

2023 Biennial Modification to the Program Year 2021 – 2024 Local Plan

Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board



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I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and guidance published by California Workforce Development Board and Employment Development Department, the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB) has developed a four (4)-year Local Plan covering Program Years (PYs) 2021-2024. Following approval by state officials representing the Governor, the Plan became effective from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2025. This update to the PY 2021-2024 Local Plan constitutes its WIOA-required biennial modification. Following the approval of this modification by state representatives, it will become the official, active version of the Plan beginning on July 1, 2023, and remaining in effect through June 30, 2025.

FRWDB represents the City of Fresno and the County of Fresno and serves all communities within the county's boundaries. Pursuant to this partnership, a non-profit organization, the Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation (FAWIC), has been established and functions as the administrator for workforce programs within the Local Workforce Development Area. The local America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs) operate under the "Workforce Connection" brand in Fresno County. Throughout this Plan, for ease of review, the entity responsible for workforce program administration, oversight, and service delivery is generally referred to as FRWDB.

A. The Local Board's Vision for the PY 2021-2024 Local Plan

The FRWDB has developed the following mission and vision statements to guide its work:

Mission: Under a Joint Powers Authority established between the City and County of Fresno, the FRWDB works in partnership with the public and private sectors to assist local businesses in meeting their human capital needs. Workforce system providers screen and train prospective new employees and assist in upskilling existing employees. By offering quality referral and training services, directly linked to local industry needs, the local workforce system benefits unemployed and underemployed clients.

Vision: To fully engage all available public and private resources to ensure that the Fresno Regional Workforce Development system is the premier source for the human capital needs of growth industry clusters within Fresno County; to integrate education and workforce preparation to assist the best companies in Fresno County to remain and thrive in our local community, achieving sustainable economic growth; and to concurrently assist our unemployed and underemployed residents to achieve a higher quality of life by accessing careers in growth industry sectors.

During the process used to develop the original PY 2021-2024 Local Plan, members of the FRWDB participated in discussions regarding the direction of the local workforce system over the next four years. As a result of these discussions, the following priorities have been identified:

1. Commit to a career pathway focus. This has, ostensibly, been a priority for the workforce system for nearly a decade. Still, on a practical level, the focus

- remains on jobs. The jobs focus can be blended into a larger strategy that identifies a career path for every job seeker.
2. Expand our approach to service delivery to include considerations of an “emotional quotient” or fit between what matters to people and the jobs that they do. This is likely an undervalued component in the workforce system’s career planning process and a shift in this direction could yield better outcomes for local programs, particularly in terms of job retention and career progression.
 3. Ensure that every job seeker has the foundational skills to succeed in the world of work. These include strong communication, math, digital and “soft skills.” Critical thinking, problem solving, and adaptability are key to every worker’s success on the job.
 4. Create and implement more programs that contextualize instruction of basic skills into vocational programs. This includes programs where English as a second language and basic education skills are embedded into job-specific skills training.
 5. Recognizing the many needs, preferences, barriers, and goals of individuals seeking assistance from local workforce development programs, expand partnerships to create greater access to a broad range of services and support for customers. Such partnerships may include, for example, relationships with mental health agencies, immigrant and refugee assistance programs, and K-12 education agencies.
 6. Focus on assisting workers to develop greater “career agility” by teaching skills (e.g., digital technology, process management, accounting) that cut across jobs and industries.

Since these priorities were established by the FRWDB in early 2021, FRWDB management and staff, AJCC service providers, and workforce system partners have made progress in developing and implementing services, strategies, and approaches aligned with these priorities.

Section V of this plan summarizes these and other issues, strategies, approaches and key considerations that FRWDB and the system partners will examine over the four-year course of this plan.

B. Developing the WDB’s PY 2021-2024 Four-Year Plan

Development of the Local Plan was the result of FRWDB’s significant engagement with organizations and individuals throughout Fresno County who guide, contribute to, and benefit from workforce system services. A series of community and stakeholders’ forums were held, as were several “agency-to-agency” discussions with local partners. These are summarized in Appendix 1 to this Plan. Developing the plan also involved a process of reviewing and evaluating existing partnerships, services, and systems and identifying areas that can be strengthened. FRWDB’s executive leadership led the planning process on behalf of the local board. Completing the plan took nearly approximately six (6) months, after which it was made available for public review and comment, prior to being forwarded to the

California Workforce Development Board for review. During the biennial process to update the PY 2021-2024 Local Plan, FRWDB leadership utilized a similar strategy and, again, engaged stakeholders, the community, and workforce development board members in discussions about strengthening the system's services.

C. Impact of COVID-19 on Development of the PY 2021-2024 Plan and its Biennial Modification

Every aspect of developing the original PY 2021-2024 FRWDB Local Plan was influenced by the onset on COVID-19, the ensuing public health crisis, and the myriad effects of the pandemic on businesses, schools, government operations, and the local workforce development delivery system. While the stakeholders met, discussions were held, priorities were identified, and a new four (4)-year plan was developed, the influence of the pandemic on the planning process in late 2020 and early 2021 is undeniable, as its shaped stakeholders' views about the economy, the workforce, training, and virtually every aspect of the workforce system.

While the content of the original version of the plan frequently references the pandemic, most descriptions of activities and services, are described in a "non-pandemic" context. The FRWDB Local Plan is part of the PY 2021-2024 Regional Plan developed by the San Joaquin Valley and Associated Counties Regional Planning Unit. The PY 2021-2024 Regional Plan directly addresses core issues pertaining to the role of local boards and local workforce systems in economic and workforce recovery.

By the time that the 2023 biennial modification to the FRWDB Local Plan was being developed, circumstances had changed significantly. While COVID remained a concern, vaccines and various levels of post-infection immunity provided protection against transmission of the virus, thereby enabling partners to gather for in-person discussions about key elements of the plan. Furthermore, the re-opening of the economy and communities, both re-focused the efforts of the local workforce system and highlighted changing priorities for system partners in meeting the needs of job seekers and businesses. The system partners are keenly aware of changing attitudes, perceptions, needs, and priorities among customers and new approaches reflecting these changes have been embedded throughout this 2023 updated version of the plan.

II. WIOA CORE AND REQUIRED PARTNER COORDINATION

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) includes requirements for Local Boards to establish a framework for collaboration among state and local programs that are financially supported by nineteen distinct federal fund sources. Six (6) of these programs constitute the four (4) “core partners:” the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs; the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program; the WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Act Program; and the WIOA Title IV State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. The core partners, together with 13 other federally supported programs, make up the WIOA-mandated One-Stop partners. The FRWDB has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the organizations managing each federal program at the local level. The narrative that follows describes coordination with the WIOA core and other required program partners as prescribed by WIOA.

A. Coordination with AJCC Partners and WIOA Memorandum of Understanding

Throughout the last 40 years, FRWDB has built strong and effective relationships with state and local agencies that represent the One-Stop partner programs. Over the next four (4) years, FRWDB looks forward to further enhancing coordination with each of the workforce system partners.

B. Overview of Local One-Stop System Partners

Following is a summary of the local/regional organizations representing the 19 federal one-stop partner programs, with which the FRWDB has developed an MOU.

