



# Regional Plan update draft

## February 14, 2022

Program Years July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024

**Great Northwest Region**

Economic Development Region 6

# CHAPTER 1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

## Introduction to Chapter 1

The Great Northwest Region of Illinois, or Economic Development Region – 6, consists of the following ten counties: Bureau, Carroll, Henry, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Mercer, Putnam, Rock Island, and Whiteside.

The Economy and Workforce in the Great Northwest Region of Illinois is embedded with a mixture of industry and occupation sectors separated by those with predominantly high locations quotients (LQ), those with favorable projected growth patterns, and those where the need to replace retiring or leaving workers indicates a need for focus. While the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted workforce in the region, it is very likely the full impact has not been accounted for in data developed in 2021 or since the last iteration of this plan submitted to the State. 2020 Census Data is being aggregated at this time and information beyond state, county, and municipal population counts is not expected to be released until later in 2022. That being said, a significant portion of the data being utilized in this report is based on pre-COVID estimates and projections.

The economic and workforce analysis below is a depiction of the diversity held within Economic Development Region 6's 10-county region.

A. As part of the 2022 modification provide an updated analysis of the factors listed below noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.

1. Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

a. What are the targeted industries, high impact industry clusters, and in-demand occupations in the region?

### **Targeted Industries:**

Manufacturing, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics, Agriculture, Health, Professional and Business Services, Construction, IT, Self-Employed, and Leisure/Hospitality.

### **High Impact Industries:**

Manufacturing, Health, Professional and Business Services (including IT), and Construction.

### **In-Demand Occupations Requiring a Certificate of License:**

Hairdressers/Hairstylists/Cosmetologists, Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics, Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics, Fitness Trainers & Aerobic Instructors, Library Technicians, Bus/Truck/Diesel Engine Mechanics, Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses, Medical Secretaries, and Preschool Teachers (except Special Education).

**In-Demand Occupations Requiring an Associate's Degree:**

Engineering Techs (except Drafters), Life/Physical/Social Science Techs, Physical Therapy Assistants, Registered Nurses, Computer User Support Specialists, Computer Network Support Specialists, Computer Occupations (All Other), Medical Records/Health Information Techs, Paralegals & Legal Assistants, and Dental Hygienists.

**In-Demand Occupations Requiring a Bachelor's Degree:**

Business Operations Specialists (All Other), Accountants & Auditors, Insurance Sales Agents, Registered Nurses, Human Resources Specialists, Secondary Teachers (except Spec./Voc. Ed.), Elementary School Teachers (except Special Education), Software Developers (Applications), Market Research Analysts & Specialists, and Substitute Teachers.

**In-Demand Occupations Requiring Education Beyond a Bachelor's Degree:**

Marketing Managers, General & Operations Managers, Financial Managers, Management Analysts, Lawyers, Computer & Information Systems Managers, Sales Managers, Administrative Services Managers, Clergy, and Medical Health Services Managers.

**Short-Term On-the Job Training Required:**

Cashiers, Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Retail Salespersons, Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers, Waiters & Waitresses, Stock Clerks & Order Fillers, General Office Clerks, Janitors/Cleaners, Light or Delivery Services Drivers, and Hand Packers & Packagers.

**Moderate-Term On-the Job Training Required:**

Customer Service Representatives, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Wholesale & Manufacturing Sales Representatives, Secretaries, Production Workers, Bookkeeping/Accounting/Auditing Clerks, Construction Laborers, Services Sales Representatives, Correctional Officers & Jailers, and Inspectors/Testers/Sorters/Weighers.

**Long-Term On-the Job Training Required:**

Farmers/Ranchers & Other Agricultural Managers, Restaurant Cooks, General Maintenance & Repair Workers, Machinists, Carpenters, Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers, Electricians, Welders/Cutters/Solderers/Brazers, Plumbers/Pipefitters/Steamfitters, and Industrial Machinery Mechanics.

**Table 1 - Great Northwest Illinois Regional Industry Mix, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021 – Top Industries:**

NAICS	Industry	Employment	Average Annual Wages	LQ
	Total - All Industries	194,591	\$54,367	1.00
611110	Elementary and Secondary Schools	12,767	\$43,371	1.29
622110	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	7,845	\$56,073	1.02
921110	Executive Offices	5,742	\$44,626	23.21
722513	Limited-Service Restaurants	5,704	\$15,916	1.05
551114	Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	4,547	\$239,357	1.59
722511	Full-Service Restaurants	4,208	\$16,440	0.79
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	3,714	\$21,592	1.10
493110	General Warehousing and Storage	3,096	\$38,570	1.64
333111	Farm Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing	2,996	\$57,303	38.91
623110	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	2,880	\$32,227	1.52
452311	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	2,809	\$28,498	1.39
332994	Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing	2,592	\$81,438	80.15
561320	Temporary Help Services	2,507	\$29,911	0.72
311612	Meat Processed from Carcasses	2,341	\$41,507	13.06
522110	Commercial Banking	2,331	\$61,378	1.32
922140	Correctional Institutions	2,301	\$67,148	3.73
621111	Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	2,267	\$93,422	0.64
813110	Religious Organizations	2,215	\$17,894	0.99
447110	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	2,119	\$21,385	1.97
441110	New Car Dealers	1,956	\$55,655	1.44
111000	Crop Production (Proprietors)	1,914	\$68,324	4.71
928110	National Security	1,794	\$87,076	2.39

Source: JobsEQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021

The table above displays the top industries for the Great Northwest Illinois Region as of second quarter, 2021. Total employment within the region is 194,591 and the average annual wage is \$54,367. The region's major industrial mix includes the traditional employment-heavy sectors that tend to predominate across Illinois and the US. These include Elementary and Secondary Schools; General Medical and Surgical Offices; Limited-Service and Full-Service Restaurants; Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores (except Convenience Stores); General Warehousing and Storage; Nursing Care Facilities; and Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores.

However, there are also some unique sectors that make up part of the region's major industries. These include Executive Offices (government offices serving as offices of chief executives and their advisory committees and commissions – includes County and City Administrators, Executive Federal/State Offices, Mayor Offices); Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices; Farm Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing; Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing; Meat Processed from Carcasses; Crop Production; and National Security (i.e. Rock Island Arsenal/Department of Defense). Other significant industries include Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters; Temporary Help Services; Commercial Banking; Correctional Institutions; Offices of Physicians; Religious Organizations, and New Car Dealers.

According to information from the 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet for EDR 6 Northwest there are 10,310 self-employed in the region (2018 figures). This information would indicate that the "Self Employed Industry" is the second largest contributor to the region's industry mix, with only the Elementary and Secondary Schools sector with greater numbers of employees.

**Table 2 - Great Northwest Illinois Regional Occupational Mix, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021 – Top Occupations:**

SOC	Occupation	Employment	Average Annual Wages	LQ
00-0000	Total - All Occupations	194,591	\$49,800	1.00
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	5,489	\$34,900	1.46
41-2011	Cashiers	5,245	\$23,700	1.19
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	4,504	\$34,000	0.90
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	4,384	\$22,200	0.98
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	4,281	\$37,900	1.15
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,021	\$52,300	1.59
29-1141	Registered Nurses	3,632	\$61,300	0.93
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3,568	\$96,500	1.16
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	3,174	\$30,100	1.08
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	3,079	\$35,300	0.83
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	2,840	\$61,300	2.58
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,675	\$29,100	0.96
51-2092	Team Assemblers	2,594	\$34,300	1.84
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	2,129	\$56,500	1.29
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	2,099	\$21,700	0.84
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	2,053	\$26,700	1.31
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2,018	\$63,900	1.19
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	2,001	\$43,400	1.12
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	1,996	\$29,500	1.13
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,912	\$39,300	0.94

Source: JobsEQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021

The table above displays the top occupations, in real numbers, for the Great Northwest Illinois Region as of second quarter, 2021. As mentioned above, total employment within the region is 194,591 but when calculating annual average wages using occupational information, results in an annual average wage of \$49,800 for the region. The region’s major occupational mix is typical of a region with significant manufacturing, retail, and health sector representations. These occupations include Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand; Cashiers; Retail Salespersons; Fast Food and Counter Workers; General Office Clerks; Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers; and Registered Nurses; Stockers and Order Fillers; Customer Service Representatives; Janitors and Cleaners (except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners); Team Assemblers; Waiters and Waitresses; General Maintenance and Repair Workers; and Nursing Assistants.

Other top occupations rounding out the top 20 in the region include those from Financial Activities, Professional & Business Services, Agriculture and Education sectors. These occupations include General and Operations Managers; Farmers, Ranchers, and other Agricultural Managers; Elementary School Teachers (except Special Education); Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (except Technical and Scientific Products); and Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks.

b. What industries and occupations have favorable location quotients?

**Table 3 – Industries with Favorable Location Quotients**

NAICS	Industry	Employment	LQ
212322	Industrial Sand Mining	568	80.57
332994	Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing	2,592	80.15
335210	Small Electrical Appliance Manufacturing	1,258	75.70
333111	Farm Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing	2,996	38.91
311930	Flavoring Syrup and Concentrate Manufacturing	338	33.11
221113	Nuclear Electric Power Generation	1,375	25.51
111411	Mushroom Production	332	23.88
921110	Executive Offices	5,742	23.21
325992	Photographic Film, Paper, Plate, and Chemical Manufacturing	226	22.44
333613	Mechanical Power Transmission Equipment Manufacturing	340	20.88
311514	Dry, Condensed, and Evaporated Dairy Product Manufacturing	477	20.19
334512	Automatic Environmental Control Manufacturing for Residential, Commercial, and Appliance Use	341	19.55
327211	Flat Glass Manufacturing	271	19.43
111150	Corn Farming	451	19.39
561910	Packaging and Labeling Services	1,356	16.55
493130	Farm Product Warehousing and Storage	233	16.32
311813	Frozen Cakes, Pies, and Other Pastries Manufacturing	252	16.00

562212	Solid Waste Landfill	1,003	15.12
311612	Meat Processed from Carcasses	2,341	13.06
336212	Truck Trailer Manufacturing	522	11.15

Source: JobsEQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021

Table 3 displays the industries located in the Great Northwest Region that have the most favorable location quotients among all industries. Many of the industries with the most significance presence in the region are within the manufacturing sector. These include Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing; Small Electrical Appliance Manufacturing, Farm Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing; Photographic Film, Paper, Plate, and Chemical Manufacturing; Mechanical Power Transmission Equipment Manufacturing; Automatic Environmental Control Manufacturing for Residential, Commercial, and Appliance Use; Flat Glass Manufacturing; and Truck Trailer Manufacturing. Additionally and specific to manufacturing, the area has a significant presence of industries associated with food production and processing including Flavoring Syrup and Concentrate Manufacturing; Mushroom Production; Dry, Condensed, and Evaporated Dairy Product Manufacturing; Frozen Cakes, Pies, and other Pastries Manufacturing; and Meat Processed from Carcasses. Industrial Sand Mining, an extractive industry, has the highest location quotient in the region. Other industries with extremely favorable location quotients in the region include Nuclear Electric Power Generation; Executive Offices; Corn Farming; Farm Product Warehousing and Storage; and Packaging and Labeling Services.

**Table 4 – Occupations with Favorable Location Quotients**

SOC	Occupation	Employment	LQ
51-8011	Nuclear Power Reactor Operators	124	16.39
19-4051	Nuclear Technicians	103	12.39
17-2161	Nuclear Engineers	181	8.55
47-5051	Rock Splitters, Quarry	42	6.55
49-3041	Farm Equipment Mechanics and Service Technicians	287	5.49
51-3023	Slaughterers and Meat Packers	477	5.01
33-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Correctional Officers	265	4.45
51-6042	Shoe Machine Operators and Tenders	23	4.00
51-4032	Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	40	3.34
51-4034	Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	98	3.33
53-6011	Bridge and Lock Tenders	14	3.22
51-4041	Machinists	1,434	3.12
53-7031	Dredge Operators	7	3.00



51-2021	Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	45	2.80
51-4191	Heat Treating Equipment Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	59	2.77
51-2041	Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	240	2.65
51-4081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	469	2.64
51-4062	Patternmakers, Metal and Plastic	9	2.62
51-4111	Tool and Die Makers	206	2.59
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	2,840	2.58

Source: JobsEQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021

Table 4 displays the occupations in the region with the most favorable location quotients. As to be expected and since Nuclear Electric Power Generation has such a presence in the region, the three occupations with the top three location quotients, are in that industry: Nuclear Power Reactor Operators, Nuclear Technicians, and Nuclear Engineers. Similarly, due to the outsized presence of the manufacturing industry in the region, a number of the occupations with favorable location quotients are from that industry. Those occupations include Shoe Machine Operators and Tenders; Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic; Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setter, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic; Machinists; Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers; Heat Treating Equipment Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic; Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters; Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic; Patternmaker, Metal and Plastic; and Tool and Die Makers. Additionally, owing to the region's agricultural focus, occupations with significant location quotients include Farm Equipment Mechanics and Service Technicians; Slaughterer's and Meat Packers; and Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers.

c. What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?

**Table 5 – Industries with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Growth**

<b>NAICS</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Annual % Growth - 2 Year Forecast</b>
221114	Solar Electric Power Generation	17	2.9%
113210	Forest Nurseries and Gathering of Forest Products	7	2.8%
624120	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	335	2.8%
492210	Local Messengers and Local Delivery	218	2.6%
624190	Other Individual and Family Services	613	2.5%
624110	Child and Youth Services	128	2.5%
213115	Support Activities for Nonmetallic Minerals (except Fuels) Mining	1	2.1%
621340	Offices of Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, and Audiologists	227	2.0%
221115	Wind Electric Power Generation	9	1.9%
623220	Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities	66	1.9%
621391	Offices of Podiatrists	38	1.8%
621610	Home Health Care Services	1,287	1.8%
621999	All Other Miscellaneous Ambulatory Health Care Services	129	1.7%
621492	Kidney Dialysis Centers	106	1.7%
621991	Blood and Organ Banks	49	1.7%
623311	Continuing Care Retirement Communities	811	1.6%
623312	Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	665	1.5%
621410	Family Planning Centers	5	1.5%
621493	Freestanding Ambulatory Surgical and Emergency Centers	19	1.5%
485999	All Other Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	65	1.4%

Source: JobsEQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021

The impact of the pandemic has slowed growth among a number of industries in the region. Growth, albeit in small real numbers, continues in Solar Electric Power Generation and Wind Electric Power Generation. Sectors focused on Health Care and Social Assistance are also growing including Services for Elderly and Persons with Disabilities; Other Individual and Family Services; Child and Youth Services; Offices of Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, and Audiologists; Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuses Facilities; Offices of Podiatrists; Home Health Care Services; All other Miscellaneous Ambulatory Health Care Services; Kidney Dialysis Centers; Blood and Organ Banks; Continuing Care Retirement Communities; Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly; Family Planning Centers; and Freestanding Ambulatory Surgical and Emergency Centers.

The two-year annual growth forecasts reflect the realities of the recent two years of a pandemic economy. While the health care industry is one that has been growing regionally and is expected to continue growing in the future, the last two years of the “pandemic economy” saw federal and state resources flow into the sector and that of Social Assistance to help Americans deal with impacts of COVID-19 on health and social support systems. In many cases, funding was used to increase staffing in these sectors. At this time, economies across the United States are just emerging and returning to their pre-COVID economies and growth trajectories for important industries.

**Table 6 – Occupations with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Growth**

<b>SOC</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Annual % Growth - 2 Year Forecast</b>
49-9081	Wind Turbine Service Technicians	13	4.6%
47-2231	Solar Photovoltaic Installers	16	2.9%
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	189	2.8%
29-1071	Physician Assistants	92	1.6%
15-2041	Statisticians	31	1.6%
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	1,773	1.4%
31-1121	Home Health Aides	600	1.4%
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	429	1.4%
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	1,223	1.3%
15-2098	Data Scientists and Mathematical Science Occupations, All Other	59	1.3%
21-1013	Marriage and Family Therapists	45	1.2%
33-2022	Forest Fire Inspectors and Prevention Specialists	3	1.2%
39-2021	Animal Caretakers	356	1.1%
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	300	1.1%
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	83	1.1%
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	101	1.1%
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	47	1.0%
39-1013	First-Line Supervisors of Gambling Services Workers	56	0.9%
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	90	0.8%
31-9011	Massage Therapists	120	0.7%

Source: JobsEQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021

As mentioned above, the COVID-19 emergency is likely impacting growth in individual occupations as well as in whole industries. In the table above, the two-year forecasts for annual growth, favor occupations in health with growth projected for Nurse Practitioners; Physician Assistants; Personal Care Aides; Home Health Aides; Medical and Health Services Managers; and Physical Therapist Assistants. Occupations that fall into social services with projected growth include Marriage and Family Therapists; Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors; and Occupational Research Analysts. Jobs associated with alternative energy including both solar and wind have the highest projected growth rates as forecast for the coming two years.

