and refer employers to board staff for further assistance as well as assess and refer job seekers to established RAPs and Pre RAPs. Workforce Solutions is also committed to utilizing WIOA and other identified funding to support RAPS and Pre RAPs in our region through all programs including: TANF Youth Development, WIOA Youth, EARN. Likewise, RAPs and Pre RAPs are considered essential to all of the work we do around career pathways, co enrollment and services for those with disabilities.

- **Local Plan 4.14:** What services, activities and program resources will be provided to businesses and employers in the local area?

Describe how Registered Apprenticeship will be promoted and the level of involvement and expertise expected of the BST team.

See the response above in 3.4.

In addition, staff from Workforce Solutions participate on all Business Service Team meetings held throughout our region to share and discuss information related to our priorities including but not limited to: Internship Opportunities, Prosper to Recovery Grant, other grants as awarded, and Registered Apprenticeship and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship.

**5) Describe how the local board will account for the RA structure in the use of contracts and ITAs.**

Responses to Sections 5 should contain additional details on how existing policies will be adapted for RA and Pre-RA. Contracts and ITAs must allow for registered apprenticeship support, which could mean adding disclaimers such as allowing for an RA occupation to be supported that is not on the HPO list. LWDBs should also make sure that their local board approved policies are up-to-date concerning the use of WIOA funds (e.g. ITA, OJT, IWT, supportive services) that can support registered apprenticeship.

LWDBs should consider:

- Are there existing OJT or ITA requirements that need to be adapted for apprenticeship to account for its specific structure (e.g. multiyear training timelines, employment requirements, etc.)?
- What other policies will need to be adopted or revised to promote RA and Pre-RA (e.g. prioritizing the use of WIOA funds to support apprenticeship, etc.)?

The following **Local Plan** prompt related to RA/Pre-RA can be developed from the answers to the questions above:

- **Local Plan 4.7:** How will training services be provided using individual training accounts, or ITAs, fund programs of study, or through the use of contracts for training services fund work-based training?

Workforce Solutions is committed to increasing the number of RAPs and Pre-RAPs in our region because we agree that employers who sponsor these programs will be positioned to build a pipeline of workers who are better retained and invested in their job. Apprenticeships can aid in reducing recruiting costs and improve work productivity. We view this as a partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers, and in particular the Business Services Teams and Title I staff as well as the board, staff and the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO).

Workforce Solutions encourages the use of WIOA funding for Registered Apprenticeships and has revised our Individual Training Account Policy (ITA) and On the Job Training Policies (OJT) to include an exception to our training cap allowance of \$7,500. For individuals participating in Related Technical Instruction (RTI) through a Registered Apprenticeship that is on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and on the job training – we have increased the training cap to \$9,000. Workforce Solutions has successfully funded registered apprenticeship programs utilizing WIOA funding and will continue to do so. We are in the process of creating a policy specifically addressing the Registered Apprenticeship program that will assist our Title I provider with the process including data entry in CWDS.

**6) Describe how the local board will coordinate RAs and Pre-RAs with workforce investment activities to support strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of service(s).**

Responses to Sections 6 should contain additional details on how existing Title I programs and funding streams will be leveraged to support apprenticeship. LWDBs should consider:

- How can an increased focus on apprenticeship support and enhance existing programs and services?
- How will the LWDB avoid duplication of services?
- How will the LWDB keep their partners informed of their apprenticeship activities (e.g. tracking and noting how many apprentices and pre-apprentices are supported by WIOA funds during quarterly board meetings, etc.)?

The following **Local Plan** prompt related to RA/Pre-RA can be developed from the answers to the questions above:

- **Local Plan 4.10:** How will the local board coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with workforce investment activities to support strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of service(s)?

Workforce Solutions is committed to increasing the number of RAPs and Pre-RAPs in our region because we agree that employers who sponsor these programs will be positioned to build a pipeline of workers who are better retained and invested in their job. Apprenticeships can aid in reducing recruiting costs and improve work productivity. We view this as a partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers, and in particular the Business Services Teams and Title I staff as well as the board, staff and the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO).

Workforce Solutions has committed time and resources to ensure that we have the staff capacity to accomplish this work. We have worked with the State Apprenticeship Office for several years preceded by work with the Federal Apprenticeship Office which has resulted in board staff with extensive knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship Programs. We currently have a journeyman who completed the Registered Apprenticeship Navigator Program. This effort is to enhance and evidence North Central Workforce Board's commitment to the work being done around development of Registered and Pre-Apprenticeship programming. The navigator and other board staff will continue to inform and educate secondary and post-secondary schools' systems of options regarding RA and Pre RA. Commitment to direct outreach and participation on Local Advisory Councils is active by board staff, including participation on Occupation Advisory Councils, and attendance regular meetings with post-secondary training providers (including Career and Technical Centers) as well as through our Business Education Partnership and youth committee of the North Central Workforce Development Board.