Federal Partner Programs	MOU Partner
WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth	Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board
WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy	State Center Adult Education Consortium West Hills Adult Education Consortium
WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser	Employment Development Department (EDD)
WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
Carl Perkins Career Technical Education	State Center Community College District West Hills Community College District
Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	SER – Jobs for Progress
Job Corps	Career Systems Development Corporation
Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)	California Indian Manpower, Inc.
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)	Proteus, Inc.
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	EDD
Youth Build	Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Employment Development Department
Community Services Block Grant	Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
Housing and Urban Development E&T(FHA)	Not applicable. <i>FHA does not receive funds for an Employment and Training Program</i>
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	EDD
Second Chance Act Grantee	GRID Alternatives
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CaWORKs	Fresno County Department of Social Services (DSS)

C. Memoranda of Understanding with System Partners

General roles and responsibilities of each partner listed above are:

- Continuous partnership building between all parties as outlined in the MOU.
- Continuous partnership building and planning responsive to State requirements.
- Continuous partnership between State and local representatives engaged in WIOA activities and related workforce preparation and development.
- Responsiveness to specific local and economic conditions, including employer needs.
- Adherence to strategic planning principles adopted by the WIOA for long range planning, including the requirement for continuous improvement.
- Adherence to common data collection and reporting, including needs for modification or change.
- Diligence in developing coordinated local leadership in workforce development.
- Responsiveness to participant/customer needs.
- Maintenance of system infrastructure.
- Shared technology and information.
- Performance management to measure the success of the local one-stop system overall and to enhance performance in a spirit of quality management and continuous improvement, and
- Identification of each partner's appropriate contribution to meeting the performance standards negotiated between the State of California and WDB.

The MOU also indicates that infrastructure costs shall be allocated as follows:

- EDD, DOR, DSS, Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission, California Indian Manpower, State Center Community College District contribute financially to the infrastructure costs, allocated by square footage and communication costs for each partner, as outlined in the Resource Sharing Agreement.
- Communication Costs: Each partner shall be allocated the communication costs at the site based upon the percentage of the number of square feet the partner commits to use relative to the total space.
- In addition, partners contribute through the provision of in-kind services, such as assisting with the AJCC's Self-Reliance Team, assisting individuals in the resource room, and providing receptionist staff.

D. Coordination with AJCC Partner Programs

The following information summarizes the ways in which FRWDB and the local workforce system collaborate with organizations managing the federally mandated One-Stop partner programs.

WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs: The three (3) formula-funded programs are administered by FRWDB. Services are delivered at one comprehensive and three affiliate America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs).

WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy: The State Center Adult Education Consortium, which serves Fresno and Madera counties and border communities in

Tulare County, and the West Hills Regional Consortium provide WIOA Title II adult education and literacy services in the local areas. Referrals are regularly made between the Title I and Title II programs and many participants are co-enrolled. When the California Department of Education solicits applications for services under the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program, FRWDB staff reviews applications to determine how they complement the Local Plan.

WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser: Wagner-Peyser staff is co-located in the Workforce Connection AJCC Centers in Fresno and Mendota. In addition, FRWDB and AJCC staff work with EDD to coordinate marketing and outreach to Unemployment Insurance claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services. EDD and FRWDB also collaborate on Rapid Response orientations for laid off workers.

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation: WIOA Title IV staff is co-located at the Comprehensive Workforce Connection Center. WIOA and DOR staff are cross trained in the eligibility requirements for each partner's services in order to ensure appropriate referrals. Regular meetings are held to discuss and enhance the referral process and co-enrollments. DOR staff is available to provide technical assistance and training to AJCC and partner staff in the areas of disability awareness, assistive technology, and the use of competitive integrated employment.

Carl Perkins Career Technical Education: The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is a principal source of federal funding to states and discretionary grantees for the improvement of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs across the nation. The purpose of the act is to more fully develop the academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs. The community colleges and the adult schools, which are the primary recipients of Perkins funding in Fresno County, regularly make referrals to and receive referrals from staff of the AJCCs.

Title V Older Americans Act: SER – Jobs for Progress operates the Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP) that serves Fresno County Residents. The program offers outreach, intake, and orientation services; provides information and referrals to supportive services available to eligible individuals; provides group presentations; provides older Americans workshops; provides group counseling services; offers short-term pre-vocational services; enrolls eligible seniors who are 55+, low income, and have barriers to employment; and provides part-time, temporary on the job training through community service assignments at local nonprofits and government agencies to enrolled participants.

Job Corps: Program representatives conduct eligibility determination for Job Corps services. Their principal activity at the AJCC is to promote the Job Corps program to potential applicants who are youth and young adults ages 16 to 24. The upper-age limit may be waived for individuals with disclosed disabilities who meet all other eligibility requirements.

Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166): The FRWDB works closely with the local office of California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC), a one-stop system partner. CIMC staff is co-located in the Workforce Connection AJCC comprehensive center and collaborates with WIOA staff to provide referrals and co-enrollment opportunities to provide Indian and Native American Job Seekers access to all WIOA and partner services available through FRWDB's local network of AJCCs.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program (WIOA Section 167): The FRWDB works closely with Proteus, Inc., which administers and operates the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) program in Fresno County to ensure MSFW programs services are available for eligible participants. WIOA program staff works with MSFW staff to provide referrals and co-enrollment opportunities.

Veterans Services: EDD administers this program and designated Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) Specialists are stationed at the comprehensive Workforce Connection center to assist veterans seeking employment.

Youth Build: In Fresno County, YouthBuild is embedded within the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC's) Conservation Corps Program. Corps members are required to enroll and progress in an academic program concurrent with their full or part-time enrollment in the Conservation Corps' paid skill-building vocational training programs. Corps members lacking a high school diploma enroll in the on-site YouthBuild Charter High School of California.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Act: Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA) is a federal program that provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. The TAA program offers a variety of benefits and reemployment services to help unemployed workers prepare for and obtain suitable employment. Workers may be eligible for training, job search, and other reemployment services. Coordination with TAA generally includes co-enrollment into WIOA, which provides multiple benefits, including TAA funds being used to cover all training costs.

Community Services Block Grant: The Fresno EOC supports AJCC staff with referrals, depending on eligibility requirements, to any Community Services Block Grant services and any other service available through Fresno EOC, such as Women, Infants and Children (WIC) services and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP).

Unemployment Compensation: The Unemployment Insurance program is generally represented in the AJCCs by EDD's Wagner-Peyser staff. The UI Navigator is co-located in the AJCC comprehensive center to provide enhanced in-person and virtual guidance to individuals filing benefit claims and job searching. FRWDB and AJCC staff work with EDD staff to coordinate marketing and outreach to UI claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs: DSS staff is co-located at the comprehensive Fresno AJCC. DSS staff function as liaisons between AJCC WIOA partner staff and DSS participants

E. Partners' Efforts to Collaborate on Co-Enrollment and Case Management

In every aspect of our operations, FRWDB attempts to identify and implement strategies to achieve efficiencies and to leverage resources on behalf of the participants we serve. Co-enrollment of job seekers into programs beyond WIOA has long-been part of this approach. While we recognize that more work needs to be done to structure and strengthen our approaches to co-enrollment, we are prepared to work closely with workforce system partners to build upon existing approaches.

F. Current Efforts that Foster Co-Enrollment and Co-Case Management

There are many examples of ways in which FRWDB's AJCCs have collaborated with partners to jointly serve our shared customers. For instance, under a state-funded project for English language learners, the AJCCs, WIOA Title II-funded education agencies, and several community-based agencies co-enrolled participants into education, workforce training, and support services programs to holistically support job seekers in achieving their employment goals.

FRWDB also pursues various methods of collaboration with partners that promote co-enrollment of participants in two or more programs. These include:

Acceptance of Partners' Assessment Results: AJCCs will accept WorkKeys, CASAS, or TABE assessments that have been administered by other organizations within the last six (6) months. Typically, the referring organization (e.g., adult education) has already enrolled the customers for which the assessment was administered.

Orienting Job Seekers to All Partner Programs: FRWDB's AJCCs conduct orientation sessions both in person and online. These sessions provide information on the One-Stop partner programs, thereby promoting not just WIOA, but various compatible programs and services.

Cross Training Staff: Under the direction of the One-Stop Operator, workforce system stakeholders participate in instruction, including cross-training, that enables staff to make informed referrals of clients to various programs.

Co-Location of Partners: The WIOA core program partners, along with many of the other One-Stop partners and local stakeholders, are co-located at FRWDB's Workforce Connection centers. WIOA staff may also be present at partner sites, such as Fresno City College's Career Center, where they assist in supporting self-directed services and in making referrals to system partners.