Additionally, other occupations showing growth include those associated with professional and business services and information technology including Statisticians; Data Scientists and Mathematical Science Occupations, All Other; Information Security Analysts; and Operations Research Analysts.

d. What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?

**Table 7 – Industries with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Replacements**

NAICS	Industry	Employment	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Replacements	Employment Growth
611110	Elementary and Secondary Schools	12,767	2,030	1,148	1,179	2,327	-296
722513	Limited-Service Restaurants	5,704	1,868	887	1,014	1,901	-34
722511	Full-Service Restaurants	4,208	1,372	592	809	1,401	-28
622110	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	7,845	1,068	577	611	1,188	-120
921110	Executive Offices	5,742	1,014	474	615	1,089	-75
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	3,714	977	499	581	1,080	-103
551114	Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	4,547	763	302	514	816	-53
452311	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	2,809	697	355	427	782	-86
493110	General Warehousing and Storage	3,096	716	280	453	733	-17
447110	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	2,119	627	333	360	693	-65
333111	Farm Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing	2,996	507	207	382	589	-82
623110	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	2,880	515	297	290	587	-72
561320	Temporary Help Services	2,507	535	234	346	580	-45
311612	Meat Processed from Carcasses	2,341	511	210	344	554	-42
332994	Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing	2,592	395	184	338	522	-128
813110	Religious Organizations	2,215	452	226	256	482	-30
441110	New Car Dealers	1,956	408	183	267	450	-42
522110	Commercial Banking	2,331	381	169	276	445	-64
722410	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	1,349	400	154	267	421	-22
922140	Correctional Institutions	2,301	335	166	226	392	-58
721110	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels	1,436	352	177	213	390	-39
621111	Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	2,267	361	166	193	359	2

Source: JobsEQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021

Much of the growth in industries in the Great Northwest Region is based on replacing retiring or transferring employees. A significant impact of the pandemic has been the unforeseen “Great Resignation” which has seen millions of Americans leaving their jobs every month. This, coupled with the widespread worker shortages that have been bemoaned over the past year, has strained industry attempts to re-hire and expand as restrictions are lifted and consumer demand expands rapidly. While many causes for the workforce shortage have been suggested including the extension of unemployment benefits, other more rational explanations include parents remaining home while children are instructed remotely, the decimation of child care options in many parts of the country, a demographic implosion thanks to the mass retirement of Baby Boomers, and the expansion of remote work opportunities that disconnected jobs from traditional geographic locations. Another explanation was the speed at which the economy recovered from the lockdowns and the massive job losses of the March-September 2020 time period. Companies could not hire fast enough and the number of jobs exceeded demand resulting in a number of new and better paid opportunities for individuals re-entering the job market.

The region has recognized for years that interventions would be needed to replace its older workforce and supply current employers with the labor they need to foment economic growth. Industries in the region with the most favorable demand projections based on replacements include Elementary and Secondary Schools; Limited-Service Restaurants; Full-Service Restaurants, General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, Executive Offices; Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores (except Convenience Stores); Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices; Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters; and Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores. All of these industries are experiencing significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining employees in the current economic situation. Executive Offices and Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices have the ability to utilize remote work as a recruiting tool while the other industries listed above are location-specific (to be sure, many of these industries do have employees who do have the ability to work remotely, as well).

Other industries with favorable demand projections due to replacements include Farm Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing; Skilled Nursing Care Facilities; Temporary Help Services; Meat Process from Carcasses; Small Arms Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing; Religious Organizations; New Car Dealers; Commercial Banking; Drinking Places; Correctional Institutions; Hotels and Motels (except Casino Hotels); and Offices of Physicians.

**Table 8 – Occupations with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Replacements**

SOC	Occupation	Employment	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Replacements	Employment Growth
41-2011	Cashiers	5,245	1,624	862	958	1,820	-196
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	4,384	1,589	730	860	1,590	-1
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	5,489	1,396	478	998	1,476	-80
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	4,504	1,119	484	756	1,240	-122
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	4,281	800	444	508	952	-152
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,021	785	314	559	873	-88
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	3,174	739	309	497	806	-67
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	2,099	752	280	500	780	-29
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	3,079	670	276	489	765	-96
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,675	645	316	367	683	-38
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3,568	544	145	454	599	-55
51-2092	Team Assemblers	2,594	377	187	347	534	-157
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	1,773	568	276	242	518	50
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	2,840	388	320	191	511	-124
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	1,996	411	209	225	434	-24
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,912	344	216	198	414	-70
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	2,053	370	208	204	412	-42
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2,018	349	115	283	398	-49
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,904	300	176	211	387	-87
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	1,733	367	139	247	386	-19
29-1141	Registered Nurses	3,632	334	197	183	380	-46

Source: JobsEQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021



As noted above, the region has recognized for years that much of the occupational demand in the region is based on replacing retiring or departing workers. Occupations with the most favorable demand projections based on replacements are also the occupations facing the greatest worker shortages at this time. These occupations include Cashiers; Fast Food and Counter Workers; Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers (Hand); Retail Salesperson; General Office Clerks; Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers; Stockers and Order Fillers; Waiters and Waitresses; Customer Service Representatives; and Janitors and Cleaners (except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners).

Other occupations in the region that are facing elevated demand due to the need for replacement workers include General and Operations Managers; Team Assemblers; Personal Care Aides; Farmers, Ranchers, and other Agricultural Managers; Nursing Assistants; Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks; Teaching Assistants (except Postsecondary); Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (except Technical and Scientific Products); Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (except Legal, Medical, and Executive); Light Truck Drivers; and Registered Nurses.

e. What industries and occupations are considered mature but still important to the economy?

**Table 9- Maturing, Emerging, and Leading Industries in the Great Northwest Illinois Region**

NAICS Title	2018 Employment	Projected 2028 Employment	Net Employment Change 2018 -	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	220,387	220,943	556	0.30%	
Self Employed Workers	10,310	10,606	296	2.90%	0.78
Agricultural Production	9,447	9,691	244	2.60%	4.46
Natural Resources & Mining	1,119	1,059	-60	-5.40%	1.2
Construction	8,352	8,570	218	2.60%	0.84
Manufacturing	28,299	28,394	95	0.30%	1.63
Wholesale Trade	8,577	8,639	62	0.70%	1.07
Retail Trade	21,810	21,709	-101	-0.50%	1.01
Utilities	2,091	2,158	67	3.20%	2.75
Transportation & Warehousing	11,679	12,182	503	4.30%	1.42
Information	1,718	1,482	-236	-13.70%	0.44
Financial Activities	8,532	8,548	16	0.20%	0.73

Professional & Business Services	20,792	22,566	1,774	8.50%	0.72
Educational Services	17,239	15,707	-1,532	-8.90%	0.89
Health Care & Social Assistance	25,283	25,715	432	1.70%	0.88
Leisure & Hospitality	17,988	17,366	-622	-3.50%	0.8
Other Services	9,255	8,878	-377	-4.10%	1.02
Government	17,896	17,673	-223	-1.20%	1.19

Source: 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest

Maturing
Emerging
Leading

Industries that are considered mature but important to the economy:

- Natural Resources and Mining
- Retail trade
- Other services
- Government

Occupations that are considered mature but important to the economy:

- Nuclear Power Reactor Operators
- Nuclear Technicians
- Nuclear Engineers
- Rock Splitters (Quarry)
- Cashiers
- Retail Salespersons



f. What industries and occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?

Industries that are considered emerging in the regional economy:

- Self-Employed Workers
- Construction
- Financial Activities
- Professional & Business Services
- Health Care & Social Assistance

Occupations that are considered emerging in the regional economy:

- General & Operations Managers
- Financial Managers
- Management Analysts
- Registered Nurses
- Business Operations Specialists
- Elementary School Teachers (except Special Education)
- Computer User Support Specialists
- Computer Occupations, All Other
- Paralegals & Legal Assistants
- Nursing Assistants
- Automotive Technicians/Mechanics
- Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors

g. What sources of supply and demand data were used to determine targeted industries, occupations, and skills?

JobsEQ 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021; EMSI 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021; 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest.



## **2. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations;**

52 Overall employment between Quarter 4 2017 and Quarter 4 2018 has increased in the region, with the exception of Jo Daviess, Carroll, Lee, and LaSalle Counties in Illinois. Leading industries in the region are Manufacturing, Transportation & Warehousing, Wholesale Trade, and Retail Trade. Within the leading industries the number of qualified workers does not meet employer demand in the following occupations:

- Engineering Technicians
- Industrial Machinery Mechanics
- Machinists
- Welders
- Diesel Engine Mechanics
- Light Truck or Delivery Service Drivers
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers

Emerging industries include Construction, Professional & Business Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, Solar Energy (especially in LaSalle County) and Leisure & Hospitality. Among emerging industries, demand gap was found in the following occupations:

- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Certified Medical Assistant
- Solar Energy Technicians
- Nurse Assistants
- Physical Therapy Assistants
- Medical Records/Health Information Technicians
- Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics

- Pre-school Teachers
- First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades
- Carpenters
- Electricians
- Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters
- Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks
- First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
- Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
- Medical Secretaries

Demand gaps were also found in Information Technology occupations such as Computer User Support Specialists, Computer Network Support Specialists, Software Application Developers, and Computer Systems Analysts. Workers are employed in all sectors in Information Technology occupations.

**3. Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region,**

- a. What are the targeted career pathway clusters in the region?

As noted in the introduction of Chapter one, the regional planning team has developed two tiers of industry in which a focus will be drawn to. Chapter 1.a states that high impact industries include: Manufacturing, Health, Professional and Business Services (including IT), and Construction.

Career pathway clusters within these industries are included in the following career clusters: Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Business, Management, and Administration; Information Technology; and Health Sciences. The following chart illustrates these career clusters’ career pathways according to projected occupational gaps in Region 6.

Career Cluster	Career Pathway	Gap	Projected annual Income
Health Science	Registered Nurse	-33	\$57,300

<b>Business, Management, and Administration</b>	General and Operations Managers	-14	\$92,700
<b>Finance</b>	Financial Managers	-11	\$111,000
<b>Information Technology</b>	Software developers	-9	\$88,100
<b>Business, Management, and Administration</b>	Management Analyst	-6	\$88,300
<b>Business, Management, and Administration</b>	Managers (all)	-6	\$80,000
<b>Marketing</b>	Market Research analysts and Marketing Specialists	-5	\$54,700
<b>Finance</b>	Accountants and Auditors	-5	\$64,800
<b>Architecture and Construction</b>	Construction Managers	-5	\$81,000
<b>Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources</b>	Farmers, Ranchers, and other Agricultural Managers	-5	\$54,500
<b>Health Science</b>	Medical and Health Services Managers	-4	\$92,000

JobsEQ, data as of 2019 Q3, except wages which are as of 2018



b. What are the skills that are in demand in the region?

In demand skills in the region are largely Middle Skills that require some post-secondary training or education, but not a four-year degree. Illustrated in the following chart are Skill Gaps of all occupations, of which the majority would be considered Middle Skill.

Tier	Industry	Skill	Gap
<b>Two</b>	Professional Business services/ financial activities	Microsoft Office	-129
<b>Two</b>	Education	Teaching/Training	-95
<b>One and Two</b>	Multiple	Bilingual	-70
<b>One</b>	Transportation	Merchandising	-64
<b>Two</b>	Professional Business services/ financial activities	Microsoft Excel	-54
<b>One and Two</b>	Multiple	Mathematics	-44
<b>One</b>	Healthcare	Medical Terminology	-43
<b>Two</b>	Professional Business services/ financial activities	Typing 31-40 wpm	-42
<b>One and Two</b>	Multiple	Change Management	-39

JobsEq, Data as of 2019 Q3

c. How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local businesses?

Middle Skills are in demand in all occupations. According to National Skills Coalition, In Illinois Middle Skill jobs account for 53% of Illinois’ labor market, yet only 42% of the state’s workers are trained with middle-skill level skills.

4. Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment<sup>6</sup> (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).

- a. How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?

**Population Demographics – Change, Age, Race/Ethnicity/Educational Attainment**

<b>Population by Largest Cities in Region</b>	
<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>
Moline	42,985
Rock Island	37,108
East Moline	21,374
Ottawa	18,840
Dixon	15,274
Sterling	14,764
Kewanee	12,509
Streator	12,500
Peru	9,896
LaSalle	9,582

Source: 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest

In general, the largest cities in the region form two groups. The first consists of those in the Quad Cities region, including Moline, Rock Island and East Moline. The second group consists of the cities along the Illinois river closer to the Chicago suburbs, in the west of the region such as Peru, LaSalle, Ottawa, and Streator. Of the three remaining cities, Dixon, and Sterling hug the Rock River, and Kewanee is to the south, between the Peru-LaSalle area and the Quad Cities. This indicates that the center of economic activity is split between these two regions, with workers migrating to the outer Chicago suburbs or working in the Quad Cities area. While these larger population centers do have a manufacturing base along with more diverse economic mixes, a significant portion of the region is focused on agriculture and industries that support that sector.

**Overall Population Change 2010-2020**

	<b>Population (2020)</b>	<b>Population (2010)</b>	<b>Population Change (2010-2020)</b>	<b>Population Percent Change (2010-2020)</b>
Bureau County, IL	33,244	35,083	-1,839	-5.53%
Carroll County, IL	15,702	15,615	87	0.55%
Henry County, IL	49,284	50,477	-1,193	-2.42%
Jo Daviess County, IL	22,035	22,728	-693	-3.14%
LaSalle County, IL	109,658	113,789	-4,131	-3.77%
Lee County, IL	34,145	36,100	-1,955	-5.73%

Mercer County, IL	15,699	16,551	-852	-5.43%
Putnam County, IL	5,637	5,982	-345	-6.12%
Rock Island County, IL	144,672	147,524	-2,852	-1.97%
Whiteside County, IL	55,691	58,750	-3,059	-5.49%
Northwest IL Region Total	485,767	502,599	-16,832	-3.47%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest.

From 2010 to 2020 the population of the region dropped evenly. Although Carroll County saw a minor .55% increase in population, most of the counties saw a drop in population between 3 and 6 percent. Rural Putnam County saw the steepest decline, losing 6.12% of its population in the timespan, followed by Lee, Whiteside, and Mercer Counties with declines of 5.73, 5.49, and 5.43 percent respectively. Overall, the region lost 3.47% of its 2010 population by 2020.

Population Projections by Age Cohort					
Age Cohort	2022 Population	2027 Population	Change	% Change	2027 % of Cohort
Under 5 years	25,318	25,331	13	0%	5.55%
5 to 9 years	27,538	25,861	(1,677)	(6%)	5.66%
10 to 14 years	28,354	27,187	(1,166)	(4%)	5.95%
15 to 19 years	28,315	26,721	(1,594)	(6%)	5.85%
20 to 24 years	25,589	24,697	(892)	(3%)	5.41%
25 to 29 years	26,738	24,890	(1,848)	(7%)	5.45%
30 to 34 years	27,213	26,157	(1,056)	(4%)	5.73%
35 to 39 years	27,817	27,288	(528)	(2%)	5.97%
40 to 44 years	27,909	27,335	(574)	(2%)	5.98%
45 to 49 years	26,006	26,939	933	4%	5.90%
50 to 54 years	28,338	25,061	(3,276)	(12%)	5.49%
55 to 59 years	30,736	27,192	(3,544)	(12%)	5.95%
60 to 64 years	34,194	29,060	(5,134)	(15%)	6.36%
65 to 69 years	32,361	31,883	(477)	(1%)	6.98%
70 to 74 years	26,394	28,491	2,097	8%	6.24%
75 to 79 years	19,932	22,851	2,919	15%	5.00%
80 to 84 years	13,060	15,337	2,277	17%	3.36%
85 years and over	13,659	14,498	838	6%	3.17%
Total	469,469	456,779	(12,691)	(3%)	100.00%

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

According to ESMI population projection data, many of the younger and middle-aged cohorts will see a decline in population. This is concerning, as these are the age groups that make up the primary workforce for the region. Only one prime workforce age cohort is expected to grow through and that is those between 45 and 49 years. In 2020, this report found that the primary workforce age cohorts had shrunk faster between 2010 and 2017. These projections show a more rapid decrease in the number of residents between the ages of 50 to 69 years of age suggesting that these cohorts are retiring and migrating out of the region. This has serious implications for future economic growth, as labor shortages increase and companies and workforce agencies will need to work diligently to replace them. The shortages can and will discourage further investment in the region's economy. This is similar to the broader problems faced by the American Midwest, as depopulation and aging starve local businesses of workers.

