

Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc.



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Draft Local Workforce Plan

For

Cecil and Harford Counties

2020 – 2024

Updated

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## **Background**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law July 22, 2014. WIOA became effective July 1, 2015, with full implementation on July 1, 2017. WIOA replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WIOA improves connections to employment and training opportunities that lead to economic prosperity for workers and their families. It strengthens engagement with the business community to align workforce system services and training programs to produce the needed skills resulting in qualified workers meeting business needs. Highlights of WIOA reforms to the workforce system include:

- Aligns federal investments to support job seekers and business
- Strengthens governing bodies that establish State, Regional and Local workforce priorities
- Helps businesses find workers with the necessary skills
- Aligns goals and increases accountability across the core programs
- Fosters regional collaboration to meet the needs of regional economies
- Targets workforce services to better serve job seekers

Section 108 of WIOA requires that each Local Board develop, in collaboration with core partners, and submit to the Governor, a four-year Local Plan

## **Executive Summary**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Integrated Plan for Cecil and Harford Counties in Maryland is divided into 16 sections.

### **Section 1: Economic Analysis**

This section provides an analysis of economic conditions, existing and emerging industries and in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

### **Section 2: Strategic Planning to Maximize the Earning Capacity of Marylanders**

This section identifies the vision, goals, economic and workforce information analysis, strategies and outcomes collectively identified for the Local Workforce Area.

### **Section 3: Strategic Planning to Strengthen the Local Workforce System**

The local workforce system will facilitate the alignment of multiple programs, funding streams and system objectives to ensure the workforce has the employability skills, occupational skills and education necessary to meet the needs of current and future employers.

### **Section 4: American Job Center Delivery System**

This section describes how services will be provided through an integrated delivery system for Cecil and Harford Counties.

### **Section 5: Title I – Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker Functions**

The employment and training services provided under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are described.

**Section 6: Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Functions**

The implementation and operation of Title II, “Adult Education and Literacy,” of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is described.

**Section 7: Title III - Wagner-Peyser Functions**

The implementation and operation of Title III, “Amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act,” of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is described.

**Section 8: Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Functions**

The implementation and operation of Title IV, “Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,” of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is described.

**Section 9: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Functions**

The collaborative relationship between customers receiving public assistance and the workforce development system is described.

**Section 10: Community Service Block Grant Functions**

This section describes services of Harford Community Action Agency.

**Section 11: Jobs for Veterans State Grants Functions**

Veteran job seekers and the workforce development system is described.

**Section 12: Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program Functions**

This section describes how Trade Adjustment Assistance Services will be provided in the American Job Center system.

**Section 13: Unemployment Insurance Functions**

Describes how Unemployment Insurance Claimants will have access to workforce development services in the American Job Centers.

**Section 14: Senior Community Service Employment Program Functions**

Description of how Senior Community Services Employment Program will be provided through the American Job Center system.

**Section 15: WIOA Section 188 and Equal Opportunity Functions**

The section describes how entities within the American Job center delivery system will comply with section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part 39, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq).

**Section 16: Fiscal, Performance and Other Functions**

The accountability of the Susquehanna Workforce Board for fiscal and programmatic performance is described.

## List of Selected Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AEFL	Adult Education and Family literacy
AJC	American Job Center
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems
CBO	Community Based Organization
CLEO	Chief Local Elected Official
DORS	Division of Rehabilitation Services
DVOP	Disabled Veteran Opportunity Program
DWDAL	Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning
DHS	Department of Human Services
EARN	Employment Advancement Right Now
EDAB	Economic Development Advisory Board
EDC	Economic Development Commission
EEO	Equal Opportunity Officer
ETP	Eligible Training Provider
HBE	Harford Business Edge
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
IEP	Individual Employment Plan
ITA	Individual Training Account
LMB	Local Management Board
LMI	Labor Market Information
LVER	Local Veteran Employment Representative
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSFW	Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
MWE	Maryland Workforce Exchange
NAWB	National Association of Workforce Boards
OJT	On-the-Job Training
POS	Priority of Service
RAMP MD	Regional Additive Manufacturing Partnership of Maryland
RFP	Request for Proposal
RSA	Resource Sharing Agreement
SBE	Significant Barrier to Employment
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SWIP	Susquehanna Workforce Innovation Partners
TAA	Trade Adjustment Assistance
TABE	Tests of Adult Basic Education
TANF	Temporary Aid to Needy Families
TCA	Temporary Cash Assistance
WFC	Workforce Center
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act
WP	Wagner-Peyser

## Local Plan Requirements

### Section 1 – Economic Analysis

This section should include an analysis of economic elements consisting of –

- (A) An analysis of the regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of businesses in those industry sectors and occupations. The analysis should identify local priority industries based on employer (and WIOA partner) input as well as how the Local Board plans to maximize opportunities for sustainable employment through those local industry priorities and needs.

Existing economic conditions in the Susquehanna region, including unemployment, industry concentration, wages, and recent growth trends had been an appealing set of labor market circumstances prior to the COVID-19 pandemic spreading throughout the U.S.

The U.S. Census Bureau defines Harford County as being part of the Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD metropolitan statistical area. Cecil County is defined as being part of the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington metropolitan statistical area and part of the Wilmington, DE-MD-NJ metropolitan division, which includes Cecil County, MD, Salem County, NJ, and New Castle County, DE. Situated between the Baltimore metropolitan area (pop. 2.8 million) and the even larger Philadelphia metropolitan area (6.1 million), the Susquehanna region forms part of one of the nation’s densest labor markets.

Economic and Labor force dynamics caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are of major concern to the region. While there will be an initial rush of job creation post-pandemic as surviving businesses reclaim many of their former workers, there may be a period of economic stagnation thereafter. The years following the pandemic may prove far more challenging in terms of helping people up the economic ladder than the latter years of the prior decade. This means that relatively more attention may need to be paid to those who have been dislocated from the workforce than had been the case during a period of unusually low unemployment and atypically large volumes of unfilled job openings.

Cecil and Harford counties are among the more rural jurisdictions of the Philadelphia-Baltimore corridor. Total employment in the Susquehanna region stood at 128,000 in 2019, or 8.1% above its 2014 level. Harford County represents nearly three quarters of Susquehanna employment.

	Total Employment (Annual Average)		2014 v. 2019	
	2014	2019	Net	%
Maryland	2,552,623	2,698,770	146,147	5.7%
Susquehanna WIA	118,792	128,431	9,639	8.1%
Cecil County, MD	30,643	33,386	2,743	9.0%
Harford County, MD	88,149	95,045	6,896	7.8%
Baltimore County, MD	364,651	380,462	15,811	4.3%
Baltimore City, MD	331,750	344,069	12,319	3.7%
Chester County, PA	240,501	252,844	12,343	5.1%
New Castle County, DE	278,216	293,605	15,389	5.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Maryland Department of Labor, Maryland Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program; Sage. Notes: 1. NSA: Not Seasonally Adjusted.

Between 2014 and 2019 employment grew faster in Cecil and Harford counties than statewide. Not only are both jurisdictions heavily influenced by the Baltimore/Washington and Philadelphia metropolitan areas, northeast Maryland is also impacted by the dynamics of New Castle County, home to communities like Wilmington (financial center) and Newark (significant university community).

Harford and Cecil counties are located at the outer boundaries of their respective metropolitan areas. Accordingly, many residents commute to the core of these metropolitan areas to participate in the densest proximate labor markets.

The chart below indicates that approximately 152,000 people living in the Susquehanna region had jobs in 2017, while the region itself was home to just over 102,000 positions. This implies that a large fraction of workers commute outside the region for work. The counts in the home area are typically far larger than in the work area. For instance, as of 2017, Census data indicate that nearly 7,300 residents of the Susquehanna region worked in financial services, but fewer than 2,700 positions existed in the region. This means that on net approximately 4,600 people commuted out of the region for such jobs, including to financial services providers located in Wilmington, DE (e.g. Bank of America) and Baltimore (e.g. T. Rowe Price).

Susquehanna Region: Employment by Industry, 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map)

Industry	<u>Work Area</u>		<u>Home Area</u>	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	985	1.0%	779	0.5%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	258	0.3%	171	0.1%
Utilities	117	0.1%	942	0.6%
Construction	7,691	7.5%	11,201	7.3%
Manufacturing	8,764	8.5%	10,095	6.6%
Wholesale Trade	3,731	3.6%	6,533	4.3%
Retail Trade	13,832	13.5%	18,006	11.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	7,011	6.8%	6,511	4.3%
Information	1,209	1.2%	2,538	1.7%
Finance and Insurance	2,663	2.6%	7,299	4.8%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,026	1.0%	2,336	1.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	8,237	8.0%	13,125	8.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	271	0.3%	1,489	1.0%
Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation Services	4,485	4.4%	7,902	5.2%
Educational Services	9,847	9.6%	15,018	9.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	12,900	12.6%	21,129	13.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,158	2.1%	2,689	1.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	10,248	10.0%	12,346	8.1%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	3,648	3.6%	5,325	3.5%
Public Administration	3,529	3.4%	7,388	4.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>102,610</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>152,822</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program, OnTheMap Application; Sage. Notes: 1. Numbers represent *primary* jobs, not total jobs. Primary Jobs: Public and private-sector jobs, one job per worker. A primary job is the highest paying job for an individual worker. 2. Job figures are for the Susquehanna Workforce Investment Area (WIA), which is comprised of Cecil and Harford Counties.

# Demographic Profile

The Susquehanna Region population was 353,542 per American Community Survey data for 2014 – 2018.

The region has a civilian labor force of 189,112 with a participation rate of 67.2%. Of individuals 25 to 64, 34.4% have a bachelor’s degree or higher which compares with 32.9% in the nation.

The median household income in the region is \$82,228 and the median house value is \$273,434.

## Summary<sup>1</sup>

	Percent			Value		
	Susquehanna Region	Maryland	USA	Susquehanna Region	Maryland	USA
<b>Demographics</b>						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	353,542	6,003,435	322,903,030
Male	49.2%	48.5%	49.2%	173,912	2,910,323	158,984,190
Female	50.8%	51.5%	50.8%	179,630	3,093,112	163,918,840
Median Age <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	40.7	38.6	37.9
Under 18 Years	22.7%	22.4%	22.8%	80,232	1,344,177	73,553,240
18 to 24 Years	8.3%	9.1%	9.6%	29,381	544,400	30,903,719
25 to 34 Years	12.3%	13.8%	13.8%	43,547	828,071	44,567,976
35 to 44 Years	12.2%	12.8%	12.6%	43,165	766,281	40,763,210
45 to 54 Years	15.1%	14.2%	13.2%	53,293	851,925	42,589,573
55 to 64 Years	14.2%	13.2%	12.8%	50,058	793,244	41,286,731
65 to 74 Years	9.3%	8.6%	8.8%	32,817	513,610	28,535,419
75 Years, and Over	6.0%	6.0%	6.4%	21,049	361,727	20,703,162
Race: White	81.6%	56.2%	72.7%	288,642	3,373,181	234,904,818
Race: Black or African American	11.6%	29.8%	12.7%	40,949	1,788,090	40,916,113
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%	612	15,644	2,699,073
Race: Asian	2.3%	6.2%	5.4%	8,230	374,277	17,574,550
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	62	3,059	582,718
Race: Some Other Race	1.3%	4.2%	4.9%	4,596	249,815	15,789,961
Race: Two or More Races	3.0%	3.3%	3.2%	10,451	199,369	10,435,797
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4.4%	9.8%	17.8%	15,455	588,912	57,517,935
<b>Population Growth</b>						
Population (Pop Estimates) <sup>4</sup>	—	—	—	358,296	6,045,680	328,239,523
Population Annual Average Growth <sup>4</sup>	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	1,380	31,529	2,146,799
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	457.4	622.8	92.9
<b>Economic</b>						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over) <sup>5</sup>	67.2%	67.6%	63.2%	189,112	3,232,422	162,248,196
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54) <sup>5</sup>	85.9%	85.8%	81.8%	119,161	2,082,710	104,136,254
Armed Forces Labor Force <sup>5</sup>	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	1,720	29,233	1,028,133
Veterans, Age 18-64 <sup>5</sup>	7.1%	5.6%	4.7%	15,455	211,886	9,398,789
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64 <sup>5</sup>	80.3%	82.9%	76.3%	12,408	175,608	7,168,168
Median Household Income <sup>2,5</sup>	—	—	—	\$82,228	\$81,868	\$60,293
Per Capita Income <sup>5</sup>	—	—	—	\$37,512	\$40,517	\$32,621
Mean Commute Time (minutes) <sup>5</sup>	—	—	—	31.2	32.9	26.6
Commute via Public Transportation <sup>5</sup>	1.4%	8.6%	5.0%	2,516	258,397	7,602,145



## Summary<sup>1</sup>

	Percent			Value		
	Susquehanna Region	Maryland	USA	Susquehanna Region	Maryland	USA
<b>Educational Attainment, Age 25-64</b>						
No High School Diploma	6.7%	8.8%	11.2%	12,647	284,921	18,885,967
High School Graduate	27.9%	23.5%	25.8%	52,951	762,906	43,699,272
Some College, No Degree	22.4%	19.4%	21.0%	42,623	627,335	35,525,113
Associate's Degree	8.7%	7.1%	9.1%	16,542	229,256	15,389,737
Bachelor's Degree	20.9%	22.7%	20.8%	39,660	735,453	35,261,652
Postgraduate Degree	13.5%	18.5%	12.1%	25,640	599,650	20,445,749
<b>Housing</b>						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	142,178	2,437,740	136,384,292
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	\$273,434	\$305,500	\$204,900
Homeowner Vacancy	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1,714	25,716	1,304,850
Rental Vacancy	5.9%	6.2%	6.0%	1,897	48,476	2,822,053
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	23.1%	33.2%	36.2%	30,139	728,577	43,285,318
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units) <sup>5</sup>	5.2%	9.0%	8.7%	6,770	196,253	10,424,934
<b>Social</b>						
Poverty Level (of all people) <sup>5</sup>	8.1%	9.4%	14.1%	28,330	553,496	44,257,979
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	8.9%	10.6%	12.2%	11,640	232,090	14,635,287
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	4,950	81,131	4,442,295
Disconnected Youth <sup>3,5</sup>	2.3%	2.2%	2.6%	414	6,818	438,452
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children) <sup>5</sup>	27.2%	34.7%	34.3%	20,879	445,760	23,973,249
Uninsured	3.9%	6.5%	9.4%	13,670	382,130	29,752,767
With a Disability, Age 18-64 <sup>5</sup>	10.2%	8.8%	10.3%	22,056	325,210	20,240,504
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size <sup>5</sup>	45.7%	47.8%	41.6%	10,079	155,329	8,421,018
Foreign Born	5.0%	15.1%	13.5%	17,605	903,533	43,539,499
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs. and over)	2.0%	6.8%	8.5%	6,613	381,953	25,647,781

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

1. American Community Survey 2014-2018, unless noted otherwise

2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.

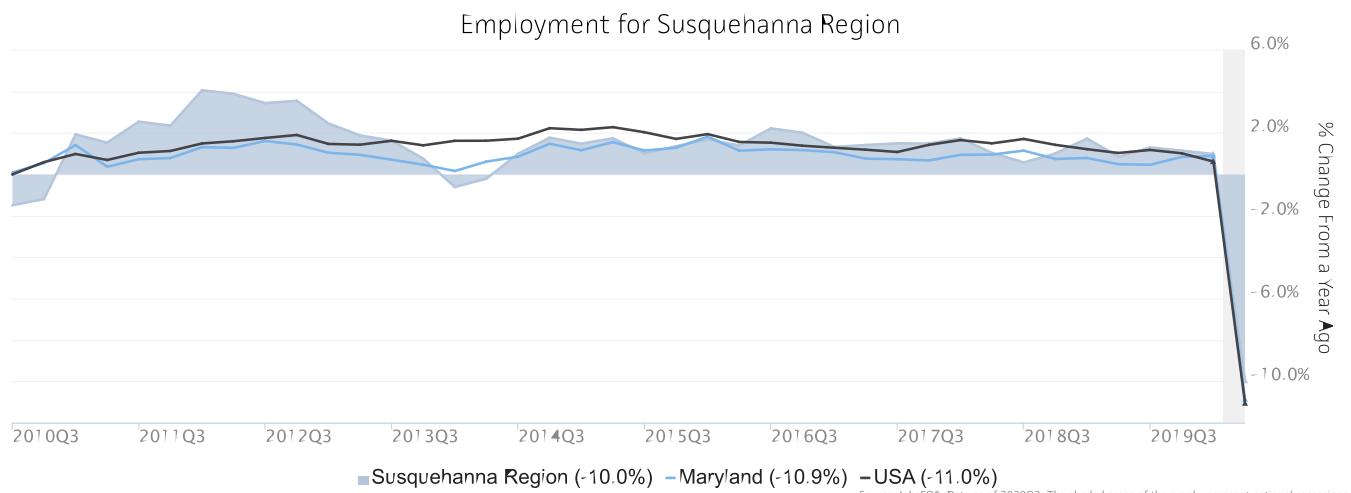
3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

4. Census 2019, annual average growth rate since 2009

5. See Rio Arriba errata note in the Data Dictionary.

## Employment Trends

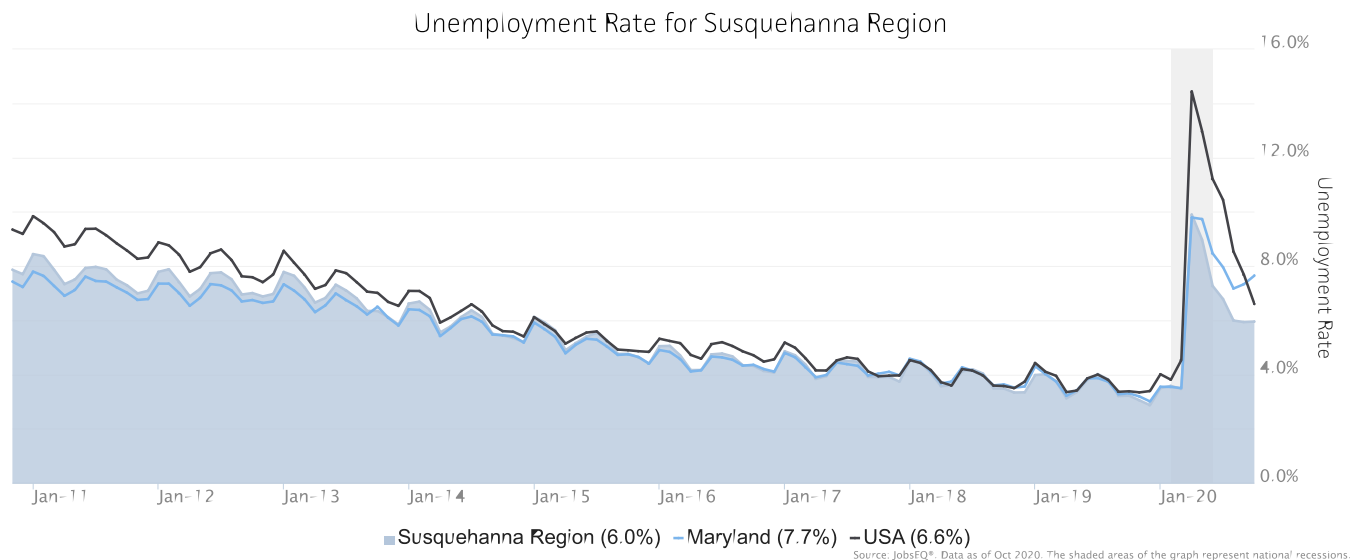
As of 2020Q2, total employment for the Susquehanna Region was 135,250 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2020Q2, employment declined 10.0% in the region.



Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q2.

## Unemployment Rate

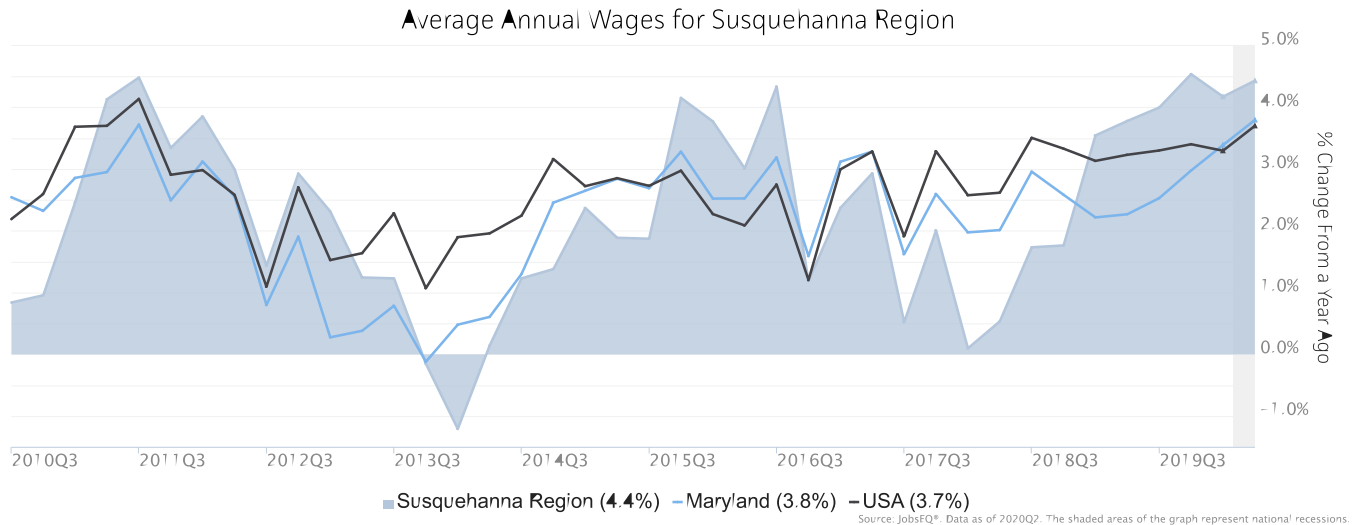
The unemployment rate for the Susquehanna Region was 6.0% as of October 2020. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 6.6%. One year earlier, in October 2019, the unemployment rate in the Susquehanna Region was 3.2%.



Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through October 2020.

## Wage Trends

The average worker in the Susquehanna Region earned annual wages of \$53,722 as of 2020Q2. Average annual wages per worker increased 4.4% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$58,849 in the nation as of 2020Q2.



Annual average wages per worker data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q2.

## Cost of Living Index

The Cost of Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. The cost of living is 12.5% higher in Susquehanna Region than the U.S. average.

### Cost of Living Information

	Annual Average Salary	Cost of Living Index (Base US)	US Purchasing Power
Susquehanna Region	\$53,722	112.5	\$47,758
Maryland	\$62,478	125.8	\$49,673
USA	\$58,849	100.0	\$58,849

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

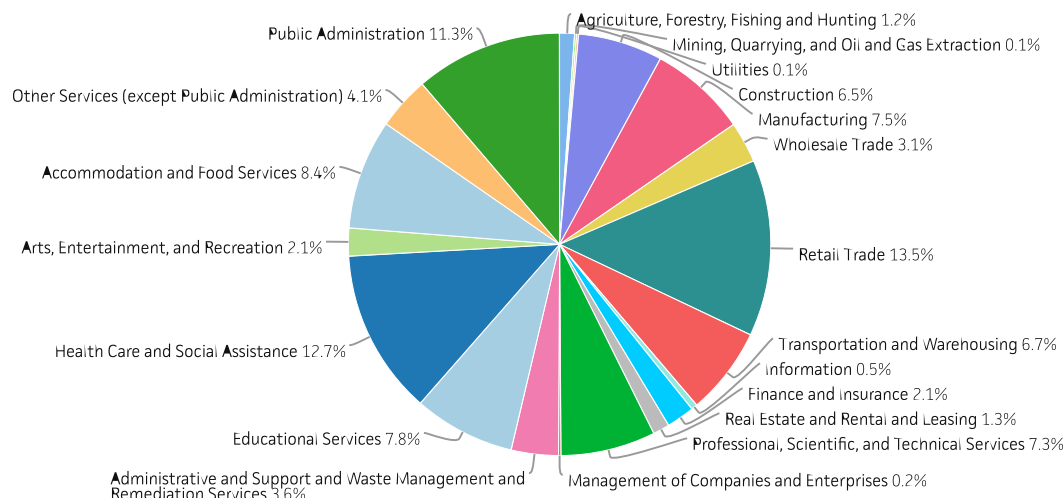
Data as of 2020Q2

Cost of Living per C2ER, data as of 2020Q1, imputed by Chmura where necessary.

## Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in the Susquehanna Region is Retail Trade, employing 18,271 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Health Care and Social Assistance (17,118 workers) and Public Administration (15,253). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Public Administration (LQ = 2.34), Transportation and Warehousing (1.43), and Retail Trade (1.32).

Total Workers for Susquehanna Region by industry



Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2020Q2

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q2.

Sectors in the Susquehanna Region with the highest average wages per worker are Utilities (\$117,660), Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$112,756), and Public Administration (\$96,098). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Retail Trade (+1,388 jobs), Manufacturing (+1,207), and Health Care and Social Assistance (+1,084).

Over the next 1 year, employment in the Susquehanna Region is projected to expand by 476 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance with a +1.2% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+199 jobs), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+105), and Accommodation and Food Services (+95).

NAICS	Industry	Emil	Current	LQ	5-Year History		Total Demand	1-Year Forecast			Ann % Growth
			Avg Ann Wages		Empl Change	Ann %		Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	
44	Retail Trade	18,271	\$30,575	1.32	1,388	1.6%	2,391	1,077	1,360	-46	-0.3%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	17,118	\$50,562	0.87	1,084	1.3%	1,816	795	822	199	1.2%
92	Public Administration	15,253	\$96,098	2.34	745	1.0%	1,381	592	805	-16	-0.1%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	11,368	\$19,139	1.00	-334	-0.6%	1,936	815	1,027	95	0.8%
61	Educational Services	10,491	\$49,343	0.94	-599	-1.1%	963	466	503	-7	-0.1%
31	Manufacturing	10,119	\$73,883	0.91	1,207	2.6%	1,000	388	664	-52	-0.5%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	9,814	\$89,775	1.05	-330	-0.7%	946	313	528	105	1.1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	9,081	\$48,151	1.43	628	1.4%	1,023	411	557	55	0.6%
23	Construction	8,764	\$58,119	1.12	394	0.9%	941	309	552	79	0.9%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	5,495	\$31,265	0.92	-266	-0.9%	636	285	341	10	0.2%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,888	\$37,980	0.57	385	1.7%	590	239	325	26	0.5%
42	Wholesale Trade	4,240	\$60,765	0.82	851	4.6%	431	167	277	-14	-0.3%
52	Finance and Insurance	2,902	\$63,321	0.53	60	0.4%	270	103	168	-1	0.0%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,893	\$21,461	1.15	-145	-1.0%	423	182	225	16	0.5%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,729	\$49,313	0.73	109	1.3%	182	80	95	7	0.4%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,556	\$35,011	0.85	84	1.1%	170	72	97	2	0.1%
51	Information	630	\$56,270	0.24	-100	-2.9%	57	22	39	-3	-0.5%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	244	\$112,756	0.12	-57	-4.1%	23	8	14	1	0.3%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	202	\$74,218	0.36	12	1.2%	21	7	14	0	0.1%
22	Utilities	195	\$117,660	0.28	88	12.8%	18	6	11	0	0.1%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>		<b>135,250</b>	<b>\$53,722</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>5,205</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>15,223</b>	<b>6,305</b>	<b>8,441</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q2. Forecast employment growth uses national projections adapted for regional growth patterns.