Intensive Collaboration with Partners: One-on-one meetings with partners, such as representatives of DOR, DSS, and Fresno County Child Support Services are common, as they help to maintain operational support of referral processes, track shared clients, and strategize regarding more effective forms of service delivery.

G. *Enhancing Co-Enrollment Strategies among System Partners*

As this plan is implemented, FRWDB will bring partners together to devise approaches to increase strategic co-enrollments as described in state guidance. A workgroup will collaborate on the development of processes and procedures for enhancing co-enrollments among the partners. In addition to defining methods for determining when co-enrollments are appropriate, these efforts will likely include strategies for additional training among the partners regarding programs and eligibility requirements.

H. *One-Stop System's Use of Technology and Other Remote Strategies*

FRWDB has designed and implemented a service delivery system that reaches out to all communities across the county's more than 6,000 square miles. A combination of brick and mortar and virtual services make up our approach to reaching the widest possible range of jobs seekers, businesses, and system partners.

I. *Remote Service Locations*

For the purposes of providing workforce development services to remote locations in the county, FRWDB broadly identifies non-urban communities under two (2) geographic designations:

Rural West Fresno County including the cities of Coalinga, Firebaugh, Huron, Kerman, Mendota, and San Joaquin and the communities of Biola, Caruthers, Easton, Five-Points, Raisin City, Riverdale, and Tranquility.

Rural East Fresno County, which includes the cities of Fowler, Kingsburg, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, Sanger, and Selma and the communities of Auberry, Del Rey, Friant, Huntington, Prather, Shaver, and Squaw Valley.

To promote access to services, FRWDB has one (1) comprehensive and three (3) affiliate AJCCs, with one (1) serving the Rural West and one (1) serving the Rural East communities of Fresno County. Currently, the site serving the West side is based in Mendota and the East side site is located in Parlier. Each site features a resource area where self-directed and basic career services are available. Job seekers using these sites have access to: phones, fax machines, and copiers; web-connected computers; information on training opportunities in demand occupations; job boards with current listings; information of partner services; and labor market information.

WIOA contractors working at these sites provide individual career services to eligible job seekers. Based on demand and Job Seeker's needs for specific services, WIOA-funded staff from the comprehensive center and one-stop partner representatives are deployed to rural affiliate centers to provide services to job seekers and to employers seeking job-ready workers.

J. *Use of Technology to Enhance Service Delivery to Remote Locations*

Over the last several years, FRWDB has continued to enhance our online presence and add to our slate of virtual services. Social distancing protocols and various

restrictions resulting from the pandemic have accelerated our development of technology-based equivalents to FRWDB's slate of in-person services. Orientation, eligibility, case management, workshops, and other traditional in-person services are now available in virtual formats. Video-conferencing platforms are used to deliver services and connect staff to customers. Implementation of various paperless processes enable us to further enhance service accessibility via the web. The availability of online services provides greater options for some living in rural communities.

As discussed throughout this plan, even with the advancements described above, poor internet connections, lack of hardware, and insufficient digital skills limit access for many vulnerable individuals in both rural and urban communities. Bridging these gaps is a priority of this Plan.

K. Coordination of Workforce Activities and Support Services

Providing access to services that enable job seekers to participate and succeed in training, other workforce services, and employment is a priority for FRWDB and for other local workforce system stakeholders. Because participants' needs for such services can be extensive and resources are limited, FRWDB has worked diligently to develop a slate of resources that makes use of WIOA funds and utilizes services from other fund sources.

L. Determining Participants' Needs for Support Services

After determining a participant's eligibility for WIOA services, AJCC staff schedules an in-person (or, possibly, virtual) meeting with the participant to develop an initial plan. This session includes an objective assessment interview. Staff engages in a discussion with the participant about specific needs and circumstances to identify appropriate services, a career pathway, suitable training, and needs for supportive services. Staff emphasizes that supportive services are provided to participants for the sole purpose of enabling their participation in WIOA-funded services, including training and employment.

Based on the individual assessment and availability of WIOA funds, supportive services may be made available to the participants. A plan is developed that indicates services to be provided and identifies the most likely source of funding for such services, whether it be WIOA, a one-stop partner program, or another community resource.

M. Services Available to Address Participants' Needs and Barriers

FRWDB has adopted a policy under which WIOA supportive services are capped at \$1,000 per participant. Under certain circumstances, additional funds may be made available through an approved FRWDB waiver. WIOA-funded supportive services generally address needs such as assistance with childcare, clothing, housing, needs-related payments, tools, union fees, and transportation assistance, including bus passes, car repair, and mileage reimbursement.

As indicated, WIOA is just one source of funding to meet participants' needs for support. Many other organizations and programs also provide various forms of supportive services. In some cases, individuals will need to be determined eligible for such services and/or be co-enrolled in partner programs to access support. For other programs, various forms of support are universally available and require neither documentation of eligibility nor enrollment. These programs include the following:

- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program: Assistance with clothing, food, housing, tools, and union fees, transportation assistance, such as bus passes, car repair, mileage, and housing.
- California Indian Manpower Consortium: Assistance is similar to that available for participants in the Farmworker program, described above. Needs-related services payments are also available.
- Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission: Available are programs to assist with the cost of utilities or meet other needs, including:
 - Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): LIHEAP offers financial assistance to help offset an eligible Fresno County household's home energy costs. LIHEAP can provide one payment per program year for electricity, gas, propane, wood, or oil for eligible households.
 - Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP): ECIP provides assistance to eligible households that are in a crisis situation. Examples include a household that has received a 24- to 48-hour disconnect notice or service termination by its utility company or a household facing an energy-related crisis or life-threatening emergency, including a combustible appliance.
 - Head Start: Head Start is a no cost preschool program primarily servicing low-income families. Children must be at least three (3) years old or turning three (3) by September 1 of the year in which they apply. Head Start provides comprehensive services including education, social, emotional, health, nutritional, family support, and disability services to children and families.
 - Women Infants and Children (WIC): WIC is a federally funded supplemental health and nutrition program that provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, health and community referrals to pregnant women, new parents, and children (up to age five (5)). There are 13 service locations throughout Fresno County.
- Fresno County Department of Social Services: DSS provides services to ensure individuals and families will be safe, self-sufficient, healthy, and free from distress at home, in school, or at work. Programs, services, and support include:
 - CalFresh: This program provides monthly benefits to help low-income households purchase the food they need.
 - CalWORKS/Welfare to Work: The Welfare to Work program provides employment-related services to CalWORKS clients to assist them in finding and retaining employment, obtaining training when necessary, and in

upgrading to higher paying jobs that will lead to financial self-reliance. Supportive services are provided to assist with the costs of childcare, transportation, work clothing, and other items needed for employment. Referral services are also available to address barriers to successful employment such as substance abuse, domestic violence, legal, and mental health issues.

- General Relief: This program provides cash or in-kind services to needy individuals and childless couples and is intended to assist with the cost of food, shelter, personal needs, and other living expenses.
- Medi-Cal: California's public health insurance program is designed to provide no-cost or low-cost medical benefits to low-income individuals and families.
- Department of Rehabilitation: DOR supports its customers by making available supportive services, including the following: assistance with clothing, tools, and union fees; transportation assistance, such as bus passes, car repair, and mileage; assistive technology; and other resources to enable persons with disabilities to participate in training and complete work-related tasks.

N. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

FRWDB staff documents policies and procedures that incorporate the requirements of WIOA Section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Annual program reviews include an assessment of how those policies and procedures are implemented by sub-recipients. All outreach and marketing materials include required taglines for compliance with WIOA Section 188. Equal Opportunity (EO) and ADA information and procedures are available on the FRWDB and Workforce-Connection websites.

O. Facilities, Technology, and Services Supporting Accessibility

For Workforce Connection facilities, a physical site review for accessibility is performed at the time of initial layout and when improvements are made. Walk-throughs are randomly performed to ensure continued compliance. Program and physical accommodations are made to customers upon request.

