

## WIOA Regional Plan – Capital Region

January 2018

### **a. Regional Service Strategies, including cooperative service delivery agreements.**

The Capital Region Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) have shared strategies and ideas for decades between their local workforce development areas (LWDAs). In addition, we have jointly pursued regional grant opportunities for many years to benefit all three LWDAs. These successful grant awards have led to cooperative projects and in some cases cooperative service agreements. Notable examples resulting from these joint activities include, but are not limited to:

- The development and ongoing operation of the Greater Capital Region Workforce Coalition. This coalition, coordinated by the WDBs in our region and the FMS WDB in an adjacent region, encompasses dozens of regional education, economic development, state/local agencies and community agencies. The group convenes quarterly to discuss and share workforce initiatives and topics of interest. The goal is to share information, develop collaboration and establish connections to benefit workforce customers throughout the region. The ongoing funding of the coalition is shared by the WDBs.
- A recent federal grant, the Workforce Innovation Fund, that was operated regionally led to regional service delivery meetings with career center staff from all of our career centers. This also led to development of some joint service delivery approaches and use of common workforce information, materials and presentations.

The pursuit of these grants not only led to the above regional activities but also generated flexibility to free up local WIA/WIOA funds that could be used to for additional services and training for center services.

In addition to the above, our WDBs have collaborated on specific regional training initiatives. We worked jointly with a coalition of regional breweries to establish a commercial craft brew training program. This was accomplished in cooperation with Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) and Shmaltz Brewing which led the effort. We have also collaborated with SCCC and AlbanyCanCode to assist with their training efforts for the delivery of software coding training. These activities have also led to discussions with SCCC to identify additional opportunities for further collaboration. Finally, our WDBs regularly communicate and share information regarding trends and services as well as other topics of joint interest.

**b. Sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations.**

WDBs in the region have participated in a variety of both joint and individual sector initiatives.

- Most recently, the regional boards collaborated on a manufacturing study funded by a NYS DOL grant that produced an inventory of manufacturing training, a career ladder tool, recruitment suggestions and a SWOT analysis. In addition, as a result of this study, Hudson Valley Community College developed a manufacturing pathways training program to prepare individuals for entry level manufacturing jobs incorporating both on-line and hands-on components. This sector grant study included WDBs, economic development (CEG), a union representative and manufacturing representatives to serve as an oversight team to guide activities. A broader feedback group included dozens of invited representatives from education, economic development, business and more.
- The area WDBs collaborated with commercial craft brewers and SCCC to initiate a short-term non-credit entry level training program to meet industry employment needs. SCCC has since expanded related program offerings to include certificate and degree options along with an international credential.
- SCCC has recently expanded their successful Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) program to include neighboring areas in the region. They have collaborated with FMS Community College and SUNY Adirondack to expand the reach of their program. Local career centers partner to assist with referrals and additional services and other community based organizations work with the colleges to operate the recruitment and coordinate services needed to support students.
- This year marks the fifth year of the Adult Machine Tool Technology training program in the Saratoga-Warren-Washington(SWW) LWDA. This is an employer driven collaboration between the SWW WDB, WSWHE BOCES, and business partners with assistance from the Workforce Development Institute (WDI). Businesses design the program, select the instructor, participate in the recruitment and trainee selection and assist during the program.
- The Hospitality Academy pilot program in Albany served hard to place city residents aged 18-24 to address staffing needs in the hospitality industry. This program provided 12 weeks of career readiness, customer service, financial literacy and industry specific training to prepare participants to enter the field with the skills, knowledge and certifications needed to begin work upon graduation. Sector partners included the City of Albany, the WDB, SEFCU, The Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau and three local hotels.
- The Warren County Career Center partners with the EDC of Warren County to deliver various short term courses and credentials related to handling of hazardous materials

through an EPA grant received by the City of Glens Falls and administered by the EDC. The career center assists with recruitment and employment preparation skills. The credentialed training translates to jobs in both environmental industries and manufacturing.

- The SWW WDB teamed up with Saratoga Economic Development Corp. and WSWHE BOCES to plan and deliver the inaugural Career Jam 2017. Other planning partners included a local school district and a business representative. This event offered a one-day hands-on career exploration event for eighth and ninth grade students from local school districts. This event is designed to highlight local career possibilities in 16 general career clusters. Career Jam is a hands-on event designed to engage students and to encourage them to look at careers that are relevant to where we live. Employers and unions were required to develop interactive activities for youth to do as they visited their exhibit. A variety of STEM and middle skills jobs as well as advanced occupations were highlighted at this event serving over 700 students and 40+ businesses. The event was well received by businesses, school staff and students with school staff looking forward to bringing many more students next year.
- SWW Career center staff partner with representatives of business, the community college and others to plan the Job Discovery Job Fair. This event now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year hosted at SUNY Adirondack provides job opportunities and employment workshops for interested job seekers and employers.
- The SWW WDB is launching a sector based initiative partnering with education, economic development and other business organizations to convene businesses grouped by industry sector to identify needs related to awareness, assessment, recruitment and training. The team would then coordinate with board committees to identify priorities and initiatives to deliver solutions.

**c. The collection and analysis of regional labor market data.**

The Capital Region's three local Workforce Development Boards have a long history of collecting and utilizing labor market data to inform decision making regarding regional initiatives and local service delivery options. The information we utilize comes from both formal and informal sources.

