



July 1, 2025

Jeffrey Boswell, WDB Chairperson
South Central Workforce Development Board
4201 Crums Mill Road, Suite 100A
Harrisburg, PA 17112

Dear Mr. Boswell,

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (Department) has approved the South Central Region Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year (PY) 2025-2028 plan with conditions. Please see a copy of the “conditions” attached. To receive full approval, a regional plan, and its associated local plans, must be fully compliant with all federal and state statutes, regulations, policies, and grant agreements. Per WIOA requirements, this conditional approval applies to the entire planning region, including the regional plan and the local plans from the local workforce development areas within that planning region. The South Central Region is composed of the following local workforce development areas:

- Lancaster County Local Workforce Development Area
- South Central Local Workforce Development Area

Currently, the Department is coordinating with representatives of Lancaster and South Central Counties to finalize remaining components of the WIOA regional and local plans. Conditional approval is effective through the end of the calendar year (i.e., December 31, 2025). Upon acceptance of all required items by the Department, the regional plan and its associated local plans will be fully ratified and full approval will be extended through June 30, 2029.

Approval of these plans does not constitute approval of any practice that conflicts with federal and state statutes, regulations, or policies, nor does approval preclude the commonwealth from, at its discretion, readdressing any part of the plan if content is found that conflicts with such statutes, regulations, or policies.

The Department commends you and your staff for your dedication and hard work in developing the WIOA PY 2025-2028 plans in alignment with both WIOA requirements and the Commonwealth’s WIOA Combined State Plan.

Please direct specific questions regarding your plan, the planning process and/or future requests for plan modification to Cassandra Grilli-Clark at (717) 346-1579 or cgrillicla@pa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Deske", though the caption identifies the signatory as Daniel D. Kuba.

Daniel D. Kuba
Deputy Secretary of Workforce Development

cc: The Honorable Robert Ziobrowski, Commissioner, Franklin County Board of Commissioners
Jesse McCree, CEO, South Central Workforce Development Board
Katie Lentz, COO of SCPa Works

WIOA Multi-Year Local Plan

(PY 2025-2028)

SOUTH CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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Open for public comment TBD

The South Central Workforce Development Board (SCPa Works) is the regional workforce development board that serves an eight-county region comprising Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lebanon, Juniata, Perry, and York Counties. SCPa Works oversees the workforce development activities of South Central PA. SCPa Works strives to create a region where growth and prosperity are within reach for all individuals.

This local area plan serves as a multi-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies that enable workforce development teams to reach critical populations and to support the Commonwealth's vision, strategic and operational goals within local workforce investment areas, and the regional goal and strategies of South Central PA. The SCPa Works local plan incorporates the input and perspectives of employers, economic development, community-based organizations and nonprofits, labor and labor management groups, and government agencies.

SCPa Works commits to the strategies, initiatives, relationship management, and administrative operations as outlined in this plan and to revisiting, revising, and reengineering the strategies as a promise of continual improvements to the South Central PA workforce development service delivery system. To that end, SCPa Works will review this document throughout the next two years to ensure that any subsequent modifications reflect the changing dynamics in the region's labor market.

SCPa Works leads a workforce development region of teams, partner employers, community organizations, and local entities partners who maintain a commitment to workforce development strategies that enhance economic mobility as a catalyst for future endeavors. SCPa Works' recent achievements and national recognition are a testament to a cohesive team with the capacity as a workforce development board to act as incubators of innovation and strategic investment, driving improved economic outcomes for our community. As we continue to invest in high-impact programs and partnerships, we aim to drive economic growth and provide opportunities for every individual in our community to succeed.

SCPa Works profoundly appreciates your interest and participation in this WIOA Local Plan. Thank you for your continued support and readership as we work towards a brighter future for all, we are excited to work with you on making this region a place where growth and prosperity opportunities exist for all.

Jesse McCree, CEO

Local Plan Effective Date: July 1, 2025

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Local Area Workforce and Economic Analysis

Section 1.1

1.1. Workforce analysis -Provide an analysis of the regional workforce, including the composition of the local area's population and current labor force employment data. [20 CFR § 679.560(a)(3).
Reviewed by CWIA, Grant Services, and PA WDB]

The South Central Workforce Development Board, D.B.A SCPa Works, oversees the South Central Workforce Development Area and comprises the counties of Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York. This data covers the effective plan date of July 1, 2025

The South Central region continues to experience steady growth. As of November 2024, the population stands at 1,514,460. On average, the population in South Central PA has increased by 11,195 people annually over the past five years and is projected to experience continued growth over the next five years with an annual growth rate of 10,730 people per year. Based on the projected population calculation for 2030, the population of South Central's eight counties is expected to reach 1,575,310, reflecting a 4% increase in population across the eight-county region.

Population

Cohort Totals

Area	2024 Population	2030 Population	Change	% Change
8 Counties	1,514,460	1,575,310	60,850	4%
State	12,985,763	13,073,888	88,125	1%
Nation	336,486,167	345,788,131	9,301,964	3%

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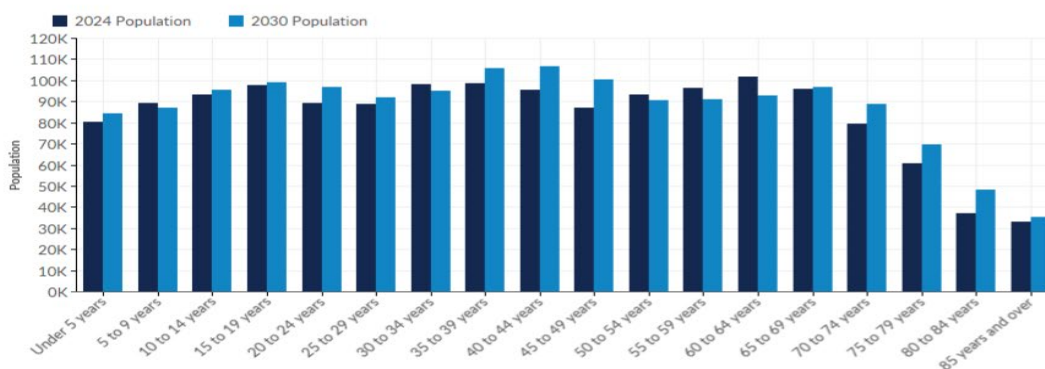
Given the projected population growth rates for each of the eight counties in the South Central region, projected growth rates range from 1% in Lebanon County to an 8% population increase in Cumberland County. The projected breakdown for expected population changes for each county is based on the following rates:

County	2024 Population	2030 Population	% Change
Adams	107,764	112,216	4%
Cumberland	274,888	297,713	8%
Dauphin	291,236	303,277	4%
Franklin	158,630	162,105	2%
Juniata	23,049	21,704	-6%
Lebanon	144,724	146,640	1%
Perry	46,122	45,589	-1%
York	468,047	486,068	4%

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While the regional population is anticipated to grow by 4% in 2030, Cumberland County ranks the highest anticipated population increase, while Juniata’s population is projected to decrease by 6%. The region’s population gains and decreases reflect the national trends of population growth in urban areas and continued loss in rural areas across the U.S.; however, it is important to note that select rural counties in South Central PA have seen an increase in population growth at a higher rate than previously reported pre-pandemic. For example, Adams County had a growth rate of 2% from 2016-2020. From 2020-2024, that population increase jumped to a 4% growth rate.

Population by Age Cohort

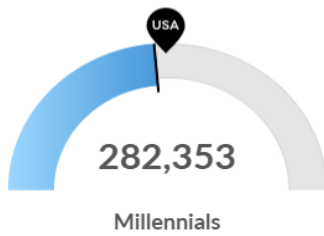


Age Cohort	2024 Population	2030 Population	Change	% Change	2030 % of Cohort
Under 5 years	80,395	84,473	4,078	5%	5.36%
5 to 9 years	89,337	87,187	-2,150	-2%	5.53%
10 to 14 years	93,202	95,349	2,147	2%	6.05%
15 to 19 years	97,555	98,902	1,347	1%	6.28%
20 to 24 years	89,105	96,773	7,668	9%	6.14%
25 to 29 years	88,686	91,832	3,146	4%	5.83%
30 to 34 years	97,999	95,201	-2,798	-3%	6.04%
35 to 39 years	98,498	105,518	7,020	7%	6.70%
40 to 44 years	95,576	106,471	10,895	11%	6.76%
45 to 49 years	86,779	100,408	13,629	16%	6.37%
50 to 54 years	93,319	90,625	-2,694	-3%	5.75%
55 to 59 years	96,249	91,181	-5,068	-5%	5.79%
60 to 64 years	101,818	92,843	-8,975	-9%	5.89%
65 to 69 years	95,836	96,929	1,093	1%	6.15%
70 to 74 years	79,289	88,778	9,489	12%	5.64%
75 to 79 years	60,725	69,530	8,805	14%	4.41%
80 to 84 years	37,022	48,050	11,028	30%	3.05%
85 years and over	33,071	35,258	2,187	7%	2.24%
Total	1,514,460	1,575,310	60,847	4%	100.00%

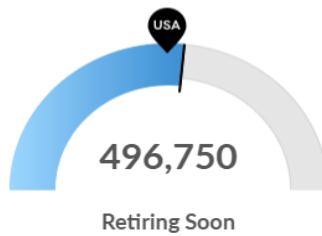
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The demographic trends in South Central Pennsylvania reveal a region at a crossroads, facing significant challenges and opportunities due to its aging population. South Central PA residents ages 60-64 represent the largest age cohort in the eight-county region. This decline is part of the broader trend of an aging population as more people move into older age groups. The cohort is comprised of 101,818 residents, followed by residents ages 35-39, totaling 98,498 individuals living in the region. The 60-64 age cohort is expected to decrease by 9% by 2030, a decline that reflects the broader trend of an aging workforce across

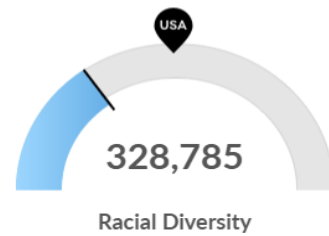
the nation. The 80-84 age cohort will increase by 30%, marking the largest cohort increase in the South Central region, further indicating the region's overall aging population. These changes are reflective of national and state trends of aging populations and a fertility rate that is below replacement level, which means fewer younger residents are entering the population to replace the aging workforce.



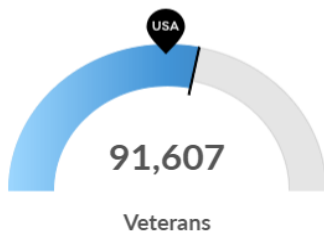
Your area has 282,353 millennials (ages 25-39). The national average for an area this size is 305,342.



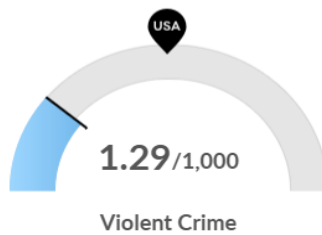
Retirement risk is about average in your area. The national average for an area this size is 453,657 people 55 or older, while there are 496,750 here.



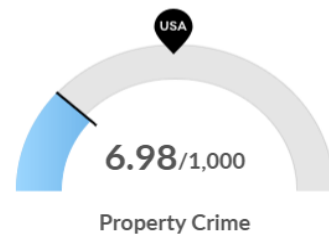
Racial diversity is low in your area. The national average for an area this size is 625,869 racially diverse people, while there are 328,785 here.



Your area has 91,607 veterans. The national average for an area this size is 76,406.



Your area has 1.29 violent crimes per 1,000 people. The national rate is 3.6 per 1,000 people.

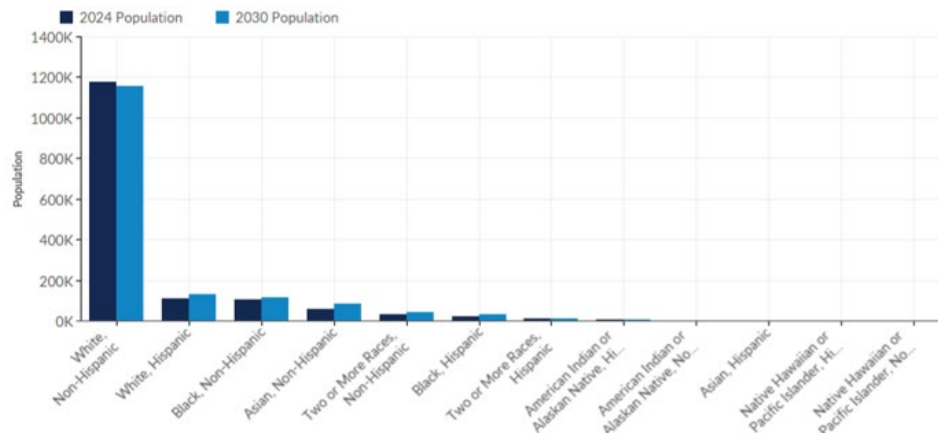


Your area has 6.98 property crimes per 1,000 people. The national rate is 18.22 per 1,000 people.

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This dynamic creates a ripple effect in the region's economy. An aging population coupled with the detriment of a decreasing labor participation rate will not only impact the fulfillment of key roles in the job market but also cause increased strains on already hard-hit industries such as healthcare. Regional talent attraction strategies will be vital for fulfilling industry workforce demands while increasing efforts to improve labor participation amongst previously unengaged populations will be equally important.

Population by Race/Ethnicity

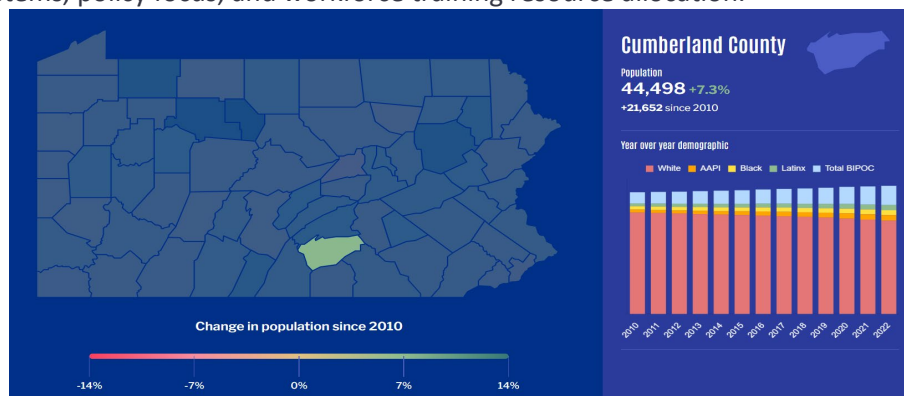


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Race/Ethnicity	2024 Population	2030 Population	Change	% Change	2030 % of Cohort
White, Non-Hispanic	1,174,153	1,157,044	-17,109	-1%	73.45%
White, Hispanic	106,776	129,445	22,669	21%	8.22%
Black, Non-Hispanic	103,148	112,000	8,852	9%	7.11%
Asian, Non-Hispanic	56,284	81,062	24,778	44%	5.15%
Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic	33,044	40,579	7,535	23%	2.58%
Black, Hispanic	22,957	30,705	7,748	34%	1.95%
Two or More Races, Hispanic	8,188	11,457	3,269	40%	0.73%
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic	4,470	6,376	1,906	43%	0.40%
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Non-Hispanic	2,381	2,533	152	6%	0.16%
Asian, Hispanic	1,574	1,995	421	27%	0.13%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic	895	1,353	458	51%	0.09%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	592	762	170	29%	0.05%
Total	1,514,460	1,575,310	60,849	4%	100.00%

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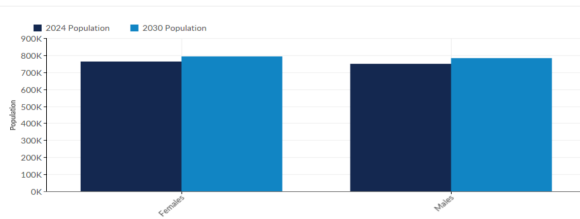
South Central PA is predominantly White, Non-Hispanic; White, Hispanic; and Black, Non-Hispanic. Research indicates that by 2030, the White, Non-Hispanic population is projected to decrease by 1%, while projections indicate significant growth in other racial and ethnic groups referred to as the broader category of BIPOC, or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The BIPOC populations, which include Asian, Non-Hispanic, American-Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic; Two or More Races, Hispanic; and Black, Hispanic, are each expected to increase in population by more than 30% by 2030. These local changes in racial and ethnic makeup align with the changing demographics at both the state and national levels. The trend observed at the state and national levels is reflected in local areas like Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, where BIPOC populations are contributing to net population growth, counterbalancing the decline in the White, Non-Hispanic population. This reflects broader demographic shifts that are happening in various parts of the United States, where the BIPOC population is growing at a faster rate than the White, Non-Hispanic population, reshaping communities and potentially influencing political, economic, and cultural dynamics. The increasing diversity in the region can lead to changes in local workforce systems, policy focus, and workforce training resource allocation.



