

## **Overview of requirements for the Regional and Local Plans**

### **The State Plan and Its Relationship to Regional and Local Plans**

The State Plan is the controlling state policy document for regional and local plans. It sets the state's policy direction for these plans, and serves as a conceptual map for Local WDBs and their partners to jointly develop the regional and local plans required by WIOA.

The State Plan has three policy objectives and an overarching stretch goal. The narrative content of regional and local plans should be tailored to address how Local Boards and their planning partners will help California reach its policy objectives and goals. The policy objectives of the State Plan are the following:

1. Fostering “demand-driven skills attainment” – Workforce and education programs need to align program content with the state's industry sector needs so as to provide California's employers and businesses with the skilled workforce necessary to compete in the global economy.
2. Enabling upward mobility for all Californians, including populations with barriers to employment – Workforce and education programs need to be accessible for all Californians and ensure that everyone has access to a marketable set of skills, and is able to access the level of education necessary to get a good job that ensures both long term economic self-sufficiency and economic security.
3. Aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs and services – Workforce and education programs need to economize limited resources to achieve scale and impact, while also providing the right services to customers, based on each customer's particular and potentially unique needs, including any needs for skills-development.

The goal of the State Plan is to produce a million “middle-skill” industry-valued and recognized post-secondary credentials between 2017 and 2027.

These credentials are broadly defined here as sub-baccalaureate credentials with demonstrable labor market value, including industry-recognized certificates, or certifications, or certificates of completion of apprenticeship, or professional licenses, recognized by California or the federal government, as well as industry-valued associate degrees that facilitate movement into either the labor market or longer term educational programs aligned with the state's workforce needs. During this time the state will also double the number of people enrolled in apprenticeship programs.

### **The Function of Regional Plans**

Regional plans and partnerships required by WIOA function under California's State Plan as the primary mechanism for aligning educational and training provider services with regional industry sector needs in California's fourteen WIOA Regional Planning Units (RPU). California state law requires coordination between the K-12, Community Colleges, and WIOA systems and requires the use of sector strategies as the operational framework for the state's workforce system.

These two state mandated requirements are met under the State Plan by making federally required WIOA regional plans and partnerships the primary mechanism for aligning educational and training programs with regional industry sector needs. As such, the main aim of regional plans is the development of “regional sector pathway” programs, by which the identification,

utilization, and servicing of career pathway programs are aligned with regional industry sector needs in each of the RPUs.

### 1. Regional Sector Pathways

The purpose of “regional sector pathways” is to ensure that demand industries in each region are having their workforce needs met while also ensuring that students, workers, and other individuals, including individuals from populations with barriers to employment, have the opportunity to develop the requisite skills in-demand in their respective regional labor markets, and that the proper remediation and other supportive services are available to ensure participants can succeed. Regional sector pathway programs should ultimately result in the attainment of industry-recognized post-secondary credentials by those who complete these programs.

The State recognizes that completing “regional sector pathway” programs will take longer for some individuals (e.g., those with basic skills related challenges) than it will for others. Nevertheless, it is the intent of the State Plan that regional partners develop regional sector pathway programs in a manner that makes relevant training and education programs accessible for those who face barriers to employment, including individuals from target populations. As a result, regional partners will need to not only identify relevant regional sector pathways, but also partner to provide the services needed to ensure the successful completion of pathway programs by those who enter them.

Local Boards and their partners should develop partnerships with relevant organizations and CBOs who specialize in providing services to target populations to help ensure that individuals from relevant target populations can participate in regional sector pathway programs, and that career pathway programmatic elements are in place to meet the needs of target populations. For example, including the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and Independent Living Centers in partnership efforts will help ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of these programs for individuals with disabilities.

### 2. Regional Organizing and Planning Efforts

Regional sector pathways are expected to be identified and developed through regional planning and organizing efforts that involve industry sector leaders, organized labor, community colleges, K-12 programs, Adult Schools, Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG) Consortia, regionally organized Local Boards operating jointly in RPUs, CBOs, business associations, and regional economic development agencies.

Regional planning efforts may involve a broader group of partners and efforts should be inclusive, taking into consideration the characteristics, demographics, and nature of each region so as to ensure that relevant stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input to and feedback on the regional plan and the regional sector pathways emphasized by the regional plan. For example, in those areas of the state where limited English proficient and foreign born are a significant share of the population and/or workforce, efforts should be made to include CBOs representing and serving these communities in the planning process.