Our regional NYS DOL Labor Market Analyst consistently provides us with occupational, employment, and industry data. The Analyst's expertise is utilized to help us identify the region's growth, shrinking and emerging industries. The data provided is also the basis for identifying our local and regional in-demand occupations. Our Analyst is a regular presenter at our quarterly Workforce Coalition meetings, providing the WDBs and other workforce partners with in-depth information about our priority industries, the jobs they encompass, and the labor force issues that are impacting those industries. Presentations have included the following

industries: Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance, Finance & Insurance, and Professional, Scientific & Technical Services.

Real time labor market information is also considered an important resource for the regional Workforce Boards. All three Workforce Boards are kept current on the activities of the Capital Region's Business Service team. Their meeting agendas and minutes are consistently reviewed and analyzed. In addition, the WDB Directors keep up-to-date with the activities and the reports issued by the Capital Region's Economic Development Council. Finally, all three Director's consistently notify each other on important local workforce and business occurrences, through the sharing of new reports and published articles.

All of these sources are used by the Capital Region Workforce Development Boards to identify trends and issues facing the regional workforce. It is this data that informs decisions about developing new initiatives and pursuing grant opportunities and additional financial resources.

**d. The establishment of a regional spending plan that includes administrative cost arrangements between LWDBs and the pooling of funds where applicable.**

The Capital Region's local Workforce Development Boards have, in the past, developed regional budgets and spending plans when, as a region, we have been awarded special grant funds. We continue to be on the lookout for additional grant opportunities that may bring in the resources needed to implement appropriate regional programs and services. The pooling of our limited WIOA formula funds is not considered a viable or reasonable option. Currently, our only shared cost arrangement goes to support our quarterly Workforce Coalition meetings.

**e. The coordination of supportive services.**

The Capital Region's local Workforce Development Boards do not currently coordinate supportive services.

**f. The coordination of services with Economic Development partners.**

The Capital Region's local Workforce Development Boards have a long history of coordinating efforts with Economic Development partners. On a regional level, the Center for Economic Growth (CEG) is the premier economic development agency that serves all of our counties. On a local level each Workforce Development Board has ongoing partnerships with their local Economic Development agencies and economic development is represented on local boards.

For more than a decade CEG has partnered with our WDBs on all of our regional endeavors, including past state-funded Sector Partnership grants, our federal Workforce Innovation Fund project, and our current NEG sector partnership initiative. With each of these endeavors CEG has provided the services of a Business intermediary, promoting our efforts with large and small companies. They have helped us promote STEM careers by creating print and video promotional materials, by setting up business tours for Career Center staff, and by making

presentations to school boards and other community based organizations. For our current Manufacturing Sector Partnership initiative, CEG completed a research project on the workforce needs of regional manufactures, developed a local manufacturing career pathway, and conducted a SWOT analysis that is leading Hudson Valley Community College to develop a new, non-credit entry level training program for advanced manufacturing.

At the local level, each Workforce Development Board also has strong working relationships with their local economic development partners.

The Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady WDB has coordinated with CEG and the NYS Business Council on the development of industry-driven training projects in advanced manufacturing. They also have ongoing partnerships with local their local IDAs and Economic Development and Planning agencies utilizing a business services team approach. The teams work together to address the workforce needs of existing businesses and to develop service plans to attract new companies to the area. The local Chamber of Commences in the area are also catalysts for economic development and have a relationship with small to mid-size businesses. Many of the Chambers dovetail their economic development activities with workforce development. The Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce has a Workforce Readiness and Education Partnership subcommittee of their board, in which WDB staff are members, and hosts forums throughout the year bringing together workforce professionals, educators, and businesses.

The Columbia Greene WDB also works closely with our local Economic Development agencies to serve existing businesses and to help attract new companies to the area. Economic Development refers businesses to the Career Center to assist them with their recruitment and training needs. The Business Service Representative refers businesses to Economic Development whenever they need assistance with expansion efforts. In addition, we are currently in the process of growing our annual Career Fair into a twice-a-year event. Both county's Economic Development agencies are now equal partners in the organization of these events and the main catalyst for undergoing this expansion.

The SWW WDB partners with their local economic development agencies on a number of initiatives, including promoting career awareness for youth, coordinating employee and business recruitment, and offering short term training. Initiatives include planning for classes in middle skills IT jobs and EPA related credential training for handling hazardous materials. Last year, an inaugural "Career Jam" event was held for over seven-hundred 8th and 9th grade students in the SWW region. Over 40 businesses and unions provided interactive activities for the students, covering 16 career clusters relevant to the local area.

Our region looks forward to developing a closer working relationship with the Capital Region REDC. In their 2017 Progress Report, the REDC mentioned programs in which the regional/local WDBs have also been involved. This includes the Albany Can Code initiative, the health care SCCC/HPOG initiative, and the various activities around career pathways in advanced manufacturing. Recently a suggestion was made to the REDC workforce committee regarding exploring a regional soft skill preparation approach. We would also encourage some joint

membership of WDB members and REDC members. Finally, we would encourage regular meetings between the REDC and the WDBs to develop workforce strategies to jointly pursue.

**g. An agreement concerning performance accountability measure negotiation and reporting.**

The Capital Region's local Workforce Development Boards do not currently have such an agreement.