**7) Describe how RA will be promoted and the level of involvement and expertise expected of the Business Service Team (BST) team.**

Embedding a focus on apprenticeship within the State's workforce system requires training frontline staff on the training approach, including what makes it unique and what role PA CareerLink® staff will play in promoting and supporting it. Questions to consider include:

- Will the BST Team receive training on RA? What about Job Developers?
- What does this training look like? How often will it occur?
- Will there be specific metrics associated with employer outreach around apprenticeship? How will these metrics measure both quantity and quality of engagement?
- What resources will the BST Team have access to? What about other Title I staff?

The following **Local Plan** prompt related to RA/Pre-RA can be developed from the answers to the questions above:

- **Local Plan 4.14:** What services, activities and program resources will be provided to businesses and employers in the local area?

Describe how Registered Apprenticeship will be promoted and the level of involvement and expertise expected of the BST team.

As previously noted, Workforce Solutions is committed to increasing the number of RAPs and Pre-RAPs in our region. We view this as a partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers, and in particular the Business Services Teams and Title I staff as well as the board, staff and the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO).

Workforce Solutions has committed time and resources to ensure that we have the staff capacity to accomplish this work. We have created and implemented a Registered Apprenticeship Guidance document that has been shared with all PA CareerLink® staff to outline the process for RAP and Pre-RAP development and implementation and to provide information and other resources to increase the knowledge of RAPS and Pre-RAPS so they can assess and refer employers to board staff for further assistance as well as assess and refer job seekers to established RAPs and Pre-RAPs. Workforce Solutions is also committed to utilizing WIOA and other identified funding to support RAPS and Pre-RAPs in our region through all programs including: TANF Youth Development, WIOA Youth, EARN. Likewise, RAPs and Pre-RAPs are considered essential to all of the work we do around career pathways, co-enrollment and services for those with disabilities.

The RA Navigator and other staff from Workforce Solutions participate in all Business Service Team meetings held throughout our region to share and discuss information related to our priorities regarding Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship, and other grants as awarded. Growing the apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship ecosystem has prompted a unique collaboration with the Business Service Teams and members of the PA CareerLink® staff who are doing business services work, including that of apprenticeship development for



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job seekers and employers. Business services team members along with the RA Navigator are working together to assess the needs of local employers who are ripe for growing an apprenticeship.

### 8) Next Steps

Based on the goals and strategies defined above, list specific next steps the LWDB will take to expand the apprenticeship ecosystem within their region, who will be responsible for driving the activity, and the expected time it will take to achieve the desired outcomes. Keep in mind that this is an iterative process, and that next steps will change and emerge as apprenticeship-related activities progress.

Next Step	Lead	Timeline
Host North Central Region Apprenticeship Summit	Exec. Director WFS	Completed 10/11/23
PA CareerLink® Business Services Teams and staff from all North Central CareerLink® locations to participate in ATO training conducted by regional assigned ATR's.	WFS Staff and PA CareerLink®	One training completed 10/10/23; another scheduled for 11/6/23 for the northern region
Connect employers to apprenticeship resources & funding (for existing and those already in-the-pipeline to develop new apprenticeships)	WFS, RA Navigator & PA CareerLink® BST's and other	Ongoing
Conduct needs assessments for employers who inquire about apprenticeships for their organization/facility	WFS, RA Navigator and BSC's	Ongoing
Assist and connect interested employers who want to build apprenticeships with ATR/ATO	WFS, RA Navigator and relevant BST's	Current and Ongoing
Outreach and communications to area employers re: ABA and Nursing Pathway Apprenticeship resources and funding availability	WFS and ABA Coordinator	Ongoing
Feature apprenticeship presentation/discussion at quarterly Industry Partnership convenings for HC/SA and Manufacturing as appropriate	WFS Staff	Ongoing

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Leverage and promote partnerships to provide funding, outreach and support to existing RA and Pre-RA programs such as the GACC; assist in setting up school tours	WFS staff, include BEP Prog.	Ongoing
Work as a liaison between schools and connect with potential program sponsors to provide resources and build apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and opportunities; connect to ATO as needed	WFS staff as needed	Ongoing
Manage ABA and Nursing Pathways grant programs to ensure successful outcomes as prescribed	WFS, and ABA/NP Grant Coordinator	Ongoing
Bridge communications between all Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship stakeholders through training, building new programs, sustaining existing programs and promoting collaboration for maximum ecosystem growth	Entire WFS team and PA CareerLink®	Ongoing
Submit the Apprenticeship Strategic Plan for the North Central Workforce Development Region as requested	WFS, Exec Director and RA Navigator	Submit to John Paul (KDP) – Nov. 2023