[©U.S. Census Bureau via Pennsylvania Growth]

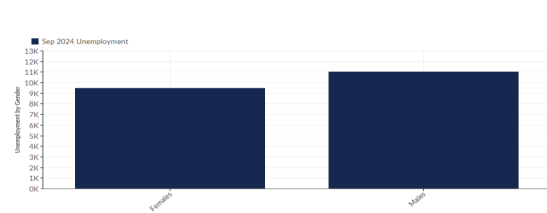
The gender composition of the South Central region currently shows a fairly even split between males and females, with females slightly outnumbering males. This balance is projected to continue into 2030. However, despite the roughly equal gender distribution in terms of the population, significant disparities exist between men and women when it comes to employment and education outcomes.

Population by Gender



Gender	2024 Population	2030 Population	Change	% Change	2030 % of Cohort
Females	764,246	791,531	27,285	4%	50.25%
Males	750,214	783,780	33,566	4%	49.75%
Total	1,514,460	1,575,310	60,851	4%	100.00%

Unemployment by Gender



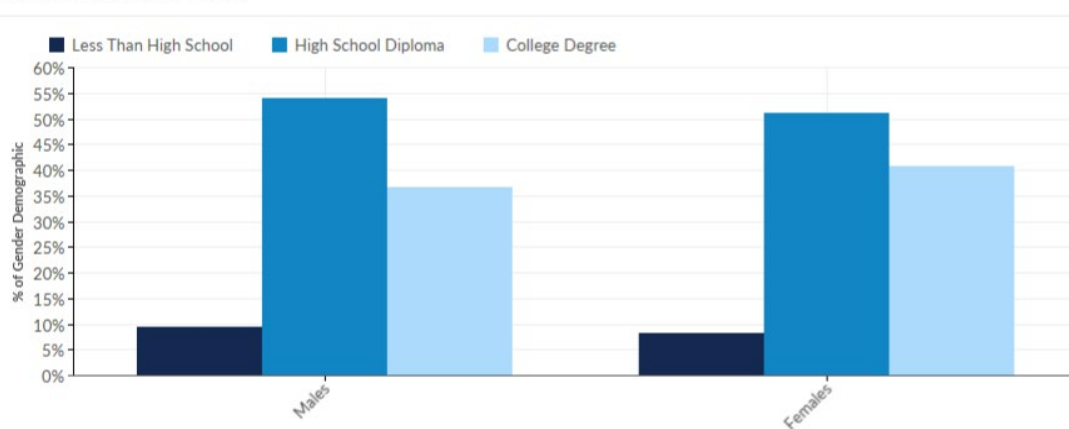
Gender	Unemployment (Sep 2024)	% of Unemployed
Females	9,481	46.22%
Males	11,031	53.78%
Total	20,512	100.00%

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Education

The three largest population segments in South Central PA are White, Non-Hispanic; Black, Non-Hispanic; and White, Hispanic. South Central PA is home to 1,064,866 individuals who are age-appropriate for high school diploma attainment and post-secondary education and training. Of these more than one million residents, 92,631 do not have a high school diploma, reflecting 8% of the region's population, while only 559,100 have attained a high school diploma with no further postsecondary education or training.

Educational Attainment by Gender



Gender	2024 Population	2030 Population	2024 Less Than High School	2024 High School Diploma	2024 College Degree
Males	520,072	546,687	48,540	280,542	190,990
Females	544,793	565,939	44,090	278,558	222,145
	1,064,866	1,112,626	92,631	559,100	413,135

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SCPa Works tailors the development of career pathway strategies to the region's workforce landscape. With a 91% high school diploma attainment rate within the regional population, SCPa Works structures a solid foundation to ensure the literacy and aptitude levels of each individual served. Although the South Central PA high school graduation rate is higher than both the state and national percentages of the population, a gap in post-secondary education and training attainment exists. According to Lightcast, South Central PA lags in state and national trends for post-secondary degree and credential attainment. This gap in workforce readiness and skill attainment presents an opportunity for workforce systems to develop and align strategies with regional industry needs and long-term economic growth.

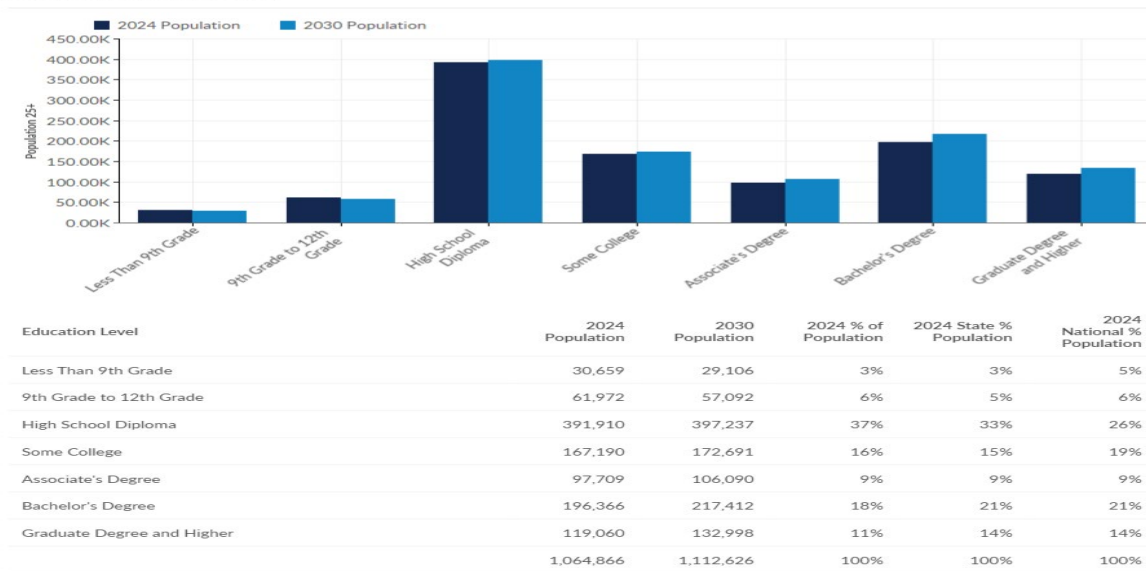
Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity



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Less than 50% of age-eligible residents have attained a postsecondary degree. This reflects that a slender 38% of individuals in South Central PA have attained workforce-ready credentials within a population that is projected to grow by 4% in the next five years.

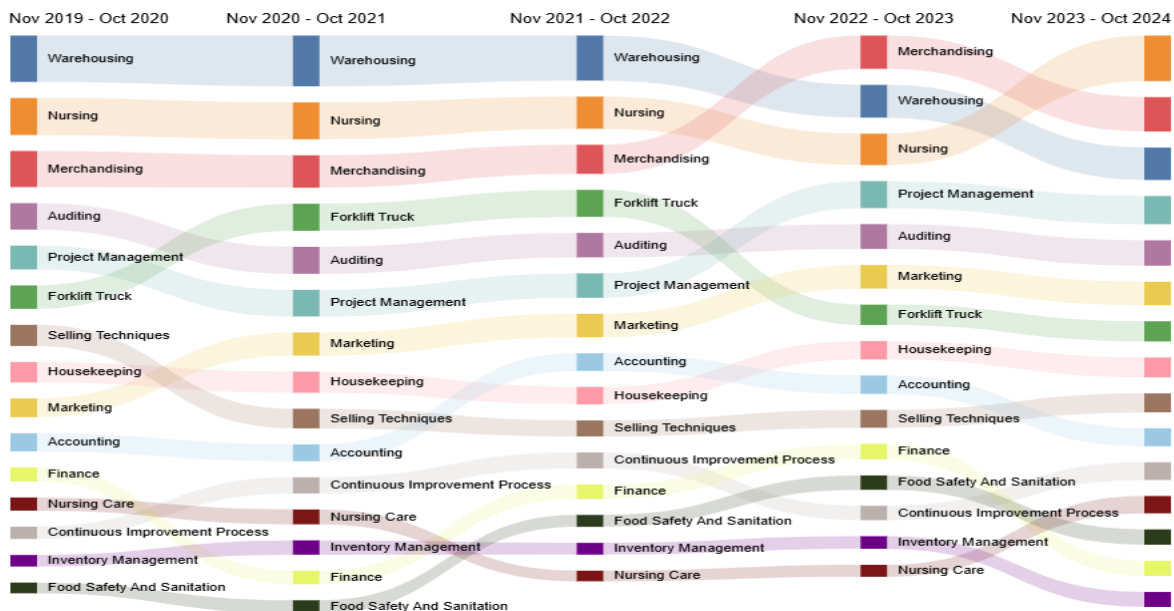
Educational Attainment by Level



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Females in the region are more likely to have a college degree than males. Males are more likely to have less than a high school diploma than females. The trend of females leading in higher education attainment is predicted to continue past 2030.

Skill Levels of the Region's Workforce

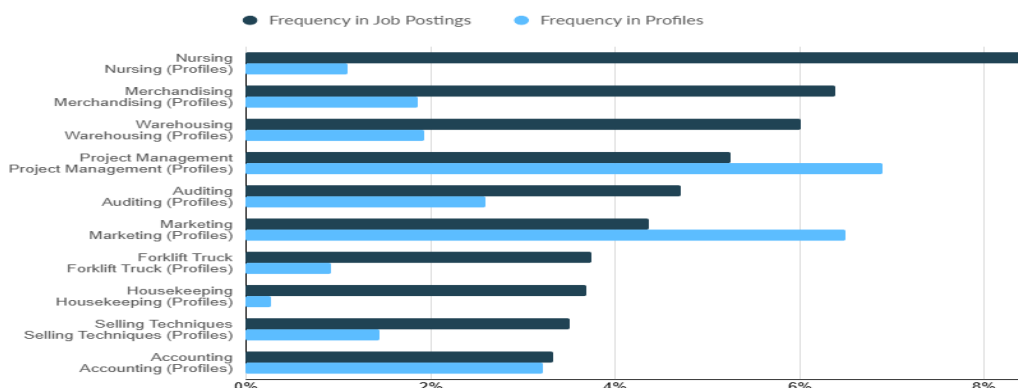


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Data collection and analysis compares top skills in job postings by employers across industries in South Central PA to the top specialized skills listed in job postings. When compared against the frequency of skills listed in a job seeker's online profile, data reveals a significant skills gap in South Central PA across

nursing, merchandising, and warehousing. In contrast, job seekers with project management and marketing skills are in abundance compared to the employer job postings seeking such skills. Overall, SCPa Works acknowledges and answers to the ever-changing landscape of employer demands in contrast to work-ready individuals.

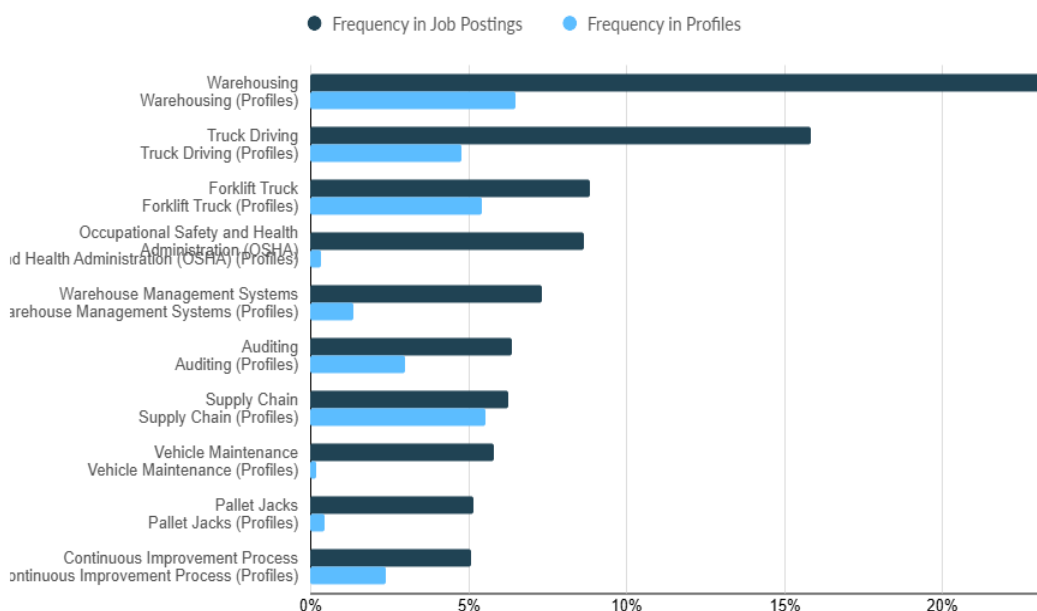
Top Specialized Skills



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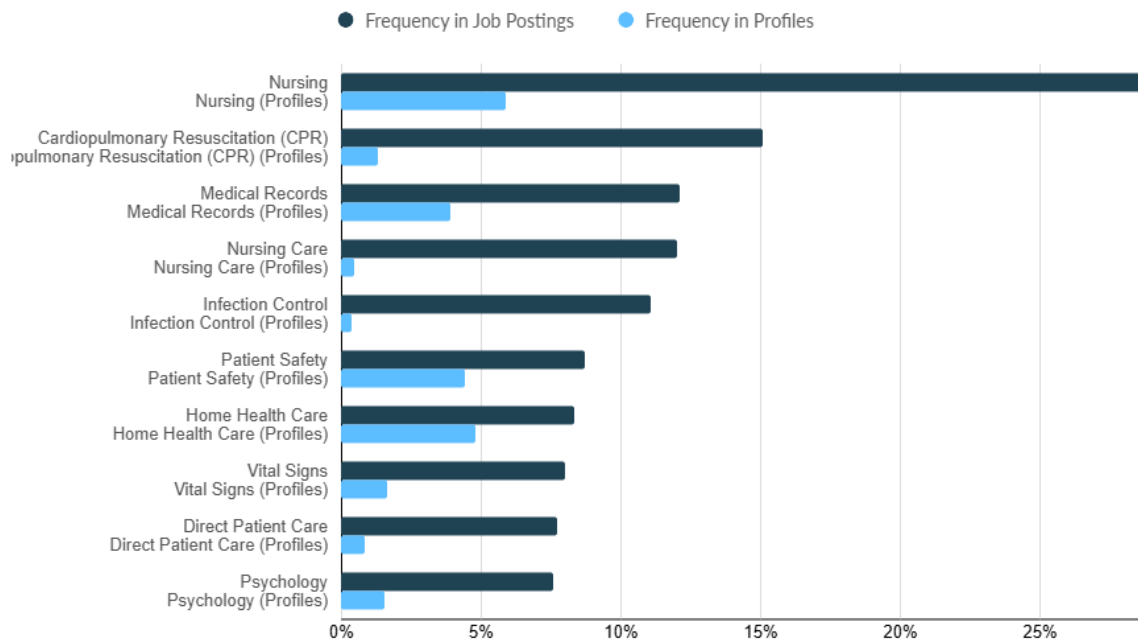
The analysis of work-ready skill levels across the regional population eligible to enter the workforce at a granular level reveals the supply and demand of skills in the top three growing industries: Transportation and Warehousing (23% growth 2018-2023), Healthcare and Social Assistance, (8% growth 2018-2023), and Manufacturing, (3% growth 2018-2023). The results for each of the three professional fields are indicated separately below:

Transportation and Warehousing Skills and Growth



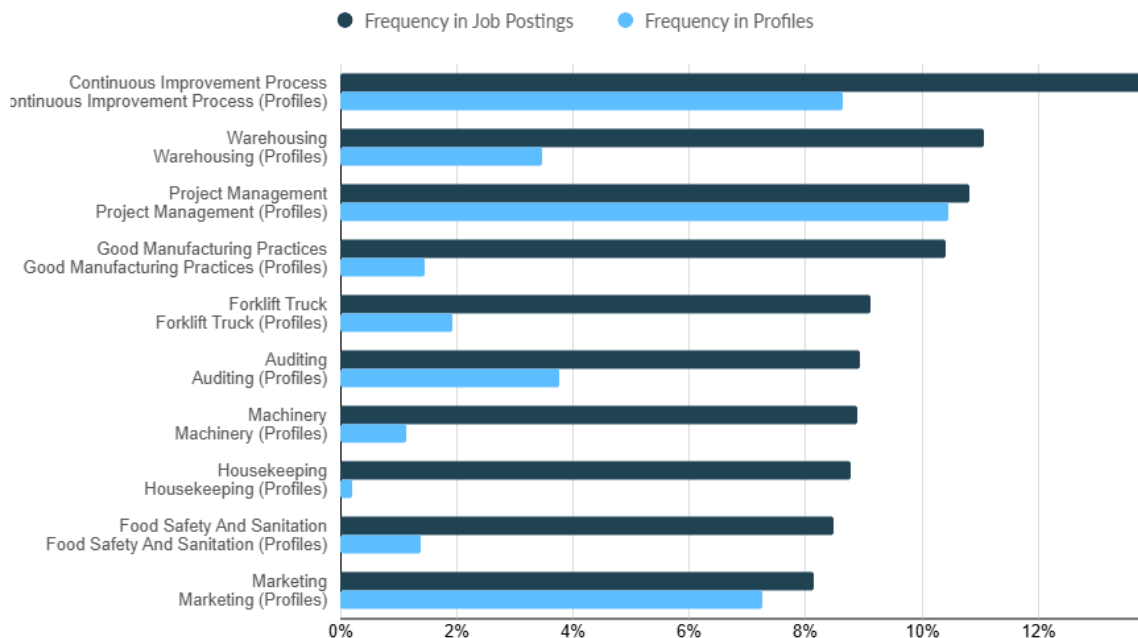
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Healthcare and Social Assistance Skills and Growth



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Manufacturing Skills and Growth



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Serving Individuals with Barriers

WIOA Sec 3(24) Individuals with Barriers to Employment Regional Analysis

According to WIOA Section 3(24), the following defines "individuals with a barrier to employment":

- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities

- The primary goal for SCPa Works is to invest in targeted skills training for in-demand occupations, and connect job seekers to a broader and stronger social safety net. Several vital factors provide challenges to serving these groups of individuals. While recruiting individuals into workforce programming has improved since the onset of COVID-19, it remains a steadfast challenge. Recidivism rates for justice-involved youth and adults continue to have as much to do with trauma-informed care and holistic, supportive services as with employment and training. The region's long-term unemployed population has not been restored to pre-pandemic levels. Older workers continue to have challenges with displacement due to ageism and age bias, in addition to the need to learn new skills and technologies.