AJCC workstations with assistive technology equipment for persons with disabilities, includes: a TTY device; handsets with volume controls and hearing aid compatible features; large 22" monitors; and large print keyboards. In addition, staff utilizes, a wireless face-to-face communication device to assist deaf and hard of hearing individuals. UbiDuo is in place at the Comprehensive Workforce Connection Center. DOR will continue to conduct an accessibility assessment for all new sites.

Program and physical accommodations are made, upon request, including sign-language interpretation. Work is underway to increase accessibility of all FRWDB-sponsored websites.

P. Staff Training

FRWDB and AJCC staff have participated in various training sessions on serving individuals with disabilities. Examples of this instruction include:

- Training on Equal Opportunity/Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Training on TTY, which is a special device that lets people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired use the telephone to communicate, by allowing them to type text messages.
- Mental Health First Aid Training.
- Mental Health and Depression under the ADA Training (online session).

Throughout the duration of the four (4)-year Plan, FRWDB intends to work closely with DOR and the other Competitive Integrated Employment Local Planning Agreement partners, and community-based agencies to identify training that would improve staff's effectiveness in working with job seekers with disabilities.

III. STATE STRATEGIC PARTNER COORDINATION

In 2018, the State completed and published a biennial modification to California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan for Program Years 2016-2019. Within this modification, the California Workforce Development Board identified several new strategic partnerships with state-level agencies and initiatives. Guidance issued by the State Board in 2018 to Local Boards regarding two-year modifications to their PY 2017-2020 Plans required that WDBs pursue these partnerships within their jurisdictions. In our 2019 modification to the Local Plan, FRWDB described these local level relationships, some of which were in an early stage of development. Following is a summary of the evolution of these strategic partnerships as well as approaches under consideration to further strengthen collaboration with local providers and programs.

A. Coordination with County Human Services Agency and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Accessing CalFresh Employment and Training Services

Fresno County Department of Social Services (DSS) staff are co-located at the Fresno AJCC and have successfully for many years provided support to the WIOA staff to validate Welfare-to-Work, CalWORKs, and CalFresh recipients' eligibility for co-enrollment into the WIOA program. DSS and AJCC staff are continuously looking for ways to improve the coordination of referrals to avoid duplication of services and expedite co-enrollment for CalFresh, Welfare-to-Work, and CalWORKs recipients' and to ensure they are receiving appropriate assistance with job search activities, soft skills development, and work-based learning opportunities (e.g., on-the-job training, transitional jobs) that will pay wages as participants learn. DSS was one of the first in California to pilot a CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET) program. As an extension of the pilot, DSS contracts with local community-based organizations and other agencies to assist CFET participants in finding employment. In 2023, DSS anticipates that the agency will reprocur providers for the CFET program and may adjust the model currently used for service delivery.

B. Coordination with Local Child Support Agency and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Who Are Non-Custodial Parents

While the CWDB issued initial guidance to local boards in 2018 regarding requirements to develop relationships with Child Support Services agencies, FRWDB and the Fresno County Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) were already working together. Under a process agreed to by all parties, non-custodial parents (NCPs) who are in contempt of court due to unpaid child support payments are mandated to participate in WIOA services. Such individuals are provided a "job training referral form" from DCSS instructing them that they must register with a Workforce Connection Center within ten days and provide a center-generated "participation report" upon the NCP's next court hearing. The referred NCP understands that the referral is an order of the court, and that non-compliance will be deemed a violation of the court order.

When NCPs contact Workforce Connection staff, they participate in an orientation and subsequent eligibility determination and enrollment processes that are similar

to those experienced by other job seekers. Non-court-ordered NCPs may also be referred to a Workforce Connection Center, but participation in workforce services is voluntary. For those whose participation is mandatory, AJCC staff provides follow-up with the Courts to provide updates and reports on participant progress and outcomes in the program.

C. Coordination with Local Partnership Agreement Partners Established in Alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

In 2018, the California Department of Education, DOR, and the California Department of Developmental Services developed the Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Blueprint, which is a five (5)-year plan to assist people with intellectual disabilities and development disabilities (ID/DD) prepare for and secure a job earning at least minimum wage working in the community with people without disabilities. The goals of the Blueprint are to:

- Help the three (3) state departments work together to better support people with ID/DD who want a CIE job.
- Create more options for people with ID/DD to prepare for and get a CIE job.
- Help people with ID/DD to make their own choices about working in the community.

In 2018, the CWDB and EDD issued guidance to FRWDB on the development of a 2019 biennial modification to our four-year Local Plan. This guidance required that FRWDB connect with and seek to participate in the efforts of local partners (local education agencies, the DOR district office, and the regional center) to deliver CIE services as outlined in a Local Partnership Agreement (LPA). These agreements articulate the ways in which local partners will work together to streamline service delivery, engage their communities, and increase CIE opportunities for individuals with ID/DD. LPAs are the result of conversations and enable the local partners to determine strategies that will work best for them and the populations they serve.

The core partners in the Fresno LPA are:

Local Education Agency Partners: Clovis Unified School District, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, and Fresno Unified School District.

Department of Rehabilitation: DOR Fresno Branch Office.

Regional Center Partners: Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC).

The LPA also acknowledges the participation of the following non-signatory “community partners:” DOR vendors, stakeholders, collaborative contract partners, College 2 Career Project Search, Youth Leadership Training Program, Transition Partnership Programs, and work-based training programs. While not explicitly named as a partner, FRWDB and our network of AJCCs fit into several of the categories listed above. As an updated agreement is developed, FRWDB will request that we be included as a community partner.

FRWDB and services provider staff have participated in discussions with the core partners. FRWDB remains committed to participating as a stakeholder in the competitive integrated employment goals of the LPA. FRWDB will work with DOR, its service providers, the regional center, and Workability programs to:

- Provide career services to job seekers with ID/DD.
- Support DOR in using an assets-based approach to promoting CIE to local businesses, and
- Work with DOR and other stakeholders to encourage businesses to take advantage of work-based learning strategies to initially integrate individuals with ID/DD into the workforce.

Local DOR leadership has committed to ensuring that FRWDB staff and representatives are included in the regularly scheduled LPA meetings.

D. Coordination with Community-Based Organizations and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Who are English Language Learners, Foreign Born, and/or Refugees

English Language Learners (ELLs), foreign born individuals, and refugees have always been key target groups for the local workforce development delivery system. Nearly 55% of the county's population is Hispanic and more than ten percent (10%) are Asian. Approximately 20% are foreign born. While many individuals from these groups come to the workforce system seeking assistance to prepare for and find employment, many also need services such as English language skills instruction. FRWDB works closely with many organizations to serve this population and continuously strives to improve services for ELLs and other vulnerable populations.

E. Partners in Serving ELLs and Immigrants

Adult education programs and the community colleges have long been important partners in providing English as a Second Language instruction and other basic education skills to ELLs and immigrants. AJCC staff regularly refers clients to WIOA Title II programs and other training to assist customers in building their English proficiency, increase other basic education skills, and provide support in earning a high school diploma or equivalency credential.

FRWDB and AJCC staff collaborate with other organizations and programs to provide education, job skills training, and placement support to ELLs and immigrants. These partners include, but are not limited to, the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative (CIVIIC), Central California Legal Services, Proteus, Inc, DSS, The Fresno Center, Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM), and Centro La Familia.

F. Strengthening Services for this Vulnerable Target Group

Since the publication of our PY 2017-2020 Local Plan and its 2019 modification, in which we discussed services for ELLs and immigrants, FRWDB has increased staff's awareness of community agencies serving this population and, consequently, cross referrals between community-based organizations and AJCCs

has also increased. Other efforts to improve accessibility of services to ELLs, foreign born individuals, and refugees have included:

- Co-location of State Center Adult Education Consortium staff at the AJCC, which has increased efforts to assist participants with enrollment in high school equivalency preparation and ESL classes; referrals for financial aid; and assistance with college applications.
- Increased promotion of WIOA and other workforce services in social media and on Spanish and Hmong language radio.
- Referrals to organizations such as FIRM and The Fresno Center to provide wrap-around educational and employment services in customers' native languages.
- Increased collaboration with DSS to assist CalWORKs participants through co-case management and coordinated referrals for job readiness, education, training, and supportive services.
- Increased availability of translation services for non-English-speaking customers.