To reduce duplication of effort, regional organizing and planning efforts undertaken under WIOA are expected to be informed by, aligned with, and build upon other relevant regional planning efforts undertaken by planning partners. Existing regional planning by AEBGs and Community College consortia, and SlingShot coalitions, for example, could serve to inform WIOA planning efforts and coordination activities between the partners. Any regional planning efforts conducted

prior to the passage of WIOA or issuance of state Regional and Local Planning guidance can serve as a foundation for WIOA regional planning to the extent that prior plans are relevant to and consistent with the intent and policy requirements of WIOA regional plans.

### **The Specific Requirements of a Regional Plan (aka the “A-H requirements”)**

The WIOA legislation, Section 106(c) “Regional Coordination”, identifies eight RPU requirements, referred to, hereafter as the “A-H RPU” requirements. These include the following:

- A. The preparation of a regional plan;
- B. The establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements;
- C. The development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region;
- D. The collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the State);
- E. The establishment of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region;
- G. The coordination of transportation and other supportive services, as appropriate, for the region. The coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers; and
- H. The establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, performance accountability measures

### **The Function of Local Plans**

Under the State Plan, the primary purpose of local workforce plans and partnerships is to facilitate access to workforce services at the local level.

While WIOA Regional Plans and partnerships are specifically focused on constructing a regional training and education architecture that aligns with regional labor markets, individuals will access and experience this regional workforce architecture primarily through local service delivery efforts, principally those of WIOA partners operating in the America’s Job Center of California (AJCC) system, formally known as a One-Stop Career Centers, but potentially through other partners of the workforce system as well. In this regard, it is typically at the local level where services will be integrated, resources braided, and supportive services provided to individuals being served by the partners.

Local workforce development plans are required to ensure a baseline level of WIOA core program alignment compliant with federal regulations at the local level, in and through AJCCs (the state’s One-Stop system) so that core program and mandated services are coordinated, and when appropriate, integrated to make accessible a menu of customizable services available

to customers on the basis of their needs (e.g., programs should be accessible to individuals with disabilities and those that are limited English proficient and, in general, should be customer-centered such that customers can access the relevant services for which they are eligible).

Additionally, AJCCs are required to operate as an access point for “regional sector pathway” programs. As such, local plans and AJCC MOUs should reflect the strategic vision of the relevant WIOA RPU regional plan such that AJCCs are operating as an “on ramp” or “gateway” to the “Regional Sector Pathways” programs either built-out or identified through the regional planning process. In developing these “on ramps,” Local Boards should consider alternative ways to provide services and the necessary supports to guarantee access for members of populations with barriers to employment to ensure that they move through the system seamlessly.

Under the California State WIOA Plan, AJCCs will continue to provide the full menu of One-Stop services, including services now known under WIOA as “career services,” and AJCCs will continue to provide as labor exchange services, especially for those dislocated workers who do not need further training to reenter the labor market. However, the State Plan mandates a greater emphasis on treating AJCCs as an access point for education and training services for those who want and need them. Moreover, local plans and AJCC MOUs must provide more emphasis on coordinating and aligning program services across WIOA core programs to best serve relevant client populations.

### **Background on Regional and Local Plan Development for the North Bay**

The North Bay WIOA service areas of Marin/Napa/Lake, Sonoma, Mendocino and Solano have had a long history of working collaboratively under the North Bay Employment Connection (NBEC) collaborative. The Governor designated this same grouping to now be the WIOA-compliant “North Bay Regional Planning Unit” (RPU.)

Both a Regional Plan (covering the six counties) and individual Local Plans (for the four service areas) are now due to be prepared and submitted.

The NBEC Steering Committee assessed the work to be undertaken and decided to secure the services of a professional consultant to develop and finalize (write) the North Bay Regional Plan. Each of the four local service areas will then develop its own Local Plan, which must be supportive of the Regional Plan.

### **Supplemental State Funding for Regional Plan Development**

The State made discretionary WIOA funding available for each of the State’s 14 RPUs to assist in the development of the Regional Plans. The North Bay RPU received \$57,234.00.

The NBEC Steering Committee approved that Solano County would serve as the grants administrator for this \$57,234.00 grant. The State subsequently modified these funds in to Solano’s WIOA grants.

The Solano WDB thus took responsibility (with an allowable 10% maximum for administration) to carry forth the established plan to secure the services of a qualified professional consultant to develop and finalize a compliant North Bay WIOA Regional Plan.