In South Central PA, 9.2% of the population face challenges unique to poverty. The PA State poverty level is higher at 11.8%. Dauphin and Lebanon Counties have the region's highest poverty rates of 12.2% and 10.9%. The region's poverty rate for children under 18 is 13.2%, below the State average of 16.2%. The regional poverty rate of 7.0% for seniors is slightly below the State average of 8.9%.

% Children Under 18 Poverty Level

17.4%
16.2% to 17.3%
14.6% to 16.1%
12.8% to 14.5%
11.4% to 12.7%
0.0% to 11.3%

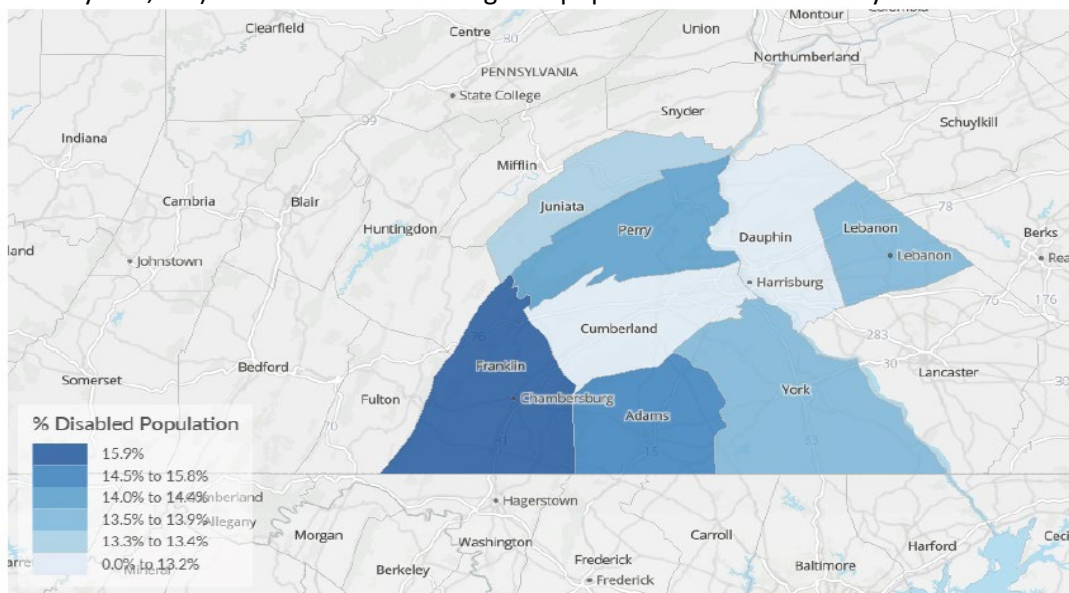
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County	County Name	% Children Under 18 Poverty Level	% Seniors 65+ Poverty Level	% Poverty Level
42043	Dauphin County, PA	17.4%	8.5%	12.2%
42075	Lebanon County, PA	16.2%	7.1%	10.9%
42055	Franklin County, PA	14.6%	6.1%	9.0%
42067	Juniata County, PA	12.8%	8.1%	9.0%
42001	Adams County, PA	11.6%	5.9%	7.9%
42133	York County, PA	11.4%	7.7%	8.6%
42099	Perry County, PA	10.9%	7.5%	8.2%
42041	Cumberland County, PA	10.4%	5.0%	7.7%

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Individuals with Disabilities:

In the South Central Workforce Development Area, 13.8% of the population has a disability (approximately 199,300). A closer look at our region's population with a disability:



County	County Name	% Disabled Population
42055	Franklin County, PA	15.9%
42001	Adams County, PA	14.5%
42099	Perry County, PA	14.0%
42133	York County, PA	13.7%
42075	Lebanon County, PA	13.5%
42067	Juniata County, PA	13.3%
42043	Dauphin County, PA	12.9%
42041	Cumberland County, PA	12.8%

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The public workforce development system must continue to align programs, education, and training for those with disabilities, especially in partnership with the PA Department of Labor & Industry Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). According to the Commonwealth Workforce Development System, a total of 109 WIOA enrollments in South Central disclosed having a disability (PY23-24).

Older Workers:

The median age in South Central PA is 41.8, with the highest age average of 43.8 residing in Adams County. Select industries have a higher average age than others. Based on the region's higher priority industries, Manufacturing has the highest percentage of the labor force age 55+, representing 30% of the industry's workforce, compared to Agriculture and Professional Services at 29%, IT at 28%, and Construction at 27%. Assisting each industry sector with career awareness, pipeline development, and recruitment strategies is a critical part of our regional workforce strategy as the skilled workforce ages out over the next 5-10 years. According to the Commonwealth Workforce Development System, a total of 76 WIOA enrollments in South Central were over the age of 55 (PY23-24).

Individuals Impacted by the Criminal Justice System:

Each year, according to the PA Department of Corrections, nearly 30,000 people return to the South Central PA region after having been incarcerated in a county jail. Almost 3,000 individuals return annually to the SCPa Works service area after being in a State correctional facility. The number of individuals within the SCPa Works region who were formerly incarcerated is increasing. Our challenge is not only to help these individuals obtain employment, but also to provide the training, education, and supportive services to reduce recidivism rates and promote long-term economic success. *(PA Criminal Justice Advisory Boards Data Dashboards; PA Department of Corrections Calendar Year Releases 2018-2019)*

According to the Commonwealth Workforce Development System, a total of 166 WIOA enrollments in South Central have been impacted by the Criminal Justice System (PY23-24).

2023 Annual Statistical Report _____Receptions

Table 3: Ten Counties with the Highest Court Commitment Activity in 2023			
Rank	County	Court Commitments	% of State Total
1	PHILADELPHIA	815	12.1%
2	DELAWARE	346	5.1%
3	MONTGOMERY	319	4.7%
4	DAUPHIN	311	4.6%
5	ALLEGHENY	304	4.5%
6	BERKS	248	3.7%
7	LANCASTER	226	3.3%
8	LEHIGH	211	3.1%
9	BUCKS	206	3.0%
10	YORK	198	2.9%
	Sub Total	3,184	47.1%
	Remaining Counties	3,575	52.9%
	State Total	6,759	100.0%

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Current Labor Force Employment and Unemployment Data:

In December 2024, Pennsylvania's labor force participation rate was 61.8%, a decrease from 61.9% the previous month and 34th in the nation. *[Federal Reserve Economic Data]*

Sep 2024 Labor Force Breakdown



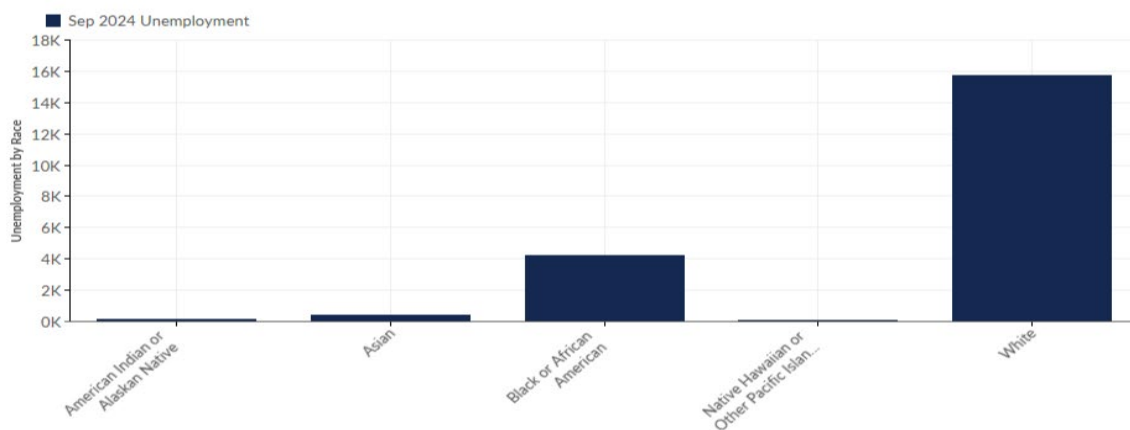
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In January 2025, the unemployment rates for adult men and women in Pennsylvania were both at 3.7%, showing little or no change from the previous month.

Unemployment in South Central PA

As of December 2024, the unemployment rate in South Central Pennsylvania was 3.3%, slightly above the state average of 3.6%. In 2023, the South Central Pennsylvania region experienced a 0.7% increase in jobs, rising from 731,783 to 736,614. However, this growth lagged behind the national rate of 4.5% by 3.8%. Additionally, the labor force participation rate decreased from 65.1% to 63.9% between 2018 and 2023. From 2018 to 2023, jobs increased by 0.7% in the South Central PA region from 731,783 to 736,614. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 4.5% by 3.8%. As the number of jobs declined, the labor force participation rate decreased from 65.1% to 63.9% between 2018 and 2023.

Unemployment by Race



[© 2024 Lightcast]

These trends suggest a stable labor market in South Central PA, with some regional variations that SCPa Works addresses through innovative workforce development strategies, grant attainment, outreach, employer engagement, and providing job seekers skill training opportunities that match labor market demands.

Unemployment Rate Trends

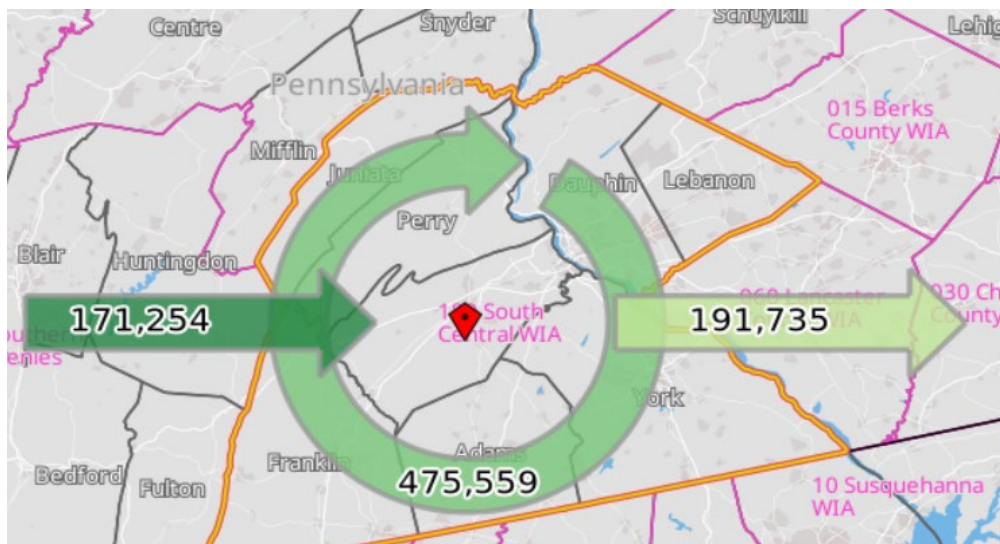
Your areas had a September 2024 unemployment rate of 2.67%, decreasing from 3.73% 5 years before.



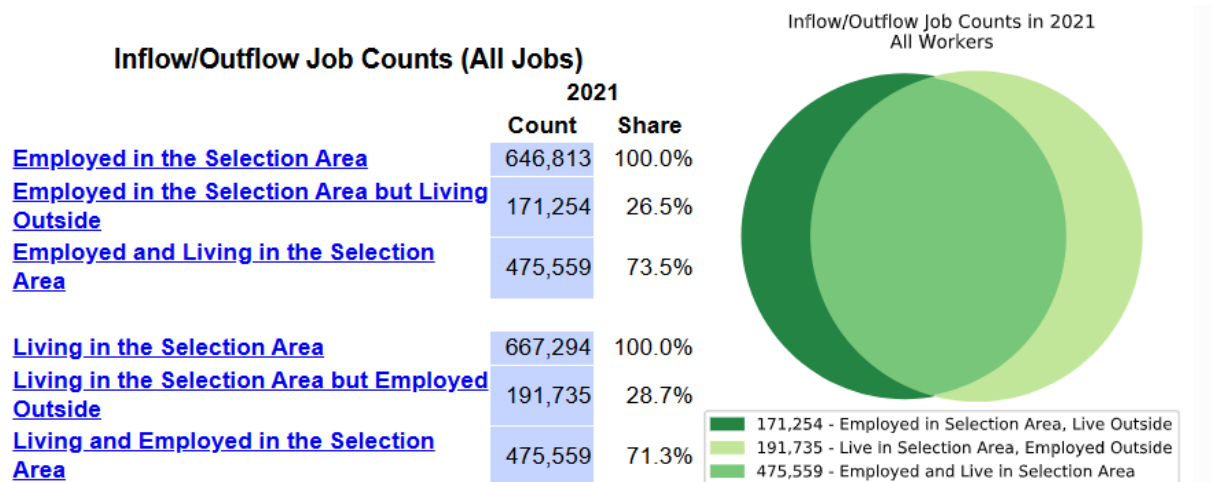
[© 2024 Lightcast]

Commuting Inflow-Outflow Patterns:

The Inflow/Outflow 2021 Report for South Central PA provides insights into the commuting patterns of workers in the region. A total of 475,559 workers in South Central PA lived and worked in the region, while 191,735 residents commuted out of the area for work. Another 171,254 individuals living outside the area commuted into the South Central PA region for work. SCPa Works aims to provide sustainable employment opportunities to all able-bodied workers in the area. One of the initiatives SCPa Works has installed into the workforce solutions landscape is to acquire insights on and create a strategy for cultivating relevant and meaningful relationships with local employers and registered apprenticeship programs.



The data below reflects the inflow/outflow job counts, indicating that the net commuting inflow/outflow in South Central PA is -20,481. This figure is based upon 171,254 individuals who were employed in South Central PA but living outside the region, in contrast to the 191,735 South Central PA residents who commuted to work outside of the area in 2021. This negative value reflects that the number of individuals working in South Central PA but living outside of the WDA is lower than the number of individuals living in the area and working outside of the WDA.