IV. WIOA TITLE I COORDINATION

The following narrative addresses services, activities, and administrative requirements of FRWDB under the WIOA Title I formula programs, along with strategies for staff preparation, training, and ongoing professional development to effectively respond to participant needs.

A. Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Digital Technology Skills

FRWDB has updated and enhanced the role of the One-Stop Operator, which among its various duties, will be responsible for managing a training calendar for center staff and system partners and coordinating on-going training activities. This will ensure that FRWDB front-line staff located at the AJCC and partner representatives have up-to-date skills and knowledge necessary to work in an environment where they can communicate, access, and provide information through a variety of digital tools, such as web-based data systems, online video-conferencing platforms, social media, email, text messaging, and more. Training in digital technology will concentrate on four (4) skill areas:

B. Skills that Enhance Work Productivity

The focus will be on providing group training and identifying tutorials, webinars, workshops, and learning strategies related to uses of technology to support managing time while working remotely; conducting effective meetings; closing any technology skill gaps; and remote communications.

C. Skills that Enable Learning on a Wide Range of Topics from a Variety of Sources

To ensure that staff members are able to successfully participate in training directly related to their jobs and to education and training activities that are part of their overall goals for professional development, training will be provided on various applications and platforms used in distance learning. Instruction will include remote communications via the web, sharing documents in an online classroom setting, streaming videos, and related skills.

D. Skills that Enhance Knowledge of Economic Issues, the Labor Market, and the Economy

Economists, labor market analysts, businesses, educators, and workforce development professionals utilize many online data management tools to access information that supports their work. Training will be provided in effective uses of these tools and technologies.

E. Skills that Improve the Capacity to Virtually Serve Job Seekers and Business Customers

Staff will participate in training to elevate their skills in using online platforms to conduct virtual workshops and interactive sessions with customers, partners,

colleagues, and others. They will also learn to use software to obtain digital signatures and the complete e-forms.

To ensure that staff's skills remain up to date with new technology and that new staff are exposed to the digital technology applications they need to work effectively in their roles, training will be provided annually, and refresher courses will be provided on an ongoing basis.

During the development of the 2023 Biennial Modification to the PY 2021-2024 Local Plan, it was noted that progress has been made in the following areas since the Plan was implemented.

- Training has been provided on using the LinkedIn Learning platform.
- Unite Us training was conducted for staff.
- Training has been provided regarding the use of digital files.
- IMAGO led training on virtual workshops.
- Training on CalJOBSSM applications and utilities remains ongoing.
- System partners have offered training on various programs and topics, some of which have included discussions of technology platforms and systems.
- An annual calendar for workforce system staff training is being developed.
- FRWDB plans to hire a training coordinator.

F. Frontline Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Cultural Competency and Effectiveness in Working with Individuals and Groups that Have Been Exposed to Trauma

Fresno County's population is racial and ethnically diverse, and this diversity is reflected in the customers who use Workforce Connection services. In addition, workforce system staff estimates that a significant number of the customers they see may have experienced various forms of trauma based on vulnerable groups that they represent, along with the wide-ranging traumatic effects of the pandemic.

While cultural competence and issues pertaining to customers dealing with trauma are areas in which workforce system staff can benefit from training, little instruction on these topics has been provided to workforce system staff in Fresno or elsewhere. Based on a preliminary review of training opportunities and the skill needs of frontline staff and partners, the following summarizes initial plans to expand training in these areas.

G. Training in Cultural Competence Skills

Training will be provided to support staff's understanding of the general characteristics of cultural diversity, cultural norms, and cultural differences. Staff will understand the importance of respecting individual cultural experiences, learn to better communicate with others to understand and address potential barriers to service, and develop greater cultural sensitivity within the workplace. Staff will become more aware of their own cultural beliefs and culturally related behaviors, and potential power imbalances, privileges, or biases when providing services. Training will be provided annually.

H. Training to Enhance Skills in Working with Individuals Dealing with Trauma

FRWDB staff will identify and facilitate training on working with trauma-exposed participants. This will include developing skills to promote conversation; learning how to respond to disclosure; integrating participants' safety when providing services, advocacy, outreach; and trauma-informed care. FRWDB will partner with local community agencies to share expertise, provide assessments, encourage participants to join support groups, share resources, and coordinate services. DSS has provided training in this area.

I. Identifying and Securing Training

FRWDB will continue to seek qualified trainers in the areas of cultural competence and trauma-informed approaches. The Regional Organizer for the San Joaquin Valley and Associated Counties Regional Planning Unit is also active in surveying local board regarding their staff training needs and in securing regional training in key topics in which WDB staff and partner representatives can participate.

J. Coordination of Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities

FRWDB's overall approach to rapid response and layoff aversion activities is one that focuses first on maintaining business stability so that companies and workers can compete and thrive. Delivery of these services fits into FRWDB's overall approach to business services, recognizing that the workforce development system's success hinges on the ability of businesses to create, maintain, and grow jobs for workers.

K. Approach to Layoff Aversion

Industry sectors whose strength will have the most significant impact on the future of the workforce area are the most appropriate targets for layoff aversion efforts. The FRWDB takes into consideration key factors for identifying such sectors. They are industries that:

- Pay middle-class wages and benefits and offer job and training ladders for low-income populations.
- Create greater economic spin-off activity (i.e., an economic multiplier effect).
- Offer diversification of the economy.
- Provide a foundation for new industries clusters.

The FRWDB focuses on a combination of industries that provide the greatest positive impact for the regions.

Early Warning System Network: Key economic stakeholders comprise the Early Warning System (EWS) network, which identifies and tacks vulnerable companies and industry sectors that might benefit from layoff aversion strategies. The EWS network identifies companies at risk of closing or moving operations before actual decision are made by the businesses to shut down or move. The FRWDB's EWS network includes local, state, and federal agencies, chambers of commerce, industry groups, organized labor, and telecommunications/media companies, along with community-based and community development organizations.

Detecting early warning indicators is a strategy that complements other information gathered through the EWS network and aids in identifying and tracking companies in possible distress. Information sources include, but are not limited to:

- Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) notices, which is useful in analyzing layoff activity by industry sector and occupations being laid off.
- Major trade journals, business journals, and local or regional newspapers.
- Dun & Bradstreet, EconoVue™, or Experian®, which provide information on companies and industries under stress. Relevant information can be found in the financial stress score, the commercial credit score, and through other indicators.
- Direct referrals.
- Changes in management behavior.
- Removal of equipment.
- Sign of a “cash crunch” or unanticipated cutbacks.

FRWDB’s Business Services Center staff, with support from AJCC staff, provide layoff aversion services that include:

Pre-Feasibility Studies: These studies provide objective evidence as to the likelihood of an employer remaining operational and, if so, under what conditions. Typically, pre-feasibility studies assess various features of an employer's operations such as: organizational structure, marketing, operations/manufacturing, and financial management.

Asset Mapping: This activity identifies and creates an inventory of community resources in local workforce development areas. Assets may include many of the organizations in the EWS network.

Business Turnaround Services: These services are provided when it is determined that an employer needs intervention beyond the menu of services provided by the EWS network and community partners. Services will be provided through an outside entity with expertise in business turnarounds. Potential employers are thoroughly assessed for intervention suitability based on early warning indicator data. Specific business turnaround services include the following: financial restructuring; operations and cost management; new market and product development assistance; production of business plans, financial projections, and financing memorandum; developing labor management partnerships; assistance in acquiring new equipment; assistance with training grants; and assistance with loans and guarantees.