## Occupation Snapshot

The largest major occupation group in the Susquehanna Region is Sales and Related Occupations, employing 14,477 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Office and Administrative Support Occupations (14,402 workers) and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (13,701). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations (LQ = 1.59), Architecture and Engineering Occupations (1.34), and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (1.22).

Occupation groups in the Susquehanna Region with the highest average wages per worker are Management Occupations (\$116,000), Legal Occupations (\$99,100), and Computer and Mathematical Occupations (\$93,800). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.8% among Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations to 9.3% among Personal Care and Service Occupations.

Over the next year, the fastest growing occupation group in the Susquehanna Region is expected to be Healthcare Support Occupations with a +1.5% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (+100 jobs) and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (+70). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Sales and Related Occupations (2,115 jobs) and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (1,983).

### Susquehanna Region, 2020Q2<sup>1</sup>

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages <sup>2</sup>	Current			5-Year History			1-Year Forecast				
				LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads <sup>3</sup>	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
41-0000	Sales and Related	14,477	\$37,800	1.11	1,040	5.5%	860	898	1.3%	2,098	859	1,256	-16	-0.1%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	14,402	\$40,800	0.83	1,002	4.0%	389	-73	-0.1%	1,562	679	952	-68	-0.5%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	13,701	\$35,600	1.22	1,133	6.4%	1,319	1,498	2.3%	1,796	640	1,113	43	0.3%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	11,116	\$25,300	1.02	1,265	8.8%	582	-417	-0.7%	2,082	807	1,176	100	0.9%
11-0000	Management	8,639	\$116,000	0.98	233	2.1%	288	628	1.5%	769	225	500	44	0.5%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	8,271	\$79,400	1.06	220	1.8%	634	557	1.4%	545	219	256	70	0.8%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	7,990	\$76,200	1.06	256	2.4%	410	626	1.6%	797	222	544	32	0.4%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	7,895	\$55,800	1.03	428	4.5%	155	-297	-0.7%	723	328	387	9	0.1%
51-0000	Production	6,782	\$40,200	0.85	472	5.8%	191	749	2.4%	733	261	511	-39	-0.6%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	6,619	\$48,800	1.05	690	7.3%	97	156	0.5%	811	220	535	56	0.9%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	5,283	\$48,700	1.01	314	3.8%	290	131	0.5%	539	168	354	17	0.3%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	4,388	\$30,700	0.73	272	3.5%	264	398	1.9%	625	261	297	66	1.5%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	4,366	\$93,800	1.06	138	2.3%	884	314	1.5%	379	77	258	45	1.0%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	4,271	\$30,300	1.16	573	9.3%	92	-185	-0.8%	698	294	372	32	0.7%

### Susquehanna Region, 2020Q2<sup>1</sup>

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages <sup>2</sup>	Current			5-Year History			1-Year Forecast				
				LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads <sup>3</sup>	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	4,176	\$30,600	0.91	338	6.1%	213	46	0.2%	574	227	325	22	0.5%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	3,119	\$88,100	1.34	93	2.4%	176	-93	-0.6%	251	74	169	8	0.3%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	2,216	\$48,000	0.95	56	2.0%	150	143	1.3%	266	81	163	23	1.0%
33-0000	Protective Service	2,174	\$52,300	0.74	142	3.1%	88	121	1.2%	248	111	136	2	0.1%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	1,879	\$80,200	1.59	62	2.9%	76	-130	-1.3%	183	37	141	5	0.3%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	1,735	\$51,300	0.71	161	6.3%	69	14	0.2%	201	72	124	5	0.3%
23-0000	Legal	985	\$99,100	0.85	32	1.9%	7	25	0.5%	67	25	40	2	0.2%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	768	\$31,200	0.88	44	7.7%	1	98	2.8%	125	31	94	0	0.1%
<b>Total - All Occupations</b>		<b>135,250</b>	<b>\$52,700</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>8,961</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>7,234</b>	<b>5,205</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>16,091</b>	<b>5,915</b>	<b>9,701</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2020Q2 unless noted otherwise

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. Data based on a four-quarter moving average unless noted otherwise.

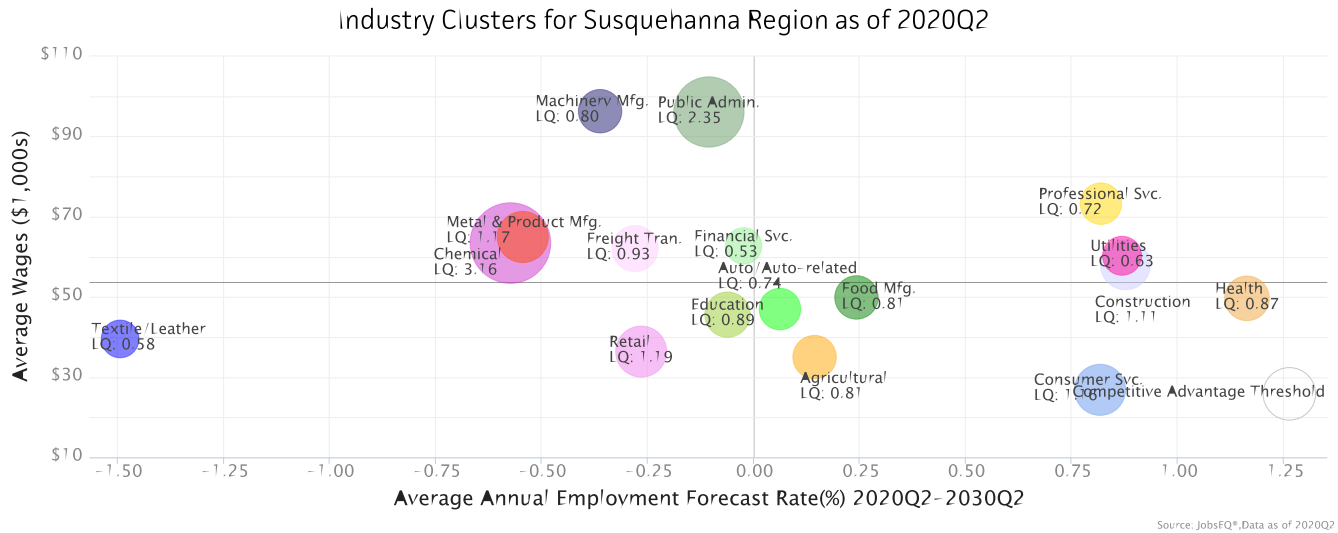
2. Wage data are as of 2019 and represent the average for all Covered Employment

3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region; data represents a sampling rather than the complete universe of postings. Ads lacking zip code information but designating a place (city, town, etc...) may be assigned to the zip code with greatest employment in that place for queries in this analytic. Due to alternative county-assignment algorithms, ad counts in this analytic may not match that shown in RTI (nor in the popup window ad list).

Occupation employment data are estimated via industry employment data and the estimated industry/occupation mix. Industry employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and currently updated through 2019Q4, imputed where necessary with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q2. Wages by occupation are as of 2019 provided by the BLS and imputed where necessary. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

## Industry Clusters

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in the Susquehanna Region with the highest relative concentration is Chemical with a location quotient of 3.16. This cluster employs 3,992 workers in the region with an average wage of \$63,450. Employment in the Chemical cluster is projected to contract in the region about 0.6% per year over the next ten years.

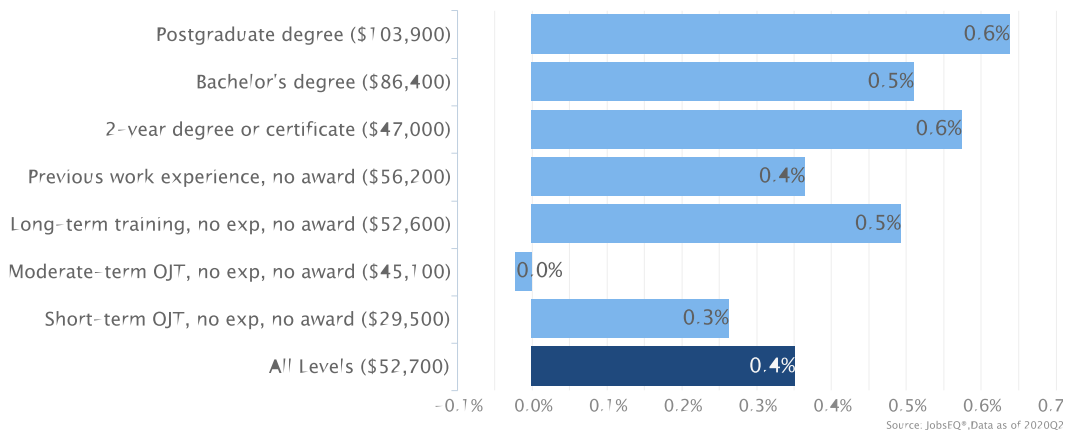


Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q2. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

## Education Levels

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Susquehanna Region is projected to grow 0.4% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 0.6% per year, those requiring a bachelor's degree are forecast to grow 0.5% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.6% per year.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Training Required for Susquehanna Region

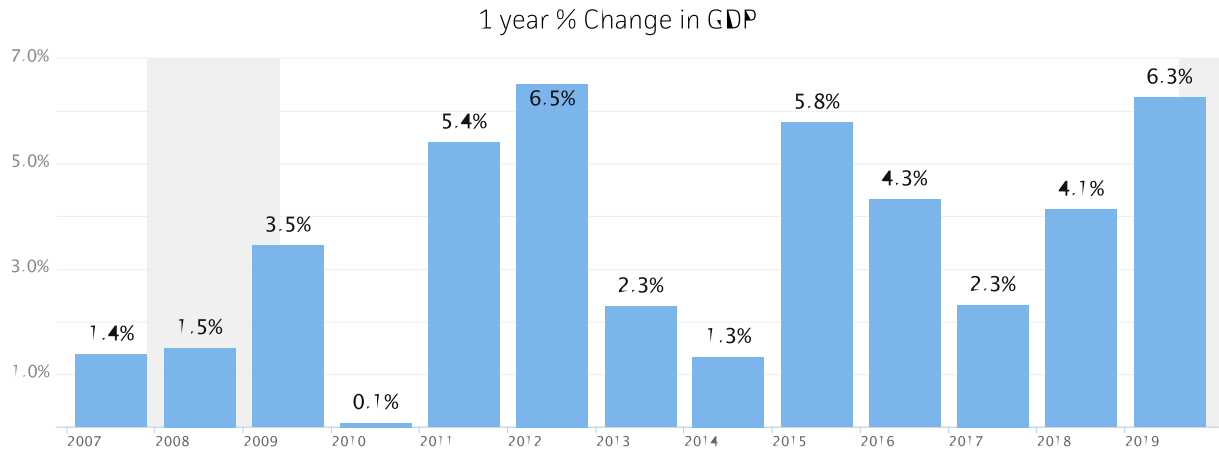


Employment by occupation data are estimates as of 2020Q2. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.



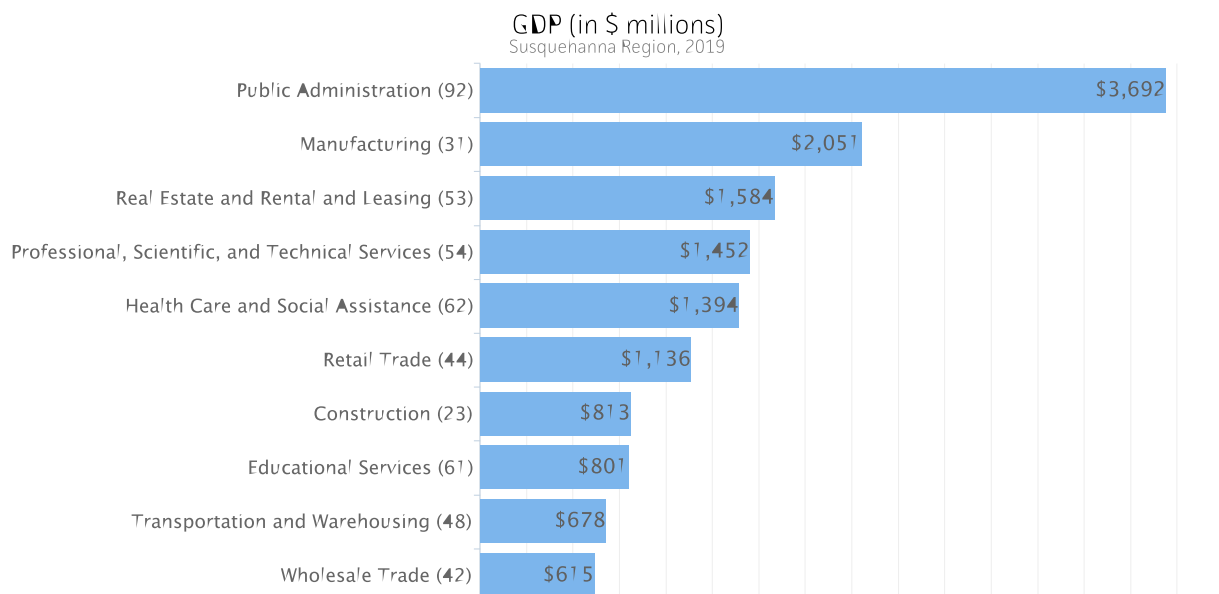
## Gross Domestic Product

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2019, nominal GDP in the Susquehanna Region expanded 6.3%. This follows growth of 4.1% in 2018. As of 2019, total GDP in the Susquehanna Region was \$17,157,153,000.



Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2019.

Of the sectors in the Susquehanna Region, Public Administration contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2019, \$3,691,568,000. The next-largest contributions came from Manufacturing (\$2,050,578,000); Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (\$1,583,665,000); and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (\$1,452,233,000).



Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2019.

## Economic Assets, Advantages and Opportunities

### Strengths

Northeast Maryland's inclusion and proximity to several major metropolitan areas along with the alignment of I-95 creates massive opportunities for market connectivity. The presence of APG further supports connections to the worlds of high-tech and federal government contracting, creating opportunities for highly technical professionals within the region.

The emergence of Principio Business Park as a major employment center in Cecil County stands for the proposition that investment in infrastructure, whether by public or private entities, is able to trigger large-scale commerce growth in northeast Maryland. The arrival of Amazon, Lidl, and Great Wolf Lodge is evidence that many major corporate entities have recognized the potential of the region to proficiently serve large markets.

### Weaknesses

The lack of a four-year degree granting institution stands out as the region's primary economic weakness. University Center (UC) was intended to address this by providing a platform through which regional colleges and universities could offer instruction and degrees to area residents, but UC was unable to fulfill this void.

There are also many area residents who lack more than a high school degree. That was not especially problematic as unemployment recently attained a 50-year low nationally and fell to just 3.3% in Maryland. However, with economic conditions now far weaker, many of these arguably under-credentialed residents may suffer substantial periods of unemployment and under-employment.

### Opportunities

In order to meet the prospective talent shortfalls of the future, the region must focus upon: 1) human capital development; and 2) human capital attraction. Human capital development will require the continued expansion of activities at Harford Community College and Cecil College, which serve as the foundations of higher education in northeast Maryland. There also needs to be expansion of critical apprenticeship programs, including via partnerships with membership organizations like Associated Builders and Contractors and the Maryland Association of Manufacturers.

Human capital attraction requires investing in quality of life. Certain northeast Maryland communities can be characterized as offering massive appeal, including Bel Air, Havre de Grace and North East, MD. Other communities, like Port Deposit, Aberdeen, and Edgewood, offer substantial potential for improved appeal, thereby supporting greater and more successful recruitment of talent into the region.

## **Threats**

There are at least three threats that stand out as representing serious sources of concern for policymakers and other stakeholders in northeast Maryland. These include: 1) dislocations due to technology; 2) the future of federal government activities; and 3) a regional brain drain.

Presently, jobs in logistics related to the e-commerce revolution, a revolution that has likely gathered additional momentum due to the novel coronavirus, are supplying significant numbers of opportunities for jobseekers. The gig economy has also created substantial opportunity, including for drivers who serve as contractors to the likes of Lyft and Uber. However, as technology continues to progress, including in the form of robotics, 3D printing, driverless vehicles, drones, and artificial intelligence, many jobs, including high-wage positions, may be permanently dislocated.

The region's large federal agency and government contracting segments can be viewed as helping to countervail some of the dislocation caused by the diffusion of human-replacing technologies, but with the federal government having amassed a debt of \$23.5 trillion prior to the novel coronavirus crisis, and with federal budget deficits surging, at some point the nation may face a debt crisis. At that point, support for federal installations like Aberdeen Proving Ground and for federal contractors may fade. The installation at Aberdeen benefitted from prior rounds of base realignment, but positive outcomes going forward are not assured.

Even during a period of what is likely to be softer economic growth during the years ahead as economic actors wrestle with the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, finding skilled talent will continue to prove challenging. At a time of economic uncertainty, many younger Americans may choose to begin their careers in larger metropolitan areas, home to the deepest labor markets and places where the cost of living is likely to become less challenging than during the peak of the now ended economic expansion.

At the same time, Baby Boomers have begun to retire in large numbers, and while the tumult experienced in financial markets recently may induce some near-retirees to postpone retirement, retirement will be inevitable nonetheless. As a result, the Susquehanna region may face a brain drain during the years ahead.

## **Maximizing Opportunities**

During the period of 2020-2024 the Workforce Board plans to continue advancing efforts to retool workers consistent with local economic drivers and priorities. This includes:

### **Continuing to Expand Credentialing Opportunities**

SWN expects the initial phases of economic recovery from the pandemic to be rapid, though complete recovery will likely take years. While there may need to be greater focus on job placement for many that lost jobs resulting from the pandemic's impact, credentials will remain important. The Workforce Board, with input from regional employers and WIOA partners, has analyzed regional industries based upon size, concentration and opportunity for growth. SWN will continue to support the maintenance and development of credentialing opportunities associated with these Workforce Boards priority industry sectors: manufacturing, primary/preventative care, construction, Distribution and Logistics and IT/Cyber. While

there are credentialing opportunities available at two-years colleges and elsewhere, there is need for quicker-hitting alternatives that connect people to opportunities on a timelier basis.

### **Swift Response and Best Practices**

The COVID-19 pandemic damaged economies globally, nationally, and regionally. Progress going forward means revisiting Best Practices associated with times of elevated unemployment and the enormous need to reconnect dislocated and other unemployed and underemployed workers to employment. This response includes:

*Informational and direct reemployment services for workers*, including but not limited to: information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims; information about re-employment assistance programs; information on the impacts of layoff on health coverage or other benefits; information on and referral to career services; reemployment-focused workshops and services; and training;

*Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition*, provided across the business lifecycle (expansion and contraction), including comprehensive business engagement and layoff aversion strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment;

*Convening, brokering, and facilitating the connections, networks and partners* to ensure the ability to provide assistance to dislocated workers and other unemployed and under-employed populations including assistance with supportive services and other community supports; healthcare, financial advice, mental health, heating assistance, legal aid, etc...

*Strategic planning, data gathering, and analysis* designed to anticipate, prepare for, and manage economic change

In the longer term, the focus will return to broader training and credentialing efforts, but in the short term SWN is prepared to reach out to employees and employers impacted by the coronavirus crisis, including by educating employees and employers about state and federal assistance programs.

## Section 2 – Strategic Planning to Maximize the Earning Capacity of Marylanders

The vision for the State of Maryland, as laid out in the State Workforce Plan and the *Benchmarks of Success*, is to increase the earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to employment, skills and credentialing, life management skills, and supportive services. The vision requires the State to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Maryland's workforce system. The first four Strategic Goals of the *Benchmarks of Success* are to:

- A. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland's workforce system customers by maximizing access to employment;
- B. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland's workforce system customers by maximizing access to and use of skills and credentialing;
- C. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland's workforce system customers by maximizing access to and use of life management skills; and
- D. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland's workforce system customers by eliminating barriers to employment.

This section of the Plan should speak to the first four Strategic Goals of the *Benchmarks of Success* and include a description of the strategic planning elements consisting of –

- (A) An analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the needs of the businesses in the Local Area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

An analysis of the workforce in the Local Area, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the Local Area, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Note: Individuals with barriers to employment, as defined by the WIOA and Maryland include the following:

- Displaced homemakers;
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers;
- Ex-offenders;
- Homeless individuals;
- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities;
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of the Social Security Act;
- Individuals who are English language learners;
- Individuals who are unemployed, including the long-term unemployed;
- Individuals who have low levels of literacy;
- Individuals without a high school diploma;
- Low income individuals, including TANF and SNAP recipients;
- Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians;
- Older individuals;
- Single parents (including single pregnant women and non-custodial parents);

- Veterans; and
- Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system.

## Industry Employment

Government represents a significant portion of total employment in the Susquehanna region due in large measure to the presence of Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) and a bevy of associated government contractors. Federal government accounts for more than 10% of total regional employment. Many government contractors are encompassed within the private professional and business services segment, which also accounts for in excess of 10% of employment, though this proportion is well below that of the state of Maryland.

Logistics/distribution is another industry of disproportionate import in the Susquehanna region, with the trade, transportation, and utilities industry accounting for more than 22% of total employment. This is logical and largely an outgrowth of the region's alignment with I-95, its proximity to major metropolitan areas along the Atlantic seaboard, its relatively lower cost of land per acre relative to more densely populated communities, and the presence of ports in both Baltimore and the Philadelphia region.

Susquehanna Region: Employment by Industry, 2018

Industry	Annual Average Employment (Susquehanna Region)	% of Total Employment	
		Susquehanna Region	Maryland
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	126,819	100.0%	100.0%
<i>Government Sector</i>	26,672	21.0%	18.3%
Federal Government	12,964	10.2%	5.4%
State Government	1,108	0.9%	3.7%
Local Government	12,599	9.9%	9.1%
<i>Private Sector (All Industries)</i>	100,146	79.0%	81.7%
Goods-Producing	18,046	14.2%	10.4%
Natural Resources and Mining	1,275	1.0%	0.2%
Construction	7,262	5.7%	6.1%
Manufacturing	9,507	7.5%	4.1%
Service Providing	82,100	64.7%	71.3%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	28,466	22.4%	17.3%
Information	570	0.4%	1.4%
Financial Activities	4,072	3.2%	5.2%
Professional and Business Services	12,874	10.2%	16.9%
Education and Health Services	16,637	13.1%	16.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	15,529	12.2%	10.5%
Other Services	3,947	3.1%	3.5%

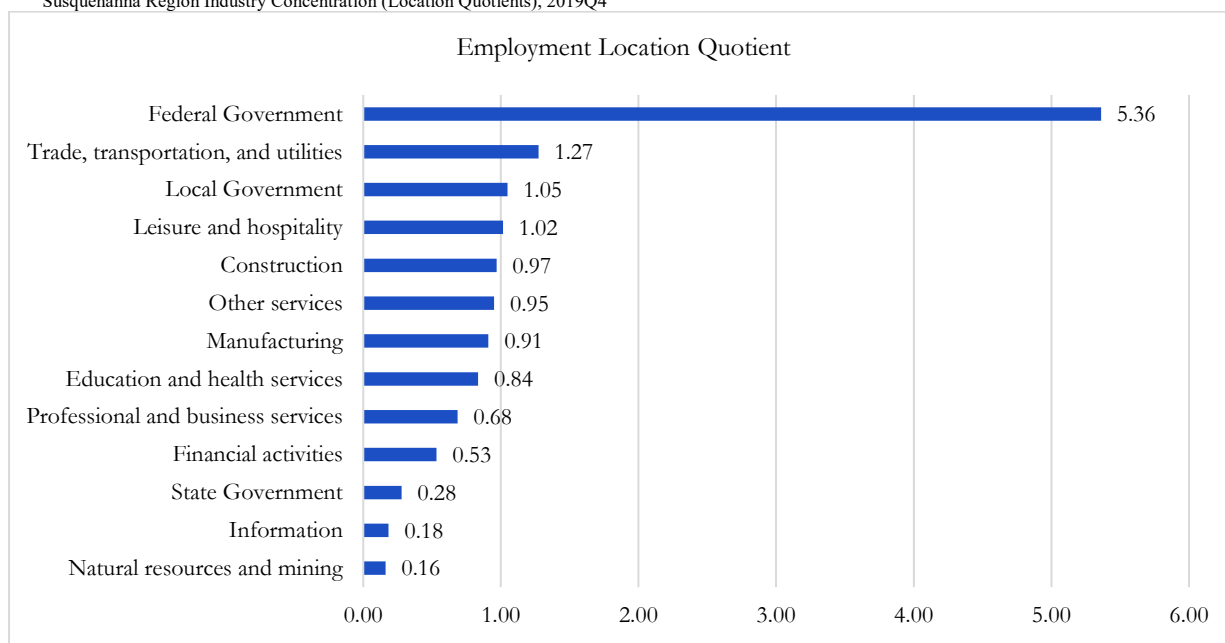
Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Maryland Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program.

Location quotients are useful in highlighting the extent to which certain industries are over-or under-represented in a region. A location quotient above 1.0 indicates that an industry is over-represented in a region vis-à-vis some other region of comparison. The location quotients below compare the Susquehanna region to the nation.

As noted above, federal government employment is highly concentrated in the Susquehanna region, with an employment location quotient of 5.36 (a reading of 1 means that an industry is no more or no less represented in a region than in the comparison area). This means that federal government's share of regional employment is five times the corresponding concentration nationally. In Harford County, home to Aberdeen, the location quotient for federal government is 6.1.

Other industries especially concentrated in the Susquehanna region include trade, transportation, and utilities (location quotient of 1.27), local government (1.05), and leisure and hospitality (1.02). At the county level, manufacturing has a particularly high location quotient in Cecil County (1.77) and construction has a high location quotient in Harford County (1.31). This reinforces the importance of connecting people to training opportunities for skilled craftspeople, including carpenters, electricians, welders, machinists and mechanics.

Susquehanna Region Industry Concentration (Location Quotients), 2019Q4



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program; Sage. Notes: 1. Figures are for private employment except for Federal/State/Local government. 2. Location quotient is the percentage of employment in a given sector relative to the percentage of employment in this sector at the national level. Values above 1 reflect a concentration greater than the national average. Values below 1 reflect a lesser concentration. For example, Las Vegas will have a location quotient greater than 1 in the Leisure and Hospitality industry because this industry makes up a larger share of the Las Vegas employment total than it does for the country as a whole.