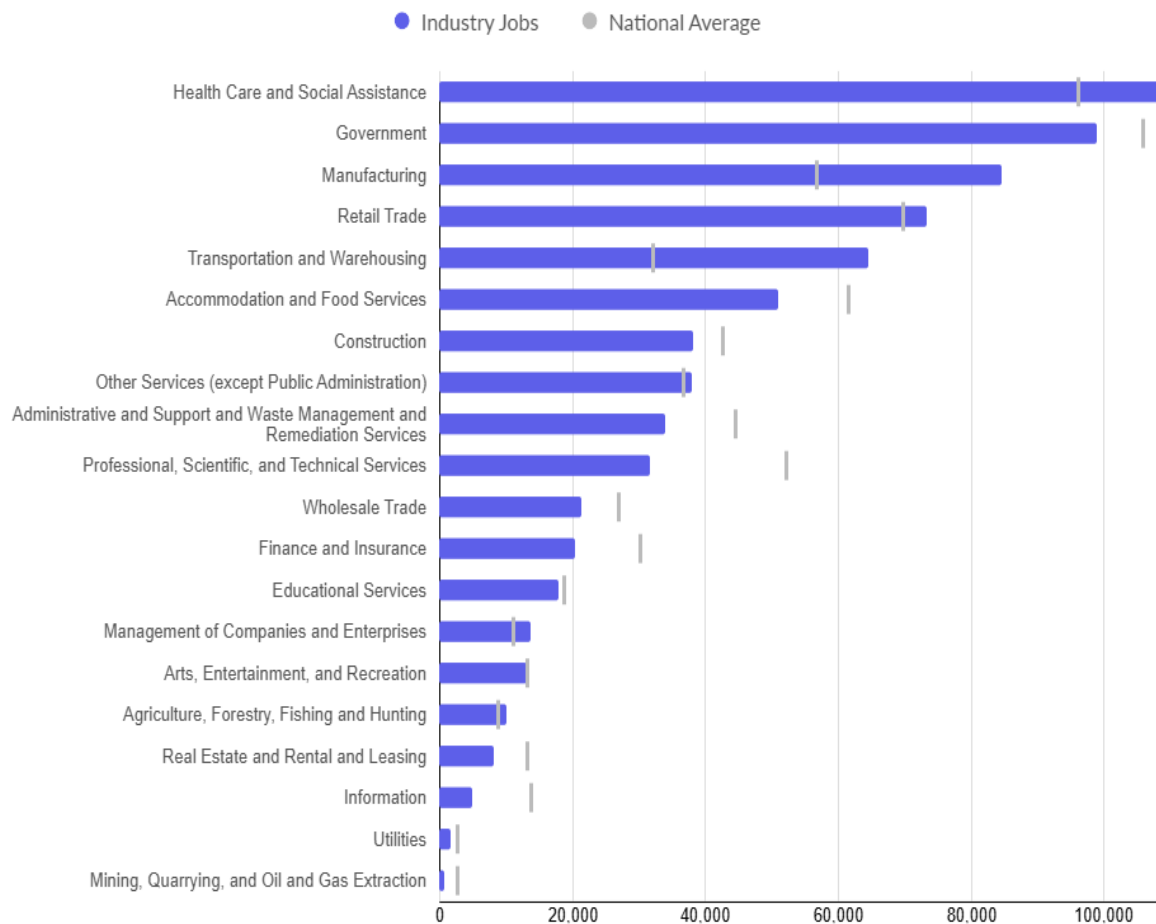


Section 1.2

1.2. Economic analysis -Describe strategic planning elements including a regional analysis of economic conditions. [20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(i) and (ii). Reviewed by ATO, CWIA, and PA WDB]

The top five largest industries in South Central PA include Home Care and Social Assistance, Government, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Transportation and Warehousing. These five industries reflect the top-five industries as reflected in Section 1.2 of the South Central PA Regional Plan, with the exception of Government being the second largest industry in the local area, compared to Manufacturing being the second largest industry in the South Central PA regional area. Government is the only industry within the top five, both locally and regionally, that falls short of the national average in terms of size.

Largest Industries



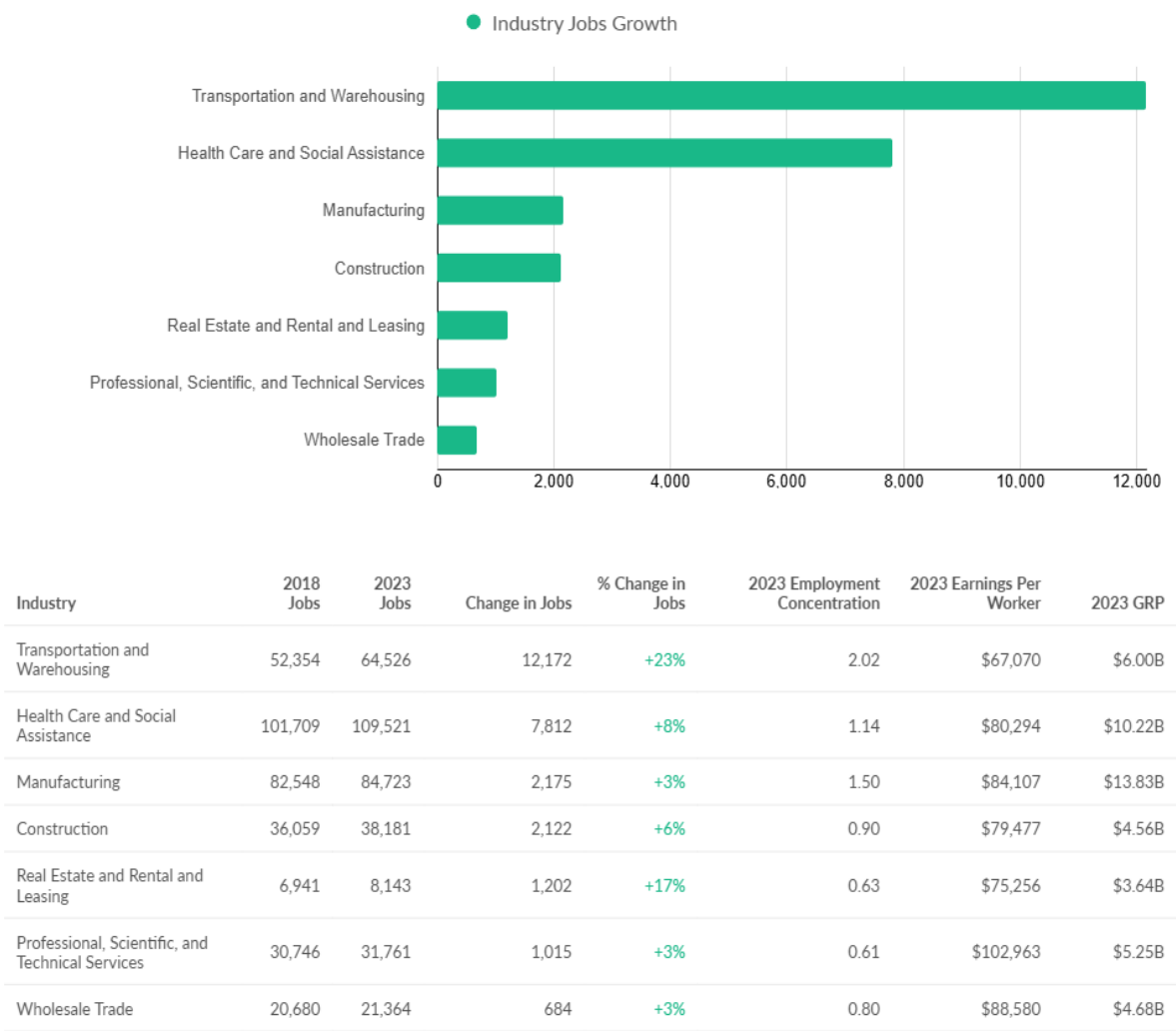
[© 2024 Lightcast]

The top-five growing/emerging industries in South Central PA are reflected in the graph below as Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Construction, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing. The top five growing industries in the South Central PA region differ slightly from what is illustrated in Section 1.2 of the South Central PA Regional Plan which lists

Transportation and Warehousing, Healthcare, Construction, Manufacturing, and Professional Services as the top five emerging industries.

The top-growing industry in South Central PA, Transportation and Warehousing, increased by 23% in the local area between 2018 and 2023. In comparison, during the same year span, the Transportation and Warehousing industry had a growth rate of 20%. The Healthcare industry had a growth rate of 8%, both locally and regionally.

Top Growing Industries



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The graph below indicates industry location quotients. The local area’s top five industries, defined by location quotients and employment concentration, are similar to the regional area. Management of Companies is expected to have the third-highest location quotient in the local area, and Agriculture is expected to have the third-highest location quotient in the regional area.

The top five industries in South Central PA include Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Construction, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing. Transportation and Warehousing saw the largest employment increase between 2018 and 2023, adding 12,172 jobs in

the region within this five-year span. The growth reflects a 23% rise in jobs. Health Care and Social Assistance grew by 7,812 jobs, exhibiting an 8% growth in jobs, while Manufacturing added 2,175 new jobs to the South Central PA service area, reflecting a 3% growth.

The Construction industry in South Central PA grew by 6% in the five-year period, adding 2,122 jobs to the region. Real Estate and Rental and Leasing grew by 17%, reflecting 1,202 new jobs in the area. With Transportation and Warehousing increasing jobs in the region by 23%, SCPa Works ensures that training and employment opportunities are made available to eligible residents through Individual Training Accounts, On-the-Job Training positions, Incumbent Worker Training, and enrollment into Registered Apprenticeship programs.

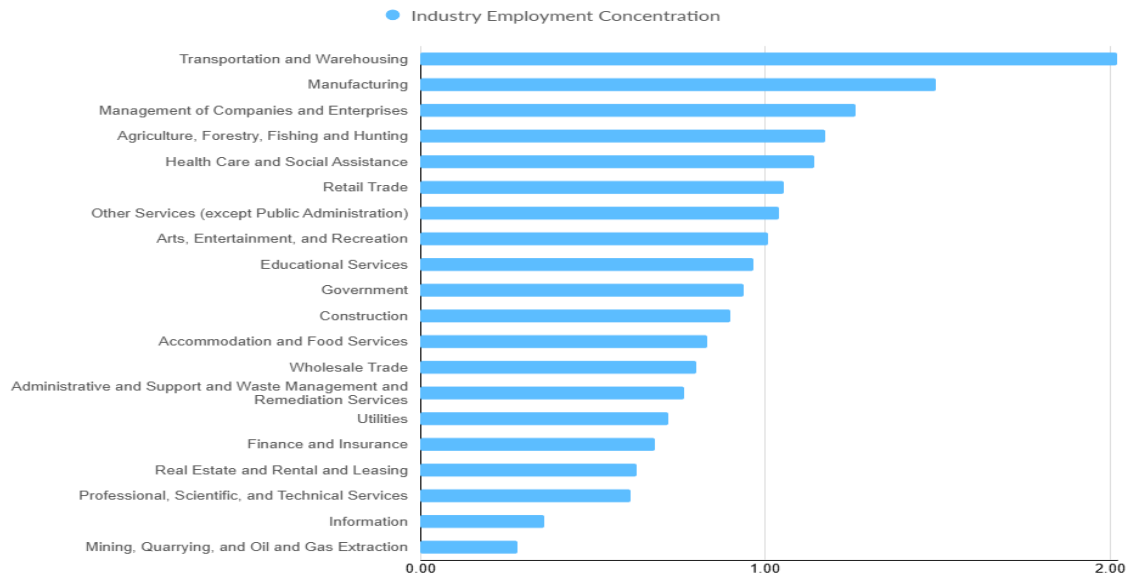
In 2024, SCPa Works launched the Logistics and Transportation Consortium, increasing employer engagement and job opportunity awareness across the region. This initiative is a results-driven approach to matching businesses and organizations with employees seeking a sustainable means to long-term career attainment. SCPa Works Logistics and Transportation Consortium delivers a platform upon which the invaluable exchange of information, ideas, and sustainable practices will ensure continued growth and success among partners.

SCPa Works Industry Partnerships(IP) program improves economic prosperity, increases job quality, and prepares the local workforce for the jobs of today and for the growth of the future. Industry partnerships reflect regional partnerships between business leaders within a single industry, who work together with public partners from economic development, workforce development, education and training, and other community organizations. IP initiatives address the shared workforce and broader competitive needs of specific industries. The Industry Partnership program strengthens overall regional industries through training initiatives, recruitment strategies, raising career awareness, and working together to address challenges identified and discussed by employers. SCPa Works IP programs support specific industry sectors like agriculture, information technology, robotics, health care, construction/trades, education, and manufacturing, but are not limited to these sectors. SCPa Works also expands its employee base to include marginalized communities whose residents experience barriers to employment and focuses on job quality for all employees.

Overall goals of the Industry Partnership program are:

- Eliminate silos by aligning local, regional, and state education, workforce and economic development initiatives, including state and regional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act plans
- Increase occupational, career pathway and economic opportunities for all Pennsylvania residents (i.e. students, youth and workers) particularly those from underrepresented, under resourced, and underserved communities
- Increase connections, collaboration, and communication between regional/local identified priority industries
- Explore and implement new approaches taking advantage of opportunities and industry specific solutions
- Grow targeted industry sectors who could benefit from sector strategies approaches; include businesses that have traditionally been left out of these initiatives, including, but not limited to, small businesses, and minority- and women-owned businesses
- Identify, develop, and act upon solutions to address workforce issues and challenges, that are supported by relevant data and information
- Create a long-lasting partnership and make best use of available funds/resources

Top Industry Employment Concentration



Industry	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2023 Employment Concentration	2023 Earnings Per Worker	2023 GRP
Transportation and Warehousing	52,354	64,526	12,172	+23%	2.02	\$67,070	\$6.00B
Manufacturing	82,548	84,723	2,175	+3%	1.50	\$84,107	\$13.83B
Management of Companies and Enterprises	13,875	13,793	-82	-1%	1.26	\$143,498	\$2.52B
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	10,189	10,101	-88	-1%	1.18	\$57,501	\$1.50B
Health Care and Social Assistance	101,709	109,521	7,812	+8%	1.14	\$80,294	\$10.22B
Retail Trade	73,520	73,434	-86	0%	1.06	\$42,038	\$6.76B
Other Services (except Public Administration)	40,609	38,023	-2,586	-6%	1.04	\$41,378	\$2.25B
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	13,178	13,157	-21	0%	1.01	\$33,027	\$802.06M
Educational Services	18,732	17,923	-809	-4%	0.97	\$49,963	\$1.06B
Government	101,739	99,041	-2,698	-3%	0.94	\$94,041	\$11.77B
Construction	36,059	38,181	2,122	+6%	0.90	\$79,477	\$4.56B
Accommodation and Food Services	52,955	51,101	-1,854	-4%	0.83	\$26,278	\$2.24B
Wholesale Trade	20,680	21,364	684	+3%	0.80	\$88,580	\$4.68B
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	40,735	33,963	-6,772	-17%	0.77	\$48,555	\$2.63B
Utilities	2,569	1,802	-767	-30%	0.72	\$188,342	\$1.67B
Finance and Insurance	25,210	20,458	-4,752	-19%	0.68	\$107,685	\$7.08B
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6,941	8,143	1,202	+17%	0.63	\$75,256	\$3.64B
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	30,746	31,761	1,015	+3%	0.61	\$102,963	\$5.25B
Information	6,699	4,875	-1,824	-27%	0.36	\$74,502	\$1.50B
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	737	725	-12	-2%	0.28	\$86,411	\$218.94M

[© 2024 Lightcast]

SCPa Works invests in Industry Partnerships to expand career pathway opportunities in industries, including, but not limited to, Manufacturing, in partnership with the Manufacturers' Association, Information Technology, Construction, and, in 2025, Agriculture. SCPa Works grew the IP program in 2025 to include a Help Desk registered apprenticeship through the IT IP, a Cyber Security training

program also through the IT IP, and is currently working on a registered apprenticeship opportunity through the Construction IP.

SCPa Works maintains a strong commitment to workforce innovation, including activities and initiatives dedicated to raising awareness and expanding the use of Registered Apprenticeships and Registered Pre-Apprenticeships throughout the South Central PA service area. SCPa Works ensures that WIOA-eligible participants have access to Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships that meet the requirements established by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO). SCPa Works is engaged in multiple sector-based collaborations and partnerships that enhance and grow Registered Apprenticeship and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship within industries that include Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care, and Agriculture, as well as the following initiatives:

- ENGAGE Program: Strengthening industry connections and workforce alignment.
- Industry Partnership Programming: Forging and maintaining long-term relationships with employers in multiple industry sectors to include IT, Construction, Health Care, and Manufacturing.
- Community and Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): Enhancing long-term regional competitiveness.

In addition, SCPa Works invests in the LEAF registered pre-apprenticeship annual summer program, and works closely with Apprenticeship and Training Representatives, the Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance, and the contracted Business Services Team to ensure that registered apprenticeship opportunities are made available to all eligible job seekers in South Central PA.

SCPa Works employs an in-house apprenticeship navigator staff member who specializes in the processes specific to registered apprenticeship processes as established and enforced by the Apprenticeship and Training Office. Furthermore, SCPa Works employs three additional apprenticeship navigators via contracted vendors, including a corporate apprenticeship navigator, to ensure that all able-bodied, eligible job seekers are made aware of the available registered apprenticeship programs in South Central PA.

Section 1.3

1.3. Skill Gap analysis -How are skills gaps defined in the local area? Provide a description of the skills that are required to meet the needs of employers in region and local area? [20 CFR 679.560(a)(2).
Reviewed by CWIA and PA WDB]

In a series of recent presentations to the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), and the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA), SCPa Works CEO Jesse McCree addressed state and local leaders on the transformative impact of artificial intelligence in the workforce system.

Introducing AI to Workforce Development

Using AI to identify skills gaps, align training with industry needs, and provide personalized career pathways, SCPa Works enhances responsiveness to the current labor market while positioning a workforce for sustainable, long-term growth.