This age re-distribution cycle will have a dramatic impact on workforce in Great Northwest Region for years to come. A growing portion of the population is reaching retirement age and their replacements are not there to take over their positions. More importantly, businesses and industries will need to retain older workers or be prepared to train replacements that might be older and less amenable to developing critical technological skills that will be needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. It also suggests an urgent need to make linkages and communicate opportunities to younger residents in the area to keep them in the area and in the local workforce.

Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity						
Race/Ethnicity	2022 Population	2022 % of Cohort	2027 Population	Change	% Change	2027 % of Cohort
White, Non-Hispanic	382,219	81.42%	364,048	-18,171	-5%	79.70%
White, Hispanic	43,279	9.22%	45,624	2,345	5%	9.99%
Black, Non-Hispanic	23,222	4.95%	24,815	1,593	7%	5.43%
Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic	8,049	1.71%	8,390	340	4%	1.84%
Asian, Non-Hispanic	6,183	1.32%	6,450	267	4%	1.41%
Two or More Races, Hispanic	1,761	0.38%	1,919	158	9%	0.42%
Black, Hispanic	1,652	0.35%	1,780	128	8%	0.39%
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic	1,472	0.31%	1,719	247	17%	0.38%
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Non-Hispanic	1,030	0.22%	1,186	156	15%	0.26%
Asian, Hispanic	332	0.07%	424	92	28%	0.09%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	162	0.03%	245	82	51%	0.05%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic	107	0.02%	179	72	67%	0.04%
Total	469,469	100.00%	456,779	-12,691	-3%	100.00%

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

According to 2022 estimates supplied through EMSI, the population of the region is overwhelmingly white, with significant populations of Hispanics and Black populations. Whites (Non-Hispanic) make up a little more than 81% of the regional population, Hispanics (all races) make-up 10.35% of the population, and Blacks (Non-Hispanic) make up almost 5% of the regional population.

Through 2027, the region is projected to see a decline in population by 12,691. This decline is almost completely attributable to a shrinking White (Non-Hispanic) population, with minority populations increasing their overall proportion of the population. The overall regional white population is expected to shrink by 5% (18,711) through 2027, while all other ethnic and racial groups are expected to grow with Hispanic (all races) and Black (Non-Hispanic) populations increasing the most in real numbers. The Hispanic population is projected to increase to 11.31% of the regional population in 2027, the Black (Non-Hispanic) population is expected to increase to 5.43% of the regional population, and the White (Non-Hispanic) population is projected to decrease to 79.7% of the regional population.

This has some implications on the need for companies in the region to recruit a diverse workforce. Furthermore, as will be discussed later, emphasizes the need to address the racial economic disparities that exist in the region.

Educational Attainment of Population 25 and over		
Educational Attainment	Count	Percentage (region)

Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10,387	3.0%
9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	24,809	7.3%
High School or Grad Equivalent	116,175	34.1%
Some College	84,043	24.6%
Associate's Degree	35,079	10.3%
Bachelor's Degree	46,003	13.5%
Graduate or Professional Degree	24,494	7.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>340,990</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest

The educational levels in the area are broadly the same as the national average, with 31% of the region's population holding an associate's degree or higher. The region may be able to leverage this workforce into entry-level positions requiring associate's and bachelor's degrees. However, the region does have a lower percentage of its population holding bachelor's degrees than national averages which indicates the economy is less diverse than other regions and there will be pressure on the economy to attract investment in these higher-paying industries and jobs unless interventions, both in economic development and workforce development can be determined.

Additionally, 44.4% of the region's population hold a high school diploma, a GED, or have not completed their high school educations. With most jobs requiring at least some post-secondary training or certificates for entry-level jobs, the region has significantly large population that is less than ready to take on the new opportunities that are expanding in the region.

**Income – Household Income, Unemployment, Poverty**

**Household Income and Income Distribution (2019 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)**

	Bureau County, Illinois	Carroll County, Illinois	Henry County, Illinois	Jo Daviess County, Illinois	LaSalle County, Illinois	Lee County, Illinois	Mercer County, Illinois	Putnam County, Illinois	Rock Island County, Illinois	Whiteside County, Illinois	Great Northwest Illinois Region
<b>Total Households</b>	13,698	6,508	19,856	9,970	45,095	13,788	6,516	2,413	60,546	23,084	201,474
Less than \$10,000	4.90%	6.60%	4.40%	4.20%	5.60%	5.60%	5.10%	3.80%	6.60%	3.90%	5.07%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.80%	4.10%	4.90%	3.50%	4.50%	5.00%	3.20%	3.10%	4.90%	3.80%	4.08%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	10.10%	9.50%	10.20%	10.50%	10.00%	9.10%	7.60%	5.10%	9.30%	12.10%	9.35%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.80%	14.30%	10.00%	11.00%	10.70%	10.90%	11.50%	12.20%	9.70%	10.40%	11.05%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15.70%	13.80%	12.60%	14.00%	12.80%	13.10%	13.00%	14.50%	14.20%	16.20%	13.99%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	18.70%	19.30%	18.30%	20.00%	20.00%	17.80%	23.70%	20.00%	19.50%	20.20%	19.75%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.60%	13.90%	14.10%	15.20%	13.10%	15.70%	14.10%	18.10%	13.90%	14.10%	14.68%

\$100,000 to \$149,999	14.10%	12.10%	17.50%	14.00%	14.70%	12.90%	17.00%	16.40%	14.80%	11.90%	14.54%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4.40%	4.30%	5.10%	4.40%	5.30%	6.20%	3.10%	3.60%	4.30%	4.20%	4.49%
\$200,000 or more	3.90%	2.00%	2.90%	3.30%	3.40%	3.50%	1.60%	3.20%	2.90%	3.30%	3.00%
Median income (dollars)	\$57,436	\$52,410	\$59,933	\$57,946	\$58,142	\$58,194	\$59,787	\$63,638	\$54,858	\$54,232	\$57,658
Mean income (dollars)	\$72,177	\$65,151	\$73,302	\$74,630	\$72,700	\$73,903	\$69,351	\$77,077	\$69,960	\$71,473	\$71,972

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, 2019

Almost 30% of the households in the Great Northwest Region have annual household incomes that are less than \$35,000, with almost 10% making less than \$15,000 per year. On the other side of the spectrum, a little over 22% of households in the region have annual incomes exceeding \$100,000 per year. The largest percentage of households in the region, 19.75%, are estimated to make between \$50,000 to \$74,999 per year. The median household income for the Great Northwest Illinois Region is \$57,658 and mean household income is \$71,972.

## Unemployment

Labor Force Statistics 2021	
Category	Population
Total	473,916
16+ Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	373,696
Not in Labor Force (16+)	145,079
Labor Force	228,617
Employed	213,885
Unemployed	14,732
Under 16, Military, and institutionalized Population	100,220

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2021.

Breaking down the labor force, 228,617 residents out of 473,916, or 48.3%, are participating in the labor force. Of course, 21.1% of the total population cannot be counted towards labor force participation due to being under 16, in the military, or institutionalized. Taking this into account, the total labor force participation rate is 61.8% -- meaning that out of the 373,696 residents who can be in the labor force, only 228,617 actually are. This number is a just a general guideline, as it does not take into account those who are not working because they are raising children, caring for sick relatives, or might be ill themselves, but it is helpful for determining how the labor force can be grown using only the population in the area. Low labor participation rates can also be attributed to those are working jobs that pay cash and significant numbers of individuals who just do not participate in the workforce for various other reasons.

Unemployment Over Time	
Timeframe	Unemployment Rate

2016	6.14%
2017	5.07%
2018	5.06%
2019	4.58%
2020	8.63%
January - June 2021	6.02%
July 2021	4.98%
August 2021	5.39%
September 2021	4.25%

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

Unemployment over time shows, overall, a very smooth curve. Following the 2008 recession, unemployment shows a slow but steady trend back towards 5%. The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic shock brought regional unemployment up above 8% and close to 9% in 2020. This was followed by a rapid fall in unemployment rates tracking the speedy economic recovery in 2021. Of course, throughout this timespan, the unemployment rate never wavers more than 2.5% from the initial value of 6.14%, but these minor changes reflect how the pandemic has affected the region's economy.

Additionally, regional unemployment is now lower in the region than it was before the pandemic struck. This has resulted in acute labor shortages among many businesses and industries in the region. A situation like this, coupled with the need to continuously replace retiring or exiting workers, will undoubtedly put a strain on workforce delivery systems for years to come.

<b>Unemployment by Age Cohort</b>		
	<b>Unemployment (Sep 2021)</b>	<b>%</b>
< 22	344	3.50%
22-24	475	4.84%
25-34	2,317	23.59%
35-44	2,219	22.59%
45-54	1,857	18.91%
55-59	975	9.93%
60-64	876	8.92%
65+	760	7.73%
Total	9,823	100.00%

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

By September 2021, it became clear that the unemployment crisis was waning and waning quickly in the region. For those still categorized as unemployed in 2021, the greatest number were those between 25 to 44 years of age which is to be expected since these age groups make up the prime workforce ages. The very young cohorts, many working in essential industries during the pandemic such as retail, had lower unemployment rates and many of these industries with younger than average workforces, began hiring back very quickly. Residents in the older age groups made up less of the unemployed population but also make up less of the total population.

<b>Unemployment by Gender</b>
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Gender	Unemployment (Sep 2021)	%
Females	5,049	51.40%
Males	4,774	48.60%
Total	9,823	100.00%

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

There is some research that shows that females were more likely to suffer unemployment during the pandemic than males. Additionally, labor participation rates are still lower than pre-pandemic levels because females are still being disproportionately disadvantaged by remote learning requirements that their children continue to face and the disruption in the childcare industry.

Unemployment by Race		
Race	Unemployment (Sep 2021)	%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	49	0.50%
Asian	163	1.66%
Black or African American	2,623	26.70%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	14	0.15%
White	6,973	70.99%
Total	9,823	100.00%

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

Unemployment by Ethnicity		
Ethnicity	Unemployment (Sep 2021)	%
Hispanic or Latino	1,058	10.77%
Not Hispanic or Latino	8,765	89.23%
Total	9,823	100.00%

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

Unemployment rates continue to be higher for minority populations in the region. Breaking unemployment down by race reveals some stark disparities. 26.70% of the unemployed population is Black or African American, while this populations only make up 4.95% of the region's population. This disparity is further reflected by the statistics regarding poverty, which will be discussed later. The White population, representing 81% of the region's population, only makes up 70.99% of the unemployed population. Turning to ethnicity, the Hispanic population makes up a little over 10% of the region's population and 10.77% of the unemployed population.

### Poverty - Population below Poverty by Education, Sex, Race, and Age Group

Poverty by Age		
Age group	# Below poverty line	% Below poverty Line
Under 5	6,006	22.6%
5-17	14,079	18.5%
18-64	31,383	11.5%



65+	6,407	6.9%
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Source: 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest

Children in poverty is a significant issue in the region, with a fifth of children under the age of 5 and in the 5-17 age cohort falling beneath the poverty line. In general, a number of these children come from single income households, headed by one parent, usually a mother. With the pandemic and the resulting loss of thousands of entry-level jobs and the impact on the childcare availability, the most vulnerable groups such as children, female headed households, and minority households suffered the greatest. Moreover, the pandemic pushed a number of individuals and families into poverty who had never experienced it before. Those statistics and a complete review of the impacts of the pandemic have not been released as of yet. While a number of government stimulus interventions were introduced including enhanced unemployment benefits, stimulus checks, and expanded child tax credits, it is too soon to determine the impact that these actions had on poverty statistics.

Poverty by Sex		
Sex	# Below poverty line	% Below poverty Line
Male	25,381	11.0%
Female	32,494	13.7%
Other Race	1,797	19.0%

Source: 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest

Poverty by Race		
Race	# Below poverty line	% Below poverty Line
White	46,522	11.0%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	7,647	17.4%
Black or African American	5,910	32.2%
Two or more races	2,669	25.5%
Asian	697	12.5%
American Indian & Alaska Native	247	23.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	33	18.6%
Other Race	1,797	19.0%

Source: 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest

Poverty in the region disproportionately affects the Black or African American population, those classified as two or more races, and American Indian/Alaska Native populations, with each having more than 20% of the population in poverty (32.2%, 25.5%, and 23.3%, respectively). The Hispanic population also has a significantly high incidence of poverty. As can be said in regions all over the state, poverty in this region has a significant racial and ethnic dimension. While the white population has the highest total count of population in poverty at 46,522, only 11.0% of the white population falls beneath poverty line.

Poverty by Education		
Education	# Below poverty line	% Below poverty Line
Less than HS	6,881	21.5%
HS/GED	12,202	10.8%
Associate's or some college	9,969	8.6%
Bachelor's Degree or higher	2,600	3.7%

Source: 2021 Regional Plan Data Packet – EDR 6 Northwest

Some 21.5% of those with less than a high school diploma or GED are under the poverty line, and general trend implies that higher levels of education reduce the likelihood of being in poverty. This indicates that stronger adult education programs and more high school retention programs are needed to target this population and integrate them into the regional workforce pipeline.

## Change in Industry and Occupation 2022-2027

Employment by Industry, Predictions and Projections						
Description	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2022 - 2027 Change	2022 - 2027 % Change	Expected Change	2027 Location Quotient
Local Government	24,115	23,795	-320	-1%	540	1.39
Food Services and Drinking Places	12,153	13,205	1,052	9%	1,088	0.99
Administrative and Support Services	8,770	9,384	614	7%	352	0.81
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7,182	7,644	462	6%	365	0.54
Federal Government	7,815	7,624	-191	-2%	-67	1.28
Ambulatory Health Care Services	6,457	6,706	249	4%	481	0.63
Food Manufacturing	5,829	6,485	655	11%	94	3.16
Specialty Trade Contractors	5,896	5,735	-160	-3%	69	0.79
Machinery Manufacturing	5,404	5,489	85	2%	75	4.18
Hospitals	5,401	5,027	-374	-7%	208	0.77
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4,808	4,861	52	1%	26	1.71
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	5,055	4,815	-240	-5%	221	1.15
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	4,695	4,760	65	1%	60	2.76
State Government	4,473	4,708	235	5%	20	0.72
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	4,514	4,637	123	3%	45	1.19
Truck Transportation	4,466	4,527	61	1%	67	2.13
General Merchandise Stores	4,682	4,420	-261	-6%	-186	1.33
Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations	4,065	4,151	86	2%	151	1.19
Food and Beverage Stores	4,158	3,790	-368	-9%	-165	1.04
Social Assistance	3,321	3,510	189	6%	405	0.55
Educational Services	3,179	3,439	260	8%	208	0.64
Warehousing and Storage	3,499	3,331	-168	-5%	131	1.66
Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	3,540	3,240	-300	-8%	-60	1.02
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	3,276	3,203	-73	-2%	43	1.33
Crop Production	3,218	3,018	-200	-6%	53	2.99
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,072	3,010	-61	-2%	10	1.17
Repair and Maintenance	2,503	2,548	45	2%	71	1.21
Personal and Laundry Services	1,947	2,120	174	9%	167	0.78
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	1,944	2,090	147	8%	-61	2.58