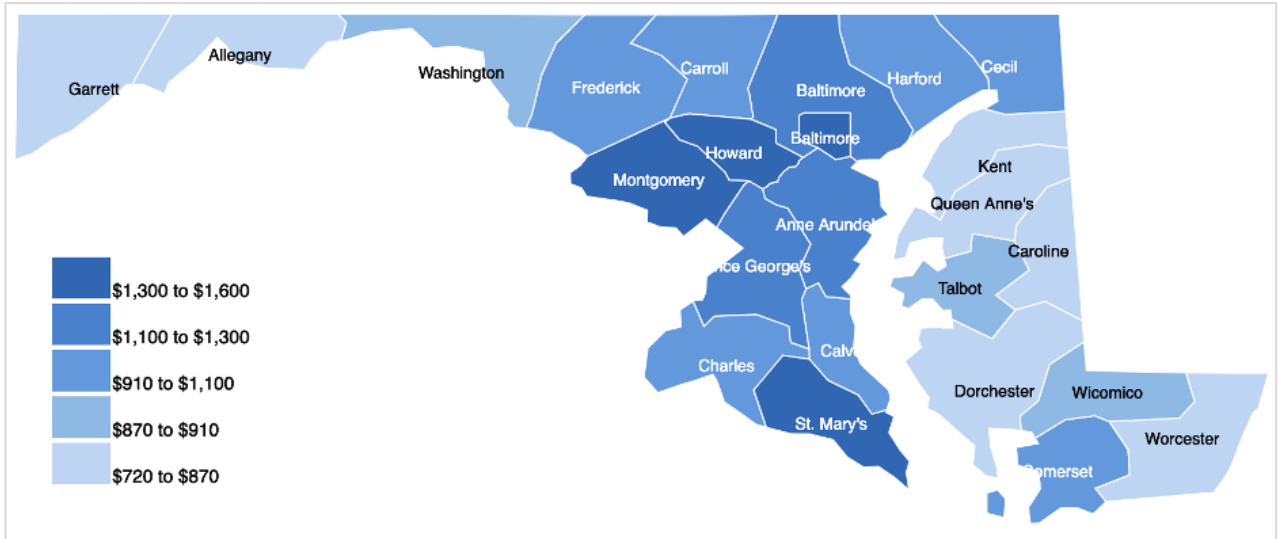
## Wages by Industry and Occupational Category

Prior to the arrival of the global pandemic that utterly shattered economic hopes for 2020, unemployment was steadily edging lower even as the number of available job openings ratcheted higher. Recently the combination of low labor force supply and elevated human capital demand helped produce the fastest wage growth in roughly a decade.

The average weekly wage in the Susquehanna region is lower than the statewide average. In 2018, the average statewide weekly wage was \$1,177 compared to \$982 in the Susquehanna region. The map below provides detail regarding the fact that wages are highest in the core of the Baltimore-Washington corridor,

which helps explain the large net outmigration that occurs each working day from the Susquehanna region. There are also more jobs in absolute terms available in the corridor.

Average Weekly Wages in Maryland, 2019Q4



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, QCEW State and County Map Application; Sage. Note: Average weekly wage among all industries, public and private.

The highest paying employment sectors in the Susquehanna region are federal government, manufacturing, and professional and business services. While wages are slightly higher in Harford County than Cecil County, wages in Cecil County have been catching up. Between 2013 and 2018, the average weekly wage in Cecil County grew by nearly 14% compared to growth of less than 10% in Harford County. In 2013, the average weekly wage in Cecil County was \$92 less than Harford County. By 2018, the gap had been trimmed to \$54 (\$934 v. \$998). Overall, wages in the Susquehanna region grew by 10.5% between 2013 and 2018.

Average Weekly Wage by Industry Sector, 2013 vs. 2018

	Susquehanna Region		Cecil County		Harford County	
	2013	2018	2013	2018	2013	2018
<b>Total Employment</b>	\$888	\$982	\$820	\$934	\$912	\$998
<b>Public Sector Total</b>	\$1,240	\$1,384	\$969	\$1,185	\$1,317	\$1,445
Federal Government	\$1,620	\$1,821	\$1,298	\$1,601	\$1,664	\$1,860
State Government	\$829	\$924	\$861	\$983	\$798	\$870
Local Government	\$872	\$974	\$846	\$1,002	\$883	\$962
<b>Private Sector Total</b>	\$781	\$875	\$782	\$874	\$780	\$875
<b>Goods-Producing</b>	\$1,111	\$1,264	\$1,228	\$1,427	\$1,037	\$1,168
Natural resources & mining	\$712	\$775	\$664	\$715	\$872	\$1,003
Construction	\$895	\$1,088	\$764	\$999	\$923	\$1,105
Manufacturing	\$1,319	\$1,463	\$1,462	\$1,697	\$1,181	\$1,252
<b>Service-Providing</b>	\$708	\$789	\$627	\$683	\$734	\$822
Trade, transportation, & utilities	\$623	\$699	\$672	\$720	\$606	\$691
Information	\$1,174	\$1,155	\$1,109	\$1,237	\$1,202	\$1,138
Financial activities	\$946	\$1,146	\$829	\$920	\$972	\$1,179
Professional & business services	\$1,162	\$1,310	\$680	\$808	\$1,237	\$1,382



Education & health services	\$809	\$881	\$781	\$856	\$819	\$890
Leisure and hospitality	\$296	\$354	\$345	\$387	\$275	\$341
Other services	\$579	\$640	\$526	\$649	\$594	\$637

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Maryland Department of Labor, Maryland Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program; Sage.

Some of the fastest wage gains in recent years have been in construction and leisure/hospitality. Wages in construction expanded 21.5% between 2013 and 2018, while wages in leisure and hospitality grew 19.7%.

## Recent Employment Growth Trends

While the public sector, including the federal government, represents a significant source of employment in the Susquehanna region, in recent years the private sector has been a more significant source of employment growth. Public sector employment has actually declined in recent years, falling at an average annual rate of 0.3% between 2014 and 2019. Private sector employment grew at an average annual rate of 2.1% during the same time period, in part a reflection of more rapid economic growth in Cecil County, which has emerged as one of Maryland's leading growth communities.

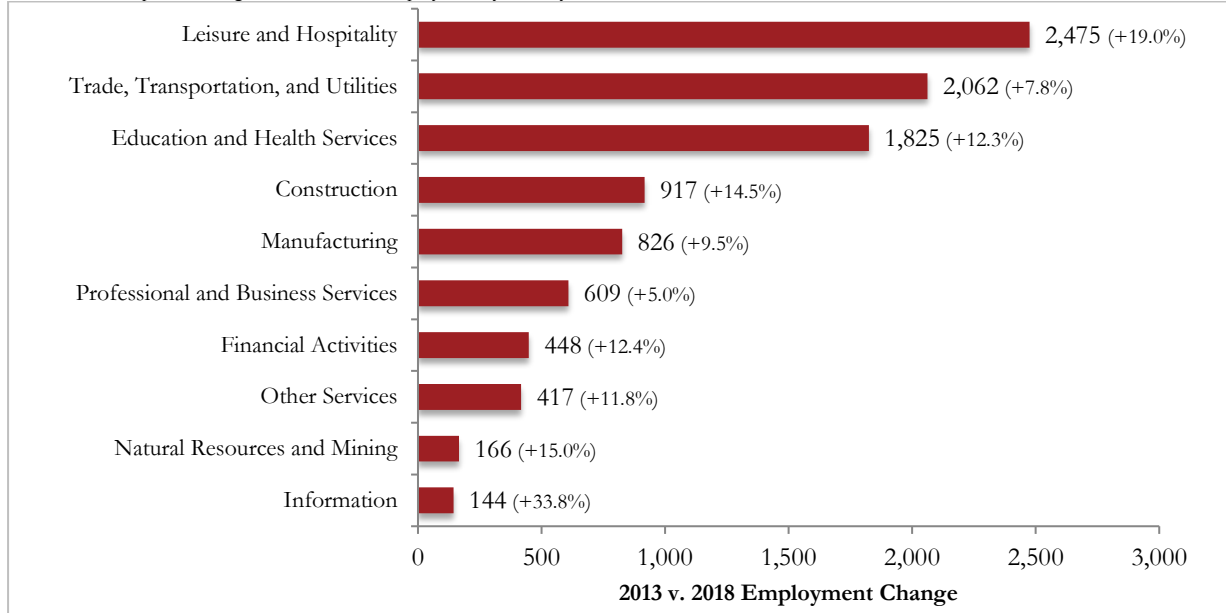
Susquehanna Region Employment by Sector, 2009, 2014, 2019

	Employment			Net Growth		CAGR	
	2009	2014	2019	2009-2019	2014-2019	2009-2019	2014-2019
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>110,363</b>	<b>118,792</b>	<b>128,431</b>	<b>18,068</b>	<b>9,639</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
<i>Public Sector Employment</i>	26,440	27,388	26,954	514	-434	0.2%	-0.3%
<i>Private Sector Employment</i>	83,923	91,404	101,478	17,555	10,074	1.9%	2.1%
<b>Goods-Producing</b>	<b>15,839</b>	<b>16,346</b>	<b>18,679</b>	<b>2,840</b>	<b>2,333</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Service-Producing</b>	<b>68,084</b>	<b>75,058</b>	<b>82,799</b>	<b>14,715</b>	<b>7,741</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program; Sage.

Private industries with the largest net job growth tend to be closely tied to consumer spending. Leisure and hospitality experienced the largest growth in employment in net terms over a recent five-year period (2013 v. 2018). Trade, transportation, and utilities experienced the second largest net increase in jobs, followed by education and health services.

Growth in Susquehanna Region Private Sector Employment by Industry, 2013 v. 2018



Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Maryland Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); Sage.

There is an obvious connection between rapidly expanding industries and demand for workers. America's consumer-led expansion produced significant demand for workers at area restaurants (classified within leisure and hospitality), at fulfillment centers (classified within trade transportation, and utilities), and in construction. With the population of Americans over the age of 85 growing rapidly along with other elderly age cohorts, demand for healthcare workers has also been on the rise.

## Emerging and In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

The chart below supplies projections of the top 10 occupations expected to experience the most growth in the Susquehanna region between 2016 and 2026. Many of these occupations require no formal educational credential or only a high school diploma or equivalency.

Susquehanna Workforce Region: Top 10 Occupations by Projected Employment Growth, 2016-2026

Rank (Net Growth)	Occupation	Education Level	Total Employment		2016-2026	
			2016	2026 Proj.	Total Growth	Annual % Growth
1	Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	No formal educational credential	3,445	4,156	711	1.9%
2	Waiters & Waitresses	No formal educational credential	3,230	3,701	471	1.4%
3	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists	Postsecondary non-degree award	1,440	1,792	352	2.2%
4	Retail Salespersons	No formal educational credential	3,423	3,764	341	1.0%
5	Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	No formal educational credential	1,443	1,760	317	2.0%
6	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	High school diploma or equivalent	3,068	3,379	311	1.0%
7	Cooks, Restaurant	No formal educational credential	1,453	1,751	298	1.9%
8	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	2,040	2,258	218	1.0%

9	Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	No formal educational credential	1,888	2,092	204	1.0%
10	Home Health Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	813	992	179	2.0%

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Sage.

According to projections generated prior to the COVID-19 induced downturn, employment in the food services and drinking places segment (a subset of the arts, entertainment and recreation industry) is expected to grow the most on net between 2016 and 2026 in the Susquehanna region. Employment in this industry is expected to grow at an annual average rate of 1.5% compared with a rate of 0.8% for all regional industries.

The warehousing and storage industry is also expected to grow significantly, by 2% annually between 2016 and 2026. This is consistent with the rapidly growing e-commerce industry, which likely will be catalyzed by the pandemic and the growing reliance upon online delivery during the crisis. There will likely be permanent associated impacts as more Americans have become accustomed to using services like Amazon, Grubhub, Instacart, and other online platforms. While educational services are expected to grow at a slower rate in percentage terms, it is the third highest industry in terms of net job growth.

Susquehanna Workforce Region: Top 10 Industries by Projected Employment Growth, 2016-2026

Rank (Net Growth)	Industry	Total Employment		2016-2026	
		2016	2026 Proj.	Total Growth	Annual % Growth (CAGR)
1	Food Services & Drinking Places	11,364	13,138	1,774	1.5%
2	Warehousing & Storage	4,845	5,881	1,036	2.0%
3	Educational Services	10,813	11,531	718	0.6%
4	Amusement, Gambling, & Recreation Industries	2,396	2,955	559	2.1%
5	Food Manufacturing	914	1,425	511	4.5%
6	Social Assistance	2,326	2,786	460	1.8%
7	Personal & Laundry Services	1,690	2,109	419	2.2%
8	State Government, Excl. Education & Hospitals	1,114	1,483	369	2.9%
9	Ambulatory Health Care Services	5,180	5,524	344	0.6%
10	Administrative & Support Services	3,734	4,074	340	0.9%

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Sage.

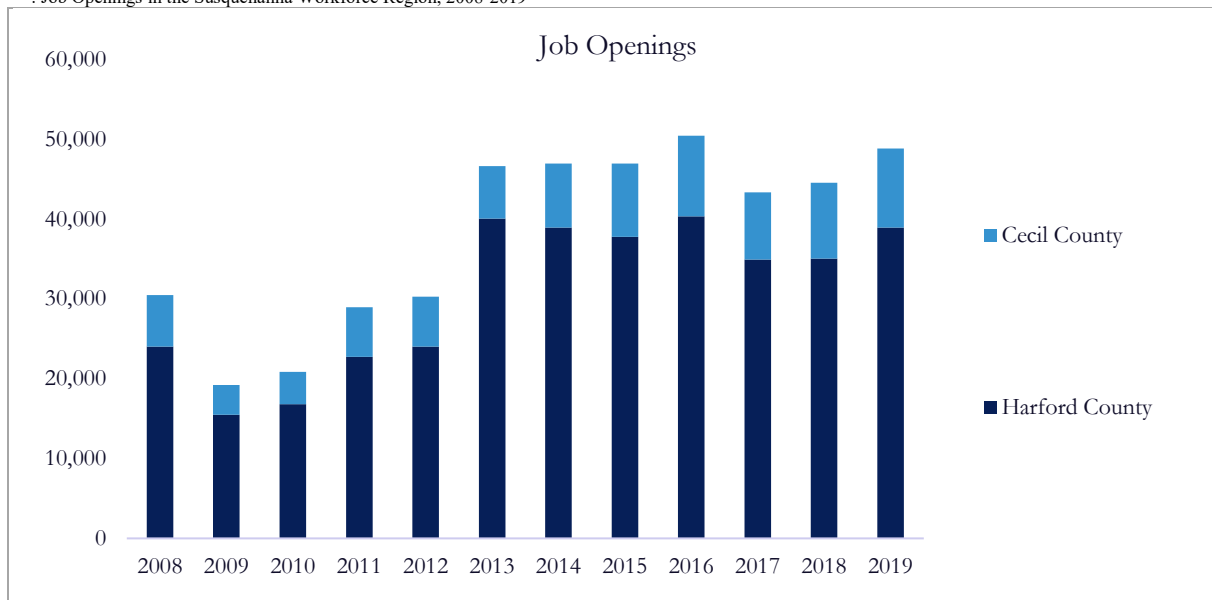
## Job Openings/Evidence of Job Growth and Job Openings

The chart below supplies data regarding job openings in the Susquehanna region posted on the Maryland Workforce Exchange from 2008 to 2019. The number of job openings initially peaked in 2016, dipped in 2017, and then began to ascend again. The number of openings in the Susquehanna region surged nearly 9.6% in 2019 alone.

Cecil County accounts for approximately 20% of job openings in the Susquehanna region (and accounts for about 29% of the region's population). Harford County accounts for approximately 80% of the region's job

openings and 71% of the region's population. This means that job openings have been somewhat more concentrated in Harford County than in Cecil County on a per population basis.

. Job Openings in the Susquehanna Workforce Region, 2008-2019



Source: Maryland Department of Labor-Maryland Workforce Exchange: Labor Market Information (online advertised jobs data); Sage. Notes: 1. Job openings figures are Jobs De-duplication Level 2: High level de-duplication of advertised job openings (for statistical analysis).

In 2019, the industry with the largest number of job openings in the Susquehanna region was professional, scientific and technical services, with more than 12,000 job openings posted. Health care and social assistance, and manufacturing also posted large numbers of job openings, followed by administrative and support/waste management services and retail trade. This is indicative of an increasingly diverse economy that has been offering jobs at every level of the income spectrum. The following chart provides relevant detail.

Susquehanna Region Job Openings by Industry, 2019

Rank	Industry	Job Openings	Rank	Industry	Job Openings
1	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12,083	11	Other Services (except Public Administration)	814
2	Health Care and Social Assistance	5,474	12	Finance and Insurance	549
3	Manufacturing	3,677	13	Construction	459
4	Administrative & Support/ Waste Mgmt. & Remediation Services	3,020	14	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	232
5	Retail Trade	2,964	15	Information	200
6	Educational Services	1,321	16	Management of Companies and Enterprises	158
7	Wholesale Trade	1,238	17	Mining	154
8	Accommodation and Food Services	1,010	18	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	139
9	Public Administration	999	19	Utilities	55
10	Transportation and Warehousing	972	20	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	47

Source: Maryland Workforce Exchange, Labor Market Information (online advertised jobs data); Sage. Notes: 1. Job openings figures are Jobs De-duplication Level 2: High level de-duplication of advertised job openings (for statistical analysis).

The chart below provides a summary of employment situation in the Susquehanna Region reflecting current employment, 5-year history and 1 year projections based as of the 2nd Quarter, 2020.

Susquehanna Region, 2020Q2<sup>1</sup>

NAICS	Industry	CURRENT			5-YEAR HISTORY			1-YEAR FORECAST				
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl Change	Trend	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
44	Retail Trade	18,271	\$30,575	1.32	1,388		1.6%	2,391	1,077	1,360	-46	-0.3%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	17,118	\$50,562	0.87	1,084		1.3%	1,816	795	822	199	1.2%
92	Public Administration	15,253	\$96,098	2.34	745		1.0%	1,381	592	805	-16	-0.1%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	11,368	\$19,139	1.00	-334		-0.6%	1,936	815	1,027	95	0.8%
61	Educational Services	10,491	\$49,343	0.94	-599		-1.1%	963	466	503	-7	-0.1%
31	Manufacturing	10,119	\$73,883	0.91	1,207		2.6%	1,000	388	664	-52	-0.5%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	9,814	\$89,775	1.05	-330		-0.7%	946	313	528	105	1.1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	9,081	\$48,151	1.43	628		1.4%	1,023	411	557	55	0.6%
23	Construction	8,764	\$58,119	1.12	394		0.9%	941	309	552	79	0.9%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	5,495	\$31,265	0.92	-266		-0.9%	636	285	341	10	0.2%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,888	\$37,980	0.57	385		1.7%	590	239	325	26	0.5%
42	Wholesale Trade	4,240	\$60,765	0.82	851		4.6%	431	167	277	-14	-0.3%
52	Finance and Insurance	2,902	\$63,321	0.53	60		0.4%	270	103	168	-1	0.0%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,893	\$21,461	1.15	-145		-1.0%	423	182	225	16	0.5%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,729	\$49,313	0.73	109		1.3%	182	80	95	7	0.4%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,556	\$35,011	0.85	84		1.1%	170	72	97	2	0.1%
51	Information	630	\$56,270	0.24	-100		-2.9%	57	22	39	-3	-0.5%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	244	\$112,756	0.12	-57		-4.1%	23	8	14	1	0.3%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	202	\$74,218	0.36	12		1.2%	21	7	14	0	0.1%
22	Utilities	195	\$117,660	0.28	88		12.8%	18	6	11	0	0.1%
Total - All Industries		135,250	\$53,722	1.00	5,205		0.8%	15,223	6,305	8,441	476	0.4%

Source: JobsEQ®  
Data as of 2020Q2  
Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.  
1. All data based upon a four-quarter moving average.  
Exits and transfers are approximate estimates based upon occupation separation rates.

## Unemployment

Unemployment in the Susquehanna region has fallen significantly in recent years, but remained above the national average in Cecil County as COVID-19 approached. Between 2013 and 2019, unemployment fell from 6.5% to 3.4% in Harford County and from 7.7% to 4% in Cecil County.

Unemployment Rate for U.S. and Select Areas (NSA), Select Years

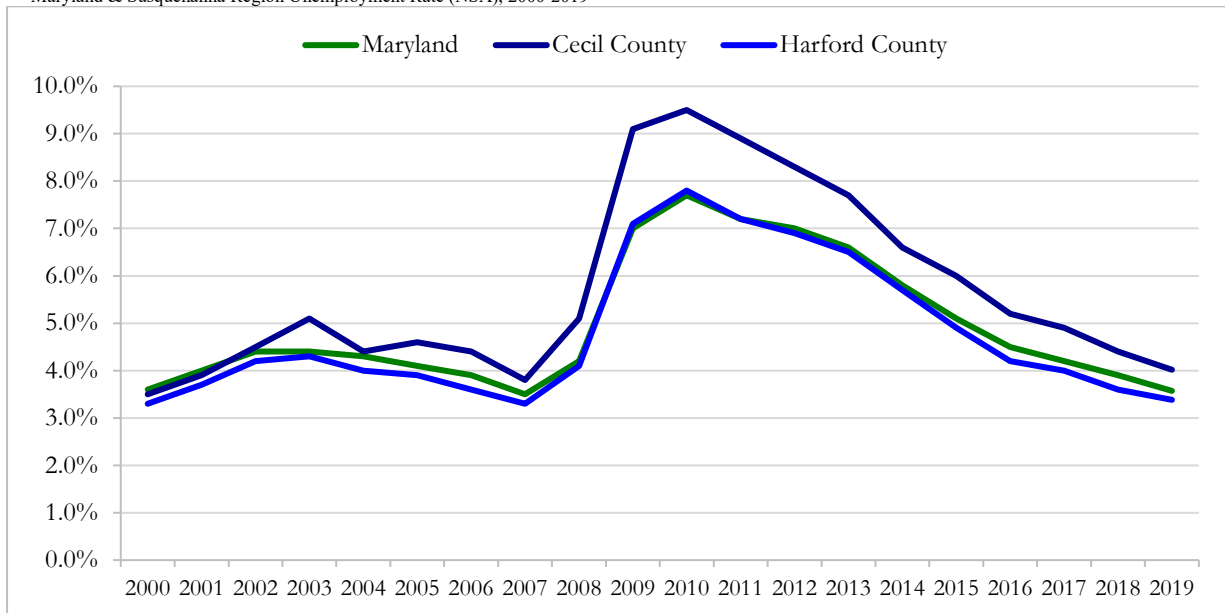
Area	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	2008	2013	2018	2019
United States (SA)	5.8%	7.4%	3.9%	3.7%
Maryland (SA)	4.3%	6.6%	4.0%	3.6%
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD MSA	4.4%	6.8%	4.0%	3.7%
Harford County, MD	4.1%	6.5%	3.6%	3.4%
Baltimore County, MD	4.4%	6.9%	4.0%	3.7%
Baltimore City, MD	6.5%	9.7%	5.7%	5.1%
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	5.3%	7.8%	4.2%	3.9%
Cecil County, MD	5.1%	7.7%	4.4%	4.0%
Chester County, PA	3.9%	5.3%	3.2%	3.0%
New Castle County, DE	4.9%	6.5%	3.7%	3.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program.

Notes: 1. SA: Seasonally Adjusted. NSA: Not Seasonally Adjusted. 2. United States unemployment rate figures represent average of the unemployment rate over the 12 months of each year. 3. 2019 figures are preliminary.

As indicated in the chart below, regional unemployment has been sitting at multi-year lows. Based on the number of available job openings nationally and regionally, unemployment was set to fall even further until a global pandemic rapidly undid many years of progress.

Maryland & Susquehanna Region Unemployment Rate (NSA), 2000-2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program; Sage.

Notes: 1. NSA: Not Seasonally Adjusted. 2. 2019 figures are preliminary.

The graphic below reflects the demographics of the unemployed population for the Susquehanna Region as compared to Maryland and the United States.

#### Unemployed<sup>1,5</sup>

	Percent			Value		
	Susquehanna Region	Maryland	USA	Susquehanna Region	Maryland	USA
<b>Unemployed</b>						
Total	5.0%	5.6%	5.9%	9,541	181,089	9,508,312
<b>Age</b>						
16 to 19 years	17.7%	18.5%	18.9%	1,490	20,908	1,207,095
20 to 21 years	6.9%	13.0%	12.1%	460	12,955	742,103
22 to 24 years	9.1%	10.4%	9.5%	968	19,300	966,294
25 to 29 years	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	1,276	23,942	1,256,936
30 to 34 years	5.4%	5.4%	5.5%	1,013	19,073	980,637
35 to 44 years	3.9%	4.3%	4.6%	1,419	28,511	1,555,881
45 to 54 years	3.5%	3.9%	4.3%	1,550	28,430	1,454,181
55 to 59 years	3.4%	3.9%	4.1%	689	12,660	633,503
60 to 61 years	2.3%	3.5%	3.9%	152	3,735	205,496
62 to 64 years	1.7%	3.5%	3.5%	125	4,423	201,417
65 to 69 years	3.8%	3.5%	3.5%	236	4,011	181,423
70 to 74 years	3.3%	4.2%	3.6%	83	2,007	75,930
75 year and over	5.1%	3.8%	3.5%	80	1,134	47,416
<b>Gender, 16 to 64 Years</b>						
Male	5.4%	5.8%	6.1%	5,025	89,570	4,908,270
Female	4.8%	5.6%	5.9%	4,117	84,367	4,295,273
<b>Race and Ethnicity, 16 to 64 Years</b>						
White	4.8%	4.4%	5.1%	7,124	75,004	5,680,702
Black or African American	6.4%	8.4%	10.8%	1,339	77,207	2,048,291
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.0%	7.0%	11.4%	0	548	130,438
Asian	8.6%	4.0%	4.6%	365	7,876	416,808
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	1.8%	7.8%	0	28	22,573
Some Other Race	0.0%	5.7%	7.2%	0	7,678	564,571
Two or More Races	8.5%	7.5%	8.8%	314	5,596	340,160
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4.4%	5.5%	6.9%	317	16,742	1,842,477
<b>Veterans, Age 18 to 64 Years</b>						
Total	3.3%	3.7%	4.9%	405	6,517	349,682
<b>Educational Attainment, Age 25 to 64 Years</b>						
Less than high school graduate	10.7%	9.1%	9.0%	790	16,900	1,023,646
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	6.1%	6.8%	6.3%	2,445	39,323	1,999,095
Some college or associate's degree	3.7%	4.9%	4.8%	1,784	34,534	1,937,789
Bachelor's degree or higher	2.1%	2.5%	2.8%	1,205	30,017	1,327,521

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

1. American Community Survey 2014-2018

5. See Rio Arriba errata note in the Data Dictionary.

- (B) An analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the Local Area, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the Local Area.

The table below provides statistical detail regarding the educational and work experience requirements of job openings in the Susquehanna region posted on the Maryland Workforce Exchange as of mid-February 2020. In terms of work experience, the majority of jobs requires 1 to 2 years of experience. Of course, this is a snapshot of data at a single point in time, so it may not be reflective of the needs of employers year round and also will not be especially pertinent during a period associated with pandemic and its immediate aftermath.

Many of the fastest growing occupations in the Susquehanna region require only a high school diploma or equivalency, suggesting that 1-2 years might be a reasonable amount of work experience to fill these kinds of positions. That notion will be especially important during the months ahead as many jobseekers face a period of diminished employment opportunities.

Susquehanna Region Job Openings by Educational & Work Experience Requirements, in All Industries

Minimum Education Level	Job Openings	%
No Minimum Education Requirement	206	3.1%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	379	5.7%
1-2 Years of College or Technical/Vocational School	2	0.0%
Vocational School Certificate	1	0.0%
Associate's Degree	48	0.7%
Bachelor's Degree	515	7.7%
Master's Degree	9	0.1%
Doctorate/Specialized Degree (e.g. MD, DDS)	4	0.1%
Not Specified	5,499	82.5%
Work Experience Requirement	Job Openings	%
Entry-level	266	4.0%
Less than 1 Year	41	0.6%
1 Year to 2 Years	6,022	90.4%
2 Years to 5 Years	228	3.4%
5 Years to 10 Years	93	1.4%
More than 10 Years	13	0.2%

Source: Maryland Workforce Exchange, Labor Market Information (online advertised jobs data); Sage.