Incumbent Worker Training: To assist in averting layoffs, Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) can be provided. Such training is an important strategy for meeting an employer's needs for skilled workers and can take place in or out of the workplace and during or after employees' work hours. Employer and worker assessments are conducted to determine whether the provision of IWT is appropriate.

Work Share Unemployment Compensation Program: The Work Share Program offers an alternative to businesses facing a reduction in force. Under the Work Share Program, an employer reduces the hours of work each week among a specific group of employees instead of laying off the employees. Wages lost to the employee due to reduced hours are offset by the receipt of UI benefits.

L. The Rapid Response Team and Services

When a WARN notice is issued, the FRWDB Rapid Response team proceeds with the activities described above. If, in meeting with business representatives, it becomes clear that layoffs are inevitable, the focus turns to the assisting affected workers as quickly as possible, providing them access to UI and with information and support that will result in their rapid reemployment. FRWDB coordinates services through a Rapid Response Team that connects affected employees to the one-stop system. The Team includes: FRWDB; EDD; Fresno County Department of Social Services; Community Housing Council; Clinica Sierra Vista; Fresno County Public Library; California Department of Insurance; Fresno4Biz (entrepreneurship); and local utilities.

Within 48 hours of notice, Rapid Response Team members will have met with business and labor representatives (as applicable) and organized orientations at the worksite(s) for employees to provide them information on a wide range of services and support. By connecting workers to Workforce Connection services (or those of the workforce system in the county where they live) the Team's objective is to quickly assess workers' skills, identify the needs for any training or support, and make referrals to employment opportunities which are aligned to the laid off individual's skills, experience, and needs. Many workers are quickly reemployed, while others train for new skills prior to returning to work.

M. Coordination with Trade Adjustment Act

When a company closure, downsizing, or relocation is caused by foreign competition, FRWDB and EDD collaborate to provide TAA and WIOA services to the affected employee(s) as needed. Such situations often result in the co-enrollment of workers in both programs, as TAA is able to cover all costs of re-training for affected workers, while WIOA addresses needs for case management, re-employment readiness services, and job placement support.

N. Coordination with Other Key Partners

In addition to collaborating with the partners that comprise the Rapid Response Team, FRWDB's business services staff participates in the Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable (CVIER) quarterly convenings, which are largely focused on regional trends, including layoffs and identification of industries and businesses in distress. The roundtables provide the opportunity for regional staff to share best practices that are of value to businesses and employees.

Additionally, FRWDB communicates regularly and effectively with state advisors on Rapid Response activities.

O. Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

FRWDB offers a wide range of services for job seekers enrolled in the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Services meet the needs of individuals with various levels of education and work experience and job seekers from vulnerable populations who may have one (1) or more barriers to employment. Services are designed to prepare participants for entry-level and higher positions with businesses in Fresno County, particularly businesses within the priority sectors that are identified in the San Joaquin Valley and Associated Counties PY 2021-2024 Regional Plan <https://frwdb.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/RegionalPlan-Sjvac-Py21-24-FInal-3.15.21.pdf>.

P. One-Stop Delivery System

FRWDB maintains four (4) Workforce Connections/AJCC locations: One (1) comprehensive site in Fresno and three (3) affiliate sites, which are located in Fresno, Mendota, and Parlier. Core and AJCC partners are co-located on a full-time, part-time, or by appointment at the comprehensive and affiliate centers. Staff utilize technology for partner referrals and co-enrollment to ensure participants have access to all workforce system services. This technology includes Unite Us, CalJOBSSM common case management system, e-mail, cloud data repositories, and web-based virtual platforms.

Under FRWDB's current model, one (1) contractor provides WIOA Adult program services and another contractor provides Dislocated Worker program services across Fresno county. FRWDB's service model ensures services are available for individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term career and training services. Efforts are being made to bring more services online to create greater access. This is especially important as Fresno County is largely rural with limited public transportation. As one means of promoting greater access to web-based services, FRWDB will provide training on digital literacy.

Q. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

FRWDB's AJCC system offers three (3) levels of career services: Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, and Training Services. These are supplemented by follow-up services. Services are provided in no specific sequence. Instead, services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals while still allowing for tracking of outcomes for reporting purposes.

Basic Career Services: Basic Career Services are made available to all individuals, and include:

- *Outreach, Intake and Orientation* to services that are available to all job seekers. Once applicants view an online orientation, they are able to submit an appointment/referral request form.
- *Determinations of Eligibility for WIOA.* Individuals who do not meet WIOA eligibility criteria may continue to access basic career services and may be referred to partner programs and those of community-based agencies.

- *Initial Assessment of Skill Levels* are conducted that address literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs.
- *Labor Market Information* is available including job vacancy listings, information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, regional labor market information, and information on nontraditional employment.
- *Partner Information and Referrals* are based on individual needs and requests from customers.
- *Training Provider Information* includes data on performance and costs of programs offered by eligible providers of training services, adult education, and career and technical education.
- *Assistance in Establishing Eligibility for Programs of Financial Aid Assistance* for training and education programs not provided under WIOA;
- *Supportive Services Information* includes types, limits, and sources.
- *Unemployment Insurance Information Assistance* includes support for filing unemployment compensation claims.

A Self-Reliance Team, which is comprised of AJCC provider staff, is responsible for interviewing participants who have requested Individualized Career or Training services. The purpose of this interview is to determine the best course of action for the participant to prepare for employment.

Individualized Career Services: These services are provided when needed for an individual to obtain or retain employment. AJCC staff relies principally on assessments to determine the need for and appropriateness of individualized career services. Included are:

- *Job Readiness Workshop:* This activity is comprised of modular, hands-on, engaging activities that focus on eight key skill areas: Adaptable and Productive Problem Solver; Digital Literacy; Learning, Creativity and Adaptability; Communicator and Collaborator; Responsible and Ethical Decision Maker; Life Skills; Personal Development; and Resumes.
- *Skills Assessments:* These include computerized O*NET Interest Profiler and Work Importance Profiler (Values/Importance) assessments and WorkKeys® Applied Math, Workplace Documents, and Graphic Literacy assessments.
- *Individual Employment Plans:* These customized plans are developed through an in-depth interviewing and evaluation process to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals. The plan outlines activities to attain career objectives.
- *Interview Workshops:* Participants are exposed to interviewing techniques and strategies. They are presented with examples of strong responses to interview questions. At the end of each module of this training, participants complete module worksheets creating a personalized answer to commonly asked questions.
- Group or Individual Counseling
- Transitional Jobs.
- Financial literacy services are provided based on individual needs.

- Supportive services, including services such as transportation, childcare, uniforms, and tools required for employment.
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs are provided based on individual need.
- Job Readiness Assistance.
- Job Search and Placement Assistance.

Training Services: FRWDB provides access to a wide range of training programs, which fall broadly into two (2) types: institutional (classroom) training programs, and work-based training programs, which are developed directly with employers and include activities such as on-the-job training, transitional jobs, or customized training.

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment.
- On-the-job training.
- Incumbent worker training.
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs.
- Training programs operated by the private sector.
- Skill upgrading and retraining.
- Entrepreneurial training.
- Transitional jobs.
- Adult education and literacy activities.
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer.

R. Follow-Up Services

For 12 months, follow-up services may be provided to participants, including technical skills training, counseling, mentoring, crisis intervention, life skills, or emergency support required to sustain long-term employment.

S. Priority of Service

As outlined in the guidance provided in EDD Workforce Services Directive WSD 15-14, priority is provided in the following order:

- Veterans and eligible spouses, who are also recipients of public assistance, are low income or are basic skills deficient.
- Adults who are recipients of public assistance, are low income, or are basic skills deficient.

Priority status is established during eligibility. Before determining eligibility, all applicants complete an initial CASAS assessment to determine if they are basic skills deficient. Whether an applicant is unable to compute or solve problems or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society is determined through structured assessments and observation by the eligibility staff.