Gasoline Stations	2,158	2,025	-133	-6%	-54	1.85
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	1,820	1,971	151	8%	61	3.99
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	1,830	1,954	124	7%	-26	4
Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	2,022	1,912	-110	-5%	61	0.51
Utilities	1,920	1,726	-194	-10%	-59	2.67
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	1,788	1,722	-66	-4%	-38	1.04
Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,422	1,672	250	18%	74	2.71
Construction of Buildings	1,643	1,542	-101	-6%	41	0.56
Accommodation	1,449	1,425	-24	-2%	157	0.76
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	1,356	1,389	33	2%	-69	1.42
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,484	1,355	-129	-9%	19	0.99
Chemical Manufacturing	1,386	1,310	-76	-5%	19	1.22
Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	1,189	1,243	54	5%	170	0.62
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,198	1,101	-97	-8%	10	0.56
Health and Personal Care Stores	1,143	1,092	-51	-4%	-20	0.92
Real Estate	1,074	1,070	-3	0%	20	0.39
Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry	898	916	18	2%	46	1.25
Couriers and Messengers	827	898	71	9%	59	0.63
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	699	814	115	16%	14	0.66
Private Households	802	771	-32	-4%	41	0.34
Rental and Leasing Services	636	747	111	17%	18	1.2
Wood Product Manufacturing	653	737	84	13%	13	1.4
Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	560	643	83	15%	92	0.68
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	564	625	61	11%	10	0.81
Primary Metal Manufacturing	591	610	19	3%	-6	1.44
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	663	545	-118	-18%	7	2.49
Telecommunications	622	538	-84	-14%	-38	0.71
Rail Transportation	543	534	-9	-2%	-20	2.24
Support Activities for Transportation	461	505	44	10%	19	0.52
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	527	505	-22	-4%	1	0.39
Printing and Related Support Activities	490	502	12	2%	-48	1.25
Animal Production and Aquaculture	438	406	-31	-7%	-20	0.78
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	361	401	40	11%	52	0.4
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	379	390	10	3%	7	0.73
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores	340	377	38	11%	-14	0.66
Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Investments and Related Activities	280	277	-3	-1%	8	0.21
Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	271	275	4	2%	3	0.48
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	205	257	52	25%	3	1.88
Electronics and Appliance Stores	287	256	-31	-11%	-22	0.53

Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	196	246	50	25%	7	0.67
Nonstore Retailers	280	242	-38	-13%	16	0.25
Broadcasting (except Internet)	209	220	11	5%	7	0.7
Water Transportation	178	218	40	22%	7	2.78
Paper Manufacturing	217	204	-13	-6%	-11	0.51
Publishing Industries (except Internet)	286	179	-107	-37%	7	0.18
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	172	177	6	3%	2	0.38
Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	146	124	-21	-15%	-13	4.14
Apparel Manufacturing	111	109	-2	-2%	-22	1.24
Other Information Services	89	108	18	21%	12	0.19
Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	73	81	8	11%	16	0.13
Monetary Authorities-Central Bank	56	66	11	20%	0	2.69
Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions	48	64	16	34%	9	0.29
Air Transportation	59	57	-2	-3%	4	0.09
Support Activities for Mining	35	46	11	32%	5	0.13
Textile Product Mills	41	44	3	7%	-2	0.35
Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	22	26	4	16%	6	0.65
Pipeline Transportation	24	19	-4	-19%	0	0.29
Forestry and Logging	14	13	-1	-10%	0	0.13
Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	0	0%	0	0
Postal Service	0	0	0	0%	0	0

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

The table above is based on 3-digit NAICS codes and is sorted based on the number of jobs projected for 2027. It is included here to illustrate the projected change in jobs by industry between 2022 and 2027.

### ***Total 2027 Jobs by Industry***

Jobs in the region are expected to increase from 198,696 in 2022 to 200,572 jobs in 2027, a 1 % increase.

The regional industries with the largest total number of employees in 2027 are projected to be Local Government (23,795 jobs), Food Services and Drinking Places (13,205), Administrative and Support Services (9,384 jobs), Professional and Business Services (7,644 jobs), Federal Government (7,624 jobs), Ambulatory Health Care Services (6,706 jobs), Food Manufacturing (6,485 jobs), Specialty Trade Contractors (5,735 jobs), Machinery Manufacturing (5,489 jobs), and Hospitals (5,027 jobs).

*Expected Change* is the amount of job growth or decline that would be expected for a particular regional industry based on the national growth effect and the local industry mix effect. Based on this definition, Local Government, Specialty Trade Contractors, and Hospitals, while projecting regional job declines, are expected to grow based on general national and industry growth effects over the next five years.

### ***% Increase in Jobs by Industry***

Regional industries with the greatest percent increase in jobs between 2022 and 2027 are projected to include Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions (34% increase); Support Activities for Mining (32% increase); Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing (25% increase); Water Transportation (22% increase); Other Information Services (21% increase); Monetary Authorities – Central Bank (20%

increase); Waster Management and Remediation Services (18% increase); Rental and Leasing Services (17% increase); and Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores (16% increase).

The regional industries with largest projected increase in 2027 job totals are Food Services and Drinking Places (1,052 jobs); Food Manufacturing (655 jobs); Administrative and Support Services (614 jobs); Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (462 jobs); Educational Services (260 jobs); Waste Management and Remediation Services (250 jobs); Ambulatory Health Care Services (249 jobs); State Government (235 jobs); Social Assistance (189 jobs); and Personal and Laundry Services (174 jobs).

By percentage decrease, Publishing Industries (except Internet) are projected to see a 37% decrease followed by Pipeline Transportation (19% decrease); Mining, except oil and gas (18% decrease); Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing (15% decrease); Telecommunications (14% decrease); Nonstore Retailers (13% decrease); Electronics and Appliance Stores (11% decrease); Forestry and Logging (10% decrease); Utilities (10% decrease); Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction (9% decrease); and Food and Beverage Stores (9% decrease).

### ***Location Quotient by Industry***

Location quotient (LQ) is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a particular region unique in comparison to the national average. Industries in the region with the largest location quotients include Machinery Manufacturing (LQ = 4.18); Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing (LQ = 4.14); Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing (LQ = 3); Electrical Equipment, Appliance and Component Manufacturing (LQ = 3.99); Food Manufacturing (LQ = 3.16); Crop Production (LQ = 2.99); Water Transportation (LQ =2.78); Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing (LQ = 2.76); Waste Management and Remediation Services (LQ = 2.71); and Monetary Authorities – Central Bank (LQ = 2.69).

<b>Job Predictions, Trends, and Projections</b>									
<b>Description</b>	<b>2022 Jobs</b>	<b>2027 Jobs</b>	<b>2022 - 2027 Change</b>	<b>2022 - 2027 % Change</b>	<b>2020 Jobs</b>	<b>Current Year Total Diversity</b>	<b>% of Jobs Held by Minorities 2020</b>	<b>2027 Location Quotient</b>	<b>Automation Index</b>
Material Moving Workers	13,101	13,357	256	2%	12,805	3,833	30%	1.46	116.8
Retail Sales Workers	9,748	9,515	-233	-2%	9,912	1,972	20%	1.03	98.8
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	8,381	8,941	559	7%	8,313	1,729	21%	1.11	129.2
Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers	7,269	7,421	152	2%	7,259	1,266	17%	1.44	83.2
Business Operations Specialists	7,088	7,351	263	4%	6,912	1,627	24%	0.91	88.3
Construction Trades Workers	6,763	6,596	-168	-2%	6,851	1,142	17%	0.92	126
Information and Record Clerks	6,704	6,484	-220	-3%	6,829	1,447	21%	0.94	96.2
Motor Vehicle Operators	6,144	6,382	238	4%	5,981	1,139	19%	1.05	106.5
Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	6,334	6,273	-61	-1%	6,377	1,303	20%	0.8	86.3
Other Management Occupations	5,884	5,790	-94	-2%	5,963	787	13%	1.1	87
Other Production Occupations	5,406	5,519	113	2%	5,252	1,464	28%	1.78	115.4

Other Office and Administrative Support Workers	5,667	5,469	-198	-3%	5,767	1,179	20%	1.18	101.1
Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	5,183	5,258	76	1%	5,185	1,989	38%	1.05	123
Health Technologists and Technicians	5,329	5,191	-138	-3%	5,419	1,275	24%	1.36	92.4
Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	4,555	4,683	128	3%	4,479	758	17%	1.15	111.3
Metal Workers and Plastic Workers	4,295	4,484	189	4%	4,163	562	13%	2.1	118.2
Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Nursing Assistants, Orderlies, and Psychiatric Aides	4,353	4,376	23	1%	4,372	1,385	32%	0.57	94.7
Assemblers and Fabricators	4,426	4,275	-152	-3%	4,454	1,119	25%	2.05	113.5
Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	4,076	4,235	158	4%	4,116	1,354	33%	1.04	125.6
Financial Clerks	3,974	3,745	-229	-6%	4,078	530	13%	1.08	102
Top Executives	3,592	3,685	94	3%	3,530	343	10%	1.04	82.2
Material Recording, Scheduling, Dispatching, and Distributing Workers	3,704	3,643	-61	-2%	3,710	1,154	31%	1.37	104
Operations Specialties Managers	3,350	3,425	74	2%	3,296	474	14%	1.23	83.7
Computer Occupations	3,064	3,143	79	3%	3,007	716	24%	0.5	83.3
Engineers	3,021	3,043	22	1%	2,975	481	16%	1.37	84.9
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	3,179	3,010	-169	-5%	3,245	475	15%	0.75	92.1
Vehicle and Mobile Equipment Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	2,643	2,662	19	1%	2,633	355	13%	1.16	109.6
Financial Specialists	2,566	2,557	-9	0%	2,562	369	14%	0.66	91.1
Other Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	2,371	2,423	53	2%	2,366	672	28%	1.03	89.2
Counselors, Social Workers, and Other Community and Social Service Specialists	2,175	2,267	92	4%	2,126	653	31%	0.72	83.1
Law Enforcement Workers	2,141	2,121	-20	-1%	2,150	825	38%	1.39	93.3
Sales Representatives, Services	2,021	2,037	16	1%	2,009	230	11%	0.67	95.5
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	1,941	2,010	68	4%	1,888	137	7%	0.98	91.8
Other Personal Care and Service Workers	1,893	1,907	15	1%	1,924	577	30%	0.65	88.2
Other Healthcare Support Occupations	1,861	1,893	32	2%	1,851	439	24%	0.82	96.4
Other Teachers and Instructors	1,787	1,847	60	3%	1,775	475	27%	1.02	86
Agricultural Workers	1,776	1,771	-5	0%	1,785	594	33%	1.33	110.7
Grounds Maintenance Workers	1,712	1,736	24	1%	1,700	527	31%	1.03	128.6
Supervisors of Sales Workers	1,599	1,600	0	0%	1,607	211	13%	0.82	85.9
Supervisors of Production Workers	1,462	1,523	61	4%	1,409	256	18%	2.01	88.6

Food Processing Workers	1,343	1,513	170	13%	1,212	420	35%	1.51	117.8
Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,496	1,449	-47	-3%	1,510	233	15%	0.81	91.8
Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,237	1,313	75	6%	1,230	307	25%	0.95	105.3
Other Protective Service Workers	1,130	1,161	31	3%	1,133	328	29%	0.57	105.2
Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations, and Sales Managers	1,106	1,148	41	4%	1,081	96	9%	1.1	82.1
Other Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers	966	1,062	96	10%	963	286	30%	0.69	128.4
Postsecondary Teachers	949	1,011	62	7%	917	212	23%	0.44	86.6
Other Construction and Related Workers	877	870	-8	-1%	886	205	23%	1.5	112.4
Personal Appearance Workers	869	856	-12	-1%	890	221	25%	0.67	99.6
Other Sales and Related Workers	869	840	-28	-3%	888	104	12%	0.65	94.1
Entertainers and Performers, Sports and Related Workers	787	834	47	6%	773	117	15%	0.77	90.2
Art and Design Workers	696	737	41	6%	672	93	14%	0.67	85.8
Animal Care and Service Workers	595	699	103	17%	538	36	7%	1.48	105.7
Drafters, Engineering Technicians, and Mapping Technicians	670	688	18	3%	655	112	17%	0.81	93.9
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	684	676	-9	-1%	697	172	25%	1.61	100.2
Military-only occupations	670	661	-9	-1%	674	316	47%	0.56	N/A
Media and Communication Workers	618	637	19	3%	610	84	14%	0.63	91.2
Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers	604	604	0	0%	619	217	35%	0.92	117.2
Lawyers, Judges, and Related Workers	556	566	10	2%	550	65	12%	0.5	81.7
Religious Workers	574	559	-15	-3%	584	124	21%	0.92	78.4
Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers	518	538	20	4%	499	89	18%	0.84	93.5
Supervisors of Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	494	508	13	3%	480	49	10%	0.81	94
Electrical and Electronic Equipment Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	515	497	-17	-3%	524	86	16%	0.68	104.9
Other Transportation Workers	434	464	30	7%	426	104	24%	1.03	111.2
Supervisors of Protective Service Workers	449	451	2	0%	448	141	31%	1.08	85.7
Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers	456	449	-7	-1%	458	45	10%	0.53	106.2
Plant and System Operators	449	445	-5	-1%	443	74	17%	1.19	104.7
Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers	410	444	33	8%	412	81	20%	0.66	108.2

Social Scientists and Related Workers	395	409	14	4%	382	77	20%	0.95	84.6
Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians	370	376	6	2%	363	87	24%	0.72	90
Physical Scientists	325	334	10	3%	315	63	20%	0.93	79.2
Legal Support Workers	341	332	-9	-3%	348	65	19%	0.56	89
Supervisors of Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Workers	275	288	13	5%	267	67	25%	0.66	101.2
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists and Technicians	281	285	4	1%	271	52	19%	1.9	92.8
Printing Workers	272	280	8	3%	267	32	12%	1.12	107.5
Woodworkers	229	263	34	15%	203	34	17%	0.78	120.9
Media and Communication Equipment Workers	266	263	-3	-1%	272	46	17%	0.57	93.4
Life Scientists	248	262	14	6%	240	54	23%	0.57	79.8
Rail Transportation Workers	255	251	-4	-2%	257	72	28%	1.84	98.6
Librarians, Curators, and Archivists	236	235	0	0%	239	47	20%	0.67	96.1
Extraction Workers	232	214	-19	-8%	245	21	9%	0.69	115.5
Mathematical Science Occupations	192	208	17	9%	183	41	22%	0.62	87
Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides	203	205	2	1%	206	22	11%	0.74	89.1
Funeral Service Workers	171	160	-11	-7%	180	<10	Insf. Data	2.04	104.7
Supervisors of Personal Care and Service Workers	139	149	9	7%	140	23	16%	0.49	92
Water Transportation Workers	95	119	24	25%	80	18	23%	0.96	101.4
Helpers, Construction Trades	99	99	0	0%	97	15	15%	0.35	134.6
Communications Equipment Operators	112	94	-18	-16%	124	27	22%	1.18	99.8
Architects, Surveyors, and Cartographers	85	91	6	7%	80	<10	Insf. Data	0.34	82.4
Air Transportation Workers	79	89	10	13%	74	15	20%	0.2	92.7
Other Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	71	73	2	3%	69	12	17%	0.46	90.1
Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	72	72	0	0%	72	16	22%	1.02	96
Baggage Porters, Bellhops, and Concierges	39	43	4	11%	38	11	29%	0.49	107.6
Tour and Travel Guides	23	25	1	6%	23	<10	Insf. Data	0.36	96.4
Forest, Conservation, and Logging Workers	26	25	-1	-3%	26	<10	Insf. Data	0.28	108.5

Source: ESMI, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021.

***Total 2027 Jobs by Occupational Category***



As mentioned above, jobs in the region are expected to increase from 198,696 in 2022 to 200,572 jobs in 2027, a 1 % increase.

The largest occupations projected for 2027 in the region include the following: Material Moving Workers (13,357 jobs); Retail Sales Workers (9,515 jobs); Food and Beverage Serving Workers (8,941 jobs); Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers (7,421 jobs); Business Operations Specialists (7,351 jobs); Construction Trades Workers (6,596 jobs); Information and Record Clerks (6,484 jobs); Motor Vehicle Operators (6,382 jobs); Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners (6,273 jobs); and Other Management Occupations (5,790 jobs).

### ***Projected Increase in Jobs by Occupational Category 2022-2027***

Regional industries with the greatest projected percentage increase in jobs between 2022 and 2027 are Water Transportation Workers (25% increase); Animal Care and Service Workers (17% increase); Woodworkers (15% increase); Food Processing Workers (15=3% increase); Air Transportation Workers (13% increase); Baggage Porters, Bellhops, and Concierges (11% increase); Other Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers (10% increase); Mathematical Science Occupations (9% increase); and Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers (8%).