Workforce development strengths include:

- Strong economic and workforce development partnerships
- Proven ability to address local and regional workforce priorities collaboratively with partner organizations



- National and local award winning Workforce Board with representation and strategic linkages to key business, industry, sector and government leaders
- Proven long term record of accountability and performance
- Strong and collaborative partnerships with local and regional economic developers, chambers of commerce, education and training providers and business, governmental and community organizations
- Proven and successful track record with grants and serving targeted populations
- Secondary and Post-Secondary systems that aggressively seek to expand educational and training opportunities, degreed and credentialing opportunities and workforce programs
- Dynamic business outreach and engagement
- Situated in the northeastern corner of Maryland with intermodal transportation and sandwiched between two major metropolitan areas provides increased access to workforce services and employment opportunities
- Customarily deploys data-driven decision making practices

Key local workforce opportunities and challenges include:

- Continuing to expand higher education and credentialing opportunities
- Accelerated job openings via retirements
- Increased prevalence of professional, scientific and technical occupations
- Predominance of Small and Micro businesses necessitating workers with versatile skill sets
- Capacity to expand workforce programs and sector initiatives to address the needs of the diverse industry composition in the local area
- Broadening access of workforce services to those living in the most rural areas and to specialized and targeted populations with multiple barriers to employment
- Increasingly, job growth in the region is concentrated in industries that require elevated levels of human capital

(C) A description of the Local Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the *Benchmarks of Success*, and the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in Section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA in order to support Local Area economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

The **Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc.** (SWN) is a private, nonprofit corporation that collaboratively oversees, coordinates, and plans workforce development programs and services for businesses and individuals in Cecil and Harford Counties in Maryland. SWN is focused on executing workforce strategies that contribute to the economic competitiveness of the region by creating solutions to address the region's pressing challenges. This is accomplished through strategic public/private partnerships (P3) with business,

industry and other governmental agencies, economic development and education that focuses on measureable outcomes that support local and regional economic development priorities.

SWN has a 37-year history of collaborative and regional efforts addressing business and industry needs. Through a variety of Federal, State, Local and Private resources, SWN manages and administers programs that help businesses grow and provides employment opportunity for area residents including youth, adults, dislocated worker and various disenfranchised populations. SWN **Business Engagement Services** operations assist the business community attract, retain and develop their workforce. The **Susquehanna Workforce Centers** assist residents in achieving their career and employment goals. SWN's **Youth Services** connect the emerging workforce to entry level employment opportunities and funds services to specialized populations.

The Susquehanna Workforce Network and our collaborative partners strategic focus areas include:

- Meeting the workforce development needs of the business and government communities
- Supporting a workforce development system that produces an educated and highly-skilled workforce
- Promoting and enhancing a labor market system that provides job seekers, incumbent workers, students, out-of-school youth and business with valuable information and assistance
- Creating a broader awareness of the region's workforce development assets
- Promoting industry recognized certifications and credentials linked to demand occupations
- Encouraging industry or sector partnerships and career pathway strategies

Objectives specific to enhancing the Workforce Development System include:

**Objective #1: To create a comprehensive workforce development system in Cecil and Harford Counties based on collaborative planning and integrated service delivery to businesses and job seekers.**

#### Collaborative Planning and Service Delivery

- Meet quarterly with partners to monitor system integration processes
- Establish criteria and processes for customer-centered services

#### Integrated Service Delivery

- Identify eligibility and appropriateness criteria of each partner
- Develop referral procedures

**Objective #2: To implement customer centered services by expediting service delivery through the elimination of redundant service documentation and individualized assessments.**

#### Review customer flow delivery throughout the system

**Objective #3: To reduce financial inefficiencies through system partner collaborations.**

#### Identify duplications of services with all partners

**Objective #4: To ensure trainings and the development of career clusters and sector strategies are based on labor market data and economic projections.**

- Correlate trainings to employment opportunities for middle skill jobs
- Career Clusters and Sector Strategies based on growth industries

**Objective #5: Promote a governance system focused on comprehensive planning, continuous improvement and accountability.**

The local workforce development board will provide leadership for the system by ensuring that:

- All workforce initiatives are driven by labor market data and validated by employers
- Workforce system partners have access to labor market data for service alignment
- Develop strategies to leverage and increase funding to the workforce system
- Facilitate a comprehensive service delivery strategy to businesses

Below are SWN's WIOA performance measures and goals for Program Year 2021.

Adult Measures

Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after exit:	76 %
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit:	71 %
Median Earnings:	\$7,500
Credential Attainment:	56 %
Measureable Skill Gains:	52 %

Dislocated Worker Measures

Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after exit:	80 %
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit:	76 %
Median Earnings:	\$8,500
Credential Attainment:	51%
Measureable Skill Gains:	52%

Youth Measures

Employment/Placement 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after exit:	68 %
Employment/Placement 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit:	63%
Median Earnings:	\$3,500
Credential Attainment:	50%
Measureable Skill Gains:	47%

Benchmarks of Success Goals

Strategic Goal #1

1. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland's workforce system customers by maximizing access to employment by:
  - Attainment of negotiated WIOA Performance Measures for Employment
  - Attainment of negotiated WIOA Performance Measures for Median Earnings
  - Providing training in occupations that lead to wages above 200% of the poverty level

- Increasing access to employment opportunities to traditionally disenfranchised individuals
  - Increase Business Engagement through SWN Business Service Representatives and Business Engagement Committee
2. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland's workforce system customers by maximizing access to and use of skills and credentialing:
    - Encourage local service providers to develop industry recognized credentials for their trainings that comply with WIOA standards
    - Encourage training for occupations in demand with industry recognized credentials
    - Support the enhancement of basic education functioning skill levels prior to, or in combination with, occupational skill training for adults, dislocated workers and youth
    - Encourage the completion of a high school diploma for all WIOA trainees
  3. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland's workforce system customers by maximizing access to and use of life management skills:
    - All workforce system customers will actively participate in their Employment Plan
    - All workforce system trainees will have documented employability development and access to workplace readiness skill training
    - Workforce system customers will be provided access to financial literacy instruction through community based organizations
  4. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland's workforce system customers by eliminating barriers to employment:
    - Identify community resources that will assist in addressing the various barriers to employment
    - Engage local resources with the workforce system

In June 2020, the Workforce Board released its 2020 Labor Market Analysis. Over the subsequent months, the Workforce Board participated in discussions and conducted planning sessions to develop consensus priorities resulting from the study. This resulted in producing a strategic document to advance short term and longer term goals shaping the region's response to economic and workforce conditions and impacts caused by the pandemic. The below chart is the result of this planning effort.

# Employment Blueprint

## Susquehanna Workforce Network

The pandemic and the resulting economic downturn increased unemployment across the Susquehanna region and many families remain financially insecure. This Blueprint outlines the Susquehanna Workforce Network Board's approach to addressing four recommendations made by Sage Policy Group to strengthen the region's response to the pandemic and expand opportunities for jobseekers.



### Goal 1: Quick Credentials

Expand opportunities for industry-recognized credentials for jobseekers to quickly acquire.

#### Phase 1

- Develop stackable mini-credentials in manufacturing, IT, healthcare, construction, logistics, and hospitality in a flexible training environment
- Help jobseekers build skills in using virtual tools (Zoom, etc.), to include business etiquette

#### Phase 2

- Upskilling: Build and promote credentialing programs that move jobseekers toward high-wage positions/careers
- Incumbent worker training and cross-training

### Goal 2: Swift Response

Expedite the workforce system's ability to respond to economic opportunity or downturn.

#### Phase 1

- Leverage partnerships to obtain flexible funding and resources
- Increase awareness among businesses of resources available (info push)
- Strengthen role of Workforce Center as nexus of swift response programs
- Incorporate mental health resources

#### Phase 2

- Create cross-industry competency map to identify and expand jobseeker opportunities
- Expand layoff aversion programs with business across region

### Goal 3: Target Industries

Focus resources on placing customers in industries with highest potential for growth.

#### Phase 1

- Develop stackable mini-credentials in manufacturing, IT, healthcare, construction, logistics, and hospitality in a flexible training environment
- Expand business partnerships in target industries and open dialogue (info pull)

#### Phase 2

- Create customer service credential
- Outline career pathways in hospitality industry

### Goal 4: Outreach

Bolster awareness of traditional and swift response programs among customers and businesses

#### Phase 1

- Brand system swift response programs to increase customer recognition and engagement
- Create greater awareness of programs among workforce partners and industry (push to system employee)
- Expand visibility of quick response programs

#### Phase 2

- Develop outreach programs with school systems
- Create robust two-way communications systems and processes with industry and partners

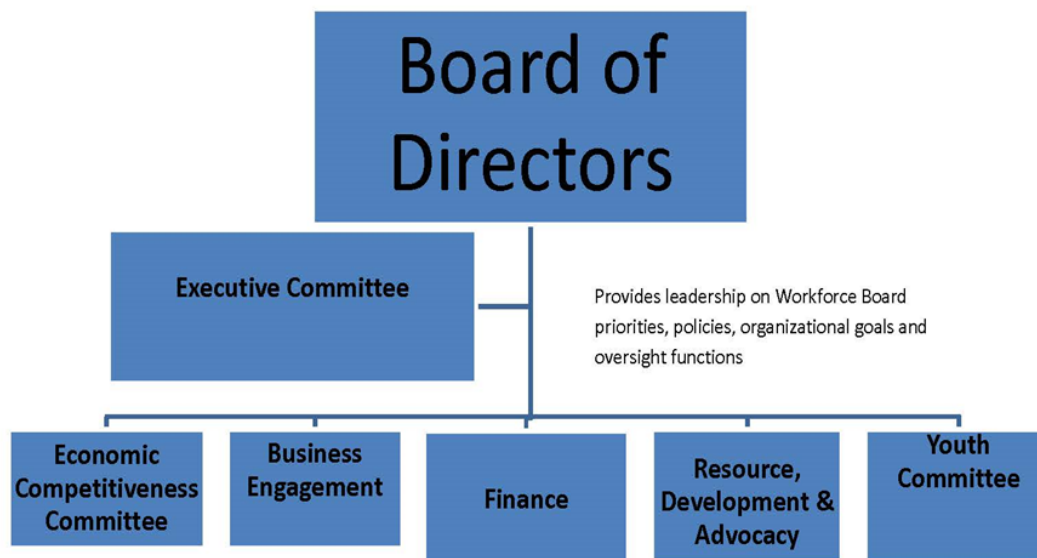
### Section 3 – Strategic Planning to Strengthen the Local Workforce System

The fifth Strategic Goal of the *Benchmarks of Success* is to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Maryland’s workforce system.

This section should speak to the fifth Strategic Goal and include –

- (A) Taking into account analyses described in Section 2, a strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the Local Area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals.

The Workforce Board’s membership and committee structure, along with SWN’s professional staff, core partners and programs and other community organizations will collaboratively work to align and access resources that are available in the region to support the Workforce Board’s strategic focus areas and system objectives. It is envisioned that over the duration of this Workforce Plan, the Board’s Committee structure and focus areas will adapt as local conditions and priorities evolve. This will facilitate the continued alignment with local and state priorities. The current committee structure of the Workforce Board includes:



#### COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

Provides insight and information on programs being developed to help train current and future workforce to meet perceived short and long term employment needs of area businesses.

Ensure close coordination with Economic Development and area businesses; evaluate and expand services as needed; promote resources of system partners.

Maintain a financially sound and fiscally responsible workforce system.

Increase financial resources for SWN; increasing awareness of agency impact and capabilities; explore resource opportunities.

Provide recommendations for WIB on youth policy and initiatives.

To advance and strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the Susquehanna region's workforce system, The Susquehanna Workforce Innovation Partnership (SWIP) was formed. This partner group, consisting of the required partners as described in WIOA law, was implemented to align core programs and services, facilitate access to services and provide for wider community engagement. The SWIP meets quarterly to coordinate resources across the region, facilitate cross training activities and sponsor events and workshops.

(B) A description of the workforce development system in the Local Area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the Local Board will work with the entities carrying out workforce development programs identified in the State Plan. The description should also include how the Local Board and the programs identified plan to align and integrate to provide services to customers. The description should also include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).

**Identify the programs that are included in the system.**

The Susquehanna Workforce Area workforce development system includes a majority of the partners detailed in section 121 (b) (1) (B) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

<b>Required One Stop Partner</b>	<b>Local Partner</b>
Title I Youth	Yes
Title I Adult	Yes
Title I Dislocated Worker	Yes
Title III Wagner Peyser	Yes
Title II Adult Education and Literacy	Yes
Title IV Rehabilitation Act	Yes
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Yes
State Unemployment Compensation	Yes
Older Americans Act	Yes
Perkins Career and Tech Ed	Yes
Trade Act	Yes
Job Counseling, Training and Placement for Veterans	Yes
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker	Yes
Employment & Training Housing and Community Development	Yes
Employment & Training Community Services Block Grant	Yes
Second Chance Act	Not in area
Job Corps	Not in area
Youth Build	Not in area
Native American Programs	Not in area

The Local Board collaborates and plans with these entities in a variety of ways to include representation on the Board and through its committee structure as described in Section A. Board meetings include information and discussion sessions with various system partners. Further, integration and alignment of services are frequent and ongoing planning topics and discussions through SWIP meetings and various group and independent communications. These plans were detailed and negotiated through the active engagement of all system partners during the development and execution of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with local partners.

Cecil County Public Schools provide the following programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.):

- Academy of Health Professions (AHP)-CNA/GNA
- Academy of Health Professions-CCMA
- Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (Ag Sciences)
- American Culinary Federation (ACF)
- Marketing
- Career Based Learning (Career Research and Development)
- Construction Trades-Carpentry
- Cosmetology
- Diesel Technician (Medium/Heavy Truck)
- Electrical Trades
- Fire Science/EMS
- Food & Beverage Management (ProStart)
- Heavy Industrial Maintenance
- Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness-Criminal Justice
- HVAC & Plumbing Technologies
- Interactive Media Production
- IT Networking Academy (Cisco)
- Landscaping & Horticulture Production
- Manual Machining/CNC Programming & Operations
- Project Lead the Way-Biomedical Sciences
- Project Lead the Way-Computer Science
- Project Lead the Way-Pre-Engineering
- Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM)
- Welding & Metals Technology

Cecil College does not provide any programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).

Harford County Public Schools provide the following programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.):

**Arts, Media and Communication programs**

- Printing and Graphic Communications



- Interactive Media Production

### **Business, Finance and Information Technology programs**

- Academy of Finance - NAF
- Accounting
- Business Management
- Cyber Security
- Information Technology – Oracle Academy
- Pathways in Tech. Early College High Schools - IT
- Marketing

### **Health and Human Services programs**

- Academy of Health Professions (Nursing Assistant)
- Academy of Health Professions (Physical Rehabilitation)
- Biomedical Sciences - PLTW
- Early Childhood Education
- Fire Rescue/EMT
- Food and Beverage Management (ProStart)
- Food Production and Management
- Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Licensed Cosmetology
- Teacher Academy of Maryland

### **Science, Engineering and Technology programs**

- Agriculture/Animal Science
- Automotive Diagnostics and Systems Repair
- Automotive Refinishing and Collision Repair
- Brick and Block Masonry
- Carpentry
- Certified Welding
- Computer-Aided Design and Drafting
- Computer-Aided Machining and HPM
- Computer and Networking Technology
- Electricity
- Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technology
- Horticulture/Floral Design
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
- Pre-Engineering - PLTW

### **Career Research and Development programs**

- Apprenticeship Maryland

Harford Community College provides the following programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.):

- Agribusiness
- Mass Communications
- Computer Information Systems
- Information Assurance and Cybersecurity

- Cyber Defense
- Early Childhood Education
- Paraeducation
- Computer-Aided Design and Drafting
- Engineering Technology
- Legal Studies
- Paralegal Studies
- Exercise Science
- Biotechnology
- Science Lab Tech
- Photography
- Design and Technical Theater
- Medical Office Assistant
- Medical Assisting
- Nursing
- Practical Nursing
- Business Management
- Accounting
- Administrative Office Certificate
- Administrative Professions
- Entrepreneurship
- Human Resources
- Computer Information Systems
- Marketing

(C) A description of how the Local Board, working with the entities identified in A, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the Local Board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

Through the Susquehanna Workforce Board's committee structure, the Local Board will continuously strive to ensure and expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. The WIOA, its accompanying regulations and the OMB Uniform Grant Guidance provide the framework to advance access and services to both the business and job seeker customers of the local system. Expanding access to services is a collaborative and shared responsibility of the local system that requires the collective expertise and resources of the SWIP partner organizations. MOU's, referral arrangements and collaborative planning will encourage co-enrollment, as appropriate, to support maximum utilization of services and expertise to support customer needs.

The Local Board will facilitate the development of career pathways by engaging with education and training

institutions, advisory boards and business organizations through the participation of these entities on the Local Board, committee structure and community engagement efforts.

The Local Board's role in developing Career Pathways will include:

1. Identifying sectors that are favorable to Career Pathways
2. Ascertaining business enterprises relevant to identified sectors
3. Engaging businesses to participate in the development and support of Career Pathway and sector initiatives
4. Support education and training partners in developing programs that meets the need of the business community; including developing business and industry recognized credentials
5. Engage partners in Career Pathway initiatives

The expansion of the workforce development system will create expanded access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals with barriers. Through the development of a system that facilitates partner engagement and maximizes awareness of all partner services, the streamlining of services and the development a more efficient service delivery will foster access to all partner services and reach to expanded populations.

(D) A description of the steps taken by the Local Board to engage entities identified in A in the formulation of its Local Plan.

The Local Board utilizes a comprehensive approach to engaging entities to actively participate in the formulation of the Local Plan. This includes:

1. Each Core Partner and many of the WIOA Required Partners engage with the Workforce Board during monthly meetings of the Board.
2. Local workforce and economic development partners, as well as many WIOA core and/or required partners are members of the Local Board. The Local Plan and planning considerations are routine agenda topics at monthly Board or Committee meetings.
3. The Workforce Board's professional staff, as well as many partner staff, actively engage in local, state and national events, meetings, workgroups and other activities to support the development of the workforce areas local plan.
4. The Susquehanna Workforce Innovation Partnership fosters collaborative planning and the identification of needs and priorities. This leads to cross agency/ individual planning meetings and discussions contributing to the development of the plan.
5. Local partners provide input and often co-authored portions of the local plan.
6. Relevant portions of the Local Plan were further developed, informed and shared through the Board's committee structure whose membership includes WIOA and local partner entities.
7. The pre-Draft Updated Plan is shared with SWIP members for input prior to the public comment notice.
8. All partners, and others, will have the opportunity for additional input during the Public Comment period.

(E) A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the Local Area—

- To facilitate engagement of businesses, including small businesses and businesses in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs;
- To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the Local Area;
- To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and
- To strengthen linkages between the AJC delivery system and Unemployment Insurance programs.

The Workforce Board has a long history of facilitating business engagement, convening and collaborating with business community and business organizations and leading efforts to support a local workforce development system that addresses the needs of the Workforce Area's business community. To that end, the Board leads and supports a Business Engagement Committee and program with the following Vision, Mission and Goals.

**Vision:**

To continuously expand recognition as a collaborative network of economic and workforce development experts that create innovative partnerships with regional business and industry to advance and grow the competitiveness of the region and support a better quality of life for businesses to grow and prosper.

**Mission:**

- Advance strategies that address the changing economic and workforce development needs of the business community.
- Cultivate a coalition of partners that efficiently connects the business community with innovative solutions, information and assistance needed to increase business competitiveness and support the workforce attraction, retention and development needs of area businesses.

**Goals:**

- Ensure close coordination with economic development, business organizations and area businesses.
- Evaluate, align and expand available services to address current and future business needs.
- Increase market penetration annually.
- Utilize a business friendly (consultative/relationship sales approach) and coordinated outreach to provide solutions and support business growth.
- Elevate knowledge of business assistance programs available through partner programs and increase business and industry intelligence.
- Connect businesses to available resources ASAP.

The Workforce Board is highly experienced with collaborations of workforce development programs, economic development organizations and partners to address priorities. The workforce area's Economic Development Directors are engaged members of the Local Board. Additionally, both Offices of Economic Development collaborate with the Local Board on workforce development needs and priorities and rely on the Susquehanna Workforce Network to lead workforce efforts related to workforce attraction, retention and

development. There exists significant cross representation of memberships as many members of the Workforce Board, as well as SWN's Director, are members of the Area's Economic Development Advisory Board and Commissions as well as economic and industry organizations such as Northeastern Maryland Technology Council, local Chambers of Commerce, and the Army Alliance which supports workforce, economic and other priorities related to the workforce area's largest employer; Aberdeen Proving Ground.

The Susquehanna Workforce Innovation Partnership members have demonstrated cooperative planning and interest in aligning services throughout the area's workforce delivery system. This includes linkages with Unemployment Insurance programs. These linkages will be further detailed through the development and execution of MOUs with the partner programs. The strategies strengthen services and access to all programs.

(F) A description of how the Local Board will ensure jobseekers have a role/voice in the board's decision-making process and in informing the services the Local Area provides.

The local Workforce Plan is posted on SWN's website for comment. The general public and job seekers are encouraged to provide suggestions at our Workforce Centers. Each Workforce Center gathers satisfactions surveys from all customers visiting the Centers. The surveys are reviewed on a monthly basis and disseminated for continuous quality improvement. Additionally, SWN and the SWIP collaborate heavily with a variety of public and private organizations in the community aimed at advancing the quality of life and economic potential of all residents, identifying service gaps and enhancements and increasing access to services. This engagement utilizes various approaches to ensure residents, job seekers, professional staff and others have input. These approaches include survey, focus groups, feasibility studies and other research.

(G) A description regarding the implementation of initiatives designed to meet the needs of businesses in support of the strategy described in Section 1, including, where applicable:

- EARN Maryland,
- Pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship,
- Incumbent worker training programs,
- On-the-job training programs,
- Customized training programs,
- Industry and sector strategies,
- Integrated education and training,
- Career pathways initiatives,
- Utilization of effective business intermediaries, and
- Other business services and strategies.

The Local Board and SWN aggressively seek opportunities and actively engage in initiatives that increase the economic competitiveness and workforce potential of the workforce area to support the needs of the business community and labor force. Examples of these strategies follow.

#### EARN Program

SWN formed the Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition which is comprised of area manufacturers, two offices of economic development, two community colleges, and two public

school systems for the purpose of implementing the Manufacturing Training Initiative. The objectives of the Initiative are to 1) to provide innovative training designed by the industry and correlated to nationally recognized standards and competencies that produce industry recognized certifications; 2) to develop viable and accessible training opportunities to targeted populations; 3) to grow the pipeline for the industry through innovative benefit outreach strategies; and 4) to establish training within the region identified by industry as critical.

#### Apprenticeships

The community colleges in the region support opportunities for registered apprenticeship programs. The apprenticeship programs that exist are primarily in the trades such as electrical and HVAC. There is also a Child Care apprenticeship that is available. There is an interest in developing additional apprenticeship programs but capacity challenges are currently a barrier to the expansion of additional programs at this time. The area's Workforce Center staff and system partners consistently make referrals to the existing registered apprenticeship programs and aligns with MD Labor's efforts to advance Apprenticeship programs in Maryland and the workforce area.

#### Incumbent Worker Training and On-the-Job Training (OJT)

The workforce area's Business Service Team promotes and facilitates incumbent worker training and OJT to area businesses. Incumbent worker training is currently offered through the local EARN Manufacturing Training Initiative, the two Offices of Economic Development, MD Labor's MD Business Works and other SWN grant resources. SWN provides incumbent worker training initiatives to Workforce Board identified priority industries by utilizing up to 20% of its WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker resources. OJT is an effective training strategy and continues to be offered through the local EARN Initiatives as well as through WIOA resources.

#### Customized Training Programs

SWN aggressively seeks resources and expertise to develop customized programs to meet business and industry needs. The local areas EARN Manufacturing Training and IT/Cyber initiative and collaboration with the Upper Shore Regional Council to offer Distribution and Logistics, Healthcare and Manufacturing training are examples. Typically, labor market data is obtained and analyzed, focus groups and surveys are conducted with local industry representatives and industry intelligence is garnered from SWN's business engagement efforts to identify occupational and skill needs. This provides a template for the development of customized training program. As specific training needs are identified by local businesses, the SWN convenes representatives from the local community colleges and other training providers to develop customized training programs.

#### Career Pathways

The Susquehanna Region is committed to the creation of career pathways in industries with growth potential. These industries have been identified through labor market data and industry focus groups. Detailed interactive web-based career pathways have been outlined for the region's

priority industries. The area continues to develop and define career pathway opportunities. The local community colleges continue pathway development in priority industries and occupations.

#### Business Engagement and Intermediaries

The workforce area has a mature Business Engagement Team which is comprised of SWN Business Service Representatives, representatives from the Offices of Economic Development, Maryland Department of Labor, and various other workforce and economic development partners. The Team connects a variety of resources to the business community to meet determined needs and grow their business. SWN has a long history of working collaboratively with area business entities and organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, Northeastern Maryland Technology Council, RAMP MD, Army Alliance and others.

#### Sector Strategies

Sector strategies have been supported to include Manufacturing, Information Technology, Construction and Warehouse and Distribution to varying degrees. The use of focus groups, business panels, surveys, expos and symposiums have all advanced efforts to support industry sector initiatives in the workforce area.

(H) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities with economic development activities for the Local Area, and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

The Workforce Board membership includes the Economic Development Directors for Cecil and Harford Counties. The Executive Director of SWN is appointed to the Cecil County Economic Development Commission (EDC) and the Harford County Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB). Representatives of the offices of Economic Development serve on two major standing committees of SWN: Business Engagement Committee and Economic Competitiveness Committee. Various members of the Workforce Board are also members of the EDC and EDAB.

The work of the Board and the standing committees have facilitated the coordination and alignment of workforce development priorities with the priorities of each office of economic development. These organizations have collectively produced marketing materials for growth industries and occupations in demand. Recently they have collaborated on a local labor market analysis study which is used widely by various organizations to support workforce and economic development planning and programming.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training has been identified in Cecil and Harford Counties as a credible workforce development strategy, given that 76% of the business establishments in the region are micro establishments (0-9 employees). The County Chambers of Commerce, SBDC, TEDCO, NMTC and Maryland Commerce often offer entrepreneurial training with business mentors that were entrepreneurs. The Local Board and SWN staff support business incubator efforts in the region and will continue to engage and support activities with small business and entrepreneurial programs and organizations such as the Small Business Development Center, MD Procurement Technical Assistance Program and others. SWN continues to work with the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) to assist veterans who are interested in becoming business owners after separating from the military.

In addition, SWN supports the Harford County OCED's innovative programs such as Harford's Business Edge, the Ground Floor at Harford, and the Harford Business Innovation Center that all enable the entrepreneurial spirit to grow and thrive.

- (I) A description of how the Local Board will leverage and coordinate supportive services in the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area. Specifically, the Local Plan should address how the Local Board will work with Local Management Boards and other providers to deliver supportive services to jobseekers.