FRWDB has established guidelines for AJCC staff to obtain and maintain appropriate documentation to support any of the criteria listed under the priority of

service. If staff is unable to obtain the required supporting documentation, a waiver request must be submitted and approved prior to the use of self-attestation (i.e., an applicant statement).

T. Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Youth Program

FRWDB's Young Adult Services program serves WIOA-eligible individuals ages 14 to 24, offering a wide variety of services that are customized to the needs of and preferences of each participant.

U. WIOA Youth Programs and Service Delivery Sites

Youth programs are delivered by competitively procured providers with experience in offering workforce development services to both in-school and out-of-school youth. Youth services are delivered across Fresno County from two (2) urban and two (2) rural locations. These locations ensure that services are within reasonable distance to youth no matter where in the County they reside. During the pandemic, most youth services were delivered remotely through various online platforms such as Zoom, Google Meets, WebEx, and MS Teams. Currently, all services are provided either in-person or through hybrid modalities, depending on the needs of youth participants. In 2023, FRWDB will finalize a new procurement for WIOA Title I Youth program providers.

V. Youth Services

Services and activities fall broadly into three (3) categories to which youth are oriented when they first inquire about the program:

Academic Assistance: Services include tutoring in reading and math; high school diploma and GED assistance; dropout re-engagement assistance; college and vocational training preparation assistance; and assistance in preparing for and transitioning to post-secondary education or career technical education.

Job Readiness: This process prepares youth to succeed in the Fresno County labor market by allowing the youth to explore and develop employability skills through activities such as: soft skills job readiness workshops; interview preparation workshops; work-based learning opportunities; pre-apprenticeship opportunities; vocational skills training; entrepreneurial training; leadership activities; career guidance, coaching, and counseling; and job placement assistance.

Follow-up services: Support and guidance from an Academic and Career Advisor is provided to youth for up to 12 months after WIOA closure. This may include links to mentoring programs, personal and leadership development opportunities, financial literacy workshops, supportive services, and education and employment referrals.

The program makes available all 14 WIOA-required Youth Program elements. Specific services aligned to these required elements include the following:

Orientation: All youth interested in receiving services are provided with a WIOA youth orientation which provides an introduction and exposes youth to all features and benefits of the program.

Eligibility Determination: Youth meet with one-on-one with a staff member to complete eligibility determination. The meeting may be conducted in-person or through videoconferencing. Eligibility documents are submitted via the CalJOBSSM secure messaging system, or they may be collected in person. Applicants 18 years and older who are not eligible for WIOA youth program are referred to the AJCC for use of Basic Career Services and eligibility determination for Adult and/or Dislocated Worker programs.

Objective Assessment: This evaluation examines barriers, skills, education, needs for supportive services, and career and employment goals.

Basic Skills and Career Assessments: CASAS provide an initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency. O*NET (Interest Profiler and Work Importance Profiler) considers aptitudes and abilities, and helps to identify skills gaps; and the WorkKeys® assessment includes Applied Math, Workplace Documents, and Graphic Literacy and help to match career goals

Individual Service Strategy (ISS): This customized service strategy plan is a “living” document that addresses all of the following factors affecting participants’ readiness to achieve educational and employment goals. It may be updated and adjusted throughout a youth’s participation in the WIOA program.

- *Labor Market Information*, including research and information on high demand occupations, minimum requirements for jobs, career exploration, and career counseling.
- *Referrals* to services that address each youth’s needs and preferences.
- *Postsecondary education information* including career technical education, short-term vocational skills certifications, and college enrollment.
- *Assistance with financial-aid applications* for education programs that are not covered under WIOA.
- *Supportive Services* and/or referrals for supportive services assistance from partner agencies for childcare, transportation, housing, food, uniforms, work attire, tools, and more.
- *Leadership Development* through academic; personal development, and community and civic awareness.

Job Readiness Workshops: This required two-week activity addresses soft skills, digital literacy skills, financial literacy, and building a strong resume.

Job Readiness Assistance: These activities include career guidance, coaching, counseling, identifying and overcoming potential barriers to employment, resume writing, interview preparation, job search, and job placement assistance.

Individual Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance: All WIOA enrolled youth are assigned to an Academic Career Advisor that provides one-on-one assistance to guide and support the academic and employment goals of the youth.

Mentorship: Adult partner role model mentorship is available during program participation and for up to 12 months of program follow-up.

Work-Based Learning/Work Experience: Up to 200 hours of paid, hands-on learning experience that includes occupational and academic components.

Training Services: Activities include occupational skills training; entrepreneurial training; adult education and literacy activities; on-the-job training; and internships in combination with training.

Activities to Prepare for and Transition to Post-secondary Education and Training: Connect youth with direct referrals to postsecondary education counselors in the community colleges and assist with college and financial aid applications.

Follow-up Services: Youth are provided with no less than 12 months of follow-up services that may include assistance to retain employment, referrals to other community services, connections to adult mentorship programs, information on entrepreneurial programs, and other support services, as needed.

W. Services to Increase the Digital Skills of Youth

Many youth may have access to an electronic device, such as a cell phone, tablet, laptop, or desk top computer. Others do not. Digital access problems for portions of Fresno County include poor or no internet connection, especially in the rural areas. For youth participants, there may also be engagement issues, such as not wanting to turn on web camera during virtual meetings, lack of participation, and lack of motivation.

FRWDB has adopted a technology assistance supportive service policy that allows WIOA enrolled participants who do not have access to a computer or other electronic device to check out a laptop as needed to participate in and complete WIOA activities. Hot spots are also available on an as needed basis. The majority of youth are familiar with commonly used software applications, social media communication, email, and messaging. However, youth may still need assistance to address the appropriate use of video-conferencing platforms, proper web-based communications, virtual training, and document submission. FRWDB's Young Adult Services program provides an introduction to digital literacy during the initial two (2)-week job readiness workshop and continues to provide one-on-one or group discussions and assistance, as needed, throughout program participation. Youth also have access to computers, printers, scanners, and a fax machines. In addition, Academic Career Advisors may assign Linked-In Learning courses that can be facilitated in the office or be completed independently.

X. Serving Youth with Disabilities

The Young Adult Services program ensures that all youth participants, including youth with disabilities, receive the same types and quality of services and level of support to achieve their career planning, education, skills training, and employment goals. To ensure that services for individuals with disabilities meet their full range of needs, WIOA staff may collaborate with DOR, Central Valley Regional Center, instructors and staff from local special education programs, and community-based organizations to develop effective service strategies.

Y. Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds and the Competitive Process Used to Award Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities

The Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation is authorized as the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds under the Administrative Services Agreement that has been executed with the FRWDB.

The FRWDB competitively procures AJCC Operator, Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Career Services, and Youth services providers. AJCC Operator services are procured every four (4) years and WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Program services are procured every five (5) years. All programs and functions (except the Youth Program) were re-bid in 2021 and began operating effective July 1, 2021, in tandem with the implementation on the original PY 2021-2024 Local Plan. The WIOA Youth Program will be competitively procured in 2023.

Z. How the Local Board Fulfills the Duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider or Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers

FRWDB competitively procures the services of both an AJCC/One-Stop Operator (OSO) and career services providers for the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.

AA. AJCC Operator Function

The OSO is responsible for coordinating the service delivery, responsibilities, and contributions of required WIOA partners as agreed upon in the FRWDB WIOA Partner MOU. Specific duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Convening meetings to support implementation of the FRWDB's MOUs between WIOA One-Stop partners.
- Coordinating with the One-Stop partners to develop agendas and facilitate meetings.
- Convening monthly site council (partners delivering services at specific centers) meetings to ensure service coordination.
- Convening quarterly system-level partner meetings.
- Convening other partner meetings required to support MOU implementation.
- Implementing policies established by the FRWDB.
- Ensuring the implementation of partner responsibilities and contributions agreed upon in the FRWDB's MOUs.
- Coordinate with other WDBs and operators for regional planning purposes, as directed by FRWDB staff.
- Coordinating with partners in program design, implementation, and capacity building/staff development, and
- Completing other duties that may be necessary to fulfill WIOA requirements of and maintain compliance as an OSO.