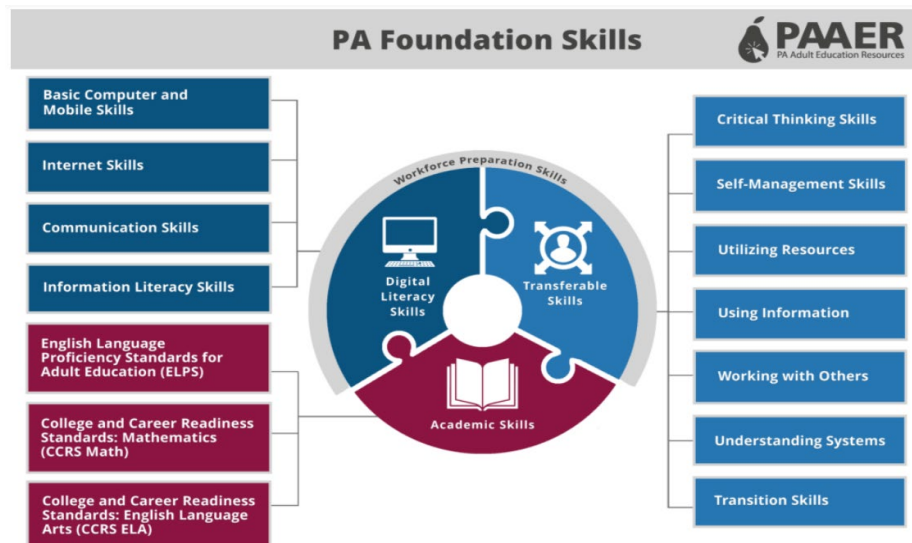
This integration of AI into workforce development is a significant advancement in identifying and addressing the skill gaps that exist between employer demands and under-skilled workers. It offers more precise, data-driven strategies that are scaled to meet the evolving needs of both workers and employers, ultimately leading to a more resilient and adaptable workforce system.

In a rapidly changing economic landscape, data is crucial for understanding emerging trends, identifying skill gaps, and predicting future workforce needs. Through the partnership with JFF, SCPa Works is enhancing its capacity to collect, analyze, and utilize data to inform decisions and strategies. This data-centric approach enables us to tailor programs to meet the region's specific needs, ensuring that we are responding to current demands and proactively preparing for future changes.

In 2024, SCPa Works launched an initiative through the established relationship with Business Education Partnerships. SCPa Works identified an untapped market of talent and, in doing so, connected local businesses, high schools, and community organizations to bridge the gap between this next generation of talent and local employers.

Through 12 community-driven projects launched through data collection and analysis, SCPa Works, via the dedicated commitment of contracted vendors, empowered more than 2,000 students with career awareness activities, pre-apprenticeships, and skill-building opportunities. These activities laid the foundation for students to gravitate toward post-secondary education in alignment with local employer workforce needs.

Analyzing skills gaps between the labor force and industry is a core component of SCPa Works' workforce development programs, services, and initiatives. SCPa Works continuously monitors critical skills gaps to ensure the proper assistive resources are applied to effectively shorten or even diminish such gaps.



[© 2024 PA Adult Education Resources]

According to PA Adult Education Resources, the top workforce preparation skills necessary to elevate and improve the Pennsylvania workforce are basic computer and mobile skills, internet skills, communication skills, and information literacy skills. This data overlaps with the top ten knowledge areas that are key education or experience requirements for an occupation, published by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) bureau, as follows:

Knowledge Area	Occupations Requiring	Pct.
English Language	606	82%
Customer and Personal Service	537	72%
Mathematics	491	66%
Administration and Management	485	65%
Education and Training	475	64%
Computers and Electronics	441	59%
Public Safety and Security	398	54%
Clerical	378	51%
Mechanical	281	38%
Production and Processing	278	37%

[© 2024 PA CWIA]

The above chart includes the percentage of occupations, out of 750 that were analyzed, that require the skill listed. Eight-two percent of occupations in Pennsylvania require English language speakers. This data validates the partnership between SCPa Works and the local Title II providers who dual enroll WIOA-eligible participants into English Language Learners (ELL) classes to close this skill gap and better prepare participants for the South Central PA workforce landscape.

Skills gap data provides an overview of the supply and demand of specific skills and knowledge. It outlines the region's capacity to meet employer demands concerning specific skill sets within the South Central PA labor force. This data allows workforce development boards, training providers, educators, and other

agencies and organizations to invest in the programs that contribute to meeting the needs of the most significant or critical skills gaps within the service area. This data is one of the essential evaluations as to the efficacy of investments and programs.

Based on a three-year (2023-2026) occupational projection from the Lightcast® application, the top 10 jobs listed below are based on average annual openings. None of the jobs listed below had a formal education or experience requirement, however, SCPa Works acknowledges the skill gap in business leadership and management. Home Health and Personal Care Aides are projected to have the highest job growth, at a 15% increase. In addition, the measuring the job market in South Central PA by annual openings, PA CWIA ranks Fast Food and Counter Workers as the number-one growing occupations in South Central PA by salary, topping out with an average annual salary of \$27,760.

SOC	Description	2026 Jobs	Avg. Annual Openings	2023 Jobs	2023 - 2026 % Change
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	28,294	3,988	26,972	5%
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	17,189	3,975	16,964	1%
31-1128	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	19,796	3,550	17,225	15%
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	17,297	2,969	16,449	5%
41-2011	Cashiers	14,659	2,875	14,957	-2%
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	15,602	2,303	15,653	0%
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	8,272	1,741	8,395	-1%
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	15,389	1,739	15,053	2%
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	13,723	1,662	14,080	-3%
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	10,666	1,506	10,718	0%
		160,888	26,308	156,467	3%

[© 2024 Lightcast]

The following graph displays a high-level statistic of jobs requiring a particular education in comparison to the region's population of education obtained. Forty-three percent of jobs require a high school diploma, while 37% of the region's population meets that criteria; however, 24% of jobs in the South Central region require a Bachelor's degree, while 18% of the region's population meets that criteria:

Underemployment



[© 2024 Lightcast]

Healthcare and Social Assistance continue to lead the South Central Pa region's industry category in size and job opportunities. According to the Lightcast application, approximately 113,000 jobs will be occupied within the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry by 2026 - a 6% increase from 2023. The following graph displays career pathways that stem from the top growing occupation by 2026, Home Health and Personal Care Aides:

Next-Step Jobs

Below are the top listed next-step jobs for Home Health and Personal Care Aides with median advertised salary of \$31,360. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Home Health and Personal Care Aides and your selected occupation.



[© 2024 Lightcast]

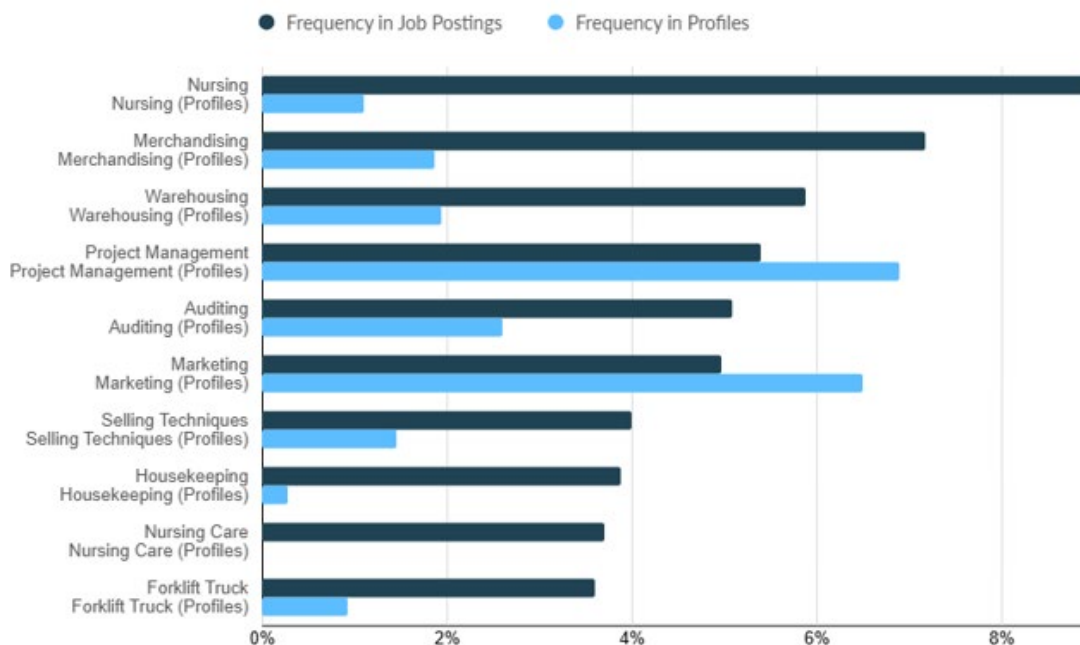
Below is the table-view of the top listed next-step jobs for Home Health and Personal Care Aides with median advertised salary of \$31,360. Select a job to view skill gaps between Home Health and Personal Care Aides and your selected occupation.

Occupation	Category	Relevance	Avg. Unique Monthly Postings from Nov 2023 - Oct 2024	Mean Salary Diff.
Residential Advisors	Lateral Advancement	73%	5	+\$7,967
Nursing Assistants	Advancement	70%	101	+\$8,377
Childcare Workers	Lateral Advancement	61%	4	+\$7,840
First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers	Lateral Advancement	54%	8	+\$11,459
Social and Human Service Assistants	Lateral Advancement	54%	15	+\$11,092
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	Lateral Transition	53%	48	+\$605
Psychiatric Aides	Advancement	48%	5	+\$21,636
Psychiatric Technicians	Lateral Advancement	48%	13	+\$10,702
Recreation Workers	Lateral Advancement	46%	14	+\$3,918
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	Lateral Advancement	43%	71	+\$16,968

[© 2024 Lightcast]

The following graph displays in-demand specialized skills according to a one-year (2023-2024) Lightcast job posting report. The graph compares what is included in the job posting, in comparison to what is uncovered through the profile of South Central PA's labor force:

Top Specialized Skills



[© 2024 Lightcast]

Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles	Projected Skill Growth	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Nursing	9,385	9%	4,252	1%	+20.1%	Rapidly Growing
Merchandising	7,503	7%	7,155	2%	+15.0%	Growing
Warehousing	6,144	6%	7,448	2%	+13.0%	Growing
Project Management	5,636	5%	26,481	7%	+19.8%	Rapidly Growing
Auditing	5,320	5%	9,995	3%	+21.8%	Rapidly Growing
Marketing	5,186	5%	24,954	7%	+23.0%	Rapidly Growing
Selling Techniques	4,172	4%	5,580	1%	-1.2%	Lagging
Housekeeping	4,054	4%	1,070	0%	+13.3%	Growing
Nursing Care	3,878	4%	0	0%	+19.1%	Growing
Forklift Truck	3,767	4%	3,559	1%	+5.5%	Stable

[© 2024 Lightcast]

The South Central Industry Sector Partnerships: Closing the Education and Skills Gap

To build effective career pathway strategies that cater to the diverse needs of the region's workforce, it is crucial to align educational attainment levels with industry demand and the skills employers require. The current landscape shows that while the region's high school graduation rate of 37% is higher than both state and national averages, we face significant challenges regarding higher education attainment, particularly in bachelor's and graduate or professional degrees. To address this disparity and build a

stronger, more resilient workforce, we have three existing industry sector partnerships in manufacturing, IT & construction, and building a fourth one in Agriculture that aims to bridge the educational gaps by focusing on the following key initiatives within industry partnerships:

- Career Readiness Programs for High School Students through micro-credential programs
- Support for Nontraditional Learners with programs designed to help non-college-bound individuals enhance their skills to lead to high-demand careers
- Strengthening Connections Between Education and Workforce Development between industry and local higher education institutions
- Industry-Focused Curriculum Development
- Targeted scholarships and internship program support
- Mentorship and Networking: Providing students with opportunities to connect with industry professionals through mentorship programs, career fairs, and networking events will help them understand industry expectations, career trajectories, and the necessary steps for success in their chosen fields.
-

Workforce systems support diverse industries in the South Central PA area to withstand economic shifts. By focusing on industries with growth potential, such as healthcare, while tapping into the Opportunity Youth population as a workforce match, SCPa Works provides a strategy to identify sustainable jobs with the promise of economic security.

In addition to data-driven initiatives through which employer needs are matched with workforce training and education, SCPa Works tracked 236 new employers who registered with the PA CareerLink®. This flux in new employers seeking qualified and eligible employees expanded the network of businesses seeking top talent in the region. SCPa Works answered the call through one-on-one employer engagement with Business Services team members, site visits, and interviews to assess work qualifications and skill requirements. In turn, the Business Services team members collaborated with the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth teams to enhance training and education opportunities that catered to the new employer population. In addition, the Program teams source on-the-job training and paid work experience opportunities to match employers with eligible workers.

The SCPa Works Opportunity Youth social media initiative laid the foundation for bridging the skills gap by attracting youth who have been disengaged from traditional education or employment paths into PA CareerLink® sites where their journey into the workforce begins. To further the process, SCPa Works launched the Opportunity Youth Paid Work Experience (PWE) program through which every Opportunity Youth participant received a workforce development training curriculum that includes Paid Work Experience (PWE).

The gap in higher education attainment presents a challenge for the SCPa Works region but also represents a significant opportunity. By strengthening the links between education and industry, especially through industry partnership programs, SCPa Works ensures career pathways are accessible at all levels of education, and we can develop a more skilled, adaptable, and competitive workforce.

Industry partnerships with employers are essential in creating pathways to employment for individuals facing barriers, such as justice-impacted individuals or underemployed individuals. SCPa Works partnerships enable the design of programs that focus not only on building technical skills but also on fostering critical employability skills—such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork—that are key to long-term success in the workforce. By working with the PA CareerLink® offices to provide targeted training, apprenticeship opportunities, support services, and inclusive hiring practices, industry partnerships help individuals overcome barriers, gain meaningful employment, and advance in their

careers, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and resilient local economy. The South Central PA industry sector partnerships are dedicated to fostering a robust education-to-career pipeline that meets regional economic needs and the aspirations of individuals, helping to build a thriving local economy for years to come.

In alignment with Pennsylvania's workforce and economic development strategy focus on creating family-sustaining jobs and meaningful careers, SCPa Works creates programming that connects students, graduates, and workers with in-state job opportunities through internships, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, and experiential learning. SCPa Works identifies and removes barriers to employment, elevating the workforce delivery model responsive to employer and worker needs.

By maintaining relationships such as the partnership with the Capital Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC), SCPa Works fully integrates workforce development into economic development efforts. These initiatives aim to create a competitive labor pool, address labor shortages, and ensure that the time and grant dollars invested into every project promote economic development and building resilient communities, with a particular focus on enhancing business growth and fostering innovation. In addition, forging relationships with organizations such as CREDC strengthens skill-building programs and job training, increasing local competitiveness in key industries.

CREDC has actively fostered communication links between SCPa Works' employer-focused endeavors and initiatives spearheaded by PREP partners, all directed toward meeting business demands. This entailed arranging frequent meetings and providing a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on prevailing needs and obstacles. For example, a sequence of task force dialogues was coordinated, enabling SCPa Works representatives, local businesses, and PREP partners to exchange perspectives on workforce needs and industry trends.

The Cradle to Career Alliance is a collective impact effort convening for the Harrisburg Region to align businesses, schools, and community organizations to develop and sustain a vibrant workforce in the region. The Alliance is to support existing work, define and assist with workforce gaps, and create more equitable and accessible supports through partnership and collaboration. The Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC are the guiding partners of the Alliance alongside the Partnership for Career Development and the Capital Area Intermediate Unit. SCPa Works aligns with the Alliance and works closely with all partners to fully immerse the SCPa Works Business Services teams and Program team into collaborative innovation to overcome the challenges unique to resolving the skill gaps in the South Central PA region.

CREDC has advanced its efforts to consolidate regional data on employer requirements through a series of comprehensive surveys and in-depth interviews with businesses. This recent period has revealed several critical areas where SCPa Works workforce program alignment is essential. One significant development was CREDC's collaboration with business assistance organizations to evaluate the ongoing demand for information seminars in key sectors of business creation, including technology startups, healthcare innovation, and sustainable practices. Partnering with this data-driven approach, SCPa Works has refined strategies that ensure regional business development initiatives are closely aligned with the evolving needs and priorities of local businesses.

According to the Pennsylvania Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Growth (2024-2033), Pennsylvania is ranked fourth in Research and development (R&D) and lags in Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Developing targeted initiatives to transition R&D into successful startups will be crucial. Looking into the future, SCPa Works intends to identify incentives for innovation hubs, promote incubators, and support

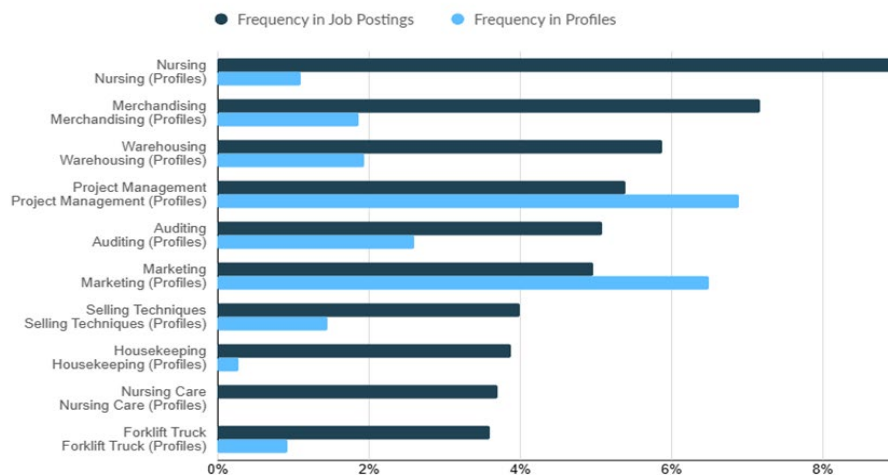
existing ventures that scale locally. By aligning efforts from local chambers, economic development organizations, and industry leaders, SCPa Works will accelerate business growth while fostering resilient communities through continued job matching, further employer engagement, and developing cutting-edge approaches to enhancing workforce system program development.