#### Supportive Services

Based on the needs of the job seekers, every effort will be made to access supportive services from multiple funding streams and through collaborative efforts with partners. The provision of Supportive Services available to the customers of the workforce system will be based on the referral partner and the assets available through the system. Types of supportive services may include, but are not limited to:

- Assistance obtaining a driver's license
- Transportation assistance
- Required uniforms, tools, and related equipment
- Child or dependent care

#### Local Management Board Coordination

The Directors of the Local Management Board (LMB) are members of the Susquehanna Youth Committee and engage and collaborate with SWN leadership and staff on a regular basis. The priority of the LMB in Cecil County is to promote the existence of a quality system for Cecil County Children, youth, and families through a comprehensive planning process that emphasizes interagency collaboration, accountability, and citizen involvement with local decision-making authority. The priority of the LMB in Harford County is to create collaborative initiatives and implement data-driven strategies to deliver lasting positive outcomes for families in Harford County.

- (J) A description of how the Local Board intends to provide a business voice in the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area. The description should include how the Local Board will engage businesses on decisions regarding the type and content of training activities.

The Economic Competitiveness and the Business Engagement Committees of the Local Board have facilitated focus groups and developed surveys with industry specific groups. The industries are chosen based on Labor Market data and the industry growth potential in the region. The following industry groups have previously been surveyed for their training needs: Manufacturing, Information Technology, Distribution and Logistics, and Construction.

The Business Engagement Team continuously assesses the needs of the specific industries. A coalition of like businesses is often formed to support industry/sector training initiatives. Specific training needs are identified and validated and reaffirmed once a training curriculum is found or developed. The Economic Competitiveness Committee and the Business Engagement Team will continue to form industry coalitions



to support the economic growth and relevancy in the region.

(K) A description of how the Local Board will promote and cultivate industry-led partnerships, such as career pathways, Registered Apprenticeship, and EARN Maryland, in the delivery of workforce training opportunities.

The Local Board will use current Labor Market data to prioritize the development of career pathways in concert with local workforce and economic development partners. The benefits cited by Manufacturing Coalition members have proven to be powerful recruitment tools in the formation of other industry coalitions. The Business Engagement Team in the region have led the effort in insuring that the needs of Coalition members were met and provided with resources for skill enhancement of their workforce.

The most mature industry-led partnership currently implemented in the region is the Manufacturing Coalition through EARN. The members of this Coalition have provided immeasurable assistance in identifying their industry needs, validating training curriculum and hiring trained customers. The Local Board plans to utilize this model when forming other expanded Industry Coalitions to address needs of growth industries in the region.

The region's Business Engagement Team and Business Services staff work collaboratively to engage businesses, identify resources that meet business needs and to connect business enterprises to appropriate State and Local programs; including Registered Apprenticeship

(L) A description of the role (if any) of local faith or community-based organizations in the local workforce development system.

SWN informs community-based and faith based organizations of the services provided through the workforce system. This outreach initiative was developed to enhance the awareness and accessibility of the workforce system. In addition to providing information, the program facilitators are identifying ways to assist and support the work of each organization through coordination strategies and opportunities. The development of a database has been established to communicate with these community and faith-based organizations on a consistent basis. We also refer customers to community and faith-based organizations for assistance with immediate needs such as food, housing, addiction, medical and mental health needs.

## Section 4 – American Job Center Delivery System

This Section should include a description of the AJC delivery system in the Local Area, including –

- (A) A list of the American Job Centers in the Local Area, including address and phone numbers. Indicate the One-Stop Operator for each site and whether it is a comprehensive or satellite center.

There are two comprehensive One-Stop Centers. The centers are located in Swan Creek and Elkton at the following addresses:

- Susquehanna Workforce Center – Swan Creek, 2021-D Pulaski Highway, Havre de Grace, MD – 410-272-5400 / fax 443-327-8763
- Susquehanna Workforce Center – Elkton, 1275 West Pulaski Highway, Elkton, MD – 410-996-0550 / fax 410-996-0555

The Workforce Centers are currently jointly operated by SWN and the Department of Labor, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning.

- (B) A description of the customer flow system and process used in the Local Area. This description should include eligibility assessment, individualized training plans, and case management.

In the design of an innovative and customer-centered delivery system, all system partners will continue to evaluate the most efficient and effective ways to meet the needs of customers. Customer Flow System design and process refinement will be ongoing discussions by the WIOA Partners; and likely evolve over the duration of this Plan. The initial design is as below.

### Workforce Center Flow

- Workforce Center visits
- Assess the need for oral or written language assistance, make appropriate accommodations as outlined in the Language Access Plan
- Identify purpose of the customer's visit
- Based on purpose of visit:
  - Career Services – register in MWE, orientation and Workforce Center seminars
  - Job Search – register in MWE, LMI information and linkages to recruiting events in the region by local businesses
  - Individualized career advising
  - Eligibility determination and service appropriateness
  - Assessments: basic skills, career and occupational skills
  - Create an employment and training plan
  - Training research – LMI (occupations in demand)
  - Need of support services identified
  - Referral to partner programs as needed
- Training enrollment

- Follow-up services for at least a year

#### Partner Referral Flow

- Referred to the Workforce Center by a system partner
- Review customer referral to determine purpose of referral
  - Based on purpose of visit:
  - Career Services – register in MWE, orientation to Workforce Center seminars
  - Job Search – register in MWE, LMI information and linkages to recruiting events in the region by local businesses
- Individual career advising
  - Eligibility determination and service appropriateness
  - Review assessments from customer referral form or conduct assessments as needed
  - Create an employment and training plan
  - Training research – LMI (occupations in demand)
  - Need of support services identified
- Training enrollment
- Follow-up services for at least a year
- System referral partner will be kept informed throughout this process if a signed release is on file

Note that upon identifying the purpose of a customer's visit, it is determined if the customer is a member of priority target population segment and the Priority of Service levels. Priority of Service will be consistent with Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 7-20. If the customer is a veteran or eligible spouse, they will be screened to determine if they have a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE). A referral will be made to a disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist for assistance for those with a SBE.

(C) A description on the process the Local Board intends to provide for the solicitation and selection of a One-Stop Operator as identified in Section 107 of WIOA.

The Board's Executive Committee will perform the initial analysis of the options provided by the WIOA law and the regulations. Further input will be solicited from WIOA Partners and the Local Board. The Local Board will ensure the solicitation and selection of a One Stop Operator in compliance with Section 107 of WIOA, related federal and state policy and local procurement policy.

(D) A description of how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local businesses, workers and jobseekers.

The Board plans to utilize its standing committees, ad-hoc committees, and the WIOA partners to ensure and drive continuous improvement of service delivery and eligible providers of services. Additionally, the selection of service providers will focus on those who are effective in delivering the needed services required to meet the needs of local businesses, workers and job seekers. Labor market and business demand will drive occupational training programs. Criteria used for the selection of service providers will include the ability to meet program design requirements, relevance and reasonableness of cost, past performance and

experience, adequacy of financial resources, impeccable record of integrity, experience, account and operational controls, the technical skills to perform the work, and the lead to employment.

(E) A description of how the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the American Job Center delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means.

The Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the workforce system by increasing the awareness and understanding of all workforce system partner services. Through the partner meetings, an awareness of existing partner services is identified. Through this process, service gaps also will be identified and addressed.

Cecil and Harford Counties are a mix of suburban and rural areas. Many small and rural communities lie outside of major population centers. While the available public transportation services are being enhanced, the use of private transportation is a necessity which poses a major barrier for many of our citizens. Because of these factors, we have and will encourage the use of technology for service access. SWN's website, [www.SWNetwork.org](http://www.SWNetwork.org) hosts a basic assessment instrument for youth and adults who are beginning their career search and provides an overview of services and the most recent job recruitments. The Maryland Workforce Exchange, <https://mwejobs.maryland.gov> (MWE) is promoted at our three Workforce Centers, affiliate sites and throughout the counties' library system. SWN staff is able to guide customers to upload required documents directly into the MWE. To facilitate person-to-person communication and meetings, SWN is offering virtual seminars and virtual one-on-one client meetings. SWN is able to collect e-signatures for WIOA required document signatures.

(F) A description of the roles and resource contributions of the AJC partners.

The Local Board expects that One-Stop Partners will comply with WIOA Section 121 (b) (1) (A) of WIOA as follows:

- Provide access through the one-stop delivery system to such program or activities carried out by the entity, including making the career services described in section 134(c)(2) that are applicable to the program or activities available at the one-stop centers
- Use a portion of the funds available for the program and activities to maintain the one-stop delivery system, including payment of the infrastructure costs associated with the centers
- Enter into a local Memorandum of Understanding with the local board, relating to the operation of the one-stop system
- Participate in the operation of the one-stop system consistent with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, the requirements of WIOA and the requirements of the Federal laws authorizing the program or activities.

(G) A description of how the Local Board will use Individualized Training Accounts based on high- demand, difficult to fill positions identified within local priority industries identified in Section 1(A).

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) will be provided to eligible individuals through the workforce delivery system for occupational specific training programs and are for in-demand occupations and/or within priority

industries as determined by the Local Board. ITAs may be used to access training providers from vendors who are listed on an Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Reciprocal agreements with bordering states to use their ETPL will be pursued to ensure customer choice and access to training for in-demand occupations. The Local Board currently has identified \$5,000 as a dollar limitation for an ITA; this amount may be adjusted. Exceptions to the policy will be allowed for certain occupations that are in high demand and are designated as a local priority. The Executive Director approves exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis.

ITAs are utilized for programs that are occupational specific. The length of training can be up to two years or until the cap is reached. Participants must maintain good academic standing and be making satisfactory progress to remain in their selected program.

The Local Board reserves the right to adjust the aforementioned ITA dollar limitations if it would be deemed in the best interest of the customer and the Local Board.

(H) A description of how the Local Board will provide priority of service that conforms to the State Plan. This should include a description of additional local requirements or discretionary priorities including data to support the need and how the local requirement and/or priority will be documented and implemented for the Adult program.

Veterans and eligible spouses will receive the first level of priority of service.

The veterans and eligible spouses are identified at entry points in the centers and receive priority referral to services over non-veterans. Monitoring for compliance is done constantly at all levels: Management, Workforce Center Coordinators/Managers, Supervisors and Line Staff.

The Workforce system in the Susquehanna Region will comply with Policy Issuance 2016-04-Employment Services for Veterans-February 24, 2016.

Priority of service for WIOA Dislocated Workers

Priority of service will be given to dislocated workers who are residents of the region. The Board approved a tiered system for categorizing dislocated workers based on most-in-need status using such criteria as obsolete skills, disability status and unemployment status.

The Susquehanna Workforce Area system partners have a history of serving individuals with barriers to employment through various programs and remain committed to serving hard to serve and targeted populations. Susquehanna's WIOA partners will continue priority of services to targeted populations through strategies that include staff training, dissemination of information on services available throughout the system, referral systems that efficiently connect customers to appropriate WIOA partner services and programs, and continuing to strengthen relationships, competence, and accountability among all partners involved in the system.

Target Populations: Individuals with barriers to employment

- Displaced homemakers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals
- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of the Social Security Act
- Individuals who are English language learners
- Individuals who are unemployed, including the long-term unemployed
- Individuals who have low levels of literacy
- Individuals without a high school diploma
- Low income individuals (including TANF and SNAP recipients)
- Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Older individuals
- Single parents (including single pregnant women and non-custodial parents)
- Veterans
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system

#### Priority of Service for the WIOA Title I Adult Program

The Workforce system in the Susquehanna Region will comply with Training And Employment Guidance Letter No. 7-20, Effective Implementation of Priority of Service Provisions for Most in Need Individuals in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program.

First Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who are also low-income (according to federal guidelines), recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient.

Second Priority: Individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses but meet criteria to be considered a target population.

Third Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who did not meet “First Priority” conditions.

Fourth Priority: Any populations identified by the Governor or Local Board for priority.

Fifth Priority: Individuals who are not veterans and do not meet criteria to be considered a target population

- (I) A description of how the Local Board will utilize funding to create incumbent worker training opportunities.

The Business Engagement Team will identify the training needs of local businesses through local business outreach activities. Their monthly business contacts assist in identifying the specific training required for businesses to grow and remain competitive. Additionally, the Local Board in collaboration with workforce and economic development partners may prioritize industry sector and occupational categories. The team utilizes a variety of funding streams to assist businesses in strengthening their workforce. The Business Engagement Team utilizes a variety of incumbent worker resources available to assist businesses by matching them to the most appropriate resources based on needs of the enterprise. These incumbent worker

resources include those available through the offices of economic development, SWN WIOA and non-WIOA resources and MD Labor Maryland Business Works. The Local Board may utilize up to 20% of the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker resources to support incumbent worker training. Incumbent worker training will be employer driven, and will require at least a 50% match by the employer. SWN may consider adjusting match rates to include at least 25% for businesses with 51-100 employees and at least 10% for businesses with 50 or fewer employees based on economic conditions in the region. This training strategy will use a cost reimbursement methodology.

(J) A description of how the Local Board will train and equip staff to provide excellent, WIOA- compliant customer service.

The staff that provides direct service to the customers at the three Workforce Centers has a history of providing an efficient and “customer friendly” delivery of service while still meeting the WIOA compliance requirements. Customers who come into the Workforce Center are invited to fill out a customer satisfaction survey. Monthly customer satisfaction reports have indicated a satisfactory rating of no less than 93% in PY19. In compliance with WIOA requirements, SWN operates a “customer centered” service delivery system. The Local Board has invested in staff development training to enhance the proficiency of the staff. All staff who provide direct service to job seeking and business customers are encouraged to obtain and maintain industry recognized credentials in areas such as resume writing, government job applications, job coaching and career facilitation.

To allow for ease of customer access, seminars can be accessed virtually, customer meetings can happen virtually, documents can be uploaded directly into MWE, and required documentation can be signed electronically if needed. Customer triage, intake and documentation obtainment processes are continuously being evaluated to insure that the customer’s needs are met without unnecessary delay and exhibit high quality customer service and satisfaction.

## Section 5 – Title I – Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker Functions

This Section should include –

- (A) A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the Local Area.

Employment and training services as described in Title I of WIOA, including career and training services, will be delivered through the region's Workforce Centers. The centers in the Susquehanna Workforce Area have demonstrated the ability to deliver effective and innovative workforce services with high levels of customer satisfaction. The Susquehanna Workforce Innovation Partners (SWIP) partners represent a multi-disciplinary team that includes the WIOA required partners; education, social services, workforce services, housing, rehabilitation services, education and training services and the Local Board. Partner services will be integrated where feasible and will be provided and/or accessed through the centers. Partner agencies may continue to provide services at existing partner affiliate locations in addition to those provided at the Workforce Centers. The region's Workforce Centers offer a consistent menu of career and training services as described in WIOA and listed here:

- Outreach, intake and orientation
- Initial assessment
- Labor exchange services
- Eligibility for services
- Referrals to programs
- Performance and cost information
- Information on unemployment insurance
- Financial aid information
- Follow-up services
- Labor market information
- Supportive services information
- Comprehensive Assessment
- Individual employment plan
- Career planning, counseling
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships, work experience
- Out-of-area job search
- Financial literacy services
- English language acquisition
- Workforce preparation
- Occupational skills training
- On-the-job training
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction
- Training programs by private sector



- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Customized training
- Incumbent worker training
- Adult education and literacy activities
- Job readiness training

Each Workforce Center currently has the capacity to increase partner on-site presence and services as afforded by the partner programs. This expansion will be encouraged through ongoing discussions and through SWIP quarterly meetings and planning activities.

(B) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities, as described in Section 134(a)(2)(A).

The Local Board, through its Business Services staff and Business Engagement Team, will lead and ensure proper coordination of rapid response activities. SWN Business Service Representatives will ensure a coordinated effort with the Maryland Department of Labor Dislocated Worker Services Unit and other local partners to provide an array of rapid response services to employers and their employees affected by the movement and loss of jobs in the region. In addition to information on services provided through the Workforce Centers, topics such as unemployment insurance, health insurance, financial assistance, labor market information and other partner services will be included as appropriate.

As referenced in USDOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter 19-16, and MD DWDAL Policy Issuance 5-18, it is critical for rapid response activities to be carried out in conjunction with the Local Board, chief elected officials and other stakeholders. The workforce areas Business Engagement Team and local staff are critically positioned to have established relationship with the local enterprises experiencing closures and/or significant loss of personnel resulting from downsizing. Additionally, this collaborative team is well positioned and aware of the local and state assets available to assist companies and their impacted workers. This supports the customization and delivery of services that are planned jointly with company officials; and in collaboration with the Dislocated Worker Services Unit. The workforce area's Business Engagement Team includes multiple partner programs to include local economic development officials, education and training representatives, veteran program staff and other economic and workforce development partners.

(C) A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in the Local Area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities.

The youth workforce development activities include an objective assessment, which includes academic levels, skill levels, work experience, employability, interests and aptitudes, and supportive service needs. WIOA states the age range for in-school youth is 14 to 24 and the age range for out-of-school youth is 16 to 24. The SWN youth training providers and/or SWN Career Specialists assess reading and math functioning levels through either CASAS or TABE basic skills assessment. Traitify is the primary basic assessment used

for career planning by identifying personality traits and career options. All youth services funded through WIOA receive or have access to the 14 required program elements. SWN youth staff work in conjunction with DORS staff to assist youth jobseekers with disabilities and ensure all appropriate accommodations are made.

- (D) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate education and workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

Since 2000, the Susquehanna Workforce Network and Local Board has advanced efforts and developed significant expertise in local labor market information, industry growth and trends and produced and/or collaborated on projects that produced analysis and information that has been used throughout the region. These products have been used by economic and workforce development partners, local governmental organizations, and education and training providers throughout the region. In 2020, a Labor Market Analysis of the region was produced in collaboration with the Offices of Economic Development.

The Local Board believes this analysis along with Business Engagement activities and other industry related activities validates critical information that supports the advancement of secondary and postsecondary education programs and services. The Local Board works collaboratively with postsecondary programs in the region to align coursework being offered with relevant industry needs.

Additionally, Title I program staff work with secondary and postsecondary institutions connecting employment and training programs and services with students seeking employment in local in-demand occupations. This includes offering relevant workshops to secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, entry level and summer Employment job fairs and seminars on job fair preparation and employability. The close proximity to area centers further facilitates employment for students exiting secondary and postsecondary programs as well as fostering potential enrollments in Title I training services.

The Susquehanna Workforce Investment Partners meet quarterly for planned training and cross training events. Cross training allows partner staff to avoid the duplication of services and prevents jobseekers from duplicating efforts. Partner frontline staff are knowledgeable of all processes and services available at partner organizations.

- (E) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the Local Area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the Local Area.

The Workforce Centers are staffed with partner staff that have a keen awareness of resources and supportive services that are available through partner and community agencies. Additionally, partner agencies will identify assistance available to system customers through their memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the Local Board.

The Local Board, through Title I supportive services, provides a flat-rate system designed to defray participant transportation and child care expenses through a tiered system which is reviewed and appropriately adjusted.

Additionally, other supportive services may be provided, within the resources available, to participants whose employment plan indicates they would be unable to participate in a training program without such assistance. The supportive services made available may include training or placement physical examinations, uniforms, driver education, license application fees, etc., necessary to meet entrance requirements to enter training, attend training, or begin employment. Recognizing that specific supportive services needs arise occasionally, the Local Board may provide other services which are allowable under WIOA if the need is identified and adequate funds are available. Financial assistance will be used to pay for necessary services only and will be limited to discrete payments required for participation. The individual's determination of such need, and the amount, will be based on the results of the objective assessment and documented in the employment plan. Other supportive services will be provided on a referral basis to other local human service agencies, where possible.

The Local Board reserves the option to revise the supportive service policy if deemed in the best interest of the customer and the program.

Members of the Local Board and/or their staff participate on local transportation initiatives and advisory groups. Collaborative planning and engagement with the Department of Social Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services, local management boards and area community organizations facilitates the identification of needs and access to available transportation and supportive services that exist in the region.

(F) A description of how the Local Board will utilize Local Adult Funding, based on adult priority groups as specified in the State Plan.

The Local Board will use Local Adult Funding to provide Title I Adult services targeting priority groups aforementioned in Section 4 (H). The focus will be on serving the most vulnerable workers (those who have limited skills, lack work experience and face other barriers to economic success); expanding education and training options to help participants access good jobs and advance in their careers; and helping disadvantaged and unemployed adults through effective employment and training activities, including supportive services. The integration and alignment of services across core, required WIOA partners, and other partner organizations programs and services, will be facilitated. The implementation of career pathway approaches and sector initiatives that support postsecondary education and training for adults will be encouraged. Services will be available to customers in person, over the telephone, through virtual seminars, virtual meetings and other online options, depending on the situation at the time in the region.

Title I customer services will include an array of career services and training, as defined in WIOA, that may include but are not limited to:

- Outreach, intake and orientation
- Initial assessment

- Labor exchange services
- Eligibility for services
- Referrals to programs
- Performance and cost information
- Information on unemployment insurance
- Financial aid information
- Follow-up services
- Labor market information
- Supportive services information
- Comprehensive Assessment
- Individual employment plan
- Career planning, counseling
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships, work experience
- Out-of-area job search
- Financial literacy services
- English language acquisition
- Workforce preparation
- Occupational skills training
- On-the-job training
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction
- Training programs by private sector
- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Customized training
- Incumbent worker training
- Adult education and literacy activities
- Job readiness training

(G) A description of how the Local Board will utilize Local Dislocated Worker Funding.

The Local Board's use of Dislocated Worker funding provides Title I Dislocated Worker services to workers impacted by lay-offs, downsizings and business closures. The focus will be on re-employment services that will return impacted workers to career oriented, in-demand and growing occupations that will return them to self-sufficiency. Additionally, dislocated worker resources will be utilized to expand education and training options to help participants access good jobs and advance in their careers; provision of support services, provide effective employment based activities; encourage the implementation of career pathway approaches and sector initiatives that support postsecondary education and training for dislocated workers. Services will be available to customers in person, over the telephone, through virtual seminars, virtual meetings and other online options, depending on the situation at the time in the region.

Dislocated Worker customer services will include an array of career services and training as defined in WIOA that may include but are not limited to:

- Outreach, intake and orientation
- Initial assessment
- Labor exchange services
- Eligibility for services
- Referrals to programs
- Performance and cost information
- Information on unemployment insurance
- Financial aid information
- Follow-up services
- Labor market information
- Supportive services information
- Comprehensive assessment
- Individual employment plan
- Career planning, counseling and advising
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships and work experience
- Out-of-area job search
- Financial literacy services
- English language acquisition
- Workforce preparation
- Occupational skills training
- On-the-job training
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction
- Training programs by private sector
- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Customized training
- Incumbent worker training
- Adult education and literacy activities
- Job readiness training

(H) A description of how the Local Board will define “self-sufficiency” for employed Adult and Employed Dislocated Worker participants.

The Local Board will define self-sufficiency for adults as an annualized income level that is at least 200% of the Health and Human Services poverty guidelines or Lower Living Standard Income Level (whichever is higher) based on family size.

The dislocated worker self-sufficiency definition is a wage equal to at least 80% of the worker's wage at dislocation.

- (I) A description of the Local Board's definition of "unlikely to return to previous industry or occupation" when required for eligibility for Dislocated Worker services.

A customer is unlikely to return to previous industry or occupation if any of the following conditions exist: the previous occupation was in a declining industry; the worker's skill sets are considered obsolete; is no longer able to work in the industry due to illness or injury; is no longer interested in working in the industry; if the labor market is saturated with similar skill sets making job acquisition difficult; and career services and/or retraining would increase the worker's likelihood of securing employment.

- (J) A description of how the Local Board will interpret and document eligibility criteria for in-school youth "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment" as set forth in the State's Youth Policy and WIOA Sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VII) and (a) (1)(C)(iv)(VII).

The Susquehanna Region has identified out-of-school youth as a priority. The Susquehanna Region may explore service to in-school youth in the future and their eligibility will be defined by the Local Board if this situation changes.

- (K) A description of how the Local Board will interpret and document eligibility criteria for out of school youth "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment" as set forth in the State's Youth Policy and WIOA Sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VII) and (a) (1)(C)(iv)(VII).

The definition of an out of school youth is one who is not attending any school as defined by Maryland law, not younger than 18 years of age and is either a school dropout, a youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance age but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter, a recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is low income and is basic skills deficient. Out of school youth, ages 16 – 24, are eligible for services as outlined in WIOA. For out of school youth, "requires additional assistance" may indicate that the youth/young adult is low income and has limited/non-existent employment skills, no significant work history, fired from a job in the last 12 months, and/or lacks occupational skills to gain employment. This expanded definition allows services to be provided to low-income high school graduates that have difficulty holding a steady job and need the extra support that the adult program does not provide.

- (L) A description of the documentation required to demonstrate a "Need for Training."

"Need for Training" is a multifaceted discussion with the job seeker, which is documented on the job seeker's Employment Plan as well as recorded in case notes. Customers are assessed for basic skill levels, interests, capabilities, occupational skills and credentials as needed for available jobs in the labor market. Additionally, the job seeker's job search activity, competencies and tactics as well as their understanding of the labor market are evaluated. Further, their work history and potential barriers to employment are analyzed

and goals are identified. Importantly, goals and potential training plans are evaluated based on the ability of the training and skill acquisitions to progress the customer to an improved quality of life and self-sufficiency. Examples of tools utilized include labor market research, ACINET, interest inventories, employer inquiries, and career assessments.

(M) A description of how the Local Board will provide access to the 14 required program elements for the WIOA Youth program design, including whether the Local Board has contracted with youth service providers or not:

The Local Board provides access to the 14 elements through the SWN Career Specialists and programs provided by partners. SWN also competitively procures youth services utilizing a Request for Proposal (RFP). In the RFP, the statement of work requests each proposer to provide the required youth elements or to indicate community resources that will assist the provision of the elements. Staff employed by SWN also provide work experience and entrepreneurial services to the youth funded through WIOA.

Each youth vendor may describe how they will ensure that all 14 elements are provided to the youth in their contracts. Community resources have been identified to support the delivery of these elements.

1. Tutoring, skills training, and dropout prevention;
2. Alternative secondary school services;
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences;
4. Occupational skills training;
5. Leadership development opportunities;
6. Supportive services;
7. Mentoring;
8. Follow-up services;
9. Counseling;
10. Concurrent education and workforce preparation activities;
11. Financial literacy education;
12. Entrepreneurial skills training;
13. Labor market information (LMI); and
14. Preparing for postsecondary education and training.

(N) A description of the steps the Local Board will take to ensure at least 20% of Youth Funds are used for work-based training activities.

The SWN employs a Youth/Young Adult Career Specialist to provide workplace readiness activities to the WIOA funded youth. When public health allows, the specialist is responsible for developing appropriate work experiences for the youth and transitioning them to the Workforce Centers for additional employability development activities. When public health does not allow for work experiences the specialist is responsible for providing employability skills training and information on the local labor market.

(O) A description of the Local Board's plan goal to serve out of school youth and identify specific steps that have been taken to meet this goal. Local Boards whose goal is under 75% must include a description of how they will implement the waiver and

how they will enhance connections to Youth Apprenticeship programming, increase DORS co-enrollment, and any changes for In-School-Youth (ISY) services.

The SWN has been providing 100% out of school youth services since 2006. The Local Board plans to continue to utilizing the same proven strategies to serve 100% out-of-school youth through partnerships with the public schools, community colleges (Adult Education), Departments of Social Services, DORS and community based organizations. If the situation in the region changes and the Local Board decides to serve in-school youth, the region will serve less than 25% in-school youth.

(P) A description of how the Local Board will provide basic and individualized career services to customers. The description should explain how individualized career services will be coordinated across program/partners in the AJCs, including Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Community Action Agencies, and Adult Education and Literacy activities. This description should specify how the Local Area will coordinate with these programs to prevent duplication and improve services to customers.