Regional Industries projected to grow in real numbers through 2027 include Food and Beverage Serving Workers (559 jobs); Business Operations Specialists (263 jobs); Material Moving Workers (256 jobs); Motor Vehicle Operators (238 jobs); Metal Workers and plastic Workers (189 jobs); Food Processing Workers (170 jobs); Cooks and Food Preparation Workers (158 jobs); Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers (152 jobs); Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations (128 jobs); and Other Production Occupations (113 jobs).

Occupations projected to face decreases include Communications Equipment Operators (16% decrease); Extraction Workers (8% decrease); Funeral Service Workers (7% decrease); Financial Clerks (6% decrease); and Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (5% decrease)

### ***% of Jobs Held by Minorities 2020***

EMSI includes data that covers diversity – data that includes the raw number of individuals who identify as racial or ethnic groups by occupational category. With this data, the overall percentage of occupations or jobs held by minorities can be extrapolated. In the region, the occupations with the largest representation of minorities include: Military – Only Occupations (47%); Law Enforcement Workers (38%); Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers (38%); Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers (35%); Food Processing Workers (35%); Agricultural Workers (33%); Cooks and Preparation Workers (33%); Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Nursing Assistants, Orderlies, and Psychiatric Aides (32%); Supervisors of Protective Service Workers (31%); and Material Recording, Scheduling, Dispatching and Distributing Workers (31%); Grounds Maintenance Workers (31%); and Counselors, Social Workers, and Other Community and Social Service Specialists.

The least diverse occupations in the region include Animal Care and Service Workers (7%); Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (7%); Extraction Workers (9%); Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations, and Sales Managers (9%); Top Executives (10%); Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers (10%); Supervisors of Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers (10%); Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides (11%); Sales Representatives, Services (11%).

### ***Location Quotient by Occupation 2027***

Location quotient (LQ) is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a particular region unique in comparison to the national average. The occupations in the Great Northwest Region with the projected highest 2027 location quotients include the following: Metal Workers and Plastic Workers (LQ = 2.1); Assemblers and Fabricators (LQ = 2.05); Funeral Service Workers (LQ = 2.04); Supervisors of Production Workers (LQ = 2.01); Occupational Health and Safety Specialists and Technicians (LQ = 1.9); Rail Transportation Workers (LQ = 1.84); Other Production Occupations (LQ = 1.78); Firefighting and Prevention Workers (LQ = 1.61); Food Processing Workers (LQ = 1.51); Other Construction and Related Workers (LQ = 1.5).

Occupations that are extremely underrepresented in the region compared to the national average include Fishing and Hunting Workers (fewer than 10 workers in this region fall into this occupation); Air Transportation Workers; Forest, Conservation, and Logging Workers; Architects, Surveyors, and Cartographers; Helpers, Construction Trades; Tour and Travel Guides; Postsecondary Teachers; Other Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations; Supervisors of Personal Care and Service Workers; and Baggage Porters, Bellhops, and Concierges.

### ***Automation Index***

According to EMSI, the “US Automation Index analyzes the potential automation risk of occupations based on job task content—derived from ONET work activities. Combining that data with the Frey and Osborne findings at the occupation level, we identify which job tasks are 'at risk' and which are resilient. We also incorporate data to identify where occupations cluster in industries facing disruption, and where workers' skills mean their nearest job options are also facing automation risk. This is a 100-based index, meaning that occupations with an automation index above 100 have an above average risk of automation, while occupations with an automation index of below 100 have a below average risk of automation. Note: automation index is unavailable for Legislators, Military, and Unclassified occupations, so they are excluded from aggregate indexes for higher-level occupations.”

The question of automation is an important topic with regards to workforce development, especially when looking at future job creation and growth. Research suggests that a number of occupations, nationally and globally, are at risk for automation. It is estimated that 50% to 70% of changes in US wage structure since 1980 are linked to industries with rapid automation; mostly where middle-income jobs had been concentrated (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2021).

A question that arises in the economic development arena is whether the current labor shortages and dearth of younger demographics available to fill in for the retiring Baby Boomers (at least in this region) will exacerbate the proliferation of automation across the region. In the Great Northwest Region, the occupational categories with highest scores on the EMSI automation index include Helpers, Construction Trades (134.6); Food and Beverage Serving Related Workers (129.2); Grounds Maintenance Workers (128.6); Other Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers (128.4); Construction Trades Workers (126); Cooks and Food Preparation Workers (125.6); Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers (123); Woodworkers (120.9); Metal Workers and Plastic Workers (118.2); and Food Processing Workers (117.8).

Unfortunately, a number of these occupations have significant numbers of workers in the region and also many of them represent the occupations with the most diverse mix of workers. Automation and the application of Artificial Intelligence has the potential to radically alter the availability of jobs at the entry level or jobs that have lower barriers of entry due to either on-the-job training or education requirements.

As noted above, automation has already impacted the wage structure of the US job market. Early automation efforts have been focused on manufacturing but is moving into retail and service industries now. Many entry-level wage and middle wage occupations will be at risk.

To be sure, automation and artificial intelligence also has the potential to create new jobs and whole new industries. It remains to be seen what those jobs and new industries will be. Additionally, certain industries that require more creativity, critical thinking, and human decision-making are less at a risk for automation. In this region those occupations include Religious Workers; Physical Scientists; Life Scientists; Lawyers, Judges, and Related Workers; Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations, and Sales Managers; Top Executives; Architects, Surveyors, and Cartographers; Counselors, Social Workers, and other Community and Social Service Specialists; Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers; and Computer Occupations.

- b. What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?

Great Northwestern Region recognizes that special populations may endure an increase volume of barriers when seeking advanced employment and/or training that leads to a sustainable income. Leadership team and Staff of regional One Stop Centers agree that every individual will have unique barriers, that no situation will be matched and that our team is determined to assist clients to the best of our ability. Through collaboration and cross training, partners continue to learn what agency to turn to for client assistance. Although we do have a list of supportive services in which we can provide, we recognize additional services may be needed. All clients, whether defined as having barriers or not, will have access to supportive services as listed in TEGL 19-16. In addition, all clients will have access to ADA compliant accessibility tools and equipment. All public funding will be awarded on a nondiscriminatory basis.

Below is an introduction to the magnitude and resulting programing in place to serve these special populations throughout the region:

**For Individuals with a disability**

According to the 2020 Regional Plan Data Packet, eleven percent of Illinoisans are deemed disabled. In Great Northwestern Region 30,251 individuals age 18-64 are disabled; 13,008 of those individuals participate in the labor force. (JobsEQ)

To serve this population, the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), through Illinois Department of Human Services, provides individuals with a physical or mental impairment the opportunity to achieve employment outcome by use of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. VR services assist clients prepare for, find, and maintain quality employment that pays a living wage and offers opportunities for advancement.

To qualify for services through DRS, staff have 60 days to determine eligibility by review of existing (medical, psychological, and educational) records, interaction with client and (if necessary) arrange for assessments. A financial analysis process will be conducted to set an amount that must be paid prior to DRS providing any financial contribution.

The Arc of the Quad Cities is a non-for-profit agency partner that provides Work Services programs designed for individuals who may require more direct supervision than one might get in a community position. The Arc provides paid work opportunities in sheltered workshop settings where individuals concentrate on developing a strong work ethic, good work habits, and proficient skills. Workers are trained in performing service contracts, light assembly work, textile recycling, secure document destruction, and product packaging.

The Arc offers training and paid employment opportunities which help individuals develop transferable work skills.

## Youth with Disabilities

Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) is a part of DRS continuum of coordinated transition services for youth with disabilities. STEP is a training/placement program that helps students with disabilities prepare to transition to employment and community participation during and after high school. With STEP, students have the opportunity to learn to become productive, self-sufficient adults through a variety of experiences.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PTS) are provided to students with disabilities to improve their chances to enter employment or post-secondary education upon leaving school. Some services provided are: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for postsecondary education, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, and instruction on self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

DRS identifies a student with a disability as an individual aged 14 to 21 who has a disability and is enrolled in an educational program.

In addition to agency partnerships, the region has a Targeted Populations Committee that considers individuals with Disabilities as one of its local priorities, and has been working on an initiative to develop a workshop to help them better market themselves to employers, and to educate employers about the advantages of hiring individuals with Disabilities.

The table below depicts disability by type and then by age:

Disability type		Disabled Population by Age	
Disability	Percentage of EDR 6 Disabled population	Age	Disabled population percentage
Ambulatory	51%	0-4	.4%
Cognitive	34.4%	5-17	6.3%
Hearing	30.6%	18-34	9.0%
Independent Living	33.9%	35-64	36.8%
Self-care	16.3%	65-74	19.5%
Vision	15.5%	75 and over	27.9%

American Community Survey, 2015-2019, Table S1810

American Community Survey, 2015-2019, Table S1810



### **Older Adults age 55 and older**

According to statistical analysis conducted using U.S. Census Bureau, Annual County Resident Population,, approximately 14.6% of the region’s population is between the ages of 55 to 64. It is recognized that a majority of these adults continue to seek employment. Older Adults in the region can receive services through National Able Network’s Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).– SCSEP is designed to provide low-income job seekers age 55 or older with personalized career supports that integrate career coaching, specialized training, and direct connections to the job.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Regional Population Percentage</b>
55 to 64	14.5
65 to 74	11.6
75 and older	9.2

U.S. Census Bureau, Annual County Resident Population, 2019

### **Farm Workers/Migrant Workers**

Through United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) services are provided to farm, migrant and other economically disadvantaged families to be sure they live and work in a healthy and safe environment; earn a living wage that is inducive of economic security and increase their access to educational opportunities. IMC provided services and guidance include: program initial skills assessment, education in regards to program eligibility for training programs at IMC and the nearest One-Stop Center, coordination with one-stop delivery providers and partners, outreach, intake, eligibility determination and enrollment in National Farmworkers Job Program (NFJP), labor market information, job search, identification of employment barriers, individualized employment development planning, career pathways counseling, short term services to prepare for training or employment, job placement assistance, adult education services and referrals, supportive services including life skills and services for youth ages 14 to 24, follow-up services include counseling for job placed, emergency assistance referrals, and work related health education.

The regional One Stop Center IDES team uses IllinoisJobLink.com, the state’s labor exchange system, for the creation of a job order for Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) clients. These job orders are then handled by local One Stop IDES staff who will refer the client to the appropriate One Stop partner. IDES service plan for Farm and Migrant workers include aiding obtaining employment, housing, medical care, and other vital necessities by referring to partner agencies that are specialized in the area of need. IDES inputs specific job orders into IllinoisJobLink.com

## **Veterans/Disabled Veterans**

Statewide Illinois is home to 570,264 honorable Veterans, nearly 4% of our state’s population. Of these Veterans, 42.8% are of working age (18-64). To serve this population effectively, IDES executes Veteran Services programs designed to assist veterans in finding gainful employment. Wagner-Peyser staff members are trained to begin services by conducting the Veteran Intake Form (VIF), which is a client centered data and assessment procedure that results in the determination of need for employment services, including significant barriers to employment (SBE). Wagner-Peyser staff will provide clients with all available basic career services, including referral to supportive services, as needed. Upon completion of this Initial Assessment, Wagner-Peyser staff will immediately refer any Veteran who has reported any SBE to a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist for Individualized Career Services. Once the client is job ready, the DVOP will work with the Local Veteran’s Employment Representative (LVER) and the client to assist with finding sustainable employment. A forty-eight-hour priority is given to Veterans when new job orders are entered into IllinoisJobLink.com.

Regional IDES One Stop staff conduct numerous hiring events that allow Veteran to connect and collaborate with local employers. In addition, One Stop Center staff that specialize in Veteran services continuously seek out and volunteer for community events that enrich the lives of our Nations Veterans.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Percent of Veteran Population</b>
18-34	7.2%
35-54	20.3%
55-64	15.3%
65-74	30%
75 and over	27.2%

American Community Survey, 2015-2019, Table S2101

## **Displaced Homemaker**

One Stop Centers in the region follow WIOA guidelines to classify an individual as a Displaced Homemaker. Once deemed qualifying, a Displaced Homemaker will receive services under guidelines for “Dislocated Worker”. This population will receive guidance and funding for training and/or employment services through One Stop Center Career Planners. Career Planners will refer the individual to other relevant partner services on an as needed basis. It is probable that a client in this situation will need intense case management in order to successfully achieve training or employment.





**Individuals needing assistance with English Language Learning, Low Literacy, Substance Abuse**

**English Language Learner:** Adult Education programs provide English as a Second Language programs for more than 19 different languages within the region. This program has experienced an influx of enrollment due to the increase of migration.

Below is an example of the diversity of language spoken by regional residents:

**Language Spoken at Home, 2017\***

	<b>Population 5 yrs. or older</b>	<b>Speak only English</b>	<b>Speak a language other than English</b>	<b>Spanish or Spanish Creole</b>	<b>Other Indo- European languages</b>	<b>Asian and Pacific Island languages</b>	<b>Other languages</b>	<b>Speak English less than "very well"</b>
<b>Bureau</b>	31,845	29,381	2,464	1,829	411	196	28	850
<b>Carroll</b>	13,964	13,505	459	275	107	74	0	169
<b>Henry</b>	46,890	44,778	2,112	1,555	272	260	4	646
<b>Jo Daviess</b>	21,123	20,215	908	562	210	59	66	306
<b>LaSalle</b>	105,030	97,774	7,256	5,345	1,023	870	16	2,682
<b>Lee</b>	32,894	31,066	1,828	1,208	406	154	54	513
<b>Mercer</b>	15,009	14,782	227	123	50	42	10	69
<b>Putnam</b>	5,516	5,175	341	257	70	14	0	91
<b>Rock Island</b>	136,834	119,007	17,827	10,939	3,460	2,063	1,247	7,064
<b>Whiteside</b>	53,547	49,569	3,978	2,747	854	178	154	1,140
<b>Great Northwest Region</b>	462,652	425,252	37,400	24,840	6,863	3,910	1,579	13,530
<b>U.S.</b>	301,150,892	236,929,699	64,221,193	39,769,281	10,907,675	10,409,087	3,090,332	25,654,421
<p>* The data in this table are calculated by ACS using annual surveys conducted during 2013-2017 and are representative of average characteristics during this period. Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2017.</p>								

**Low Literacy:** Adult educational centers have programs available to assist adults and youth with literacy attainment.

**Substance Abuse:** Clients will be referred to organizations specializing in Behavioral Health and Addiction. Substance abuse may have a negative impact on the successful completion of training/education course work. It is also agreed that substance abuse is a serious mental health condition that deserves treatment. Any acknowledging client will be assisted with a referral to or assistance with contacting an organization that can assist with remission.

### **Incarcerated Offenders / Returning Citizens**

2020 regional data packet reports that Great Northwestern Region has 1,075 incarcerated adults. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB) Innovation Project for Returning Citizens (IPRC) established an **American Job Center**® Specialized One-Stop Career Center inside Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center. Partner organizations include WDB / IPRC, Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), Rock Island Tri-County Consortium, Lake Land College, Black Hawk College, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), and Project NOW, Inc. Supporting organizations include Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Southern Illinois University Carbondale Center for Workforce Development (SIUC CWD), First Institute Training & Management Corporation, and Midwest Trailer Manufacturing, LLC. The objective is to build valuable life skills and prepare offenders for Re-Entry into society while maintaining safety and security. There is a focus on offenders who are ready to make needed changes in order to successfully reintegrate into their communities, by offering educational, job readiness, and cognitive behavior therapy courses. Business-driven career, education, training, and supportive services are provided. Customers being served are (1) businesses / employers, (2) State of Illinois / IDOC, and (3) incarcerated offenders / returning citizens. Workforce professionals meet routinely with all three types of customers to ensure that focus and programs are customer driven. Outreach has been improved using digital newsletters and videos produced by incarcerated offenders.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, **American Job Center**® Specialized One-Stop Career Center inside Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center has not been able to operate in person. However, career planner has continued with resume writing assistance.

The region's Targeted Populations Committee considers this expanded targeted population as one of its local priorities, and has been working on an initiative to develop a workshop to help them better market themselves to employers, and to educate employers about the advantages of hiring individuals with any kind of background issue, whether incarcerated at any time or not.