Section 1.4

1.4. Workforce Development Activities analysis -Provide an analysis of local area workforce development activities, including education and training. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(D); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(vii); and 679.560(a)(4). Reviewed by ATO, CWIA, and PA WDB]

As Section 1.3 of the SCPa Works Local Area Plan describes, bridging the gap between employer talent demand and the supply of incumbent workers and job seekers is essential for fostering economic growth, workforce sustainability, and overall industry competitiveness within the South Central PA region. To provide an overview of employer demand and the level of comparative skills held by the region's labor force, the following one-year (2023-2024) analysis of the Top Specialized Skills report was sourced from the Lightcast® system. Of the top 10 skill sets required by employers, only two of the skill sets, Project Management and Marketing, showcased a surplus of profiles within the region's labor force. Housekeeping, Forklift Truck, and Nursing are the occupations least met by employer demand and occupational requirements.

Top Specialized Skills



Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles	Projected Skill Growth	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Nursing	9,385	9%	4,252	1%	+20.1%	Rapidly Growing
Merchandising	7,503	7%	7,155	2%	+15.0%	Growing
Warehousing	6,144	6%	7,448	2%	+13.0%	Growing
Project Management	5,636	5%	26,481	7%	+19.8%	Rapidly Growing
Auditing	5,320	5%	9,995	3%	+21.8%	Rapidly Growing
Marketing	5,186	5%	24,954	7%	+23.0%	Rapidly Growing
Selling Techniques	4,172	4%	5,580	1%	-1.2%	Lagging
Housekeeping	4,054	4%	1,070	0%	+13.3%	Growing
Nursing Care	3,878	4%	0	0%	+19.1%	Growing
Forklift Truck	3,767	4%	3,559	1%	+5.5%	Stable

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Through the results-driven work ethic of the South Central PA CareerLink® service delivery teams and the partners within the workforce development ecosystem, SCPa Works aligns workforce training programs with market demands and job seekers who strive to obtain meaningful employment. The South Central

PA workforce region houses multiple career and technical centers, community colleges, and four-year colleges, as well as a variety of for and nonprofit training providers that offer a diverse and flexible suite of options for job seekers seeking to obtain new skills training.

SCPa Works is committed to leveraging resources to promote an integrated workforce system across the region while avoiding the duplication of services and aligning with the separation of duties among partners. According to the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS), Program Year '23-24 efforts of the PA CareerLink® and partners within its ecosystem placed 162 participants into meaningful training, 1,316 participants into occupational skills training where a certificate or high school diploma/GED was earned, 5 participants into On-the-Job Training (OJT), and 65 participants into Paid Work Experiences (PWE).

Program Year '23-24 regional impact is evident in the 4,347 individuals who entered workforce development activities and gained employment by the second quarter after exiting the program with average earnings of \$8,782 during that quarter. In addition, PA CareerLink® partners provided essential workforce development services to a unique count of 5,826 Title I and Title III customers collectively. Through a collaborative service model, PA CareerLink® partners seamlessly coordinate services for eligible participants to include Individual Training Accounts (ITA), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Paid Work Experience (PWE), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and WIOA-Funded Registered Apprenticeship Programming (RAP) and Pre-Apprentice programming (Pre-RAP).

Registered Apprenticeship

SCPa Works prioritizes the availability of a multitude of career services to individuals with barriers. This initiative includes the availability of Registered Apprenticeship as a career pathway. Apprenticeship training, supported by SCPa Works' regional Apprenticeship Navigators, in collaboration with the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) and Keystone Development Partnership (KDP), provide comprehensive knowledge on where to find information on pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities. According to the PA CareerLink® website (pacareerlink.pa.gov), 132 registered apprenticeships are available in the South Central PA region. The Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) reports two participants who successfully began a RAP journey as a registered apprentice in Program Year '23-24.

Three SCPa Works staff members completed the Apprenticeship Navigator Training by the close of 2024. In conjunction with the SCPa Works Policy Manager, who created, implemented, and presented a full-spectrum training on WIOA-funded RAP, the SCPa Works Apprenticeship Navigator coordinated a local kickoff with the ATO, PA CareerLink® staff, and Partners. Equus included a RAP launch activity with staff to generate enthusiasm and success. The event also included two employer RAPs with success stories.

Working with the SCPa Works Policy Manager, Equus developed a PA CareerLink® process for Registered Apprenticeship Programming (RAP) and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Programming (Pre-RAP). The Equus team has two employees enrolled in the KDP Apprenticeship Navigator Program. Existing RAP and Pre-RAP lists are regularly provided to the PA CareerLink® project lead for distribution. In addition to creating program processes, the Business Services Team and Job Seeker processes have been established.

The SCPa Works WIOA-funded RAP initiative aligns with Governor Shapiro's workforce plans with increased investment in career and technical education centers (CTCs) so that more students can access technical education and programming. Connecting with and including CTC representatives in meetings for pre-apprenticeship programs, Industry Partnerships, and employer engagement is vital to the success of WIOA-funded RAP in South Central PA.

Industry Partnerships promote RAP and Pre-RAP employers and sponsors to hire and train within their industry without requiring employees to earn four-year degrees. Monthly training calls are planned to introduce all new RAPs and Pre-RAPs to the PA CareerLink® programs team.

In addition to the newly WIOA-funded RAP launch activities, the Navigator keeps abreast of ATO updates, attends LWDB in-person meetings with larger companies, leverages leftover ABA funds through ATO programs, and uses the grant opportunity website for apprenticeship funding opportunities for the community.

SCPa Works ensures that Title I staff meet the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) representative regularly to discuss updates, changes, and improvements to local Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Economic Development Connections Agreement with Capital Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC)

Economic development connections are vital to the success of the South Central PA workforce development systems, partnerships, and the employer community. SCPa Works serves the needs of the employer community in the South Central PA region by forging and cultivating strong connections with the economic development community. All efforts are grounded in the belief that to drive economic progress and success, SCPa Works must build a strong foundation that supports the region as a place where the opportunity for growth and prosperity exists for everyone.

The Economic Development Connections Initiative, a collective approach to elevating workforce development strategies, hinges on a well-defined and collaborative approach that aligns the goals of SCPa Works, CREDC, and the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The project approach fosters effective communication, data-driven decision-making, and seamless coordination between workforce development and economic development efforts. The following illustrates the collective forces of each entity, highlighting the proactive approach to connecting the community with workforce development while exhibiting each organization's highly skilled teams.

CREDC Responsibilities:

- **Liaison and Communication**
 - Facilitate regular communication between SCPa Works' employer-facing efforts and the PREP partners' initiatives focused on addressing business demand.
 - Act as a liaison between workforce and economic development systems, aggregating regional data on employer needs and strategies for program alignment.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:**
 - Utilize survey data and research to identify key workforce challenges and opportunities faced by businesses in the region.
 - Research and report on key sectors within South Central Pennsylvania, highlighting emerging and declining industries, related occupations, and required skills.
- **Strategy Development:**
 - Based on data analysis, propose education, training, and workforce strategies to meet the skill demands of local employers and attract new businesses to the region.

- Advocate for smart economic development initiatives that better align businesses with job seeker needs
- Program Coordination and Support:
 - Coordinate and administer business calling programs in collaboration with PREP services and programs.
 - Provide strategic and administrative support for business calling programs, including referring workforce-related inquiries to the appropriate organization.
- Stakeholder Engagement:
 - Communicate regional economic development perspectives with stakeholders, including service providers, Industry Partnerships (IPs), and partners.
 - Support economic development components of WIOA local/regional plan writing.
- CEDS Implementation Support:
 - Act as a liaison between workforce-related groups and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).
 - Provide training to stakeholders on the use of CEDS, mapping, and alignment activities.
 - Assist in planning and coordinating CEDS events and activities. Monitor implementation of program policies and practices related to CEDS.

Economic Development Connections Initiative highlights

Data Collection and Analysis

CREDC has advanced its efforts to consolidate regional data on employer requirements through comprehensive surveys and in-depth interviews with businesses. This recent period has revealed several critical areas where program alignment is essential.

One significant development was CREDC's collaboration with business assistance organizations to evaluate the ongoing demand for information seminars in key sectors of business creation, including technology startups, healthcare innovation, and sustainable practices. Using this data-driven approach, CREDC has refined and developed strategies that ensure regional business development initiatives are closely aligned with local businesses' evolving needs and priorities.

Furthermore, CREDC has continued to expand its collaboration with educational institutions and workforce development agencies to address the skills gap in emerging industries. Recent targeted data collection efforts have pinpointed specific training and certification programs necessary to meet the growing demand for skilled labor in fields like advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, and cybersecurity.

These insights have empowered CREDC to advocate for and implement training programs that are directly aligned with employer needs, thereby fostering a more resilient and adaptable workforce in the region.

Strategy Development

CREDC continues to spearhead an initiative to broaden the impact of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by forming task forces aligned with the four core objectives of the South Central PA regional CEDS strategy: Economic Competitiveness, Workforce Development, Infrastructure

Improvement, and Quality of Life Enhancement.

CEDS Task Force 1: Economic Growth and Development

Task Force 1 is focused on identifying opportunities for economic advancement and aims to propel the region's economy forward through launching initiatives in higher education, small and mid-sized companies, tourism, and technology.

- ✓ **To Date:** CREDC partnered with the Pennsylvania Business One-Stop Shop (BOSS) to create a region-focused webpage on the government website.

Through targeted outreach, information sharing, and strategic planning, the task force has identified regional opportunities to support businesses throughout their lifecycle, from planning and registration to operation and growth. The task force is currently working with BOSS to display these opportunities online and tailor a web page section to meet the region's specific needs.

CEDS Task Force 2: Workforce Development

Task Force 2 is dedicated to strengthening the regional workforce by addressing critical challenges in skill development, talent enhancement, workforce resilience, and industry-specific training programs. The task force aims to cultivate a skilled workforce essential for attracting and retaining businesses. Recognizing that talent attraction and retention are paramount in today's competitive landscape, the group extends its work beyond skill development to include initiatives aimed at talent enhancement and workforce resilience.

By fostering strategic partnerships with educational institutions, job training programs, and industry leaders, the task force ensures that the regional workforce remains competitive and adaptable in today's rapidly evolving economy.

- ✓ **To Date:** the task force has convened sessions on second-chance hiring to better understand and integrate overlooked segments of the local labor supply.

Additionally, the task force has developed a Childcare Assessment survey that has been disseminated to employees in in-demand sectors. This survey aims to ascertain the specific childcare needs in the region, providing crucial data to inform strategies that support working families and enhance workforce participation.

CEDS Task Force 3: Infrastructure Improvement

Task Force 3 optimizes South Central PA infrastructure in support of sustainable development. It is committed to enhancing transportation networks, expanding broadband access, and improving environmental sustainability initiatives. By investing in infrastructure, this group is laying the groundwork for continued economic growth and prosperity in the region.

- ✓ **To Date:** The task force prioritized infrastructure improvement as a key component of regional workforce development. Efforts to assess and enhance critical infrastructure to support economic growth and workforce mobility are in motion.

The task force actively seeks to recruit new stakeholders, including industry experts, local government officials, and community leaders, to join the team. By broadening the range of

expertise and perspectives, the task force aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the region's infrastructure state. This inclusive approach is intended to identify and address infrastructure challenges more effectively, ensuring the development of robust solutions that support the needs of businesses and the workforce.

CEDS Task force 4: Quality of Life Enhancement

Task Force 4 focuses on enhancing the overall quality of life in the community by promoting access to education, healthcare, arts, culture, and recreation.

- ✓ **To Date:** The task force prioritizes preserving and enhancing the quality of life for both current and future residents in all development projects. To ensure growth positively impacts the community, they have developed a Quality of Life Assessment checklist. This tool screens proposed projects for their effects on key quality-of-life factors.

Currently, the task force is disseminating questions for this checklist to key business leaders. Additionally, the team is recruiting new stakeholders, including community members, urban planners, and public health experts, to better understand regional quality of life issues. This approach aims to align development projects with community needs, enhancing the overall quality of life in the region.

Each task force meets quarterly and participates in many smaller working group meetings. Through this process, the task force aims to develop policy recommendations that represent the best thinking of this diverse group of stakeholders, informed by the experience of Task Force members and research and input from communities across South Central Pennsylvania.

Program Coordination and Support

As the South Central Regional PREP and Engage! coordinator, CREDC has consistently expanded data collection efforts within these initiatives. In 2024, the PREP region is exploring ways to enhance the Engage program survey to better align with regional information needs. By providing a more comprehensive economic overview, EDCs, with adjacent partners, gain deeper insights into contributions to local development efforts. These changes are expected to be implemented in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

In addition, CREDC continues to play a key role in directing workforce-related inquiries to the appropriate organizations, ensuring businesses receive timely and relevant support. CREDC helps strengthen connections between businesses and available resources by providing strategic and administrative assistance, ultimately boosting the region's economic vitality.

Stakeholder Engagement

As an Economic Development Corporation (EDC), CREDC has worked to cultivate Regional Service Coordination by establishing or joining industry sector partnerships and working groups. Recognizing the importance of six major industry sectors within the region, CREDC has worked toward forming sector partnerships and workshops in several of these areas, with ongoing plans to expand further in the near future through data collected through the PREP and Engage! programs. While these partnerships operate regionally, the specific geographic focus will vary according to industry needs.

To facilitate effective Regional Service Coordination, SCPa Works has continued to utilize the PREP group as a communication platform, keeping partners informed about progress and potential avenues for program support. Given the novelty of these partnerships, the initial focus is on raising awareness of the programs and actively engaging with sector contacts. This entails collaborative initiatives such as training

and workforce development, sharing resources and best practices, and aligning efforts to attract new investments and foster regional business growth.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Implementation Support

Following the successful CEDS Summits, CREDC has continued its efforts to engage regional stakeholders in the CEDS for the South Central PREP region. Building on the momentum from the summits, CREDC has conducted continued community outreach initiatives to ensure ongoing participation and collaboration.

This outreach includes focus group discussions to foster dialogue and gather input from a diverse range of stakeholders. These activities have provided valuable insights into community priorities, challenges, and opportunities, informing the ongoing development and implementation of the CEDS.

CREDC has also partnered with local chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and government agencies to promote awareness of the CEDS and the importance of driving economic growth and cooperation. Collaborative efforts have been made to engage businesses, community leaders, and residents in shaping strategies that align with the region's economic goals.

Moving forward, CREDC remains committed to facilitating meaningful engagement and collaboration among stakeholders to ensure the CEDS reflects the collective vision and aspirations of the South Central PA PREP region. Similar to the CEDS Summit format, continued programming is planned to sustain this momentum and drive progress toward a dynamic and resilient regional economy.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

As a core partner, OVR participates in Employer Engagement and provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding prescreened qualified employees with disabilities.

OVR onboarding support for a qualified new hire can include reasonable accommodation consultation, on-the-job training (OJT) wage reimbursement, and referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also works with businesses by connecting students involved in OVR's pre-employment transition services.

Services under pre-employment transition services include programs like paid work experiences, job shadowing, and workplace tours. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards, and helping a business retain current employees following an accident, injury, or disability. Statewide business services staff identify resources to assist organizations in improving access compliance and diversifying workforce development to include citizens with disabilities.

Unemployment Compensation (UC)

Unemployment Compensation (UC) representatives are currently deployed in all the PA CareerLink® comprehensive centers. Customers and/or claimants may call a designated number to schedule an appointment with an unemployment compensation agent either in person or, on occasion, virtually. In the event UC staff are not present, claimants can use the CRC to connect with the unemployment compensation filing system.

A kiosk system is being deployed throughout the commonwealth to assist with ID.me connectivity issues some claimants have encountered. The kiosk will verify identification so that the claimant has full access to their unemployment compensation claim dashboard on the state website.

Registered Apprenticeship Programming

SCPa Works administers funding for WIOA and TANF-eligible participants interested in registered apprenticeships. This is accomplished through an intake process to determine eligibility for individuals who can benefit from programs encompassing WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, WIOA OSY, TANF Youth, WIOA IWT, and WIOA ISY. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) are included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and training providers must be "ATO Approved" in the CWDS 2.0 system. To receive benefits, RAP participants must be WIOA or TANF eligible and actively enrolled in a WIOA or TANF program, unless receiving training through WIOA Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), which does not require WIOA eligibility.