All job seeking customers will be provided basic and individualized career services at Workforce Center locations in the workforce area as local conditions allow. Basic and individualized career services may also be provided through virtual seminars, virtual meetings and online tools. Career services may also be provided at WIOA partner locations as capacity and capabilities exist and are developed. The Local Board and WIOA Partners, through the development, negotiation and execution of MOUs and Resource Sharing Agreements will identify these capabilities, coordinate delivery, ensure alignment and access, enhance quality and prevent duplication.

(Q) Describe the Local Board's follow-up services policy. This should include follow-up requirements, frequency of contact, and required documentation.

Follow-up services may be provided for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. SWN staff or follow-up specialists will perform follow-up through a variety of means that will include telephone, email, virtual meeting, personal contact and mailings. These services are designed to assist the customer in obtaining and retaining employment. Follow-up services are intended to provide assistance and guidance after entering employment such as tracking progress on the job, referrals for additional services, and other assistance that may increase employment success. Title I funded staff provide follow-up at least quarterly for one year following exit. This information is tracked in the participant's records.



## Section 6 – Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Functions

This Section should include –

- (A) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities in the Local Area integrating the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA, including, but not limited to, the implementation of the career pathways model. The description should include a discussion of how the Local Board will comply with requirements to review local applications submitted under Title II as set forth in guidance provided by the DWDAL's Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services. Once review has been conducted, the Local Board will submit documentation (MD Labor WIOA Alignment Form) of the review and any recommendations for increased alignment to the applicant for Title II services in a timely manner.

A priority for alignment and collaboration was established in 2011 with the Consolidated Adult Education and Family Literacy Service Grant. This alignment and coordination initiative includes activities that will integrate adult education and workforce services including Career Pathways initiatives. The Local Board will coordinate and integrate Core Partner services to ensure that Title II participants maximize the opportunities available in the area. The Local Board will establish a review process of the applications that is consistent with MD Labor guidance to ensure alignment with the Local Workforce Plan and priorities.

- (B) A description of how the Local Board will coordinate efforts with Title II providers to align basic skills and English language assessments. The description should include:
- An outline of the agreed upon steps that will be taken to align basic education skills and English language assessments within the local area, including, but not limited to, any Memoranda of Understanding entered into by the workforce development and adult learning partners;
  - An identification of how assessment scores will be shared among WIOA Title I areas and Title II providers (Consideration must be given to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA));
  - An identification of who will conduct which of the approved assessments (including for Trade Participants) and when such assessments will be conducted, consistent with this policy;
  - An outline of how the local area will coordinate testing between workforce development and adult education providers; and,
  - An outline of how the local area will ensure that test administrators are to be trained in accordance with MD Labor's policy and applicable testing guidelines as set forth by the applicable test publisher.

Title II representatives will be included as part of the discussion and negotiations of the MOUs. The adult education partner will provide assessment, advising, and instructional services in adult basic and secondary skills and/or English language skills. The workforce system will utilize compatible and approved assessment instruments when identifying the basic education needs of customers. The workforce staff will be trained in administering the common assessments utilized by Title II providers.

The sharing of assessment scores is currently done in a youth-funded program and with the informed consent

of the customer. A formal agreement will be executed to include the sharing of assessment scores for the adult and dislocated worker populations. Title II providers will request that students sign FERPA release forms so that educational records, including assessment data, can be shared. Assessments conducted in the Workforce Centers will be administered by trained staff.

Wagner-Peyser staff who specialize in services to trade participants facilitate the delivery of services related to the Trade Program. Based on the training services requested, arrangements for assessments will be arranged.

The workforce center staff has the capability of administering basic education, career and skill assessments. Once a customer's training choice has been determined by their employment plan, the occupational training provider may require occupational-specific assessments, which they will administer.

Test administrators will be trained annually, or as necessary, by college staff or directly from the testing system (TABE or CASAS). These assessment systems have online certification opportunities that create the potential flexibility needed for test administration. The primary partners administering assessments will be Adult Education and WIOA Title I.

(C) A description of how the Local Board will ensure that the individual appointed to represent Title II services on the Board will coordinate with all Title II Grant Administrators in the Local Area in a uniform, regular and consistent manner.

The Title II services are currently provided by the two community colleges in the Susquehanna Workforce Area. Currently the presidents of both community colleges are appointed to the Board. Additionally, Title II Grant Administrators and/or other representatives of the community colleges actively participate on various subcommittees of the Board. These include the Business Engagement Committee, Youth Committee and Economic Competitiveness described in Section I. Title II representatives are apprised of the Local Board's schedule and participate on the area's Youth Committee. Additionally, the Local Board's meetings are open to the public. The Title II representatives are accessible through standard communications channels such as phone, email and in-person. Additionally, the Title II representative is responsible to attend all local WIOA Partner meetings. This affords routine and effective coordination amongst partners.

Further, there exists multiple levels of coordination between Title II and the workforce system: youth vendors have direct and indirect relationships with the workforce staff: Workforce Center staff routinely work with the Deans of Career and Continuing Education and other program staff.

(D) A description of how adult education services will be provided in the AJC system within the Local Area.

Adult education services will be provided through the existing established referral systems. There are ample opportunities scheduled throughout the year to inform each partner of the comprehensive services that each partner delivers. The local MOUs specify the responsibilities of each partner. Through cross training and multiple partner engagement opportunities, the local partners have developed and will make direct referrals to Title II services.

(E) A description of how adult education providers in the Local Area will use the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program under section 243(a) of WIOA to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Cecil College and Harford Community College did not apply for IELCE funds. The colleges will not prepare English Language Learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

A participant who went to HCC or CC requesting this program would be assessed and offered participation into ESL courses. They could be placed into appropriate ESL courses. College staff could then assist participants in enrolling into workforce development certificate programs as their English language skills reached certain levels.

If a participant specifically wanted to enroll into an IECLC program, they would be referred to programs in other regions of the state that could meet their needs.

## Section 7 – Title III – Wagner-Peyser Functions

This Section should include –

- (A) A description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the Local Area through the American Job Center delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

The Susquehanna Workforce Network staff and the Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff have co-operated the three Workforce Centers in the region since 2000. This history of coordination will facilitate the continued harmonization of WIOA Career Services and Wagner-Peyser Act staff functions through the workforce delivery system. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Board and Partners will further promote and describe service delivery functions; avoiding duplication of services. Further WIOA Partner and Operator meetings provide and support effective communications that facilitate planning, revisions and enhancement to service delivery.

As identified in the Maryland State Plan, Wagner Peyser functions will include labor exchange services and career guidance that are included as career services under Title I, and activities that assist workers in identifying and obtaining jobs in in-demand industries and occupations. The State Plan further recognizes staff development opportunities that are focused on developing Wagner-Peyser staff capabilities to operate in a number of disciplines and flexibility to move between functions, locations, and funding streams to provide seamless delivery of services. This will increase potential to further maximize and align seamless services across partner programs while minimizing potential duplication and supporting quality services to job seekers throughout the workforce area. In accordance with the US Department of Labor's current guidance, the primary services provided by WP staff are Basic Career Services and may include Individualized Career Services. As the aforementioned are advanced, service delivery designs will be of continuous discussion among the WIOA Partners and adherence to MOUs will be tracked and monitored via the Operator. Both of these mechanisms will support quality service delivery and avoid unnecessary duplication of services.

- (B) If applicable, a description of how the Local Board will ensure that migrant and seasonal farm workers in its Local Area will be provided employment services.

### **Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Program**

The MSFW program is included in the Local Board's Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements which will identify MSFW services, referral and service processes and is a primary mechanism to report and ensure the provision of MSFW employment services.

- The Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program (MSFW) is monitored by the State Monitor Advocate. Locally the program is serviced by a Maryland Department of Labor staff member currently located in Cecil County.
- To provide access to the full array of services at the One Stop that is afforded to non- migrant workers to include outreach to work sites; provision of written materials regarding One Stop

Locations; Community Resources; Educational services; Job Search and Placement; Training information; Usage of office equipment. May include access to services to remedy language barriers.

- Conduct field visits to include camp inspections to ensure workers are knowledgeable of One Stop Services, and provide community service information.
- Provide services to both farm owners/operators and workers by ensuring H2A clearance orders are properly entered into the state computer system, and by performing pre-season housing inspections; for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers.
- Compile appropriate reports and deliver services in accordance with MD Policy Issuance 2018-04

(C) A description of who is responsible for conducting migrant and seasonal farmworker housing inspections.

MSFW housing inspections will be conducted by the Maryland Department of Labor Supervisor in Elkton (Greg Adams) as the need is identified. Inspections may be coordinated with the state Rural Services Coordinator as appropriate in order to maximize efficiency and better serve workforce system customers.

## Section 8 – Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Functions

This Section should include –

(A) A description of the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in section 107(d)(11)) between the Local Board or other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (**The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services**) (other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to section 121(f)) in accordance with section 101(a)(11) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), in accordance with 29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11) will provide the following services to youth and adults with disabilities:

- Provide intake, orientation, and assessments for disabled job-seekers;
- Promote employment of persons with disabilities;
- Based on a comprehensive assessment of an individual's disabilities, determine an individual's eligibility for services in accordance with the Division's Order of Selection criteria;
- Develop an Individualized Employment Plan;
- Provide guidance and counseling, physical restoration, and training to eligible persons with disabilities;
- Provide follow-up services to enhance job retention;
- Provide other services as may be available and appropriate;
- Provide Pre-Employment Transitioning Services for students with disabilities, as defined by WIOA;
- Provide Supported Employment Services for youth and adults with disabilities as defined by WIOA;
- Provide independent living services to enhance the capacity of persons with disabilities to live unaided in the community;
- Provide performance information as required by WIOA;
- Provide cross-training of workforce staff on disability related issues;
- Provide technical assistance on disability related issues and on assistive technology;
- Engage employers through the Division's Business Services Representatives;
- Work in a collaborative manner to coordinate services among the Workforce Partners for youth and adults with disabilities.

(B) A description of how individuals with disabilities will be served through the AJC system in the Local Area.

As with all individuals who access the Workforce Center, whether they have a disability or not, the goal is to have a universal referral form, which will enable individuals to select the services they feel they need. In addition, the goal is to ensure that all information and services are accessible, regardless of the individual's

disability. DORS will provide training to the partners in such areas as programmatic and physical accessibility, serving individuals with disabilities that require support services, disability etiquette and sensitivity training, and assistive technology.

Individuals with disabilities have always been served at the Workforce Centers in the SWN Workforce area. Adaptive equipment and software have been purchased and is available for use at Centers. Through cooperative agreements with DORS, individuals with specialized equipment needs not available at the Centers are referred to DORS to address those needs. DORS has a part-time physical presence in the Cecil County Workforce Center and the Harford County Workforce Center. A DORS office is located in the same building as the Bel Air Workforce Center. This physical presence throughout the local area helps us enhance partner collaboration and maintain the warm transfer of referrals.

DORS staff participate in local WIOA partner cross-trainings/ professional development activities in order to maintain familiarity with local partner services, initiatives, employer needs, marketable career pathways and best practices. DORS regional management serves on the local Workforce Board and two DORS staff serve on the Youth Committee. DORS Youth are informed of and encouraged to participate in local partner programming to include youth job fairs held throughout the year.

## Section 9 – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Functions

With guidance and technical assistance from DHS and MD Labor, Local Areas will use a functional approach to integration which may include revised practices and policies related to:

- Eligibility,
- The range and sequence of services,
- The use of funds for supportive services,
- Income support,
- Performance measurement,
- Reporting requirements, and
- Administrative structures and decision making.

Data snapshots on the TANF population, statewide and by county, is available on the MD Labor website at: <http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/wioatca.shtml>.

This section should include –

- (A) A description of how TANF is integrated in the AJC system (e.g., customer intake, service coordination, client monitoring and tracking, targeting employment services to low-skill, low-wage workers, etc.).

The Susquehanna Workforce Area has been selected for Phase One implementation based on the data from the TCA/WIOA Readiness Survey. This data included current levels of coordination in assessment tools, data sharing, co-location of staff, shared performance goals, cross training, braiding/blending of funding, involvement on the local workforce development board, and shared innovative strategies.

There is currently no formal process for intake or referral of Cecil County TANF Customers to SWN. TANF staff are actively engaged in the Susquehanna Workforce Innovation Partnership and direct appropriate candidates to the Workforce Center. Additionally, Cecil customers can access SWN services in the same manner as the general public. If a customer is interested in services from SWN they would contact SWN individually and request services.

In Harford County all work-eligible TANF customers are referred to SWN upon approval of their TANF case. This is due to a contract that is held with SWN. Harford County DSS contacts SWN through a referral on a state system, Works, and also through phone calls and emails. Regular and ongoing communication occurs between SWN and the DSS to work together to assist customers in obtaining employment.

- (B) A description of the implementation and coordination process to enhance the provision of services to individuals on TANF that includes:
- Potential co-location of LDSS and/or WIOA Partners at AJCs or LDSS depending on the nature of local partnerships and operations;
  - Leverage existing financial and in-kind contributions to the WIOA system to ensure coordination of services provided by multiple programs, creating a seamless approach to delivering services;
  - Cross train and provide technical assistance to all WIOA Partners about TANF;
  - Ensure that activities are countable and tracked for the TANF Work Participation Rate;



- Access to business services and employer initiatives to attract and better serve employers by marketing joint services, minimizing the burden on employers who use the centers, and provide employer-focused services through a single point of entry rather than through all partnering programs; and
- Contribute and provide outcomes data to the WIOA system through strategies for collecting and reporting varied program reporting requirements.

The Local Board and LDSS are committed to build upon existing relationships and service coordination. Currently SWN staff provided work-based training services, follow-up services and job placement services funded through DSS in Harford County. This includes entering and narrating activities into CARES and WORKS as well as job placement and work experience opportunities. Throughout the region TANF customers are referred to and participate in activities at the Workforce Centers. Through engagement with the Business Service Team and Business Engagement Committee of the Local Board, the LDSS are apprised of all employment recruitment activities conducted in the region and needs of employers through participation on the Business Engagement Committee of SWN.

It is anticipated that through the development of the Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement additional implementation, coordination and opportunities to leverage resources and contribute to outcomes will be identified. It is envisioned that the MOUs will address topics such as:

- Referral mechanisms and access to TCA services
- Cross training and technical assistance opportunities
- Business services and engagement
- Co-location and/or access to TCA services
- Contributions to system infrastructure costs
- Data sharing, performance tracking and reporting

Workforce Center staff track TANF customer activities through the Maryland Workforce Exchange. Customers are responsible for gather all participation data and providing the documentation to DSS for monitoring in WORKS and the Work Participation Rate.

(C) A description of the LDSS representation on the Local Board to ensure that TANF expectations, roles, and responsibilities are addressed in the Local Area.

The Local Board structure includes a seat designated to represent TANF. This seat is currently held by the Director of Harford County Department of Social Services and is appointed according to WIOA requirements and the Memorandum of Agreement between the Chief Local Elected Officials and the Local Board. Additionally, the LDSS's (Cecil and Harford) are members of the WIOA Partner Group which meets quarterly, and are apprised of the Board's meeting schedule. Both are encouraged to participate on subcommittees of the Local Board and have participated at Local Board meetings.

(D) Provide a description of what strategies the Local Board employs to support TANF recipients in accessing skills and credentialing, life management skills, and employment to improve the financial status of those exiting the TANF program.

Cecil County DSS and our WIOA partners will work together to develop and create training programs to fill identified gaps such as soft skills/job readiness and expanding options for TANF customers. Focus should be on giving customers the skills which employers seek, improving self-esteem and training in high demand fields.

Cecil County DSS will continue to partner with Cecil College and DORS to provide onsite GED classes, credentialing programs, job coaching, mentoring, and counseling for customers.

Cecil County DSS will continue to explore expanding transportation and work on overcoming barriers such as mental health issues, legal issues (bonding and expungement clinics) to assist our customers on becoming independent.

WIOA partners will continue to have quarterly meetings where resources are shared about programs, funding, community resources and job fairs.

WIOA partners will continue to work on development of common intake/assessment form to allow WIOA members to better assist our TANF customers.

The Local Board oversees the Work-Based Training portion of the Family Investment Program for Harford County Department of Social Services. A transition plan has been established for customers receiving Temporary Cash Assistance to receive services through the Susquehanna Workforce Centers after they full-fill their work requirements. TANF Customers are placed in non-paid work experiences to develop employability skills; a Job Placement Specialist assists the customers apply for unsubsidized employment. Life Management skills are provided by Susquehanna Workforce Network (SWN) employees as part of the Work-Based Training program.

## Section 10 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

A) How many SNAP work registrants currently exist in the jurisdiction? *Note: Local Areas should work with their Local Department of Social Services for assistance in accessing this information.*

In June 2023 Cecil County had 1229 Snap E&T work registrants. Of the 1229 work registrants 909 of these are mandatory participants and 320 are categorically exempt.

Harford County just began this program in January 2023. They have made referrals, but cannot provide registration numbers at this time.

B) Describe the process the local WIOA partners utilize, or plan to utilize, to support SNAP work registrants in accessing available supports and workforce development programs.

All Snap work registrants will be referred to the Cecil County DSS In House WISH workforce development program. The WISH program will assess participants and where appropriate will refer these participants to the local WIOA partners for education and employment opportunities.

Harford County is still developing the process to best utilize local WIOA partners to allow registrants to access available supports and workforce development programs.

C) List the available SNAP E&T third party partners in your local jurisdiction and describe how the third party partners are being engaged to ensure they are aware of all workforce development programs available in the WIOA system, streamline resources, and prevent duplication of services. *Note: Local Areas should work with their Local Department of Social Services for assistance in accessing this information.*

There are currently no third party partners in Cecil County.

Harford County is currently working with United Way, MCVET, HumanIm, NCIA, and Civic Works.

## Section 11 – Community Service Block Grant Functions

This section should include –

- (A) A list of Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) providers in the Local Area and whether they provide employment and training activities.

Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) providers in the Local Area are as follows:

- (1) **Harford Community Action Agency** (HCAA – Harford County)
- (2) **Maryland Rural Development Corporation** (Cecil County – does not provide employment and training activities)

- (B) A description of the implementation and coordination process to enhance the provision of services to individuals on CSBG that includes:

- Potential co-location of CAAs and/or WIOA Partners at AJCs or CAAs depending on the nature of local partnerships and operations;

This will be accomplished through the use of office space for trainings and one-on-one case management made available at Harford Community Action Agency's 1010 Gateway Road location in Edgewood, MD.

- Leverage existing financial and in-kind contributions to the WIOA system to ensure coordination of services provided by multiple programs, creating a seamless approach to delivering services;

In-kind donations would include the office space and the use of a case manager at HCAA to provide referrals and initial triage.

- Cross train and provide technical assistance to all WIOA Partners about CSBG;

This would be accomplished through ROMA (Results Oriented Management and Accountability) training available through HCAA's on staff ROMA Implementer; this training would also include information on the 2-Generation/Whole Family approach being adopted by CAA's nationwide.

- Ensure that activities are countable and tracked for CSBG performance metrics;

SWN will report to HCAA on customer progress for any referrals sent to SWN from HCAA for input into HCAA's CSBG performance metrics tracking system, CAP60.

- Access to business services and employer initiatives to attract and better serve employers by marketing joint services, minimizing the burden on employers who use the centers, and provide employer-focused services through a single point of entry rather than through all partnering programs; and

SWN would be the point of entry for communication with employers; HCAA will make referrals to SWN for accessing business services and employers; HCAA would utilize its website space to outreach for SWN.

- Contribute and provide baseline outcomes data to the WIOA system through strategies for collecting and reporting varied program reporting requirements.

HCAA will assist SWN with the collecting and reporting of data for customers that it sends to SWN, and SWN would send data back to HCAA to be input into CAP60.

(C)A description of the CAA Representation on the Local Board to ensure that CSBG expectations, roles, and responsibilities are addressed in the Local Area. A representative from a CAA is a required partner on the Local Board.

Harford Community Action Agency will select a representative (by default the CEO) to serve on the Local Board as afforded by membership composition in accordance in SWN bylaws and WIOA regulations.

In this position, the HCAA representative will articulate and advocate for national CSBG goals:

- Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
- Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity. Additionally, CAA representation is available through CAA's active participation on the Local Board's committee structure and the WIOA Partners/Susquehanna Workforce Innovation Partnership.
- People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in their communities.

This representative will coordinate with the tripartite CSBG Board of HCAA to address issues, goals, and plans that arise through meetings of the Local Board to ensure that all CSBG expectations, roles, and responsibilities are addressed in the Local Area.

## Section 12 – Jobs for Veterans State Grants Functions

This Section should include –

- (A) A description of how the Local Board will provide priority of service to veterans and their eligible spouses.

The Workforce Center (WFC) provides “Priority of Service” to veterans and their eligible spouses in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 and the Veterans’ Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006. The purpose of Priority of Service is to give first consideration for program participation to covered Veterans and eligible spouses who also meet the eligibility criteria of a federal Department of Labor training, employment, or placement service in any workforce preparation program. Local Workforce Development Areas will ensure all vendors follow Priority of Service provisions.

To receive Veterans Priority of Service for a specific program, a Veteran or eligible spouse must meet the statutory definition of a “covered person” and also must meet any other statutory eligibility requirement applicable to the program. For all USDOL funded programs, Priority of Service means access to services or resources earlier than others, or if resources are limited, it may mean access to services and resources instead of general service individuals.

Veterans Priority of Service will take precedence before applying WIOA Priority of Service for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Programs with specific eligibility criteria, such as the WIOA Title I Adult program, will ensure covered persons meet all statutory eligibility requirements for the program before receiving Priority of Service.

Note: All criteria for veteran and spouse eligibility will be applied as written in Maryland’s WIOA State Plan, Section 9. (review for more details on veteran and spouse eligibility)

In accordance with Maryland’s State Plan, veterans and eligible spouses will continue to receive priority of service for all USDOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described below, priority must be provided in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
2. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA’s priority groups.
4. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

1st Priority	Veterans and eligible spouses who are also low-income, recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient
2nd Priority	Individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses, are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient
3rd Priority	Veterans and eligible spouses who did not meet "first priority" conditions
4th Priority	Individuals who are residents of the Susquehanna Local Area and who are not veterans and do not meet criteria to be considered a target population

### **Customer Service Flow for Veterans**

Workforce Center (WFC) staff provides core services and initial assessments to veterans.

The receptionist or other WFC staff who work at the front desks are trained to determine whether any customers are veterans. Information can also be gathered on veteran status when the WFC front desk has customers complete their county's "Customer Activity Sheet". Customers who self-attest to veteran status shall receive priority of service from this point forward.

WFC staff conduct the initial Personalized Needs Assessment with all new customers (including veterans). If a customer self-attests to veteran status, WFC staff complete MD Labor's Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) Checklist to determine whether the veteran qualifies as having one or more SBE.

When the Personalized Needs Assessment is completed, veterans choose from the following options:

1. If the customer qualifies as SBE, and requires intensive services to overcome a barrier to employment, WFC staff assists in setting up an appointment for them to meet with a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist.
2. If the customer does not require intensive services, they are then referred to Basic Career Services resources, WIOA Title I resources, an WFC Job Service Specialist, or other resource as determined appropriate based on the Personalized Needs Assessment.

Note: When a veteran seeks services at an WFC where the DVOP is not currently available because of their rotation schedule, the receptionist provides the customer with the card and contact information of the DVOP and contacts the DVOP via email to provide them with the contact information of the customer so the two can coordinate a meeting time when the DVOP will be stationed at the WFC, if desired.

### **Verifying Veteran Status**

Any individual self-identifying as a covered person should be provided immediate priority in the delivery of employment and training services. It is neither necessary nor appropriate to require an individual self-

identifying as a veteran or eligible spouse to verify their status at the point of entry unless the individual who self-identifies as a covered Veteran or eligible spouse:

1. Is to immediately undergo eligibility determination and must be registered or enrolled in a program; or,
2. The applicable Federal program rules require verification of covered Veteran or eligible spouse status at that time.

Similarly, a covered person should not be denied access on a priority basis to any services provided by program staff in order to verify covered person status. Rather, an individual self-identifying as a Veteran or eligible spouse should be enrolled and provided immediate priority and then be permitted to follow-up subsequently with any required verification of his or her status as a Veteran or eligible spouse.

For services that require eligibility verification, such as classroom training, verification only needs to occur at the point at which a decision is made to commit the use of outside resources. For example, to receive training services under WIOA Title I programs, veteran status must be verified. In cases, such as these verification is only necessary where a decision is made to commit outside resources to a covered person over another individual. For all other purposes, covered persons should be enrolled and provided immediate priority before providing verification as a covered person.

To receive Priority of Service for career services, covered persons may self-attest their veteran or eligible spouse status.

### **Veterans and Spouses as Dislocated Workers**

WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Funds can help Veterans, separating service members, and eligible spouses to enter or reenter the civilian labor force. To receive services under the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program, a Veteran or eligible spouse must be a dislocated worker. By definition, according to WIOA, a dislocated worker is an individual who:

1. Has been terminated or laid off, or received a notice of termination or layoff from employment;
2. Is eligible for, or has exhausted, unemployment insurance (UI) benefits;
3. Has demonstrated an appropriate attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for UI and is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation;
4. Has been terminated or laid off, or received notification of termination or layoff from employment as a result of a permanent closure or substantial layoff;
5. Is employed at a facility where the employer has made the general announcement that the facility will close within 180 days;
6. Was self-employed, but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community or because of a natural disaster;
7. Is a displaced homemaker as defined by WIOA 3(16); or,
8. Is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty (as defined in section 101(d)(1) of Title 10, U.S.C.), and who has experienced a loss of employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in duty station of such member; or is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.



Generally, service members exiting the military, including, but not limited to, recipients of Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Military members (UCX), qualify as dislocated workers. Active duty service members who separate by retirement may also qualify as dislocated workers. However, an active duty service member taking early retirement as an incentive must be taken on a case by case basis. In some cases, this type of separation may be the only choice a service member may have. Thus, the service member's retirement could be considered a dislocation. However, if the service member's separation is voluntary, then the service member would not qualify as a dislocated worker.

If a Veteran meets the definition of a dislocated worker, then they may also be eligible to receive Priority of Service. For WIOA Title I programs, Priority of Service is available to any Veteran who has served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. WFCs may consider documentation of a service member's release from active duty on a specific date as equivalent to a layoff notice for WIOA Dislocated Worker Program eligibility. However, service members are not eligible for Priority of Service until they leave active duty.

In the case of separating service members, because they may be on a terminal leave from the military, a separating service member may begin to receive career services while the service member may still be part of the Active Duty military, but has an imminent separation date. It is appropriate to provide career services to separating service members who will be imminently separating from the military, provided that their discharge will be anything other than dishonorable.

### **Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Funds Are Provided to Fund Two Staff Positions**

**Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists** – Under 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a), a DVOP specialist provides intensive services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the USDOL Secretary; and

**Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER)** – Under 38 U.S.C. 4104(b), the LVER's principal duties are to: (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in a State under the applicable State employment service delivery systems.

### **Monitoring Priority of Service**

To ensure priority of service is implemented and operating correctly it will be monitored by the Regional Local Veterans Employment Representative (RLVER) and by the Reemployment Program Director or whomever they designate.