### **Youth in Foster care or aged out of foster care**

Regional leadership teams will report to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to provide information on WIOA and the One Stop Center services available within the area. This population of youth are recognized to have a multitude of barriers due to the environmental

conditions which lead to placement in Foster Care. It is with great prudence that One Stop Center staff collaborate with partners and co-workers to develop an intensive IEP that meets the critical needs of the client. In addition, our team collaborates with Superintendents throughout the region by attending Board of Control committee meetings. Attendance at these meetings offers program education to area professionals that work directly with at risk youth, including youth involved in Foster Care.

### **Homeless and/or Homeless Youth**

Regional leadership teams will apply similar outreach as described under the previous bullet “Youth in Foster Care or aged out of Foster Care”. In addition, outreach will be promoted to area community-based organization and/or community resources.

### Indians, Alaskan Natives and/or Native Hawaiians

This special population represents .02% of Great Northwestern Region’s population. Leadership team will provide outreach to community-based organizations.

Table is a depiction of Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian population residing in EDR 6.

Race	Population by percentage	Population by number
Native Hawaiian	0%	202
American Indian and Alaska Native	.2%	1113

### Single Parents

According to JobsEQ, in Great Northwestern Region 35,161 families are made up of Single Parent households. Because single parent households typically have less annual income and more responsibilities than dual parent households, many stress inducing barriers may exist. This population will be referred to appropriate partner organizations by all partners. Communication with community-based organizations and schools may also provide a strong source of outreach. Single Parents will receive support and funding for training and/or employment services through One Stop Center Career Planners. Career Planners will refer the individual to other relevant partner services on an as needed basis. It is probable that a client in this situation will need intense case management in order to successfully achieve training or employment.

The table below compares annual income of varying household member types.

County	Married Households	Male Household	Female Households
Bureau	\$81,688	\$47,417	\$19,087
Carroll	\$79,000	\$50,350	\$21,094
Henry	\$90,417	\$40,172	\$22,952
Jo Daviess	\$78,763	\$34,545	\$27,708
LaSalle	\$82,571	\$48,450	\$20,717

Lee	\$82,547	\$46,700	\$24,500
Mercer	\$80,095	\$47,500	\$16,214
Putnam	\$91,118	\$63,333	\$27,813
Rock Island	\$77,289	\$41,879	\$24,594
Whiteside	\$82,087	\$40,938	\$25,139

American Community Survey, 2017, Table S1903

## **Chronically Unemployed**

Reports from Illinois Department of Employment Security show that Illinois unemployment was at 5.1 in 2019. It is a regional understanding that the unemployed population may have additional barriers related to chronic unemployment. For this reason, IDES, as the primary contact for the unemployed, will refer clients to partner and community-based organizations as needed. If IDES is not the primary contact for clients, any partner will have the knowledge and ability to properly seek out assistance for this population.

### **B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region.**

#### **A. How will the workforce partners convene employers, foundations, regional institutions to help lead sector partnership and make coordinated investments?**

Seven counties within EDR 6 recently completed a rapid talent pipeline pilot project (RTPI) to more actively engage the business community. The RTPI team is comprised of members from Illinois Valley Community College, IDES, BEST, Inc. (workforce Title I), Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, and Blackhawk Hills Regional Council. The team's purpose is to engage the business community to ascertain their current and projected needs, create a plan of action to help address those needs, and follow through with the company on implementing that plan of action. At times the need to convene a larger group of a specific industry may be necessary to assess the pervasive an identified need is. Members of NCI Works (LWIA 4) are in a position to convene such summits. In the Illinois Valley Community College district, a healthcare networking group has been established as the result of a healthcare summit held in 2017. This networking group's purpose is to keep all stakeholders apprised of the needs and trends within the healthcare industry so that workforce and education can respond to those needs in a timely fashion. As a result of this networking group, Illinois Valley Community College recently began a Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) program. This CMA program has also recently become an apprenticeship program with NCI Works serving as the sponsor and St. Margaret's Health in Spring Valley as its first participating employer. Replicating such efforts across the region would not be difficult.

BEST, Inc., on behalf of both local workforce areas within EDR 6, recently submitted a proposal for an apprenticeship expansion grant. If chosen to receive this grant members of the NCI Works RTPI Team as well as the BEST Navigator will work with area chambers, economic development, community colleges, region 6 career centers, and LWIA 13 staff to engage businesses on a regional basis to recruit current apprenticeship program companies and new ones to the project of expanding registered apprenticeship participants.

Community college advisory committees also work to engage area businesses across industry sectors to contribute to the development and improvement of certificate and degreed programs. In addition, community college business training offices are able to work with workforce development entities to offer training to the incumbent workforce along with Title I incumbent worker training funding for most occupational training and upgrades.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB) Innovation Project for Returning Citizens (IPRC) established an **American Job Center**<sup>®</sup> Specialized One-Stop Career Center inside Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center. Supporting organizations include business-led Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), as well as businesses such as First Institute Training & Management Corporation and Midwest Trailer Manufacturing, LLC. The objective is to build valuable life skills and prepare offenders for Re-Entry into society while maintaining safety and security. Business-driven career, education, training, and supportive services are provided. Customers being served are (1) businesses / employers, (2) State of Illinois / IDOC, and (3) incarcerated offenders / returning citizens. Workforce professionals meet routinely with all three types of customers to ensure that focus and programs are customer driven.

**B. Identify the established and active industry sector partnerships in the region.**

All partners participated in a series of meetings, telephone conference calls, and the summit to compile and review data, evaluate resources, and identify the key regional targeted sectors. Since four community colleges have significant portions of their districts housed within the Northwest Region, many initial planning discussions tended to revolve around data compiled by the respective colleges. This data was combined with the on-the-ground experiences of partners. This method also insured that the varying needs of the large region were considered.

Black Hawk College

The Black Hawk College District covers most or all of Rock Island, Mercer, and Henry counties and combines both rural and urban areas. This district is also impacted significantly by proximity to the Iowa counties of Scott and Muscatine. As a result, much of the data used to determine sector initiatives in this portion of the Northwest Region is specific to the Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL Metropolitan Statistical Area. Economic Modeling Software, Inc. (EMSI) projects strong growth between 2015 and 2023 in:

Healthcare – Registered Nurses, Nursing Assistants, Personal Care Aides, Home Health Aides, Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses, Medical Assistants

Logistics – Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers, Heavy and Tractor Trailer Drivers, Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers

Manufacturing/Trades – Industrial Machinery Mechanics, Machinists, Maintenance and Repair Workers, Team Assemblers, Electricians, Plumbers, Pipefitter, Steamfitters

Agriculture – Farmers, Ranchers, Other Agricultural Managers, Landscaping and Groundskeeping

IT – Computer Systems Analysts, Software Developers, Applications, Computer User Support Specialists (combined with IT requirements in many of the other fields)



In addition to the EMSI data, we reviewed the five key industries identified for each county in the Bi-State Region based on Location Quotient (LQ) and total jobs. (LQ is a measure of the concentration of a certain industry sector in an area relative to the concentration of that industry sector in the U.S.) Key industries for each county are:

Rock Island – Agricultural and Construction Machinery Manufacturing, Military Manufacturing and Logistics, Packaging and Labeling Services, Animal Slaughtering, Nuclear Electric Power Generation

Henry County – Small Arms Manufacturing, Truck Trailer Manufacturing, Ethyl Alcohol Manufacturing, Elevator and Moving Stairway Manufacturing, Prefabricated Wood building Manufacturing

Mercer County – Machined Parts Manufacturing, Crop and Animal Production (Farming), Farm Supply Commodities & Farm Support Activities, Paperboard Container Manufacturing, Plate work and Metal Finishing

Scott County – Aluminum Manufacturing, Construction Agricultural & Other Industrial Machinery Manufacturing, Animal-based Rood Processing, Steel Foundries, Lime Cement & Concrete Manufacturing

Muscatine County – Office Furniture and Fixtures Manufacturing, Lighting Fixture Manufacturing, Plant- and Animal-based Food Manufacturing, Pesticide and Agricultural Chemical Manufacturing, Iron & Steel Mills Ferro and Non-Ferro alloy Manufacturing

Illinois Valley Community College, Sauk Valley Community College, Highland Community College

These colleges serve the remaining seven counties (Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Whiteside, and Putnam Counties). Regional priorities were determined by reviewing the following:

LMI data from the State of Illinois

Jobs EQ Reports

EMSI Reports

Advisory Committee feedback (Truck driver training, Nursing, Manufacturing/Maintenance/Welding, Agriculture)

Northern Illinois University P-20 Workforce Needs Report

Northern Illinois University P-20 Emerging Jobs Report

Advisory committee work, job data, and a regional survey completed by area Economic Development groups

The community colleges listed above find growth in the educational programs in the fields of:

Manufacturing, production workers, industrial maintenance, CNC

Healthcare: nursing, ambulatory care, radiologic technology, certified medical assistant

Criminal Justice: law enforcement and corrections

Precision Agriculture and “value-added” agriculture (Agri-Business)

Northwest Illinois Economic Development:

Manufacturing & Industrial Maintenance

Food manufacturing – emerging

Chemical manufacturing – maturing/growing

Machinery manufacturing – leading/growing

Fabricated metal manufacturing – leading/growing

Healthcare

- Nursing and Skilled Nursing Facilities - Leading
- Ambulatory Care - emerging
- Hospitals – maturing
- Social assistance - emerging

Transportation/Logistics

- Merchant Wholesalers – Durable Goods – Leading
- Merchant Wholesalers – Nondurable Goods – Leading
- Truck Transportation – Leading
- Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation – Emerging
- Support Activities for Transportation – Emerging
- Warehousing and Storage – Leading

IT –as a subfield of Mfg., Healthcare, and Transportation/Logistics Regional priorities were determined by reviewing the following:

- NWILED surveyed 225 regional companies in Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Stephenson Counties regarding manufacturing skills and occupational demands in October 2014.
- Other data is from LMI information distributed through IDES to local workforce investment boards.

Based on the data gathered by all partners in Great Northwest Region, the Regional Priorities are:

#### Manufacturing and Industrial Maintenance

- Food Manufacturing – emerging
- Chemical Manufacturing – maturing/growing
- Machinery Manufacturing – leading/growing
- Fabricated Metal Manufacturing – leading/growing

#### Healthcare

- Nursing and Skilled Nursing Facilities – leading

- Ambulatory Care – emerging
- Hospitals – maturing
- Social Assistance – emerging

#### Transportation/Logistics

- Merchant Wholesalers – Durable Goods – leading
- Merchant Wholesalers – Non-Durable Goods – leading
- Truck Transportation – leading
- Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation – emerging
- Support Activities for Transportation – emerging
- Warehousing and Storage – leading

#### Energy

- Ethanol – emerging
- Wind – growing
- Solar – emerging

IT- as a subfield of Manufacturing, Healthcare, Energy, and Transportation/Logistics

In addition to the key industries listed above, this area has historically had a strong Agriculture and Logistics presence. The agriculture sector includes occupations in farm labor, crop production, animal production, and commercial mushroom production along with postharvest crop activities. With three major interstates running through these counties (I-80, I-39, and I-88) logistics has grown over the years especially in the area of large-scale warehousing. Along with the growth in warehousing, an increase in demand for truck drivers and diesel mechanics was realized. Replacement demand in these two industry sectors will continue to grow.

**C. What other sector-based partnerships exist in the region? If any are they business-led and what is their role in planning?**

Additional sector-based partnerships that exist within the region are listed below with a note as to whether they are business- led. These business-led partners did not participate in the planning of the regional planning directly, unless otherwise noted. However, their partnership and collaboration is used throughout the regional plan and is based off of past collaboration.

- Healthcare Networking Group - local healthcare facilities and institutions, NCI Works and Illinois Valley Community College; business led;; meet to address issues and challenges affecting the healthcare industry
- Community colleges have active Advisory groups used in planning healthcare offerings and curricula – community college led (separate bullet point). For example, Black Hawk College and others within the region participated directly
- Manufacturing- American Nickeloid, not business led, participate in bridge class as a guest speaker
- The Quad Cities was recently named one of 12 federally designated manufacturing communities as part of the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership grant.
- Chief Manufacturing Executives meet quarterly at IVCC staff supported by NCI Works and IVCC; business led
- Other Advisory committees meeting annually or biannually(Truck driver training, Nursing, Manufacturing/Maintenance/Welding, Agriculture, Criminal Justice, Fire Science, Rad Tech, and Office and Administrative Service) – community college led
- Northern Illinois Discover Manufacturing Expo – business led
- Public Safety Career Fair – community college led
- Workforce Readiness Coalition (manufacturing) – community college led
- National Manufacturing Day Planning Committee (K-12, College, and Industry)
- Highland Community College has annual advisory meetings, meets monthly with NIDA (Northern Illinois Development Alliance) and TCEDA (Tri- County Economic Development Alliance and with the Workforce Development Coalition. Participated directly
- Pathways to Academic, Career, and Employment (PACE). Eastern Iowa Community Colleges received funds from the Iowa State Legislature for the Pathways to Academic, Career, and Employment (PACE) Program in 2013. PACE strives to create a strong pipeline of

individuals entering and completing training in high skill / high demand career areas in Advanced Manufacturing, Allied Health, Information Technology and Transportation / Logistics.

- The LaSalle, Marshall, & Putnam County Regional Office of Education (ROE) in partnership with Illinois Valley Community College sponsored a PACE (Post-Secondary Career Expectations) Framework event for regional middle and high school administrators and teachers. The purpose of the event was to develop a PACE framework for the region to ensure that each student in 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade would have an individualized learning plan to help guide decisions about career and post-secondary education or training. The program, facilitated by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), walked implementation teams from nine area schools through the development of a PACE model. In addition to educators, workforce and industry representatives contributed to the discussion. As a result, Regional Office of Education, #35, was the first cohort in the State of Illinois to develop a regional PACE model. The PACE model is now being implemented in area high and middle schools with the college assisting as needed.

To support the process, PACE incorporates the use of sector boards. Sector boards are partnerships of employers within one industry who come together to focus on the workforce needs of the industry within the regional labor market. The Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce could see that having the both the Iowa and Illinois community colleges participate would be preferable to establishing duplicative boards. With Chamber encouragement, Black Hawk College representatives were invited to join.

Sector Boards are different from the traditional Advisory Councils that the colleges have had in place for many years and that continue to work with college career programs advising faculty on the types of training students need today in each of those specific career fields. Sector Boards work on a much broader basis and are focused on long-range planning, considering new technology and factors expected to impact the industry. They are focused on the future workforce and work to identify resources and solutions to anticipated staffing and competitiveness needs.

The four sector boards established are:

1. Advanced Manufacturing
2. Allied Health (includes mental and dental as well as broad range of medical)
3. Information Technology (IT)
4. Transportation and Logistics

**D. What other public-private partnerships exists in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?**

Additional public-private partnerships that exist within the region that could support sector strategies are listed below. These partners did not participate in the planning of the regional planning directly, unless otherwise noted. However, their partnership and collaboration is used throughout the regional plan and is based off of past collaboration.

- CPT- Certified Production Technician – Certificate endorsed by several CME participants
- Community and Economic Development, University of Illinois Extension- Rock Island, Henry, and Mercer Counties. Participated directly Truck Driver Training works with trucking companies for student placement
- Healthcare Executives Group, IVCC nursing department works with area hospitals and nursing homes
- Starved Rock Advantage – nonprofit collaboration of employers, educators, workforce board, and others in the Starved Rock area to develop a work-ready community and talent pipeline for area businesses.
- Workforce Development Coalition – Highland
- Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Corporations or Organizations
- SET – Stronger Economies Together – multi-county regional economic development planning initiative through USDA and University of Illinois Extension – Putnam County (along with Marshall and Stark Counties)
- LEAD – Leader in Economic Alliance Development – Lee, Carroll, and Whiteside Counties (initially – looking to add Jo Daviess and Ogle Counties) – regional economic development planning initiative through USDA and University of Illinois Extension to develop leadership capacity to promote regional economic collaboration.
- NCI Works Certified Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program – St. Margaret’s Health is participating provider and was a partner in planning the apprenticeship standards. Participated directly

**5. What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region and what is their role in planning?**

Neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships below did not participate directly with the planning of this regional plan, unless otherwise noted. However, ongoing collaboration with these partners has influenced the planning of this regional plan.