SCPa Works incorporates multiple WIOA/TANF funding options to offset and subsidize the costs associated with RAP and pre-RAP opportunities directly related to RAP. To support registered apprentices in South Central PA, SCPa Works ensures that all eligible apprentices receive the maximum allotment in training dollars, in addition to continuous case management services and eligible supportive services.

WIOA/TANF funding integration can include, but is not limited to:

1. The use of WIOA OJT funds for RAP on-the-job learning;
2. The use of WIOA ITA funds for RAP Related Technical Instruction (RTI);
3. The use of WIOA fund for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) within RAP;
4. The provision of WIOA/TANF Supportive Services funds for eligible RAP/Pre-RAP participants;
5. The integration of WIOA/TANF-funded Youth program paid work experience (PWE) funds and occupational skills training services for Pre-RAP.
6. The use of PWE funds for eligible WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers (DW), providing 12 weeks of paid work to determine whether a participant is a good fit for a registered apprenticeship program.

Following the initial eligibility determination, a participant is referred to an Apprenticeship Navigator to enter into the process of applying for a registered apprenticeship program. SCPa Works acknowledges all apprenticeship-related credentials earned within the standard WIOA 12-month training period as measurable skill gains in CWDS.

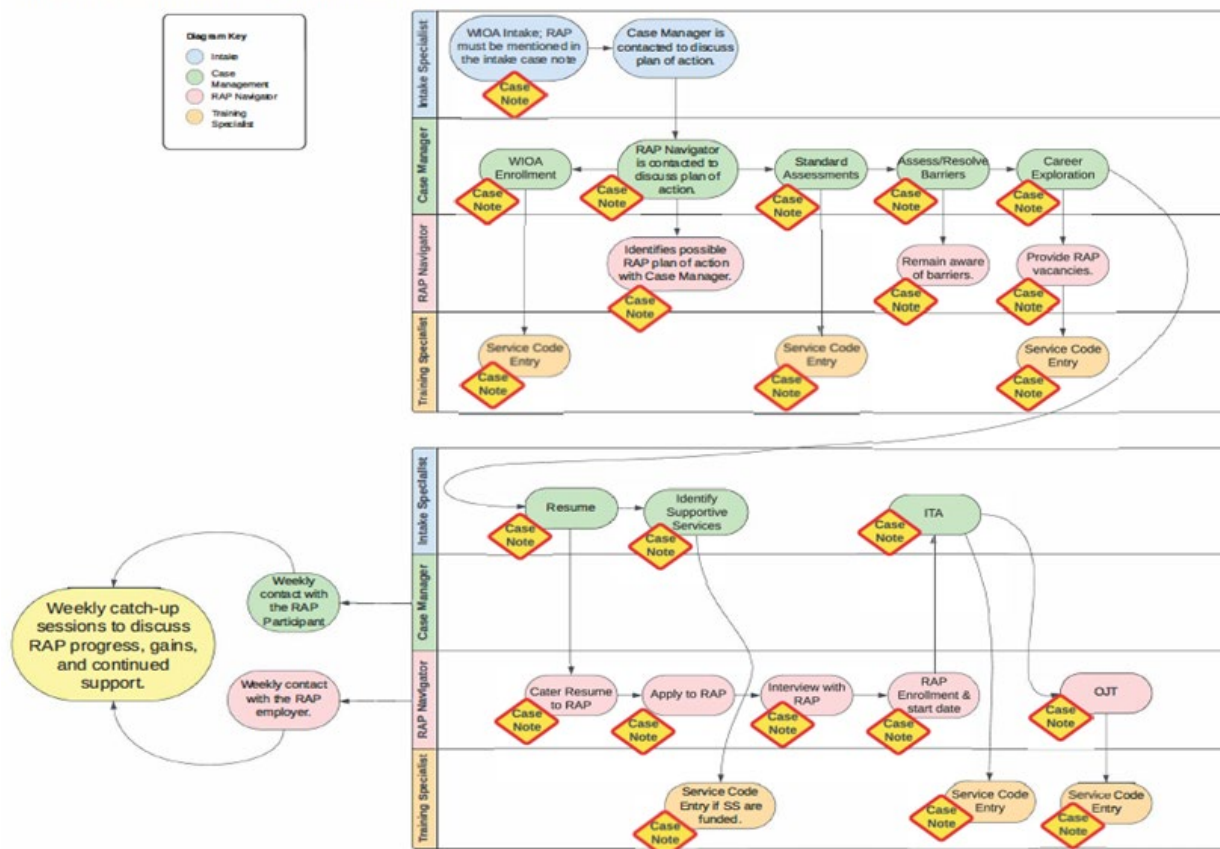
Funding for registered apprenticeships is based on processes and procedures already in place for OJT, ITA, PWE, IWT, Occupational Skills Training, and Supportive Services. The only requirement for a participant to receive WIOA funding within the SCPa Works service area is that the participant must achieve all eligibility requirements for WIOA programs.

In support of registered apprenticeships through the South Central PA region, SCPa Works issued an apprentice flow process that enables contracted Title I vendors to standardize the step-by-step path that a newly enrolled apprentice follows.

The flow incorporates Title I team members significant to the apprenticeship pathway from start to launch. The flow also ensures that members of the apprentice service team communicate regularly and work seamlessly to ensure that the apprentice is a good fit for the industry chosen and that the employer is equally satisfied with the funding and support provided.

New Apprentice Process

This flow represents a sample process for a non-working, WIOA-eligible Adult who begins their journey into RAP as PACL walk-in participant. This flow picks up following the initial workshops or preliminary registration processes that might take place upon entering a PACL. We understand that not all vendors work within a PACL.



SCPa Works Strategic Initiatives, Programs, and Fiscal Operations 08.15.2023
Activities and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Equal Opportunity Employment Program

All Title I staff are required to follow stringent case note practices during the flow of a WIOA-eligible participant entering a new registered apprenticeship program. Case noting is vital to the function of a cohesive team as an apprentice navigates from one stage to the next. With the coordination of processes between case managers, apprenticeship navigators, training specialists, and additional staff who come in contact with the administrative process, case notes serve as a source of communication from one staff member to the other. Case notes tell the story of the progress that the new apprentice is making as they journey through the program to completion.

Case Note Components Answer these Questions:

- **When** did the event occur, or when will it occur?
- **What** actions or activities were completed, and what are the next steps for both the participant and the case manager?
- **Who** provided the service or information relevant to the case?
- **Why** is the participant receiving this service or interaction?
- **What's Next** for the participant?
- **How** will the next steps be carried out, and who will be involved?

SCPa Works ensures that PA CareerLink® staff are well-informed about the benefits of registered apprenticeship programs (RAP) and can effectively connect individuals to these opportunities. When RAP aligns with a participant's career goals and local employer needs, PA CareerLink® staff introduce available local RAP opportunities via the PA ETPL Registered Apprenticeship link. Regional staff educate participants about WIOA/TANF funding, which helps with career exploration, skill development, and long-term employment opportunities. Additionally, RAP provides industry-recognized credentials that demonstrate measurable skill gains.

SCPa Works also highlights how individuals who complete a pre-apprenticeship program under WIOA/TANF can be placed in a registered apprenticeship, which leads to employment after exit, another important measurable outcome.

New apprentices are considered "walk-in" participants while existing apprentices are "reverse referred" by employers for funding benefits. Apprentices must provide proof of their RAP with a signed Apprenticeship Agreement. Apprentices are required to complete at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning, which is supported by funding for eligible individuals. SCPa Works provides up to \$7,500 for on-the-job training (OJT) and related technical instruction (RTI), which can be delivered by eligible institutions or employers. RTI is mandatory, with apprentices needing to complete 144 hours of instruction.

New and registered apprentices who are WIOA/TANF eligible receive comprehensive services, including up to \$2,000 in Supportive Services funding for training materials, uniforms, transportation, and other needs. PA CareerLink® staff are trained to identify and address barriers to training and employment, with priority given to underserved communities.

SCPa Works ensures apprentices meet funding eligibility requirements. If eligibility is uncertain, PA CareerLink® staff can apply for Fifth Priority of Service under SCPa Works policy. Regional staff help connect apprentices to RAP opportunities, guiding them through the WIOA/TANF funding streams and explaining the benefits of these programs, such as career exploration, skill development, and sustainable employment.

SCPa Works connects job seekers to RAP opportunities through vendor training, business services team initiatives, and partnerships with employers in sectors such as agribusiness. Monthly training sessions provide specialized content, and SCPa Works integrates RAP into job fairs and community events, emphasizing long-term, sustainable career opportunities for job seekers.

SCPa Works offers topic-specific training for vendors, including training on registered apprenticeship for training providers, employers, and state employees. These sessions are recorded and available in a Library on the SCPa Works Online Vendor Portal. Additionally, Industry Partnership funding supports apprentices in the region.

Section 1.5

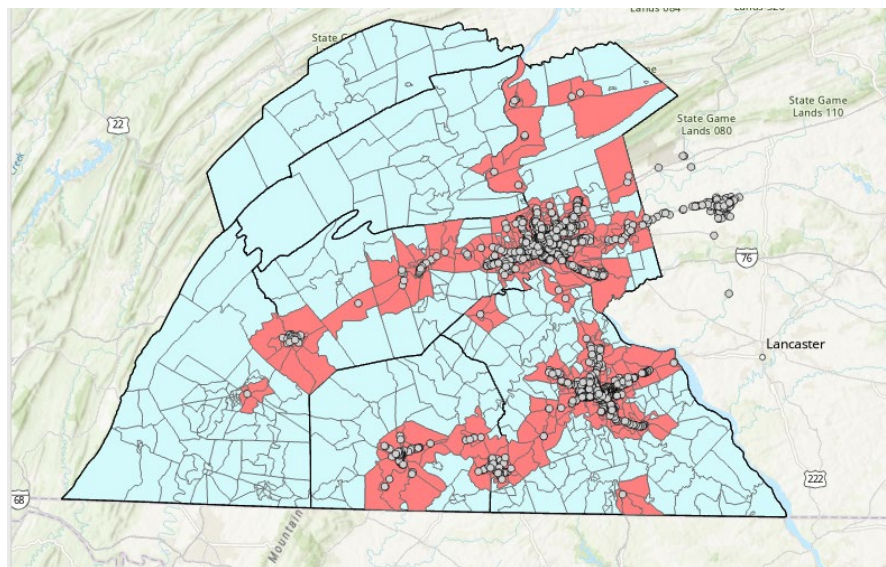
1.5. What are the local area challenges in aligning existing labor force skills and education, and training activities with the needs of regional employers? *[Reviewed by CWIA and PA WDB]*

Aligning existing labor market training and education activities in South Central PA with the needs of regional businesses requires understanding the various strategies being developed and the partners that are convened to tackle this multifaceted challenge.

Geographic Barriers to Education, Training, and Employment

SCPa Works' region has a rich and diverse network of world-class institutions that make the SCPa Works region primed for impactful collaboration. South Central PA is home to several top-performing school districts across the commonwealth, an active and influential group of economic development agencies, world-class secondary education institutions, and significant industry associations committed to improving workforce development. South Central PA has structured a series of robust ecosystems to enhance economic growth and mobility for job seekers and businesses through the cultivation of relationships with partners and networks across Pennsylvania.

One of the most prevalent of barriers to education, training, and employment has proven to be transportation to services within rural communities. SCPa Works answered to data provided by GIS mapping that illustrated cells of residents throughout the eight-county South Central region that were within a 15-minute, three-quarters of a mile radius, from public transportation. Rather than focus on how to transport individuals with barriers to a PA CareerLink® site for services, SCPa Works conceptualized a strategic plan to bring the services to the individuals in the communities where they live.



Community Access Points (CAP) emerged from the idea that everyone should be within 15 minutes walking distance of the opportunity to improve their lives. As a place-based workforce development strategy, CAPs meet individuals where they are, build trust through community relationships, and eliminate common barriers to accessing the traditional brick-and-mortar workforce system. The SCPa Works CAP strategy tackles the challenges of accessibility head-on and directs resources to those most in need of services.

In order to roll out the CAP program from concept to implementation, SCPa Works maintained a positive and flexible approach to a theory of change that allowed for growth through trial and error. Utilizing the data-driven outreach strategy to connect with Opportunity Youth, coupled with demographic and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, SCPa Works engaged the CAP Outreach Team to drive the establishment of CAPs across the South Central PA region. The geographical diversity of the eight-county service region of SCPa Works and the region's demographic diversity and economic inequality increased the potential of CAPs to expand access and direct resources more efficiently.

Utilizing GIS mapping to pinpoint effective CAP sites and measure the 15-minute walkable distance footprint for each site, SCPa Works dissected the eight-county service region, narrowing areas of the region where access to workforce development services was limited.

The data launched a full CAP Outreach investment into forging relationships with organizations and agencies throughout the South Central PA region. This was a first in history for SCPa Works to evaluate and advance a program based on data-driven research that resulted in the promotion and impact of the region's workforce development system. SCPa Works has trailblazed programming that will continue to define and improve the value of the workforce system as a whole.

The One-Stop Operator's robust outreach efforts connected with many participants across the region, showcasing the vital role of place-based workforce development. Through the establishment and implementation of more than 70 local CAPs and Referral Partner Organizations, PA CareerLink® site services have expanded to reach Opportunity Youth in all eight counties of the SCPa Works service region.

By the fourth quarter of Program Year '23-24, SCPa Works improved access to all job seekers by creating a fully functioning network of CAP locations with simple yet powerful technology tools, combined with PA CareerLink® staff to connect individual and business to the PA CareerLink® system. CAP sites are a place-based service to not only job seekers with barriers, but also serve as a source of awareness to employers and community organizations who add to the expansion and growth of workforce development initiatives in the South Central PA region.

Partnering for the Future

In early 2023, SCPa Works issued a Request for Proposals titled "Opportunity Youth in South Central PA Analysis and Needs Assessment." Knovva Academy answered the request with a proactive, results-oriented, data-driven model.

In 2024, SCPa Works launched a mixed-methods research study through the partnership with Knovva Academy, resulting in the provision of a granular level of data analysis, data mapping, alignment of data and Community Access Point (CAP) model, systems connection, and best practices for serving Opportunity Youth in the South Central PA region. The study collected data across the South Central PA region, encompassing Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York counties. The study focused on Opportunity Youth, previously referred to as Out-of-School Youth, and engagement with workforce development services through regional PA CareerLink® centers and Community Access Points (CAPs). The study revealed that Opportunity Youth are largely disconnected from both school and work, often facing significant personal, economic, and social challenges. These factors highlight the importance of prioritizing Opportunity Youth within the service area and underscore the need to deepen Opportunity Youth engagement. The disconnection of Opportunity Youth also illustrates the challenges service providers face in locating and effectively engaging disconnected youth as long-term employees. SCPa Works stepped back from the day-to-day cycles of delivering workforce development services and

answered to the Knovva research and analysis results with the implementation of four main Opportunity Youth initiatives:

1. Digital and Social Media Outreach Campaign
2. CAP Outreach, Business Services Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion
3. Youth Reentry Grant Acquisition
4. Summer Youth Programming

All four initiatives targeted Opportunity Youth, increased overall program participation, elevated employer engagement, and broadened Paid Work Experience opportunities throughout the region.

SCPa Works is eagerly engaged in a future-focused Workforce Development Board (WDB) project in collaboration with Jobs for the Future (JFF). This project addresses the evolving needs of the regional workforce, ensuring adaptability and resilience in the face of economic changes. By leveraging JFF's expertise and innovative approaches, SCPa Works developed strategies to ensure that the workforce development system remains adaptable and resilient in the face of economic changes.

SCPa Works' engagement in the Workforce Communities in Action cohort has already yielded remarkable success. SCPa Works has been awarded \$10,000 by JFF and JP Morgan Chase, recognizing the commitment to workforce development strategies that enhance economic mobility. This award serves not only as a recognition of past efforts to elevate workforce development initiatives but also serves as a catalyst for future endeavors. The project underscores SCPa Works' capacity as a workforce development board to act as an incubator of innovation and strategic investment, driving improved economic outcomes for our community.

In 2024, through the Lebanon County Christian Ministries Community Access Point (CAP), the Lebanon County PA CareerLink® linked a youth program participant to a paid work experience opportunity where she acquired vital skills through workforce development programming. The achievement enabled the participant to secure a position with Equus, where she now serves as a Talent Engagement Specialist at the PA CareerLink®. The partnerships that SCPa Works forges and maintains showcase the strength in connecting job seekers with employers. In addition to identifying sustainable employment for the participant, the Lebanon CAP, in partnership with the Lebanon County PA CareerLink®, has proven to be significant in fostering collaborations with employers, including Lebanon Transit and the Community Health Worker Committee of Lebanon County.

During the rolling four quarters ending March 31, 2024, our PA CareerLink® partners provided essential workforce development services to a unique count of 5,826 Title I and Title III customers. WIOA Title I and Wagner Peyser Title III staff helped job seekers across South Central Pennsylvania secure meaningful employment and build sustainable careers.