#### **(B) A description of how the Local Board will engage Local Veterans Employment Representatives in engaging and providing services to local businesses.**

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans and encourage the hiring of veterans. The Local Board will promote LVER services through social media, job fairs and

email blasts based on information provided to the Local Board by the LVER. The Local Board will include the LVER in employer meetings convened in support of determining employer needs related to Career Services, Training Services, or Educational Services. The LVER will be included in meetings and efforts convened by and on behalf of the WFC Partners, including meetings and efforts convened by the One Stop Operator.

## Section 13 – Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program Functions

The Trade program provides aid to eligible workers who lose their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are reduced, because of increased imports or exports or production transfers abroad. The purpose of the program is to return trade-affected workers to suitable employment as quickly as possible with the seamless provision of coordinated resources, support, skills and training they may need.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Employment and case management services include:

- Interview and review training opportunities for each trade-affected worker;
- Inform trade-affected workers of the services and allowances available;
- Register in Maryland Workforce Exchange and complete Trade Adjustment Assistance application;
- Provide initial assessments;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan with the affected worker;
- Help them secure appropriate training;
- Monitor their training progress;
- Devise a training waiver process;
- Provide access to workshops and other employment resources;
- Coordinate other employment benefits that workers may be eligible for;
- Inform trade-affected workers about supportive services available through partner programs;
- Co-enrollment with Adult, Dislocated Worker, or other appropriate partner program to provide comprehensive wrap-around services and reduce barriers;
- Rapid Response Services;
- Follow-up Services;
- Facilitate the early filing of petitions for any workers that are likely to be eligible for benefits under the Trade Act; and
- Perform outreach to affected workers, intake of, and orientation for adversely affected workers and adversely affected incumbent workers covered by a certification.

MD Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance policy can be found here:

<http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/mpi11-19.pdf>.

USDOL's Trade Adjustment Assistance Final Rule can be found here:

[https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/tradeact/pdfs/TAA\\_Final\\_Rule\\_1205\\_AB78.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/tradeact/pdfs/TAA_Final_Rule_1205_AB78.pdf).

This Section should include –

- (A) A description of how Trade Adjustment Assistance services will be provided in the American Job Center system within the Local Area.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Employment and Case Management Services include:

- Rapid Response Services;
  - Facilitate the early filing of petitions for any workers that are likely to be eligible for benefits under the Trade Act;
  - Perform outreach to affected workers, intake of, and orientation for adversely affected

workers and adversely affected incumbent workers covered by a certification.

- Inform trade-affected workers of the services and allowances available;
- Provide initial assessments;
  - Register in Maryland Workforce Exchange and complete Trade Adjustment Assistance application;
  - Inform trade-affected workers about supportive services available through partner programs;
  - Co-enrollment with Adult, Dislocated Worker, or other appropriate partner program to provide comprehensive wrap-around services and reduce barriers;
- Provide access to workshops and other employment resources;
- Interview and review training opportunities for each trade-affected worker;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan with the affected worker;
- Devise a training waiver process;
- Help them secure appropriate training;
- Monitor their training progress;
- Coordinate other employment benefits that workers may be eligible for;
- Follow-up Services;

(B) A description of how Title I staff will provide the TAA services listed above in an integrated manner. Describe what your process/flow will look like.

Partner staff in the Workforce Center will be responsible for providing the initial meeting and assessments, ensure enrollment in MWE, labor market information and delivering Rapid Response service, if not already provided and to make the participants aware of all the available services and allowances that the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program can provide. Trade staff will work with the trade affected worker on training options, completing TAA application MWE and to ensure the six criteria for training have been met, as well as create or review participants' IEP. Trade staff will also provide approval of all TAA training programs, training contracts and training waivers. Efforts will be coordinated to monitor progress, provide Bench marks every 60 days and ensure a service is provided every 90 days for the Trade affected worker, as well as ensure any needs and barriers are addressed. Staff will coordinate on all employment, case management and follow-up activities.

(C) A description of how Trade participants will be co-enrolled in other programs.

By following an established process flow within the WFC, co-enrollment of Trade affected workers will be ensured to allow for more efficient use of public workforce system resources and reduce barriers to program integration. Participants will be made aware of their co-enrollment. In the event that a Trade affected worker declines co-enrollment or is not eligible for co-enrollment, documentation must be provided and maintained. Declining co-enrollment has no effect on eligibility for benefits and services under the TAA Program.

## Section 14 – Unemployment Insurance Functions

This Section should include –

- (A) A description of how WIOA Title I and Title III partners will support Unemployment Insurance claimants and provide meaningful access to Unemployment Insurance claimants, as required by WIOA.

A priority identified in the MD State Plan is the provision of ongoing information and training to Wagner-Peyser program staff regarding the Unemployment Insurance program. As such, the WP program will lead the efforts for making Unemployment Insurance information available throughout the local delivery system. MD Labor staff will also ensure access of unemployed individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) for profiled Unemployed Insurance recipients in the workforce area. The Maryland Department of Labor staff currently conduct the Reemployment Opportunity Workshop (ROW) for profiled Unemployed Insurance recipients in the workforce area. These programs place a greater emphasis in connecting unemployment insurance claimants to workforce system services. MD Labor staff are the primary provider of basic career services to all job seekers that access the region's Workforce Centers. MD Labor staff will facilitate access to and referrals of UI claimants to local workforce development services available in this region.

- (B) A description of how the Local Board will utilize the Wagner-Peyser program and the RESEA and ROW programs to provide access to local workforce development services for Unemployment Insurance claimants.

ROW and RESEA customers are all dislocated workers. WP staff will assess and direct clients to other workforce services as appropriate, as well as ensure that all clients are familiar with system services. WIOA staff engage these customers during in person meetings to provide training services, supportive services, and referral to partner programs. WIOA will supplement reemployment activities and services during and directly resulting from a customer's participation.

## Section 15 – Senior Community Service Employment Program Function

This Section should include –

- (A) A list of Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) providers in the Local Area. Explain how SCSEP is administered in the Local Area, including grantee and subgrantee information, if applicable,

The Center for Workforce Inclusion, Inc. (the Center) is the provider of SCSEP program in the Local Area.

- (B) A description of how SCSEP services will be provided in the AJC system within the Local Area. Include the components of the SCSEP program that are offered in the Local Area.

The Center will operate through local partners and provide the following services in the local workforce system:

- Information and referral of SCSEP ineligible customers from SCSEP to the designated Center(s);
- Information and referral of SCSEP eligible customers to appropriate service providers, supportive services and other resources as appropriate
- Assign SCSEP participants to the designated Center(s), where appropriate, to help expand the services and mission of the Center(s)
- Provide local SCSEP data and performance measurement where appropriate and feasible
- Providing knowledge and expertise in working with older adults as a special population Staff participation on the Local Workforce Boards Business Engagement Committee/Team, and other jointly beneficial committees, associated activities and specialized projects as appropriate and feasible

## Section 16 – WIOA Section 188 and Equal Opportunity Functions

MD Labor's Nondiscrimination Plan can be found here:

<http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/ndp/>. MD Labor's Language Access Plan can be found here: <http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/wioa-access.pdf>.

It is against the law for this recipient of federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following bases: Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, on the basis of the individual's citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

This Section should include –

- (A) A designation of the local Equal Opportunity Officer, including their name, location, email, telephone number, and TTY or equivalent.

The Equal Opportunity Officer is Julie Brown. She is located at the SWN Administrative Office, 410 Girard Street, Havre de Grace, Maryland 21078. Her email address is [JBrown@SWNetwork.org](mailto:JBrown@SWNetwork.org) and her telephone number is 410-939-4240. Connect using MD Relay by dialing 7-1-1 or 800-201-7165.

- (B) A description of how entities within the AJC delivery system, including AJC operators and the AJC partners, will comply with Section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part 38, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities and individuals with Limited English Proficiency, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities and for individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

SWN will ensure that services will be accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each Workforce Center (WFC) will conduct an annual assessment of accessibility of their Center. The assessment will be reviewed for compliance and any deficiencies will be addressed. WIOA Partners will acknowledge compliance through the execution of MOU's with the Local Board. A coordinated referral process between the WFCs, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), and other organizations that provide specialized services to people with disabilities will ensure streamlined services. Through DORS, eligible job seekers with disabilities will have access to specialized employment related services. Additionally, DORS will assist with identifying needs and developing strategies to support physical and programmatic accessibility. For individuals with Limited English Proficiency our Workforce Centers utilize interpretations services and LanguageLine Solutions. Accessibility Assessments have been conducted by SWN staff and staff of the Maryland Department of Labor on an annual basis at each Workforce Center. Based on Section 188 regulations and forthcoming guidance, necessary adaptations to this process will be made as further guidance is provided.

(C) An acknowledgment that the Local Board understands that, while Section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part 38 ensure equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, sub-recipients may also be subject to the requirements of:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by recipients of Federal financial assistance;
- Title I of the ADA, which prohibits discrimination in employment based on disability;
- Title II of the ADA, which prohibits State and local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability;
- Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act; and
- Maryland Anti-Discrimination laws, including 5 Md. STATE GOVERNMENT Code Ann. §10-1101, which stipulates that oral language services must be delivered on-site for those in frequent contact with a service provider.

As a condition of financial assistance under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, the grant applicant assures, with respect to operation of WIOA funded programs or activities and all agreement or arrangements to carry out the WIOA funded programs or activities, that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions and requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by recipients of Federal financial assistance; Title I of the ADA, which prohibits discrimination in employment based on disability; Title II of the ADA, which prohibits State and local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability; Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act; and Maryland Anti-Discrimination laws.

(D) A description of how the Local Board will ensure meaningful access to all customers.

The majority of services will be accessed through the WFCs in the Susquehanna Region and through system affiliate sites. Technology will be deployed to insure accessibility for limited English speaking individuals, people with disabilities, and persons with non-traditional employment goals. Partner access strategies will be specified in the Partner MOUs.

The Local Board will assess and monitor advancements to customer access by reviewing adherence to the MOU's and best practices identified by the Partner organizations. The full development of a comprehensive workforce system is an ongoing work in progress and strives to increase effectiveness over time. The Local Board has elected to utilize the Partner MOUs as a primary mechanism to elevate and enhance access to the local system. Inasmuch as the MOUs will likely be more frequently revised and executed, this strategy seems most logical and effective. The partners have identified critical components in the development of a comprehensive system. See Section 2, A.

(E) A description of the Local Board's procedures for handling grievances and complaints from participants and other interested parties affected by the local AJC system, including partners and service providers. Federal regulation on grievances and complaints can be found at: 29 CFR 38.69-97. Provide a separate description for the:

- Complaints alleging discrimination on the ground of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only,



- citizenship or participation in any WIOA Title I – financially assisted program or activity;
- Complaints and grievances not alleging illegal forms of discrimination. This includes grievances from individuals alleging labor standards violations; and
- Remedies that may be imposed for a violation of any requirement under WIOA Title I, limited to, suspension or termination of payments under the title; prohibition of placement of a participant with an employer that has violated any requirement under WIOA Title I; reinstatement of an employee, payment of lost wages and benefits, and reestablishment of other relevant terms, conditions, and privileges of employment (where applicable); and other equitable relief as appropriate.

SWN's procedures for handling grievances and complaints from participants and parties of the workforce system, including one-stop partners and service providers, are described in SWN's Grievance and Complaint procedure. This procedure is to ensure the principles of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in administration and operations of all programs and activities delivered by SWN and its partners. This procedure describes processes for both complaints alleging discrimination and complaints and grievances not alleging discrimination and includes Methods of Resolution/Disposition of Complaints; including alternative dispute resolution processes.

All SWN participants in WIOA funded programs are entitled to Civil Rights under Federal Law while enrolled in an employment and training program. Participants cannot be discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, political affiliation, belief, or participation in Title 1 Programs. Included in the general policy regarding all complaints, is that complaints shall be resolved informally between parties involved, when possible. Complaints which may be processed using these procedures will be classified as one of two types upon review of the complaint's content. Each type of complaint will be handled in the appropriate manner pursuant to WIOA regulations. These policies are intended to be in compliance with WIOA Section 188, and Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 38, and Title 20 CFR Part 683.60.

### **Type I Complaint Procedure: Formal Complaints Alleging Discrimination**

Complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, nation origin, religious belief, age, political affiliation, citizenship, disability and participation in WIOA Title I program, may be reported in writing to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer at SWN, the State Equal Opportunity Officer or the Civil Rights Center (CRC) U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

#### **1. Filing the Complaint**

- a) The Susquehanna Local Board encourages all persons with complaints to first discuss their concerns with the persons who have caused those concerns. However, if after discussing the problem the individual still wishes to formally pursue resolution of his/her complaint, he/she may choose to pursue resolution through the SWN Grievance Policy and Procedure.
- b) All complaints alleging discrimination must be filed within 180 days of the event which triggered the complaint.
- c) Complaints filed must be documented on the Complaint Procedures Form.

#### **2. Resolving the Complaint**

- a) Director of the Civil Rights Center (DCR) – A complainant may file a Type I complaint with the DCR at any time. There is no waiting period or lower level hearings which must precede this filing. Details on the steps which the complainant must follow in filing a complaint with the DCR will be provided to the complainant when requested.
- b) Susquehanna Local Board/Subrecipient Procedures - If a complainant wishes to first seek a resolution of his/her complaint through the EEO Officer, and are participants in the Local Board's subrecipient programs, the complainant must file their complaint in accordance with the procedures established by the subrecipient.
- c) Representatives of subrecipients or other interested persons have the option of either filing their complaint with the subrecipient (e.g. for interested persons) or with the SWN's EEO Officer.

Subrecipient procedural guidelines – Subrecipients of the Local Board must immediately notify the SWN's EEO Officer of all complaints received in writing which allege discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religious belief, age, political affiliation, citizenship, disability, or participation in a WIOA program. The SWN will immediately notify the Maryland Department of Labor of the complaint's existence and content.

Subrecipients are permitted 30 days to attempt a resolution of the complaint using the procedures developed by the subrecipient. If after 30 days from the date of filing the complaint, the complainant has not achieved a satisfactory resolution of his/her complaint, he/she may file the complaint with the SWN's EEO Officer. The complaint should be filed on the Complaint Documentation Form.

Susquehanna Region Local Board Procedures – Upon receipt of a written Type I complaint, the EEO Officer will convene a hearing to which the complainant and other person(s) involved in the complaint are invited. The hearing will be held this hearing within 15 days of receipt of the complaint, and will identify a person who is not involved in the complaint to preside as the hearing officer.

The hearing officer will issue a written description of his/her judgment regarding the complaint, including his/her recommendation for resolving the complaint, within 30 days of the date that the complaint was first filed (either at the subrecipient level or with the EEO Officer).

### **Type II Complaint Procedure: Complaints NOT Alleging Discrimination**

This procedure may be used to provide resolution of complaints arising from action taken by SWN with respect to investigations or monitoring reports of sub-grantees, contractors, and other sub-recipients. SWN and other sub-recipients will assure that employers, including private for profit employers of WIOA participants will also be provided with this procedure which may be used for complaints relating to the terms and conditions of employment for WIOA participants

#### **1. Filing the Complaint**

- a) The Local Board encourages all persons with complaints to first discuss their concerns with the persons who have caused these concerns. However, if after discussing the concern the individual still wishes to formally pursue resolution of his/her complaint, he/she must adhere to the following guidelines.

- b) Complainants who are participants in the Local Board's subrecipient programs must file their complaint in accordance with the procedures established by the subrecipient. Representatives of subrecipients or other interested persons have the option of either filing their complaint with the subrecipient (e.g. for "interested persons") or the SWN EEO Officer.
- c) All complaints not alleging discrimination must be filed within one year of the event which triggered the complaint.
- d) Complaints filed with the EEO Officer must be documented on the Complaint Documentation Form.

## 2. Resolving the Complaint

- a) Subrecipient Procedural Guidelines – Subrecipients are not limited by time in their handling of non-discrimination complaints. The existing complaint procedures adopted by the subrecipient should be followed. If after exhausting the subrecipient's procedure a complainant is dissatisfied with the proposed solution to his/her complaints, he/she may file the complaint with the SWN EEO Officer. The complaint will be documented on the Complaint Documentation Form.
- b) Susquehanna Local Board Procedures – Upon receipt of a written Type II complaint, the EEO Officer will convene a hearing to which the complainant and other persons involved in the complaint will be invited. Written notices (invitations to attend) about the hearing will include the date, time and location of the hearing. The EEO Officer will hold the hearing within thirty (30) days of the date on which is received the written complaint, and will identify a person who is not involved in the complaint to preside as the hearing officer.

At the hearing, an opportunity will be provided for all parties (persons) involved in the complaint to present evidence. An audio tape of the complete hearing will be made and maintained. A written decision on the complaint, arising from the hearing, will be issued to all persons at the hearing within 60 days of the date on which the EEO Officer received the complaint.

- c) Additional Procedures – If a complainant does not receive a satisfactory decision by the Local Board within 60 days from the date he/she filed the complaint, the complainant (only) has the right to request a review by MD Labor. A request for this review must be made within 10 days from the date on which the complainant should have received a decision (60 days after filing). Details on how to file a request for a MD Labor review will be provided in the written decision rendered by the EEO Officer.

## **Other Complaint Procedures**

Complaints arising from action taken by the grantee with investigation or monitoring reports of subgrantees, contractors and other subrecipients will follow the course of Type II complaints.

All employers of participants under WIOA programs will be requested to have a complaint procedure related to the terms and conditions of employment available to participants.

Discrimination/Complaint Coordination Policy – Susquehanna Workforce Centers

The dissemination of all potential discrimination/complaints are to be initially directed to the Workforce Center Coordinators or the EEO Officer. The Coordinators and/or EEO Officer will then direct them to the appropriate discrimination/complaint regional contact.

### **Special Considerations**

The Maryland Workforce Exchange is a shared system. If there is an inappropriate request spotted in the system, it is brought to the attention of the Workforce Center Coordinator.

Complaint procedures will be made available to:

- Participants, upon enrollment into or first contact with WIOA services
- Subrecipients and subcontractors, prior to the signing of grant agreements or contracts
- Other interested parties, upon their request to the Local Board.

Documentation of the receipt of the complaint procedures information will be maintained in the appropriate file(s) of the Local Board.

#### **(F) A description of how an individual can request an accommodation.**

The SWN will ensure that services will be accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with ADA. Individuals can request accommodations with first contact or any time they are receiving services, through SWN website, WFC's direct phone or email and/or WFC Partner. A coordinated referral process between WFC Partners and other organizations that provide specialized services to individuals with disabilities will streamline services.

Staff will provide appropriate accommodations needed by individuals with disabilities as deemed appropriate and reasonable and in accordance with ADA.

#### **(G) A description of the Local Board's policy and procedures with regard to aid, benefits, services, training, and employment; include a statement of assurance that you will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities unless providing the accommodation would cause undue hardship.**

The Local Board assures that each program or activity, when viewed in its entirety, will be accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with ADA. With regard to aid, benefits, services, training, and employment, the Local Board will ensure reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities unless providing the accommodation would cause undue hardship. Undue hardship implies that there may necessarily be some hardship in accommodating someone's disability, but unless that hardship imposes an undue or unreasonable burden, it yields to the need to accommodate.

#### **(H) A description of how the Local Board will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The description should include how the Local Board will provide reasonable accommodations regarding materials, technology, and physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities. The description should also include how the Local Board will provide staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

The SWN will ensure that services will be accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with ADA. A coordinated referral process between the Workforce Centers, DORS and other organizations that provide specialized services to individuals with disabilities will streamline services. Through DORS, eligible job seekers with disabilities will have access to specialized employment related services. Additionally, DORS will assist with staff training such as programmatic and physical accessibility. Workforce staff will provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations, equipment or interpreters needed by individuals with disabilities.

- (I) A description of the Local Board's policy and procedures in place to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities, including individuals with visual or hearing impairments, are as effective as communications with others.

Consultation with DORS has resulted in a coordinated referral process to facilitate the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities, including visually and hearing impaired. DORS will provide the Local Board with technical assistance to assure that services are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Workforce Center staff will ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities, including individuals with visual or hearing impairments, are as with non-impaired customers. Staff will provide appropriate accommodations, equipment or interpreters needed by individuals with disabilities as deemed appropriate and reasonable.

- (J) A description of the steps the Local Board will take to meet the language needs of individuals with Limited English Proficiency who seek services or information. The description should include how the Local Board proposes that information will be disseminated to individuals with Limited English Proficiency, including using oral interpretation and written translation services in accordance with Maryland Anti-Discrimination laws, including 5 Md. STATE GOVERNMENT Code Ann. §10-1101, which stipulates that oral language services must be delivered on-site for those in frequent contact with a service provider.

The Board and Title 1 programs will ensure reasonable steps are taken to provide access to all programs and activities and assure that limited English speaking persons can effectively participate in and interact with programs and activities. Services for limited English speaking persons will include: resource information designed for those with limited English skills; referral to Adult Education providers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes; and the Continuing Education Departments of Cecil and Harford Community Colleges who provide interpreters for a variety of languages. Information will be conveyed to limited English speaking individuals through the use of signage, free or low cost interpreters obtained through MD Labor/DWDAL, the community colleges and/or other available sources.

The Susquehanna Workforce (WFCs) has bi-lingual staff who have the capacity to provide oral interpretation of services. There are multilingual brochures available at each Center: "I Speak" and/or LanguageLine posters near the point of entry, listing 38 identifiable languages.

## Section 17 – Fiscal, Performance and Other Functions

This Section should include –

- (A) An identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under section 107(d)(12)(B)(i).

The Chief Local Elected Officials, Harford County Executive and the Cecil County Executive, executed a Memorandum of Agreement that establishes Harford County Government as the Grant Recipient and the Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. as the Fiscal Agent and Administrative Entity authorized to oversee and manage WIOA resources on behalf of the CLEO's.

The SWN Board of Directors oversees workforce area operations and establishes policy through subcommittees. The day-to-day operation of the Local Board is provided through a hired staff. The Executive Director is directly responsible to the Board of Directors, has signature authorities as designated by the Susquehanna Board and supervises and manages employment and training services and activities in the Workforce Area.

- (B) A description of financial sustainability of the American Job Center services with current funding levels, and a description of the ability to make adjustments should funding levels change.

WIOA allocation formula(s) are a significant factor in the sustainability of the region's Workforce Centers. MOU's/RSA's with WIOA Partners will also support Center operations. The Susquehanna Workforce Network evaluates the sustainability of the Workforce Centers on an annual basis and monitors revenues and expenses on a monthly basis to determine if adjustments need to be made. Adjustments are made by examining all options to include analyzing costs, budget availability, and availability of additional resources and appropriateness of cost distribution/allocation methodologies. This may result in adjustments to the budget and/or services as necessary.

- (C) A description of the competitive process to be used to award the subgrants and contracts in the Local Area for activities carried out under this title, including risk assessment of potential subgrantees and contractors.

The SWN has established a Service Provider selection process that conforms with acceptable procurement standards. The primary solicitation instrument that will be utilized is a Request for Proposal (RFP). This RFP and its corresponding evaluation criteria will ensure a competitive process that includes:

- Demonstrated performance is a primary consideration
- Non-duplication of facilities or service
- Opportunity to provide educational services by appropriate education agencies
- Employment and training services which meet SWN guidelines

In determining "demonstrated performance," the SWN primarily will utilize the following evaluation criteria:

## **POINTS**

## **AWARD CRITERIA**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5 | Consistent ability to exceed contractually required outcomes and performance standards, as demonstrated by success for 3 or more consecutive years. |
| 4 | Consistent ability to exceed contractually required outcomes and performance standards, as demonstrated by success for one or two years.            |
| 3 | Has met contractually required outcomes and performance standards for at least two years.   |
| 2 | Has met contractually required outcomes and performance standards during the previous year of operation.  |
| 1 | Sporadic ability in meeting required outcomes and performance standards.  |
| 0 | Consistent failure to meet performance expectations.  |

The primary consideration in selecting providers will be the effectiveness of the agency or organization in delivering comparable or related services, based on the above. Additional evaluation criteria will include, but not be limited to, ability to meet program design requirements; relevance and reasonableness of costs and cost justification; past performance and experience; adequacy of financial resources; satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics, and fiscal accountability; necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls; the technical skills to perform the work.

In using the RFP process, which provides for notification of its availability through the development of RFP mailing lists of those agencies wishing to receive the RFP, the SWN will provide for the opportunity for community-based organizations to be considered, as well as providing the opportunity for appropriate education agencies in the Region to provide educational services.

### **Appeals Procedure**

Respondents dissatisfied with any SWN procurement recommendation who seek to appeal the matter to the SWN Executive Committee must file a written appeal with the SWN Executive Director. All appeals must be received by dates and times specified in the relevant Request for Proposal. The Executive Committee, at its discretion, will decide whether to grant the appellants an open hearing.

### **YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS:**

The selection of youth service providers is primarily conducted through a RFP process. The RFP will reflect the eligibility categories and program models that reflect Best Practices. This competitive process will allow for the specific delivery of services, targeted to a specific youth segment, identified by the Youth Committee. Final approval of the proposals will rest with the Local Board, upon recommendations from the Youth Committee.

## ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICE PROVIDERS:

With the CLEO's and Local Board's approval, the SWN will provide career services. The SWN has responsibility for identifying eligible providers of services. The State administers the list of eligible training providers. Due to circumstances in the local area the "training exceptions" as identified in TEGL 19-16 will be utilized to fulfill customer choice requirements and access to training programs in demand occupations. The Local Board will use Training Agreements consistent with 20 CFR680.320, 680.340 and 680.530 and the Local Boards procurement procedures. The Local Board has determined that there are an insufficient number of Eligible Training Providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs. The Local Board utilizes the public comment period of the Local Plan for interested providers to provide comment.

(D) A description of the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high- performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State board pursuant to Section 101(d)(6); This should include a description of the process used by the Local Board to review and evaluate performance of the local American Job Center(s) and the One-Stop Operator.

The Susquehanna Workforce Network's Board has a significant history of strategic leadership, accountability, financial performance and reputation for aligning services and programs to execute effective solutions addressing local priorities. SWN is a member for the National Associations of Workforce Boards (NAWB) and routinely will access the assets and best practices that this membership provides. In previous years, the Board assessed their capabilities as compared with NAWBs Gold Standard Board criteria that included:

- Strategic Management
- Financial Diversification
- Strategic Convening and Partnerships
- Labor Market Analysis
- Communications, Advocacy and Outreach
- Performance Measurement

In Dec 2014, the Board once again developed and Action Plan that focused on five similar categories that included:

- System Capacity Building
- Financial Diversification
- Strategic Convening and Partnerships
- Labor Market Information
- Communications, Advocacy and Outreach

The 2020 Susquehanna Region Labor Market Analysis was released in June, Subsequently, the Local Board engaged in strategic planning sessions that resulted in an Employment Blueprint to strengthen the region's response to the pandemic, identify priority goals and expand opportunities for job seeking populations; see Section 2.



The Local Board has utilized both Federal performance, negotiated performance goals with MD Labor, and local metrics to evaluate performance of the region's Workforce Centers and operations. Through its NAWB membership, the Local Board plans to take advantage of resources and other technical assistance related to the review and evaluation of the One Stop Operator; if sufficient technical assistance and local funds are available. Otherwise technical assistance and/or resources will be sought through State resources.

- (E) A description, including a copy, of the Local Area's Individual Training Account policy. The description should include information such as selection process, dollar limits, duration, etc. and must be in accordance with the State's WIOA Title 1 Training and the Eligible Training Provider List policy found at: <http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/mpi9-17.pdf>.