- Chambers of Commerce – represent needs of local employers, advocate for educational programming and resources to meet those needs
- Examples: Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, Illinois River Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Economic Development Organizations – North Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation (NCI EDC), NIDA, NW IL Economic Development, I-88 West Corridor Association, Greater Sterling Development Corp., Henry County Economic Development Partnership, Kewanee Economic Development Corporation, La Salle County EDC
- Local Workforce Boards – provide linkages between employers, prospective employees, training providers and fund training programs. Participated directly
- Adult Education Area Planning Councils – assure that those in need of ABE, ASE, ESL, and High School Equivalency educational programming prepares students for the workforce. Participated directly
- Bi-State Regional Commission – Research and assess opportunities and threats and articulate broad economic development strategies for the region
- North Central Illinois Council of Governments - Research and assess opportunities and threats and articulate broad economic development strategies for the region
- Blackhawk Hills Regional Council - Research and assess opportunities and threats and articulate broad economic development strategies for the region
- North Central Regional Betterment Coalition
- United Way Education and Income Councils – support agencies offering supportive services needed for workforce development
- Sauk Valley Center for Small Business Development
- Starved Rock Startups
- Starved Rock Country Alliance
- Streator Incubator



- Community Colleges: Black Hawk College, Illinois Valley Community College, Highland Community College, Sauk Valley Community College. Participated directly
- Western Illinois University
- Augustana College
- University of Illinois and University of Illinois Extension. Participated directly
- USDA
- BEST, Inc. Participated directly
- Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC)

## Chapter 2: Strategies for Service Integration

- A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (§679.560 (a)(4)). Plans must respond to the following:**

Great Northwest Region workforce development activities include classroom training, job search assistance, on-the-job training, essential skills training, customized training, business services, work experience, incumbent worker training, apprenticeship programs, and job shadowing. Employment and Training (Title I) is provided in two Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) with Local Workforce Development Boards. There are two Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, as well as affiliate One-Stop Centers. Training providers include all of the major institutions – public, private, and proprietary- as well as businesses engaged in work-based learning. Other core partners include Adult Education (Title II), Wagner-Peyser (Title III), and Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV), which are co-located or available through technology. Great Northwest Region is very large in geographic size, economically diverse, and quite varied in the needs of businesses and individuals. Therefore, the types of workforce development services vary by local area, with each having used different strategies and areas of focus. Many common activities and services, with good return on investment (ROI), will continue.

Great Northwest Region adapted to the impacts of COVID-19 by offering services in a variety of ways, including virtual platforms, email, and phone. Once mitigations became relaxed, the region began serving clients both through technology-based platforms and in-person. Both local areas purchased technology to provide secure digital signatures for business to continue. Staff in both local areas received assistance with cellular phone expenses to keep communication lines open. LWIA 4's Virtual Job Seeking workshops were created on YouTube and the social media avenues increased use. Virtual and Drive Thru Job Fairs became an avenue for businesses to continue to use services through the agencies. Electronic forms for all aspects of services were created and used which led to be very beneficial and will continue to be used when needed.

- 1. Our partners within the One-Stop Center and at their access sites have also adapted to COVID-19 with their approach to meeting the strategies identified by transitioning the services into hybrid or remote, so individuals still had the opportunities for services. Communication between partners continued electronically and the vision of integrated services continued on a remote basis. A number of very valuable service strategies were learned and will continue to be used in the coming years. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region.**

Strengths:

1. Several local community colleges offering training of in-demand occupations with frequent enrollment windows in various Adult Education courses.
2. Availability of customized training options through the community college's business training center.
3. Strong area involvement with multiple partners for client strategies.

4. Essential Skills Training.
5. Workforce partner customized labor market information guides Great Northwest Region to better decision making for workforce area.
6. Area business buy in with Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and Work Based Learning activities
7. Great Northwest Region is comprised of a team with strong local and regional partnership among WIOA workforce partners. Specifically, the regions collaboration/relationship with Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) for Business Services continues to strengthen in the region.
8. Great Northwest Region has a team with years of workforce experience and a long history of engaged workforce board members.
9. Development of stackable credentials that allow for multiple exit and entry points that lead toward attaining a credential.
10. Community College partners provide opportunities for high school students within the district to take college-level courses prior to graduating from high school.
11. Career Services and Business services provided with options of technology using choice of email, phone, virtual platform.

Weaknesses:

1. To increase accessibility, colleges have begun to incorporate flexible class formats, locations, and times. However, more work in this area needs to be done.
2. Silo funded activities.
3. Aging workforce and the inability to retain younger generation to replace aging workforce.
4. Referral Process needs strengthening with proper follow up and documentation n and there is no integrated shared information system for workforce partners.
5. Business owners seeking assistance through Incumbent Workers program are burdened by the limitations set by DOL's regulations in the area of training approval and qualifying employee selection.
6. A state system that requires federal funds to flow into the state budget and be appropriated to the local areas.
7. Great Northwest Region has identified transportation deficits that pose problems for employees to obtain and sustain employment. Public Transportation does not cross into surrounding communities. Hours of operation are limited, leaving 2nd and 3rd shift workers without reliable transportation to and/or from the job site.

8. Difficulty for community college partners in finding qualified instructors in CTE fields. Particularly for in-demand sectors, such as health care and IT.

**2. Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment.**

Great Northwest Region provides workforce development activities that address educational and skill needs to the public by use of two avenues. With a strong workforce partnership, Great Northwest Region's One Stop Centers allow for successful implementation of Journey Mapping and/or Referral Intake. This process allows for front-line staff members to capture a client's education history, skills history, social service necessities and any (additional) barriers to employment. This model allows for proper referral of services, which results in accurate obtainment of WIOA services. The execution of Business Services teams, including Apprenticeship Navigator and Rapid Talent Pipeline Initiative, will build workforce capacity by developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, processes, and resources that businesses, educational institutions, local workforce areas and community partners need to create new or expand existing employment opportunities. Similar to Journey Mapping, Business Services teams will survey businesses in order to capture business needs and allow for development of business service action plans that contribute to a successful workforce.

The COVID-19 National Health Emergency required community colleges to pivot to remote learning for all classes, and provision of student services. Colleges quickly saw the need to expand the technology loan program to offer not only laptops, but routers as well. Prior to that technology loan was only available to CTE students funded through Perkins. CTE students have the opportunity to apply for the assistance with the cost of internet service, which is funded through Perkins. The College continues to make technology loans available to all students.

Providing remote lab and clinical experience required in CTE programs has been challenging. The Practical Nurse and Associate Degree Nurse programs both utilized virtual clinical simulations for students during the pandemic. Both programs employ standardized, computerized exams to assess student learning outcomes and prepare students for licensure exams. These were normally proctored in-person in the college computer lab. The College now contracts an online proctoring service in order to allow students to complete testing at home.

The College was able to leverage grant funds to purchase Cisco CCNA equipment and software which provides Computer Information Technology and Cybersecurity students access to virtual lab activities. With an Internet connection, students can access lab equipment without being in the classroom. Black Hawk College is exploring other ways in which virtualization can supplement in-person activities.

**3. Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide activities to address the needs of employers.**

The execution of Business Services teams, including Apprenticeship Navigator and Rapid Talent Pipeline Initiative, is building workforce capacity by developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, processes, and resources that businesses, educational institutions, local workforce areas and community partners need to create new or expand existing employment opportunities. Such surveying allows for the development of business service action plans that are implemented by workforce partners.

**4. How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?**

Creating training programs is a multifaceted process. Data collections from Labor Market programs are useful tools to pinpoint labor market trends. This information is used to narrow down specific Industries and Occupations within an industry that are in-demand. Data collected from post-graduate students offer educational leaders a synopsis of employment success, including length of time from training completion to employment, wages, acquired occupation and employment retainment. This data tool is used to analyze the success of offered programs. Business advisory committees meet to share insight on offered and needed training programs. In these meetings businesses have an opportunity to share workforce needs with educational leaders.

It's the combination of these processes that allows Great Northwest Region's educational partners to successfully create educational and training programs that properly prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses. The process is additionally used to prevent over training in occupations that are not in demand. These processes insure that employee and business needs are being met simultaneously. It's important for any workforce to carefully create trainings based off in-demand occupations.

**5. Summarize the commitments of each program partner to implement the selected strategies described in the "Action Plan for Improving Service Integration in the Region."**

Please note: as a result of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, some regional service integration plans listed in the below items 1 – 7 have paused. Great Northwest Region has every intention of resuming such plans once COVID restrictions are not a barrier.

**1. Business Services**

To deliver business services Local Workforce Development Board and its business committee will guide strategic plans to create quarterly meetings, create a functioning business service team, develop defined goals of the business services team, put business service team's action plan into effect and move from low isolation to low coordination.

Educational partners will continue to share information from Business Advisory Committee meetings and Community Needs Assessments so that partners better understand the business needs and expectations in the community.

Share Integrated Education and Training (IET) opportunities with the Business Service Team

Use Business Service Team input to focus refinement of existing IET's and inform the development of additional options

**2. Communication occurs across One Stop Partners:**

- The Chair will lead Joint Services Committee meetings. All partners are responsible to provide information during meetings that will then be passed on to WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB) by the Chairperson.

- Provide Adult Education information for inclusion on WDB meetings including the Area Plan and annual Application for Adult Education funding

Front-line staff meetings continue to be held by partner agencies.

Work Force Development Board members are invited to **American Job Center**®.

Partners will inform staff of WDB meetings and encourage attendance.

During website development, all partners will provide content for public viewing.

Program Service Team to be created that consists of Front-line staff that will increase knowledge of service and increase communication along System Partners.

Partners will begin touring partner agency sites, increasing awareness of opportunities for integration.

Workforce Development Board to educate front-line staff of NCI Works and NCI Works website to increase knowledge of NCI Works activities and advance on WINTEC continuum.

Program Service Team (PST) reports to One Stop Operator and Leadership team is an ongoing goal that give accountability to WDB to assure progress is made on the goal.

### **3. Cross-Training Provided to Staff**

Partners will collaborate for the planning and implementation of tours and braided training activities

Partners continue to assign staff members to attend weekly front-line staff meetings

### **4. Customer input used to design and deliver services**

Receptionist briefs clients of needed documents and forms of ID prior to seeing program staff.

Continue with regular orientations coordinated with partners.

Client/student focus groups continue. This will encourage feedback that will drive improvements to service delivery.

Development of customer/student satisfaction surveys conducted by educational partners. This feedback will drive improvements to service delivery.

Educational partners create informative flyers that summarizing One-Stop services

### **5. Staff collaboration on customer assessment**

Program Services Team meetings to share assessment information.

Discussion of Journey Mapping process with Program Services team will prevent duplication of services.

### **6. Processes are streamlined and aligned.**

One Stop Operator will approve Program Service Team's creation of uniform policies and procedures on referral and follow-up.

One Stop Operator will train partner staff on the implementation of referral and follow-up policies and procedures.

Program Services team and Leadership team to develop evaluation tool to show effectiveness of referral and follow-up processes and procedures.

## **7. Customer Information Shared**

Create One Stop system manual with all partner services included.

Provide Training on Policies and procedures to all system partners.

Internal monitoring of all system partner customer files to verify consistency.

### **B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§679.510(a)(1)(vi). Plans must respond to the following questions:**

#### **1. What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?**

Individuals with Disabilities are referred to Vocational services through IDHS's DRS Rehabilitation services and The Arc of the Quad Cities

Older Adults are referred to Senior Community Service Employment program through National Able.

United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) and IDES serves migrant and seasonal farm workers.

Veterans, including disabled veterans are referred to IDES.

Title I career planners received referrals to assist Out of School Youth, Dislocated Workers, and individuals that qualify for assistance through Trade Adjustment Assistance.

English as a second language (ESL) individuals are helped through the regions Educational Partners.

Incarcerated Offenders/Returning Citizens receive services through IDES and Title I Career Planners.

IDES has specialized programs to assist individuals that are immigrants.

Individuals burdened by the lack of basic needs are referred to Project Now for assistance with utility assistance, rent and security deposit assistance, food and nutrition programs, health care assistance and referrals, clothing vouchers, transportation vouchers, household budgeting, scholarship program and financial literacy.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (**TANF**) program is run by the Illinois Department of Human Services. The program is for families with children and pregnant women who need temporary cash assistance. Those receiving TANF also receive medical assistance

One Stop center partners may refer clients to agencies that provide transportation. Some partner agency's have programs that provide free access to public transportation.

Education is given to clients on local community-based organizations that assist with the cost of childcare and dependent care

Linkages to community services will be completed by partners on a as needed bases.

Partners throughout the region have program assistance to aid with housing needs.

Needs-Related Payments (available only to individuals enrolled in training services and must be consistent with 20 CFR 680.930, 680.940, 680.950, 680.960, and 680.970)

Educational partners can help with educational testing

Each One stop center is ADA compliant and has reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Referrals to health care can be conducted by any partner agency.

Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eye glasses and protective eye gear

Title I and/or Perkins may offer assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes

Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications may be included under Title I services.

Clients may be referred to community organizations that offer free legal services for low income persons

## **2. What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?**

Through Journey Mapping/Referral Intake process, coordination of supportive services and service follow up will be done on a case by case basis. Moreover, Great Northwest Region's comradery has inspired communication among partners regarding client need of supportive services. With this, partners are comfortable contacting one another in regard to specific client needs; making the referral process a collaborate team effort.

### **C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers (§679.510(a)(1)(v)).**

Great Northwestern Region collaborates with Economic Development agencies through business service teams. This collaboration gives the region up to date happenings within the local and regional economy. Economic agencies welcome One Stop Center staff to participate in regularly scheduled meetings as well as arbitrary meeting.

North Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation (NCI EDC)

Northwest Illinois Economic Development

Bi-State Regional Commission

Henry County Economic Development

Rock Island Economic Development

Mercer County Better Together



**1. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?**

None. EDR 6 collaborates with economic development agencies on an ongoing basis. Therefore, economic development information related to the development of the regional plan was influenced from such ongoing collaboration. University of Illinois Extension is an economic development organization that provided statistical analysis for regional planning.

**2. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses were invited to participate but declined?**

None. EDR 6 did not have declined participation requests.

**D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§679.510(a)(1)(v)).**

All required partners participating in the development of this Regional Plan have agreed that administrative cost arrangements are not required at this time. If future projects require additional administrative support, partners will identify in-kind resources, grants, and/or pool administrative costs, as needed and appropriate. The Memorandum of Understanding will continue to be used to coordinate administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs by each local area with EDR 6.

E. As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic on the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers, not covered in the above sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic regarding the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

F. As part of the 2022 modification, describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the regional service integration strategies, including the coordination of service delivery strategies to job seekers and employers.

## Chapter 3: Vision, Goals and Implementation Strategies

In order for the Local Workforce Boards within Great Northwest Region to continue coordination of the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas, Great Northwest Region adapted to the impacts of COVID-19 by offering services in a variety of ways, including virtual platforms, email, and phone. Once mitigations relaxed the region began serving clients both through technology-based platforms and in-person. Both local areas purchased technology to provide secure digital signatures for business to continue. Staff in both local areas received assistance with cellular phone expenses to keep communication lines open. LWIA 4's Virtual Job Seeking workshops were created on YouTube and the social media avenues increased use. Virtual and Drive Thru Job Fairs became an avenue for businesses to continue to use services through the agencies. Electronic forms for all aspects of services were created and used which led to be very beneficial and will continue to be used when needed.

Our partners within the Center and at their access sites have also adapted to COVID-19 with their approach to meeting the strategies identified by transitioning the services into hybrid or remote, so individuals still had the opportunities for services. Communication between partners continued electronically and the vision of integrated services continued on a remote basis. A number of very valuable service strategies were learned and will continue to be used in the coming years.

### **A. Describe the strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth. (§679.560 (a)(5))**

In order to support the State's vision, Great Northwest Region (GNR), also known as Economic Development Region 6, will continue to foster a Statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce that can effectively compete in the global economy by collaboration with workforce partners. Such drive to collaborate will deliver GDR's vision to promote business-driven talent solutions that integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals, and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the State of Illinois economy.