The OSO will also assist FRWDB staff in meeting continuous improvement goals established as a result of the One-Stop certification process. These currently include:

- Developing and implementing a process to survey partners' satisfaction with the AJCCs and the overall workforce system, along with the value they believe the AJCCs provide their program and customers, and
- Establishing and maintaining a structured annual training and professional development schedule for One-Stop staff.

BB. Career Services Provider Function

The career service provider function involves the implementation and delivery of career services and follow-up described in section IV.D, above.

V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2021- 24

Based on discussions held throughout the planning process utilized to develop the original PY 2021-2024 Local Plan, the following topics were identified as priorities for further exploration, development, and/or enhancement for the FRWDB and the partners over the four (4)-year active period of the Local Plan. The Plan was carefully reviewed by staff, partners, community stakeholders, and others during the biennial modification process. Based on this review, the priorities below have been refined and, for some, progress updates are provided.

A. Priorities of the Workforce Development Board

1. Commit to a career pathway focus. This has, ostensibly, been a priority for the workforce system for nearly a decade. Still, on a practical level, the focus remains on jobs. The jobs focus can be blended into a larger strategy that identifies a career path for every job seeker.
2. Expand our approach to service delivery to include considerations of an “emotional quotient” or fit between what matters to people and the jobs that they do. This is likely an undervalued component in the workforce system’s career planning process and a shift in this direction could yield better outcomes for local programs, particularly in terms of job retention and career progression.
3. Ensure that every job seeker has the foundational skills to succeed in the world of work. These includes strong communication, math, digital and “soft skills.” Critical thinking, problem solving, and adaptability are key to every worker’s success on the job.
4. Create and implement more programs that contextualize instruction of basic skills into vocational programs. This includes programs where English as a second language and basic education skills are embedded into job-specific skills training.
5. Recognizing the many needs, preferences, barriers, and goals of individuals seeking assistance from local workforce development programs, expand partnerships to create greater access to a broad range of services and support for customers. Such partnerships may include relationships with mental health agencies, immigrant and refugee assistance programs, and K-12 education agencies.
6. Focus on assisting workers to develop greater “career agility” by teaching skills (e.g., digital technology, process management, accounting) that cut across jobs and industries.

B. Other Key Considerations Identified by Workforce System Stakeholders

1. In recognition of their standing with underserved and vulnerable populations, expand the use of Community-Based Organizations as assess points or “on-ramps” to the AJCCs and the local workforce development delivery system.
2. Expand efforts to increase outreach to immigrant communities and identify strategies to bridge gaps in services to foreign born individuals. FRWDB has

secured and continues to pursue funding to support these efforts under programs such as state-funded Equity and Special Population and the Breaking Barriers grant.

3. Provide additional training for staff on serving individuals with disabilities. FRWDB has secured training from DOR, including its Windmills series, along with information on disability etiquette.
4. Collaborate with state, county, and municipal officials in developing solutions to address the digital divide affecting rural and low-income communities. Strategies should address insufficient internet access, a lack of technology hardware, and the need for digital skills training. FRWDB has secured 200 devices to support a program to loan them to customers and is developing specialize digital assessment and training.
5. Increase the availability of entrepreneurial skills training and work with government and business groups to support new business start-ups as the Fresno area economy reopens in the post-pandemic period. FRWDB has connected to business incubator programs at California State University, Fresno.
6. Consider the FRWDB's taking a lead role in developing a mission statement for the network of partners that comprise the local workforce development delivery system, which could be used to guide local collaboration.
7. Explore opportunities to add more virtual training/distance learning programs to FRWDB's Eligible Training Provider List as training in this format makes skills development more accessible for many job seekers. FRWDB is participating in a pilot program with the National Association of Workforce Board on securing Google certifications for participants.
8. Provide recommendations to county and municipal government agencies on strategies to improve mass transit for county residents.
9. Commit to teach job retention, a skill that many job seekers lack.
10. Develop more opportunities for upskilling and backfilling their positions with new workers as upskilled workers move forward on their career paths. FRWDB has developed an incumbent worker training program with Adventist Health.
11. Collaborate more extensively with colleges and universities in the development of career pathways that encompass occupations requiring an associates or higher degree.
12. To engage with employers more effectively, offer more training for business customers. FRWDB is providing workshops for businesses, along with sponsoring an "HR hotline" through the Sierra HR Partners.

VI.APPENDICES

The following items are included as part of the Local Plan.

- Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary (Attachment 1)
- Public Comments Received that Disagree with the Local Plan (Attachment 2)
- Signature Page (Attachment 3)

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

To facilitate the engagement of stakeholders in planning for the local workforce development delivery system and in the development of the PY 2021-2024 Local Plan, the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB) hosted a series of three (3) community and stakeholder forums focused on topics affecting strategies and services across the system. These forums included:

Vision for the Local Workforce System: How can workforce system partners and other stakeholders create a system that is more equitable, accessible, and effective?

This forum was held via Zoom on December 16, 2020.

Strengthening the Role of the AJCC as an Access Point for all System Partners and Programs: How can the AJCC be more effectively promoted and used as a central access point for all local workforce system services?

This forum was held via Zoom on January 14, 2021.

Improving Workforce System Services: How can workforce system services be made more effective and relevant for all customers, including vulnerable populations that have been underserved by traditional programs?

This forum was held via Zoom on January 21, 2021.

In addition, a planning discussion centered on “vision” was held with the members of the Workforce Development Board during their meeting on January 20, 2021. Through this process, six priorities were established.

Where necessary, agency-to-agency discussions were held with various partners and stakeholders to improve collaboration between their programs and those of the FRWDB. Such discussions were conducted via Zoom and included meetings with:

- Department of Social Services and CalFresh E&T Partners on December 8, 2020
- Economic Development Partners on December 15, 2021
- California Indian Manpower Consortium on January 12, 2021

During the development of the biennial update to the Local Plan, FRWDB hosted a community and stakeholder forum on “Economic Recovery and the Role of the Workforce System.” This forum was held in-person at the Comprehensive Workforce Connection Center in Fresno on October 12, 2022.

On September 28, 2022, FRWDB leadership and staff gathered representatives of the WIOA core partners together with contracted service providers and the AJCC Operator to review content in the original version of the PY 2021-2024 Local Plan and to discuss changes and updates to be included in the Biennial Modification.

In addition, a discussion was held with members of the FRWDB’s Executive Committee during their January 28, 2023, meeting. The FRWDB reviewed the six (6) priorities established as part of the PY 2021-2024 Local Plan and reaffirmed its commitment to these objectives and principles.

The table below summarizes participation in the community and stakeholder engagement process to develop the 2023 Biennial Modification to FRWDB’s PY 2021-2024 Local Plan.

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email and Social Media	Partners, Providers of Services, Educators, and multiple CBOs.	Attended in-person and Zoom forum.	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Core partners, Providers of Services, and One-Stop Operator.	Attended in-person forum.	Reviewed Plan, engaged in the discussion, and planned updates for 2023 modification.
Email and Website	Executive Committee	Attended in-person Board meeting.	Solicited input focusing on the six (6) priorities and engaged in the planning process.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THAT DISAGREE WITH THE
2023 BIENNIAL MODIFICATION TO THE PY 2021-2024 LOCAL PLAN**

1. From: _____ Date: _____

Comment:

2. From: _____ Date: _____

Comment:

SIGNATURE PAGE

The following signatures represent approval of the Local Plan by Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board and the Chief Elected Official for the Local Workforce Development Area.

For the **Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board**:

Dennis Montalbano, Chairperson

Date

For the **Fresno Local Workforce Area – Chief Local Elected Officials**

Jerry Dyer, Mayor, City of Fresno

Date

Sal Quintero, Chair, Fresno County Board of Supervisors

Date