The SWN shall enter into a financial agreement with each vendor that it will be using for ITA programs. This agreement will describe the roles and responsibilities of the vendor, including dollar limits, duration, type of training, name of participant, payment terms and approvals. After the agreement is received by vendor, invoice can be submitted to the SWN. Payment for properly charged amounts shall be made by the SWN in a timely manner.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) will be provided to eligible individuals through the one-stop delivery system for occupational specific training programs aligned with "in-demand" occupations.

Participants will have completed services, which may include an initial assessment, basic skill and aptitude assessments, interest inventories, labor market research, support needs and/or job search and placement assistance, which has resulted in or identified the participant's inability to retain employment. Additionally, the participant will develop an employment plan that identifies training as a necessary service to gain or retain employment. Financial assistance options are provided to participants such as Pell Grants and other forms of financial assistance.

ITAs may be used to access training from vendors who are listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Currently, the Board has identified \$5,000 as the dollar limitation for an ITA. Exceptions to the policy (dollar limitation and ETPL) will be allowed for certain occupations that are in high demand and for occupations that are designated priority industries in the local area. The Executive Director approves exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis. ITAs will be allowed for programs that are occupational specific. Degreed programs beyond an Associate's Degree will not be eligible for an ITA. Exceptions may be made for completion of certifications in high demand occupations. The length of training can be up to two years or until the cap is reached. Participants shall maintain good academic standing and be making satisfactory progress to remain in their selected program.

The Board reserves the right to adjust the aforementioned ITA dollar limitations during the term of this Plan if it would be deemed in the best interest of the customer and the Local Board.

- (F) A description of how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with Section 134(c)(3)(G), including, if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the Local Board will ensure

informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

The delivery of training services will be made to eligible customers in a manner that will ensure customer choice and is consistent with priority and/or demand industries and occupations in the region. Individuals may benefit from training services that may include:

- Training Vouchers and Agreements/Contracts for Occupational Skills Coursework
- On-the-Job Training
- Customized Training
- Cohort Training for in-demand sectors and occupations
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Transitional Employment
- Training by Community Based Organizations or other organizations to serve individuals with barriers to employment
- Internships and Work Experience
- Training through Pay for Performance Contracts

(G) A description of how the AJCs are utilizing the Maryland Workforce Exchange as the integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by AJC partners.

The Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) is the labor exchange, case management and performance accountability platform for the Workforce Centers. MOU discussions and development will include utilization of MWE capabilities by all MOU Partners, and other employment and training partners who have a written data sharing agreements. The Local Board will encourage the integration of labor exchange, case management and performance accountability toward MWE as a common technology platform.

(H) A description of the Local Board's procedures for conducting oversight and monitoring of its WIOA activities and those of its subgrantee and contractors. The monitoring plan shall address the monitoring scope and frequency and shall include the following:

- The roles and responsibility of staff in facilitating this procedure;
- A requirement that all subgrantee agreements and contracts be monitored at least annually;
- Procedures for determining that expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in the Act and WIOA regulations;
- Procedures for determining compliance with other provisions of the Act and regulations and other applicable laws and regulations, including the method of monitoring to be used for subgrantees and contractors;
- Monitoring risk factors and risk assessments;
- Provisions for the recording of findings made by the recipients' monitor(s), the forwarding of such findings to the subgrantee or contractor for response and the recording of all corrective actions;
- Provisions of technical assistance as necessary and appropriate; and
- Specific local policies developed by the Local Board for oversight of the American

Job Center system, youth activities and employment and training activities under Title I of WIOA.

All subrecipients' agreements and contracts will be monitored on-site at least annually. The purpose of the monitoring will be to determine compliance with the agreements and WIOA rules and regulations. The monitoring will consist of a desk and on-site review, and a fiscal monitoring. Monitoring may occur more frequently based on subrecipient risk factors including years of service, A-133 audit results, appropriate policies and procedures in place, weakness of internal controls, performance deficiencies or major changes in program or operations.

The procedure for determining that expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in the Act and WIOA regulations are as follows:

1. A fiscal desk monitoring occurs every time a payment is made to subrecipients, vendors or contractors. Expenses are compared to approved budgets before payments are made. All costs are evaluated to determine whether expenditures are in compliance with the applicable uniform cost principles included in the appropriate circulars of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), for the type of entity receiving the funds. Supporting documentation such as invoices, ITAs and time sheets are collected and reviewed to ascertain compliance and validity. The Department Manager and then the Fiscal Manager review and approve all requests for payment before submission to the Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for final approval of all payments. When discrepancies arise, they are addressed and resolved prior to compensation. When a question arises regarding the proper allocation and/or allowability of costs, the Executive Director will make the final decision.
2. Monthly financial reports are processed from the accounting system for all expenses incurred for the period by title, grant or funding source and sub-item.
3. The Executive Director, as well as other management staff, analyzes the fiscal reports prepared by the Fiscal Manager on a monthly basis. Any problems that are identified are corrected immediately. The Treasurer and Board of Directors also review the monthly reports.
4. The computer-generated monthly fiscal report reflecting expenditures through the end of each quarter is used to prepare the Maryland Department of Labor/DWDAL WIOA Quarterly Status Reports. All other financial reports required by the Maryland Department of Labor are completed utilizing the accounting information system as described, which is in full compliance with State requirements. Financial reports for the Maryland Department of Labor will be completed in the format requested by the Maryland Department of Labor and furnished to the Maryland Department of Labor in a timely manner.
5. As required, the Fiscal Manager, under the authority of the Executive Director, will assign control and assignment of new general ledger accounts.

Monitoring will be accomplished through the Local Board's staff. The Local Board sub-committees, through assigned staff, are responsible for reviewing overall performance for their respective areas of oversight. This may be completed via staff input at sub-committee meetings, at Local Board meetings, or committee on-site

visits. Specific contract or subrecipient monitoring may be initiated if routine oversight indicates a need.

#### Desk Monitoring

For program monitoring, the desk review includes review of contract, required subgrantee documents, submitted invoices and due dates.

#### On-Site Monitoring

The on-site review includes review and testing of subgrantee expenditures submitted against their book of accounts, allowable back up for expenditures and an adequate and appropriate quality control system. A review of subgrantee's audit and the testing of expenditures allow for the monitoring of any risk factors.

A written monitoring report will be forwarded to the recipient. If there are findings through the monitoring, the monitoring report will specify the findings and provide a timetable for corrective action. The contractor will be required to submit a written response indicating the corrective actions that will be instituted to address deficiencies and a time-frame for instituting the corrective actions. The plan will be reviewed by the Local Board and mutually agreed upon between the Local Board and provider.

SWN leadership routinely monitors WIOA program, administrative and financial activities, as well as performance metrics and indicators. This is accomplished through ongoing oversight and monthly reports. Program and financial reports are provided to the Workforce Board through the committee structure and updates are provided as part of meeting agendas.

SWN will notify the Maryland Department of Labor regarding technical assistance needs relative to the implementation and operation of WIOA. Technical assistance will be provided by SWN staff to sub-recipients and WIOA partners as needed. Cross-disciplinary training will be provided in WIOA regulations.

- (l) A description of the Local Board's policy and procedures regarding the safeguarding and handling of personally identifiable and confidential information (ex., physical and electronic files), including the incident response plan for loss of records.

SWN utilizes a Confidentiality Certification Policy/Form which states and informs all SWN staff that they may be exposed to certain confidential data which could include data related to participants and businesses and such data may not be discussed with or revealed to anyone, in any manner, except to other persons also having authorization to the same data. Information is to be used only for purposes of performing duties on the job.

The Local Board's procedures will comply with TEGl 39-11 and MD Policy Issuance 2019-04. Local WIOA Partners will ensure referral processes, data sharing, case records and other PII data and processes being jointly developed comply with partner agency requirements.

Upon discovery of a security breach whether physical or electronic, SWN will make appropriate notifications consistent with MD Policy Issuance 2019-04.

Local file backup details include the use of a backup server. In addition, monthly full backups take place at

least once every four hours. Backup jobs and files are encrypted.

- (J) A description of the Local Board's procurement system, including a statement of assurance that the procedures conform to the standards in DOL regulations set forth in 29 CFR Part 95, Part 97 and 2 CFR 200. Note, this should include details on how the Local Board would award emergency contracts when current contracts have been eliminated for just cause, in accordance with the Local Board's procurement system.

The Local Board assures the its procurement procedures conform to the standards in US DOL regulations set forth in 29 CFR Part 95, Part 97 and 2 CFR 200.

#### Policy for Purchasing Supplies, Equipment and Services

The Executive Committee is designated Procurement Authority, within the policies stated herein, and is authorized to delegate this responsibility to the Executive Director.

The procurement authority of the Executive Director shall be limited to the approved budget amount for each category and shall not be exceeded without the approval of the Executive Committee.

Such authority includes the right and responsibility to question specific quantities, quality and necessity for items requested, in order that the best interests of the SWN may be served.

It is the objective to procure necessary supplies, equipment and services at reasonable prices, in adequate quantities, of satisfactory quality and on schedule from reliable suppliers.

Supplies, construction, lease/rental, equipment and services, including policies of insurance or surety company bonds, services of members of the medical or legal profession, or other personal services involving professional expert advice, costing less than \$10,000 may be purchased without solicitation of competitive quotations if the price is determined reasonable based on research, experience or purchase history.

#### Policy for Purchasing Small Purchase Items

Supplies, construction, lease/rental, equipment and services, including policies of insurance or surety company bonds, services of members of the medical or legal professionals, or other personal services involving professional expert advice, costing \$10,000 or more, but less than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, may be purchased after soliciting quotations from two (2) or more qualified suppliers.

Purchases of equipment of \$5,000 or more require written approval from the Maryland Department of Labor.

#### Bid Solicitation

Competitive bids, as appropriate, will be based on local written procurement policy. A designated staff person shall prepare the bid specification and general conditions.

#### Policy for Purchasing by Sealed Bids

Typically Sealed Bids are for fixed price amounts, either lump sum or unit prices.

Supplies, construction, lease/rental, equipment and services, including policies of insurance or surety company bonds, services of members of the medical or legal professionals, or other personal services

involving professional expert advice, costing the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, or more may be purchased by Sealed Bid from the lowest responsible bidder meeting specifications after advertising for bids.

Whenever bids are advertised and solicited in accordance with these regulations, the bid proposals must be received by the Executive Director or his/her designee in sealed form. The bids will be opened publicly in accordance with the general conditions and specifications prepared by the SWN. After they are opened, they will be referred to the appropriate SWN committee by the Executive Director for final analysis and recommendation for awarding and will be subsequently awarded by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall accept the lowest bid or bids, kind, quality, and materials being equal, but have the authority to reject any or all bids or select a single item from any bid.

#### Policy for Procurement by Competitive Proposals

Typically, Competitive Proposals are for cost reimbursement amounts or fixed price contracts.

Supplies, construction, lease/rental, equipment and services, including policies of insurance or surety company bonds, services of members of the medical or legal professionals, or other personal services involving professional expert advice, costing the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, or more may be purchased by appropriately publicized Competitive Proposals. Contracts will be awarded to the responsible firm whose price and other factors are considered most advantageous.

Advertisement shall mean a notice published at least ten (10) days before the award date of any contract in one or more newspapers qualified to accept legal advertising, of general circulation in the Susquehanna Workforce Area. In addition to public advertisement, bids may be solicited directly from such persons as may be deemed reliable and competent to furnish the item or items required.

Notwithstanding the other provisions of this policy, the Executive Committee may, upon affirmative vote of the majority of the Committee, permit advertisement for bids on an emergency basis at such times as the Executive Committee determines that the best interest of the SWN warrants the shortening of the time for advertisements of bids otherwise provided. In such circumstances, bids may be solicited by advertisements published and made available electronically at least two (2) separate days prior to the opening of bids.

#### Exceptions to Bid Solicitation Requirements/Sole Source Procurements

Provisions as to advertising and bidding set forth above shall not apply to the following classes of purchases or others as the SWN may from time to time adopt:

1. Lease/Rental of real property.
2. Purchase of potential or manufactured products offered for sale on a non-competitive market or solely by a manufacturer's authorized dealer.
3. Purchases made through the State or against Federal purchase contracts.
4. Contracts with public utility service companies under tariffs on file with the Public Utility Commission, contracts made with another subdivision of the State of Maryland, the Federal Government, and any agency of the State of Maryland or any municipal or county authority.
5. Purchase of supplies and equipment requiring parts or components being procured as

replacement parts in support of equipment specifically designed by the manufacturer, where data available is not adequate to assure that the part or component is identical with the part it is to replace or where contemplated procurement is to match or complement equipment or components previously purchased.

6. Purchase of technical, non-personal services in connection with the assembly, installation or servicing, or instruction of personnel therein, of equipment of a highly specialized or technical nature.

(K) A description of any documentation to demonstrate that the acquisition, management, and disposition of property adhere to the Property Management Procedures taken from USDOL regulations 29 CFR Part 97 and 29 CFR Part 95.

The SWN assures that procedures related to the contracts for acquisition, management and disposition of property adhere to the standards in the Property Management Procedures taken from DOL regulations 29 CFR Part 97 and 29 CFR Part 95. All property is tagged and logged into inventory that contain; description, serial number, acquisition date and cost, location, funding and vendor from which purchased.

(L) A description of any policies or procedures the Local Board adopted to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts in the exercise of their responsibilities, particularly those related to the awarding of contracts.

No officer, employee or agent of the Local Board shall:

Solicit or accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value, except meals, from suppliers or participate in the selection or award of procurement where to the individual's knowledge of the following has a financial or other substantive interest in any organization which may be considered for an award:

The officer, employee or agent, any member of his/her family, his/her partner, a person or organization which employs any of the above with whom any of the above has an arrangement concerning prospective employment.

Local Board members must:

- Recuse themselves from participation if there is a real or perceived conflict of interest;
- Advise the Board of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest;
- Ask the Board for guidance if there is doubt as to whether a specific situation involves or constitutes a real or perceived conflict of interest;
- Complete and sign the Board conflict of interest policy and acknowledgement form annually.

(M) A description of the Local Board or fiscal agent's accounting procedures, including the procedures used in preparing reports to the State. In addition to the requirement that all financial transactions be conducted in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), the fiscal management system must include the following in the accounting procedures. This description must address how the fiscal system:

- Tracks funding types, funding amounts, obligations, expenditures and assets;
- Permits the tracking of program income, stand-in costs, and leveraged funds; and.

- Is adequate to prepare financial reports required by the State.

The SWN, as the fiscal agent, utilizes the SAGE AccPac ERP accounting system. The system tracks grants by cost center numbers.

This system tracks assets, liabilities, expenditures and program income. Obligations are tracked by supplemental Excel worksheets. Stand-in costs and leveraged funds tracked manually.

Financial reports will be processed on the accounting system for all expenses incurred by the grant or funding source and by sub-item. State required financial reports are prepared based upon the monthly financial reports.

(N) An identification of key staff who will be working with WIOA funds.

The Local Board staff working with WIOA funds will include a Fiscal and Human Resources Manager, a Fiscal Specialist and an Administrative Assistant. The oversight of all fiscal functions is the responsibility of the Executive Director.

(O) A description of how the Local Board's (or fiscal agent's) financial system will permit tracking of funds to a level adequate to establish that funds have not been used in violation of WIOA standards or USDOL regulations.

The Local Board's financial system will permit tracking of funds to a level adequate to establish that funds have not been used in violation of WIOA standards or DOL regulations by the following established procedures:

REVENUE: When revenue is received, it is recorded by Administrative Assistant then forwarded to fiscal department. Fiscal and Human Resource Manager codes the item to the appropriate cost center and enters it into the system.

PURCHASE ORDERS: SWN utilizes a purchase order system which includes review and approval by the Department Manager, the Fiscal and Human Resource Manager and the Executive Director.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE: SWN utilizes an accounts payable system whereby purchase orders are matched to invoices by the Fiscal Specialist. The invoices are then checked for accuracy by the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager and entered into the accounting system by the Fiscal Specialist. Each batch is then checked by the Fiscal and Human Resource Manager before the checks are generated. The checks, invoices and related purchase orders are forwarded to the Executive Director for review and approval. Upon signature, the Fiscal Specialist prepares the checks to be mailed and files the backup. Non-purchase order items (i.e. contract payments) are processed similarly except invoices are matched to original contracts instead of purchase orders.

(P) Provide a brief description of the following:

- Fiscal reporting system,
- Obligation control system,
- ITA payment system,



- Chart of account system,
- Accounts payable system,
- Staff payroll system,
- Participant payroll system, and
- Participant stipend payment system

Obligations are tracked monthly by utilizing an Excel spreadsheet which identifies the amount of funds restricted for training and each obligation. The report is prepared by the Fiscal Specialist and reviewed by the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager. Copies are available to be shared on a monthly basis.

The Fiscal and Human Resources Manager is responsible for the obligational control.

The Local Board's obligational control system provides the ability to compare, on a monthly basis, actual accrued expenditures and current budgeted amounts for each of its MD Labor/DWDAL funded grants.

All journal entries are approved by Management and entered into the system by the Fiscal Department. Periodically during the year, the Executive Director will review all journal entries. Deobligation requests are generated by staff and reviewed, approved and coded by the appropriate manager/coordinator. The documents are forwarded to the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager, who then reviews the deobligation for accuracy and completeness. The Fiscal and Human Resources Manager then forwards the requests to the Fiscal Specialist to enter into the Excel obligational control spreadsheet.

The SWN shall enter into a financial agreement with each vendor that it will be using for ITA programs. This Agreement will describe the roles and responsibilities of the training provider, including the ITA payment system. Upon the enrollment of a WIOA client into a training program with an eligible ITA training provider, the SWN will provide the selected training provider with an authorization form for that individual. The authorization form will include the total amount of costs for tuition and fees that will be paid by the SWN. After the authorization form is received, the training provider can submit an invoice form to the SWN, which sets forth all approved tuition and fees for the WIOA client. Payment for properly charged tuition and fees shall be made by the SWN in a timely manner.

The chart of accounts is set up by cost center. Each grant has its own cost center code. In addition, each grant has a revenue and program income account. The chart of accounts is structured as follows:

Account Series

1000	Assets
2000	Accounts Payable/Liabilities
3000	Payroll
4000	Fund Balances
5000	Revenues
6000 – 9000	Expenses

The Fiscal Department verifies that invoices are accurate according to the quantity received as compared to the quantity invoiced. The prices charged are checked against the purchase order. The Fiscal and Human Resources Manager verifies the accuracy of codes and computations on all vouchers. The vouchers are

entered into the computer system, after which the accounts payable batch is checked and verified by the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager, and checks are then printed and forwarded to the Executive Director for signature. The batches are then posted to the General Ledger.

Time and attendance reports are completed by each employee and verified by the employee's supervisor. All leave requests are approved by the supervisor. The time and attendance report is entered into the computer payroll system and a payroll register is generated by the Fiscal Specialist. The payroll register is then checked by the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager. The checks are generated and forwarded to the Executive Director for signature. Payroll is then posted to General Ledger. Periodically during the year, the Executive Director reviews the Payroll Control Sheet, Payroll Register and the Direct Deposit Deduction Summary.

Any participant payroll will be processed in the same manner as staff payroll.

Upon enrollment of the participant, the counselor completes support services determination form. An obligation and expenditure record is established for the participant. Timesheets, signed by the participant and the instructor, are forwarded to the Fiscal Specialist. The payments are calculated based on actual attendance. The information is then entered into the accounts payable system and checks are processed according to the accounts payable system. The checks are mailed to the participants.

Financial reporting will be processed on SWN's accounting system (SAGE AccPac ERP) for all expenses incurred by the grant or funding source and by sub-item. State required financial reports are prepared based upon monthly financial reports.

(Q)A description of the Local Board's (or fiscal agent's) cash management system, providing assurance that no excess cash will be kept on hand, and that procedures are in place to monitor cash.

The Fiscal and Human Resources Manager generates and reviews status of funds reports several times each week. The review of the status of funds on a monthly basis by the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager, Executive Director, and Chair of the Local Board's Finance Committee will ensure that no excessive cash will be held by the Local Board, in accordance with Federal and State regulations. Bank statements are reconciled by the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager and approved by the Executive Director generally within 10 days of receipt. Outstanding checks are resolved and/or written off after 2 years.

The Local Board requisitions funds from the State on an as-needed basis. The requisitions are completed by the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager and submitted on behalf of the Harford County Government to the Maryland Department of Labor. State funds are received through ACH (Automatic Clearing House) by Harford County Government, who then releases funds by ACH to the Local Board based on a direct payment request completed by the Fiscal and Human Resources Manager. Vendors are paid on a weekly basis; staff payroll is paid on a bi-weekly basis. All vendors and subgrantees are paid on a reimbursement basis. Certain subgrantees may be paid using a cash advance method. Payments are reimbursed in accordance with the terms outlined in each specific Agreement.

(R)A description of the Local Board's cost allocation procedures including:

- Identification of different cost pools,
- Procedures for distribution of staff costs between cost categories (Administrative cost, program cost and indirect cost),
- Procedures used for distribution of funds from each cost pool,
- Description of funds included in each cost pool, and
- Description of cost allocation plans for AJCs.

### **Cost Pools**

The Local Board currently has the following cost pools: Administrative, Program, fringe benefit, and building cost pools. The Local Board reserves the right to develop additional cost pools as needed.

### **Distribution of staff costs**

Personnel serving one funding source are directly charged to that funding source. The personnel costs that cannot be directly charged to one funding source are distributed to the cost pools.

The distribution of staff costs from the cost pools is determined by the hours reported on time sheets. Staff salaries will be charged to the appropriate funding source based on hours worked. Leave will be distributed using the same percentage as hours worked for the period.

Fringe benefits will be pooled and a monthly distribution of costs will be made to each funding source based on the percentage of hours worked in each month. The percentage of the staff hours will be used to determine the distribution of the cost of operating the Administrative Office and Counseling Offices.

### **Distribution of funds from each cost pool**

**Administrative Cost Pool:** On a monthly basis, program expenditures for each funding source are totaled. These expenditures are then divided into categories, which consist of the aggregate of all program expenditures for each individual funding source. The totals of these expenditures are then utilized to determine the percentage each individual WIOA and non-WIOA funding source will be charged. After the percentage of program expenditures is determined, the administrative costs are then tracked to each funding source on a monthly basis. On an annual basis, the administrative cost pool department is allocated to the various funding sources.

**Program Cost Pool:** Like administrative costs, the program costs are captured in a separate department in the automated accounting system. The procedure for allocating the program costs will consist of one of the following methods:

The procedure currently in use for allocating program costs is based on percentage of direct program expenditures for each grant.

Program costs may be charged based on total number of participants. A percentage for each grant is calculated and indirect costs allocated accordingly.

Program costs may be charged based on total number of terminations. A percentage of terminations for each grant is calculated and indirect costs allocated according to those percentages.

### **Funds included in each cost pool**

Both Administrative and Program cost pools include WIOA funds and all other funds.

### **Cost allocation plans for Workforce Center**

1. Costs will be allocated proportionally across funding sources.
2. Once the total cost of the system has been determined, each partner's financial obligation is assessed. Costs are proportionally distributed among partners who may pay their fair share:
  - a. in cash
  - b. through contributions, or
  - c. through a combination of cash and contributions.
3. A three-step process to allocate system costs, including costs of services:
  - a. Shared system and service costs will be allocated by an appropriate methodology as outlined in the Partner Agreement, to assign costs to partners.
  - b. Assess affordability, resources, etc. If costs do not appear to be affordable, review service plan to determine potential adjustments. If costs can be covered, proceed with allocation from partners.
  - c. Conduct periodic reviews of the cost of operating the workforce center system and how costs are being allocated. Revise the allocation plan as appropriate.

(S) A description of the Local Board's (or fiscal agent's) procedure for collecting debts involving WIOA Funds.

In the event that a debt is established with a subcontractor as a result of an audit or error, the first preference is to collect cash. Such a request will be made by a registered letter if collection cannot be made via informal means. The second preference will be through a reduction in payment if the subcontractor is still providing services. However, if debt cannot be collected through both preferences, the Local Board will forward the case to its attorney for collection proceedings.

## 2020-2024 Local Plan Assurances

*The following checklist and signed certification must be included in the submitted Local Plan. Check the following boxes to accept the assurances listed below.*

	<b>Assurance</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), for the 2020-2024 Plan, the Local Board has held at least one public comment period of no less than 30 days to obtain input into the development of the Local Plan and to provide the opportunity for comment by representative of business, labor organizations, education, other key stakeholders, and the general public.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. The final Local Plan is available and accessible to the general public.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. The Local Board has established procedures to ensure public access (including people with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4. The Local Board makes publicly-available any local requirements for the Local Area, such as policies, including policies for the use of WIOA Title I funds.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5. The Local Board has established a written policy or procedure that identifies circumstances that might present conflict of interest for any local workforce investment board or entity that they represent, and provides for the resolution of conflicts.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6. The Local Board has copies of memoranda of understanding between the Local Board and each American Job Center partner concerning the operation of the American Job Center delivery system in the Local Area, and has provided the State with the latest versions of its memoranda of understanding.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7. The Local Board has written policy or procedures that ensure American Job Center operator agreements are reviewed and updated no less than once every three years.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8. The Local Board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting One-Stop operators, awarding contracts under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth service provision under WIOA Title I in accordance with applicable state and local laws, rules, and regulations, provided no conflict exists with WIOA.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9.	The Local Board has procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA Title I individual training accounts.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10.	The Local Board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11.	The Local Board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service American Job Center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and Local Board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12.	All partners in the local workforce and education system described in this plan ensure the physical, programmatic and communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials in the Local Area's American Job Centers for individuals with disabilities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13.	The Local Board ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from American Job Center services.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14.	The Local Board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15.	The Local Board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188, and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16.	The Local Board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188 of WIOA.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17.	The Local Board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the American Job Center environment for political activities, and the Local Board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18.	The Local Board ensures that American Job Center staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers that are demand-driven and consistent with MD Labor policy.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	19.	The Local Board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records including, but not limited to, 20 C. F. R. 603, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable State laws, Departmental regulations and policies.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20.	The Local Board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (or applicable federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	21.	The Local Board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth program and the Wagner-Peyser Act funds.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	22.	The Local Board ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23.	The Local Board has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24.	The Local Board has a written policy and procedures for ensuring management and inventory of all properties obtained using WIOA funds, including property purchased with JTPA or WIA funds and transferred to WIOA, and that comply with WIOA, and, in the cases of local government, Local Government Property Acquisition policies.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25.	The Local Board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	26.	The Local Board has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career services and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	27.	The Local Board has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	28.	The Local Board has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIOA Title I programs.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	29.	The Local Board has a written policy for priority of service at its American Job Centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites and for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30.	The Local Board has developed plans and strategies for maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the Local Area through the American Job Center delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	31.	The Local Board will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities unless providing the accommodation would cause undue hardship.

The Local Workforce Development Board for Susquehanna Workforce Area certifies that it complies with all required components and assurances of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act plan development guidelines issued by the State of Maryland. The Local Board also assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Wagner-Peyser Act, and their regulations, written U.S. Department of Labor guidance implementing these laws, Office of Management and Budget circulars, and all other applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Danielle Hornberger, County Executive, Cecil County

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Cassilly, County Executive, Harford County

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Ann Bogarty, President,  
Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Justus, Executive Director,  
Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\* Signature pages and Statement of Concurrence available on PDF Version