Workforce partner professionals use a coordinated workforce pipeline that responds to business needs, for key sectors, while increasing opportunity for individuals. Achieving this vision will use these principles as guideposts for policy development and program service delivery. Each workforce partner will use its resources to support the following principles:

Business demand-driven orientation through a sector strategy framework

Strong partnerships with business at all levels

Career pathways to jobs of today and tomorrow

Integrated service delivery

Access and opportunity for all populations

Cross-agency collaboration and alignment for developing and/or promoting career pathways and industry recognized stackable credentials

Clear metrics for progress and success

Focus on continuous improvement and innovations

Make the manufacturing sector a priority

Make the healthcare sector a priority

Make the transportation sector a priority

Make information technology, across these three sectors, a priority

Further analyze the agri-business/farm sector as a future priority

Integrate workforce, education, and economic development

Increase collaboration, communication, and shared resources

Engage business owners and managers as solutions-forming partners

Increase skill levels of individuals through career pathways

Focus on eliminating or minimizing barriers to education and employment

Create user-friendly processes and systems, intake through exit

Improve outreach, branding, and identity

**B. Describe the goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators. (§677.155 (a)(1))**

Great Northwest Region workforce partners will collectively use the following goals to support Illinois' vision to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development strategies at the state, regional and local levels to improve the economic growth and competitiveness of the state's employers and their workforce.

Foster improvement and expansion of employer-driven, regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.

Expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.

Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in the educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs.

Expand information for employers and job-seekers to access services by improving the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

**C. Performance accountability is a shared responsibility between partners. GDR's collaboration and teamwork prepares clients for successful program completion, that includes meeting performance indicators. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and goals. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:**

To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. (§679.560(a)(5)).

To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii)).

To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§679.560 (b)(3)(iii)).

To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§679.560 (b)(3)(iv)).

To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§679.560 (b)(4)).

C.6 To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers (§679.560(b)(3)(v)).

Great Northwest Region professionals will use a variety of strategies for the implementation of these goals with a focus on improving community prosperity through more competitive businesses and workers.

In addition to existing Incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and customized training, Great Northwestern Region recently submitted a proposal for an apprenticeship expansion grant. If chosen to receive this grant members of the NCI Works RTPI Team as well as the BEST Navigator will work with area chambers, economic development, community colleges, one stop centers, and business services staff to engage businesses on a regional basis to recruit new and current apprenticeship program companies to the project of expanding registered apprenticeship participants.

Employer forums, focusing on manufacturing, which involved workforce partners in the presentation of partner services, an assessment of business needs, and the identification of critical skills for new hires have recently been held in various parts of the region. These events include a dialogue between workforce partners, area manufacturing representatives, and local educators. It is the intent that this dialogue will be continued after the forums to ensure that workforce partners and educators are responding to the needs of area manufacturers. The offering of additional sector forums will also be considered.

Great Northwest Region recognizes the importance of providing a wide range of employment opportunities to its job seekers. Some, especially dislocated workers, may have marketable skills and talents and simply need some assistance in developing a plan to establish themselves in any number of niche industries/businesses. In order to meet the needs of this group, both LWIAs explore existing entrepreneurial models such as NWILED's Build-It-Grow-It program, and Etsy, the online marketplace that would allow our entrepreneurs to reach a global community of shoppers. Furthermore, connections with local SBDCs will be enhanced for the purpose of providing the information and resources that will help ensure success. Where no SBDCs are located in an area, BSTs will become knowledgeable in these opportunities and will serve as the "go to" resource for assistance.

Some strategies that will be instrumental small businesses, including those with entrepreneurial interests already exist in some areas of EDR #6 and will be replicated throughout the regions 11-county area. For example, our WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, **American Job Center**<sup>®</sup>, is a member of Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, Inc., with workforce development professionals engaging in activities and events with entrepreneurs and business leaders. Example of promoting and connecting entrepreneurs to resources to create, collaborate, pitch, and grow ideas in our Great Northwest Region include:

Entrepreneurial meetups are free gatherings to exchange ideas and learn from seasoned entrepreneurs.

Quad Cities co-working space includes workshops, gatherings and partnerships.

TechBrew is a free monthly networking event for entrepreneurs, educators, technologists, economic developers, and business leaders.

Henry, Mercer, and Stark Counties Fast Pitch contest to test ideas in front of a panel of judges, with the chance to win prizes and resources to develop a thriving business.

Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) program, the nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and helping small businesses start, grow, and succeed.

**C.1 To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§679.560(a)(5)).**

Great Northwest Region facilitates the engagement of employers by use of data collections that identify current and projected in-demand industry sectors and occupations within those sectors. By use of this data collection, specific positions and individual tasks that would be involved within each position are narrowed down. In addition, interaction with local, county, and regional Economic Development Agencies provides engagement of employer's needs.

**C.2 To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii)).**

The local workforce development system is supported by meeting the needs of businesses in the local area as follows:

Collaborate with local, county, and regional Economic Development agencies and businesses to target business needs to enhance success and/or prevent closure.

Utilization of a Business Services approach that leads to stronger communication and a greater understanding of the unique business needs in the communities and which serves as an educational portal of services the Local Workforce Development Board and the one-stop delivery system can provide businesses to assist with such needs.

Secondary and Vocational education partners are an outreach source for businesses. This relationship has proven to be a wealth of knowledge for the region in terms of business needs and expectations in the community. As a partner, these educational centers advise business leaders of the services available to them throughout the Local Workforce Development Board and the one-stop delivery system.

Business Services Committee is an active committee consisting of various partners who contact local businesses to educate business leaders on services available through the Local Workforce Development Board and the one-stop delivery system. Once service needs are identified the business services committee develops and implements a strategic service plan.

Organization of Job Fairs.

Rapid Talent Pipeline (RTPI) is a systematic approach that allows for businesses to work directly with the RTPI group to identify business needs, create a plan of action, and work together to implement the plan.

Regional Apprenticeship Navigator will build capacity by developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, processes, and resources that businesses, educational institutions, local workforce areas and community partners need to create new or expand existing apprenticeship programs.

### **C.3 To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§679.560 (b)(3)(iii)).**

Align and integrate business and job-seeker services among the workforce partners along with local, county, and regional economic development partners.

Continue to increase coordination between workforce development and economic development practitioners and organizations.

Provide data and tools to support regional planning for aligning education, workforce and economic development.

Collaboration with economic development practitioners to identify businesses at risk for hardship allows workforce development teams to collaborate with these businesses to identify solutions. By use of the Rapid Talent Pipeline (RTPI) businesses work directly with a workforce development team to identify business needs, create a plan of action, and implement the plan.

### **C.4 To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§679.560 (b)(3)(iv)).**

Great Northwest Region strengthens the linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs starting at the front desk where an intake referral form is completed. This referral form is unique to each client and is given to intramural partners to eliminate overlooked services. Because of

service integration’s model, Great Northwest Region has begun holding “frontline” staff meetings where partner staff members attend and discuss current happenings. This cross-training experience gives IDES the ability to properly spot a client’s need(s) and refer them to the appropriate partner. This also allows partner agencies to properly refer clients to IDES. Cross-trained partners are better equipped to determine how services can best address the need(s) of unemployment insurance recipients and get them back into the workforce.

**C.5 To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§679.560 (b)(4)).**

Providing community awareness of available business services available through the Local Workforce Development Board and the one-stop delivery system serves as a progressive tool for entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. In addition, Great Northwest Region’s frontline staff are equipped to advise entrepreneurs of public and private organizations that promote and connect entrepreneurs and small business owners to resources to start, create, expand, recover, collaborate, pitch and grow ideas.

An example of an agency that frontline staff may recommend to entrepreneurs is The Illinois Small Business Development Center at the Starved Rock Country Alliance which provides FREE tools, resources, and confidential services to entrepreneurs and small businesses across Bureau, Grundy, LaSalle, and Livingston Counties.

**C.6 To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers (§679.560(b)(3)(v)).**

These strategies have been developed for four different areas. Those areas include Data, Workforce Partners, Business Services, and Workforce Boards. Best practice models will be identified and utilized whenever possible.

Data

- Utilize reputable public databases in order to conduct independent surveys used to fine tune operational and programmatic business activities.
- Utilize up-to-date Labor Market Information for strategic development of programs.
- Request and/or provide database reports to workforce partners and economic development practitioners as needed.

Workforce Partners

Use of referral and intake form to identify service needs and eliminate duplicated services in order to continue leveraging resources with workforce partners.

Create new pathways for success by preparing very low-skill adults for sector-based bridge programs.

Attend Rapid Response and WARN meetings.

Participate in partner employment service-related events and activities.

Promote partner re-training programs and events using Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) outreach notices.

Continue successful out-of-school youth programs.

Conduct effective Trade-related programs.

Organize front-line staff meeting on a regular basis to assist with collaboration of client services.

Share workforce trends with partners throughout the region in order to shift outreach of business and client needs to accurately reflect current workforce and economic trends.

#### Business Services

Continue the long history of providing incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and work experience/internships while developing customized training.

Implement and expand work-based learning programs and strategies for all eligible customers.

Schedule employer interview appointments for job seekers, following the job development process.

Continue to share workforce intelligence and organize hiring events, through partners, local economic development agencies and businesses.

Continue expanding shared business services through combining local areas' team meetings.

Regional Apprenticeship Navigator to build capacity by developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, processes, and resources that businesses, educational institutions, local workforce areas and community partners need to create new or expand existing apprenticeship programs.

Rapid Talent Pipeline Initiative (RTPI) will continue guiding businesses towards operating directly with the RTPI workforce partners to identify business needs, create a plan of action, and implement the plan.

#### Workforce Boards

Support awareness and adoption of innovative private sector models, such as the United States Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management Initiative.

Implement National Emergency Grant (NEG) Sector Partnership (SP) strategies for the health care sector while exploring options to apply for grants for the regions other identified sectors.

Utilize business intermediaries, including but not limited to United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Expand employer forums including workforce partners.



Create a pilot event in Jo Daviess County or Carroll County to feature The Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation Institute (Chicago), along with the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center and NIU EIGERlab (Rockford).

Apply for Regional Grant opportunities to assist in the implementation of Sector Strategies.

Continue Targeted Populations Standing Committee, as used by one local area, and integrating targeted population's representatives into all committees, as used by the other local area.

**D. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.**

Through LWIA 4's proposal for the Regional Apprenticeship Navigator Grant, Great Northwest Region will have the capability to conduct structured outreach to businesses with employers and workforce professionals to expand the use of apprenticeship as a work-based learning strategy. Regional Apprenticeship Navigator will build capacity by developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, processes, and resources that businesses, educational institutions, local workforce areas and community partners need to create new or expand existing apprenticeship programs.

**E. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.**

In addition to the Regional Apprenticeship Navigator Grant proposal; Great Northwest Region's educational partners offer Stackable or Micro Certificates that allow clients to advance in their work and their education simultaneously. Additionally, educational partners and Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs work together to offer Integrated Career and Academic Preparation (I-CAPS). This program offers Adult Education students, including ESL students, the opportunity to complete college certificate programs in CNC Manufacturing, Patient Care Assistant, or IT Support Technician while preparing to earn their GED.

**F Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including:**

**F.1 Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.**

LWIA 4's execution of a Rapid Talent Pipeline Initiative (RTPI) has a goal to develop a universal template for use by partners in the workforce area to help employers develop/improve their talent pipelines, address the challenge of engaging rural employers, and improve employer engagement in the region. The process for implementing RTPI utilizes five process steps: Identify and Recruit Employers with identified needs, Assess Skill Needs and Pipeline Options, Develop an RTPI Plan, Implement the RTPI Plan with the employer's approval, and Review the Outcomes. The process is designed to be collaborative among partners, focused on working with smaller numbers of employers to identify specific talent needs and solutions, faster at responding to those needs by using existing programs whenever possible, and data driven so that new projects will benefit from what has been learned in previous projects.

Great Northwest Region will work to establish a regional business service team based on the RTPI process. Representatives from both workforce areas will convene to establish a list of possible members that represent a minimum of all core partners and will work from there to identify additional members that serve the business community who can contribute to the successful expansion of the rapid talent pipeline initiative outlined previously.

To make businesses more competitive, Great Northwest Region's NCI Works launched a new initiative designed to provide labor market and career information to our businesses, job seekers, young adults and current workers through the publication of Industry Brief's designed to explain local business leader's workforce occupations, educational and training requirement, valued skill sets for potential employees, and the challenges the industry is facing today. These Industry Briefs are circulated through workforce partners, schools, libraries, elected officials, economic development organizations and local chambers to share with the community.

To help reach an even broader audience, podcasts that feature those same presenters and perhaps even guest presenters to promote further discussion on the selected industry as well as other related workforce topics are hosted. Podcasts are accessible on an on-going basis. This also supports our programmatic accessibility efforts, as well as our career pathways initiatives by providing career information.

### **F.2 Expanding career pathway<sup>7</sup> opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.**

Great Northwest Region will collaborate with existing employer sector groups to expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated training and work-based learning; leading to industry-recognized credentials that result in improved employment and earnings by focusing a Regional Apprenticeship Navigator on outreach to area chambers of commerce, economic development teams, and regional one-stop center partners in order to engage businesses throughout the region to become familiar with current apprenticeship program in order to strategize what training will benefit clients emerging into the workforce. Businesses will have the opportunity to troubleshoot their workforce needs with the navigator who will report to one-stop centers for strategic solutions. In addition, Rapid Talent Pipeline (RTPI) is a systematic approach that allows for businesses to work directly with the RTPI group to identify business needs, create a plan of action, and work together to implement the plan.

### **F.3 Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs.**

By working closely with local community college partners in bridge programs, providing work-based training and co-enrolling individuals with local partner programs, Great Northwest Region expands career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers by minimizing the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement. A Targeted Population Committee consisting of 2-4 individuals is in place to develop a career stop curriculum that will help client's market themselves and market the advantages of hiring the client.

Front line staff from all partnering agencies share information on what is happening within their organizations, new initiatives, common concerns, what is lacking, service delivery and with the shared client - journey mapping. Journey mapping consists of ensuring that services are not duplicated yet the

individuals is getting the services that they need to become successful. This is all connected to the service integration strategies in the area.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, Innovation Project for Returning Citizens, **American Job Center**<sup>®</sup> partner organizations are reducing recidivism and improving public safety by providing returning citizens with vocational training and employment services.

To help support our programmatic accessibility efforts, as well as our career pathways initiatives by providing career information, podcasts that feature industry leaders, business owners and guest presenters are broadcasted to promote thorough discussion on a selected industry as well as other related workforce topics. Podcasts are accessible on an on-going basis.

NCI Works Targeted Pop initiative re: integrating/re-integrating individuals with disabilities, individuals with background issues and veterans into/back into the workforce.

**F.4 Expanding information for employers and job-seekers to access services by improving the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.**

This state goal will be supported by:

Participating in the region's several workforce development initiatives of Chambers of Commerce and United Way organizations.

Supporting Illinois Economic Development Association (IEDA) through membership.

Creating public-private partnerships or alignments with businesses and not-for-profit agencies that serve special populations.

Improving public/private data infrastructure by collecting regional data and investigating methods to make the data accessible.

Requesting opportunities to make presentations to economic development practitioners and professionals, through chambers of commerce and economic development association.

Hosting workshops for economic development practitioners and professionals.

Connecting with entrepreneurs and those starting businesses, to assist with workforce needs.

Participating in the region's several Area Planning Council (APC\_ Area Plan Development processes with education professionals and community college administrators.

Participating in the region's several Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning processes with economic development professionals.

Assisting communities and chambers with requests for information from businesses that may relocate or expand.

G. As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic on how the Local Workforce Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas not covered in the above sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic regarding how the Local Workforce Board(s) efforts for regional coordination.

- Great Northwest Region's coordination of the regional workforce, education and economic development activities will continue to transpire. Although the pandemic did impact the way the region executed collaboration efforts, the pandemic did not prevent such efforts. Lessons learned and alternative means of conducting business noted throughout this plan will continue.

H. As part of the 2022 modification, describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies.

- Through continued collaboration, Great Northwest Region is committed to working towards closing the equity gap by making resources well known when collaborating with partners, community agencies, businesses, and community members. With a history of working towards providing resources to such underserved individuals, LWIA 13 will continue outreach to Returning Citizens. Partner organizations with in LWIA 13 include Safer Foundation and Arc of the Quad Cities (see Local Plan), whom both focus on serving underserved populations. LWIA 4's WDB has a Targeted Population Committee which works closely with the employer engagement committee to ensure services for all populations are equal and aligned. Barriers that may be prevalent in rural communities, such as transportation, will be offered services using technology.

Furthermore, with the increased focus on equity throughout the Unified State Plan, the region will continue alignment to reach the underserved individuals of the region. Equity will continue to be at the forefront of our programming as it is believed that the purpose of WIOA is to provide access to sustainable income to individuals with barriers, including equity gaps.