Metric (Title I & Title III) By Q2, Post-Exit	
Unique customers served	5,826
Individuals gaining employment	4,347
Average earnings	\$8,782
Total estimated annual earnings	\$152,703,428

Regional impact is evident in the 4,347 individuals who successfully gained employment by the second

quarter, after exiting with average earnings of \$8,782 during that period. The total estimated annual earnings for those employed in the second quarter alone reached a significant \$152,703,428, highlighting the far-reaching economic impact of SCPa Works and its partners on the regional economy.

Also, in 2024, the South Central PA CareerLink® service delivery system surged with momentum, welcoming 18,754 new job seeker accounts. This influx represents a wave of individuals seeking career opportunities, upskilling, and personalized support to launch or advance their careers. Each new account marks a step toward meaningful employment, highlighting the pivotal role in driving economic prosperity across the region.

In addition, 236 new employers registered through South Central PA CareerLink®, expanding the network of businesses seeking top talent. These partnerships are essential in bridging the gap between job seekers and employers, driving economic growth, and providing local companies with the skilled workforce they need to thrive. Each new employer registration strengthens the region's job market, offering more opportunities for meaningful employment.

With the launch of the Community Access Points and Referral Partner Organizations throughout the region, SCPa Works elevated public positioning and expanded workforce development awareness to multiple employers, reaching businesses across the region to include rural Perry and Juniata Counties where WIOA and TANF Youth participants engaged in and completed paid work experiences in 2024.

The SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team, in partnership with the Title I WIOA Youth program, Crispus Attucks, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) engaged 70 participants, issuing 13 internal referrals for enhanced services.

Business Services Outreach and Employer Engagement

The SCPa Works Business Services Department has been a driving force in reaching Opportunity Youth across the South Central region. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of reaching and engaging Opportunity Youth.

In 2024, the Business Services Department engaged with 1,923 new businesses, broadening the network of job placement sites for Opportunity Youth. Through direct business owner outreach, Business Services established 65 Paid Work Experience (PWE) sites, providing an expanded opportunity for hands-on job experience to 34 Opportunity Youth in the region in July and August 2024 alone.

PWE is a required element of Opportunity Youth within the SCPa Works service area. PWE ensures that Opportunity Youth participants receive applicable workforce assessments, including CareerScope, O*NET, and additional assessments, to identify feasible work experiences for each youth participant. Assessment results are individualized so that career advisors can easily pinpoint an Opportunity Youth participant's industry aptitude and career interests. The assessment results serve as the key source of data entered into the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) where career advisors create Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for Opportunity Youth participants. The ISS is utilized to track goal attainment, training outcomes, and employment placement while actively encouraging Opportunity Youth participant accountability as they professionally evolve through the workforce development system. This journey begins with applicable PWE.

The SCPa Works region is well-positioned for future economic growth to include excellent opportunities to chart a course for sustainable expansion. The population is growing, businesses are moving into the

region, key sectors and industries such as TDL (Transportation, Distribution, Logistics, and Healthcare) are growing, and technological advancement will provide opportunities for new occupations and markets to emerge in the region. With regional growth and expansion as it relates to people, business, and jobs, SCPa Works consistently creates applicable training opportunities for participants who are then matched with employment opportunities based on market demand.

In addition, the Title I Business Services Team hosted 30 PA CareerLink® job fairs further increasing employer outreach and access to available workforce development participants. The Business Services Team attended an additional 56 job fairs, providing valuable opportunities for job seekers and employers to connect directly.

Opportunity Youth Research, Data Collection, and Application

South Central PA houses businesses and employers that face a significant need for skilled workers. Industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and construction are seeing an increase in job openings, but many employers struggle to find qualified candidates to fill positions. At the same time, Opportunity Youth—youth who are not currently enrolled in school and who are not working—represent a significant untapped resource for these employers. Many of these youth face barriers to employment, such as lack of work experience, limited skills, lack of access to resources, and disengagement from traditional educational pathways.

Research conducted by Knovva Academy during Program Year 2024 provided SCPa Works with quantified data on the targeted Opportunity Youth demographic. The Knovva report supplied SCPa Works with insight on building keyword gaps into SCPa Works digital content to ensure search engine optimization (SEO). This method enabled SCPa Works to create specific online content related to specific keywords, prompting a higher rank on search engines. Top-ranking keyword searches included “youth employment near me,” “youth job services,” “youth employment opportunity program,” and youth job programs near me.” The study compared SEO between SCPa Works and three out-of-state local workforce development boards (LWDB). For example, SCPa Works identified that the search phrase, “youth employment program near me,” was an online hit for a New York-based LWDB at a rate of 81 while SCPa Works could not produce data on the search term hit at the time of the study, meaning, SCPa Works had zero hits on the search engine phrase or terms. This study prompted a substantial leap into the realm of SEO, online content development, digital material creation, and social media branding to establish a high number of content opportunities via online workforce development searches throughout the SCPa Works service area.

The Knovva report revealed that 33.3% of Opportunity Youth in South Central PA are under the age of 20, while a staggering 50% of Opportunity Youth are between the ages of 20 and 24. According to Knovva's research, exposure to employment and training opportunities occurs at a high rate through social media users between the ages of 18 and 24 years. This age demographic, coupled with the market analysis provided by Knovva prompted the SCPa Works team to launch a digital and social media campaign as a means to grab the attention of Opportunity Youth.

SCPa Works utilized the metrics produced by the Knovva research initiative and launched digital campaigns through collaboration with the OSO, PA CareerLink® communications teams, digital marketing, development technicians, and digital and social media site management.

Digital and social media campaigns made a significant impact on regional data, reaching approximately 18,000 accounts through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, with a high engagement rate of 20% interaction. These strategic efforts raised awareness of workforce development opportunities

and activities, increased a drive in participation and expanded community and participant interest in crucial workforce programs that led to employment placement in high-demand industry sectors.

Employer Engagement

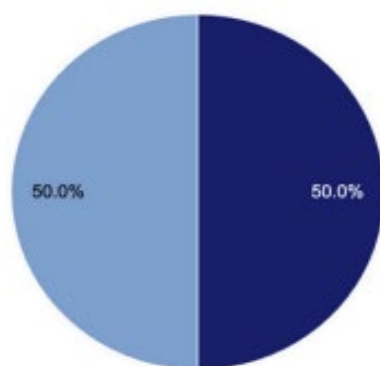
Throughout 2024, SCPa Works linked with the CREDC Economic Development and Workforce Integration Initiative. By actively fostering communication concerning employer-focused endeavors and initiatives spearheaded by PREP partners, it became clear that workforce initiatives needed to evolve towards meeting business demands within the South Central PA region. This entailed arranging frequent meetings and providing a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on prevailing needs and obstacles. For example, a sequence of task force dialogues was created, enabling SCPa Works representatives, local businesses, and PREP partners to exchange perspectives on workforce needs and industry trends. In alignment with SCPa Works' employer engagement initiative, CREDC's collaboration with business assistance organizations evaluates the ongoing demand for information seminars in key sectors of business creation, including technology startups, healthcare innovation, and sustainable practices. Utilizing this data-driven approach, the SCPa Works refined and developed strategies that ensure regional business development initiatives are closely aligned with the evolving needs and priorities of local businesses.

In the Fall of 2024, SCPa Works contracted with Envoy to conduct research on employer engagement. The result was the creation of a WIOA Out-of-School Toolkit for Employer Engagement, matching labor market demands and concerns with a target population enrolled in credential-earning workforce development programs. The study included data and research from Aspen Community Solutions, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation, Rite Aid Healthy Futures, and workforce development program focus points of reference from Partner4Work and Philly Works.

The Envoy study showed that South Central PA is comprised of employers looking for new, sustainable ways to build a strong workforce. Out-of-School Youth (OSY) represents an untapped labor pool that can help South Central PA companies meet staffing needs while driving community engagement. There are approximately 5 million OSY in the United States, defined as youth between the ages of 16-24 (*Aspen Community Solutions, 2024*) who are neither enrolled in school nor employed. This population represents individuals who possess valuable skills and talents that remain underutilized due to systemic barriers to employment, as well as undertraining, noncredentialed youth. SCPa Works utilized the Envoy research and resolution data to acquire an understanding of how businesses can integrate OSY into the workforce, highlighting business opportunities and practical strategies for implementation and success. The findings underscore the importance of community partnerships in addressing local talent needs while offering young people meaningful employment opportunities and career pathways.

We have a particular strategy or partnerships to recruit and hire 16-24 year-olds:

● No
● Yes

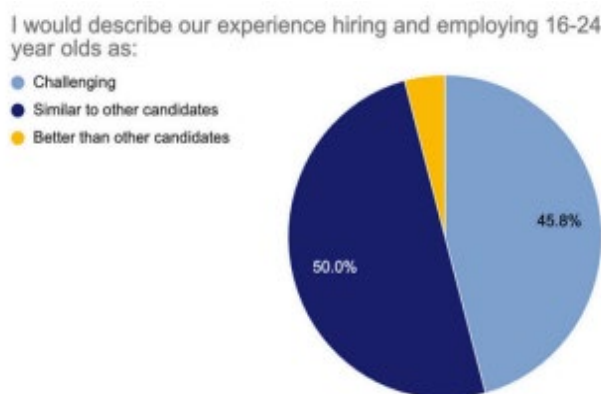


[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]

Based on an Envoy survey of South Central PA employers, only 50% of employers have systems and partnerships in place to recruit young talent.

The data encouraged a need for employers to connect with workforce development systems to formalize hiring efforts, collaborate with program directors, partner with community-based organizations, and acquire new ways of approaching the existing job vacancy problem with employers across the region.

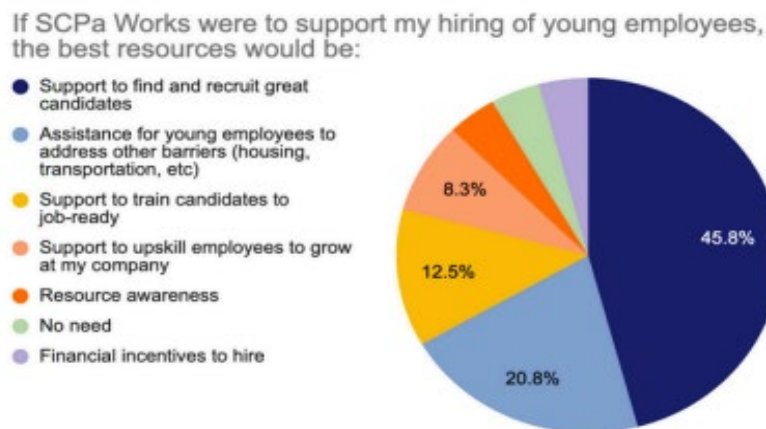
SCPa Works devised a proactive approach to addressing labor shortages by building an OSY talent pipeline through the implementation and success of CAP locations throughout the service area. In addition to the employer challenge of not having hiring systems in place, Envoy reported that nearly 50% of employers in South Central PA experience challenges in attracting and hiring workers between the ages of 16 and 24.



[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]

The research report data positioned SCPa Works, South Central PA CareerLink® teams, and CAP site locations across the region to step in full force on the recruitment, training, and employment of OSY, referred to as Opportunity Youth.

In alignment with the Opportunity Youth initiative, an astounding 45% of South Central PA employers agreed to connect with SCPa Works to identify and recruit “great candidates.” In addition, SCPa Works matched 21% of employers’ need for supportive services to remove Opportunity Youth barriers with WIOA OSY eligibility and enrollment.



[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]

The Envoy data reinforced and validated a push for the SCPa Works Programs Team to elevate employer engagement initiatives through the Title I Business Services Team and the One-Stop teams. The SCPa Works Programs Team determined that in Program Year '24-25, 100% of WIOA OSY funding would be devoted to Opportunity Youth initiative as expanded upon in Section 3.4 of this Plan.

To benefit employer access to hiring quality workers, SCPa Works WIOA OSY programs offer a combination of academic, occupational, and life skills training, ensuring that Opportunity Youth are job-ready upon program completion. Employers stand to gain substantial benefits from hiring youth who have completed WIOA programs. These programs equip Opportunity Youth with industry-specific skills that align directly with labor market demands, ensuring that participants possess the technical expertise and certifications required for high-demand sectors in South Central PA, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. *[Envoy, 2024]*

In addition to technical training, Opportunity Youth receive practical work experience through internships, apprenticeships, and paid job experiences, providing hands-on exposure to professional environments before beginning full-time employment. Additionally, employers who partner with workforce programs gain access to a reliable pipeline of young, motivated workers who have completed rigorous training and certification programs. *[Envoy, 2024]*

Furthermore, according to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), employers who partner with organizations that administer WIOA grant funding have experienced proven success in filling roles that are difficult to staff, benefiting from the motivated, well-trained youth that WIOA-based training and education produce into the workforce. *[Envoy, 2024]*

According to the Envoy study, there exist economic and workforce development advantages to hiring Opportunity Youth as a means to enhance a company's community reputation. SHRM reports that more than 70% of consumers are comfortable supporting businesses that hire employees ages 16-24, and nearly 1 in 5 consumers would increase patronage of companies actively engaging in Opportunity Youth employment initiatives. This growing social sentiment demonstrates the potential for companies to gain both economic and reputational benefits by embracing OSY hiring practices. In Pennsylvania, businesses like Giant Food Stores, a top five employer in South Central PA according to the Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) Bureau, have actively promoted efforts to hire and train OSY, strengthening community standing and customer loyalty. By investing in Opportunity Youth, employers build stronger relationships within the community, foster goodwill, and position themselves as contributors to local economic development. These efforts have increased media attention, improved relationships with local governments, and increased workforce development visibility among consumers in the region.

The Opportunity Youth model enables employers to recognize the untapped potential in hiring youth and fosters partnerships between businesses and nonprofit organizations that work with Opportunity Youth. According to the Envoy report, 96% of employers who partner with community-based organizations and nonprofits to support employees document positive outcomes, including higher retention rates, increased employee engagement, and increased job performance. Walmart Associates, Inc., reported by PA CWIA as the number four top employer in South Central PA, embraced the Opportunity Youth model on a national level. Local employers and businesses benefit through partnerships with WIOA-funded organizations to provide paid internships, subsidized on-the-job learning, and skills-based training for potential hires. SCPa Works programming and strategic planning pave the way for Opportunity Youth to transition from training to permanent professional roles within the South Central PA workforce.

In addition to matching employers with workforce hiring systems, processes, and talent, SCPa Works continues to unite community businesses, agencies, and organizations through regular Local Management Committee (LMC) meetings where training and recruitment strategies and statistics are shared among partners.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

SCPa Works serves individuals who are Asset Limited, Income-Constrained, and Employed (ALICE Populations). This population is comprised of workers who earn just above the Federal Poverty Level but less than what it costs to operate a financially sustainable household. These struggling households are forced to make impossible choices each day based on the cost of living versus the need to provide food, shelter, and clothing for family members. The bare minimum cost of household basics covers housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and a smartphone plan, plus taxes and a small contingency. Investing in this population provides economic stability and more robust communities throughout the region.

SCPa Works answers to the complexities the ALICE population experiences. The roots of providing Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) existed in the possibility of saving jobs by avoiding layoffs due to the need for upskilling. SCPa Works updated the Incumbent Worker Training policy in 2024. This endeavor included the creation of a new IWT application easily accessed at the SCPa Works website, as well as a comprehensive IWT contractual agreement. SCPa Works implemented IWT for the first time in South Central PA in 2024 as a means to assist five members of the ALICE population not only to keep their positions with their employer but also to subsidize their upskilling costs to benefit the employer. SCPa Works continues to collaborate with employers to upskill current employees to maintain competitive wages and skill sets within professional roles.

Justice System Impacted

Investing in individuals with barriers such as previous incarceration provides individuals to enter the workforce with the skills and confidence necessary to succeed. SCPa Works has added a Fourth Priority of Service the Priority of Service Policy to ensure that individuals who have come in contact with the criminal justice system are provided the necessary education, training, and employment needed to sustain life. Enforcing the SCPa Works Fourth Priority is a direct reflection of the region's Re-Entry program delivery through which SCPa Works has been the subrecipient of both the Youth Re-Entry Grant (2024) and the Women's Re-Entry Grant (2023). The inclusion of this Fourth Priority ensures that contracted service providers are prioritizing the need to serve individuals whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system.

In 2024, SCPa Works received reentry program dollars provided by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), through which SCPa Works launched the RENEW program. The program focuses on providing women impacted by the criminal justice system with supportive services and employment assistance. A highlight of the program is the Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Employment Classes. This evidence-based curriculum emphasizes approaches to managing risky behavior and thoughts within the workplace. By integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions with traditional employment approaches, workforce development programs reach all aspects of personal and professional growth within an individual who would otherwise have barriers to employment.

SCPa Works, in partnership with the EARN partner, integrated virtual reality at York County Prison and the York Reentry Opportunity Center (ROC) and accelerated the growth of the women's reentry CBI workshops at PA CareerLink® one-stop centers. At the start of the program in the spring of 2024, EARN

had provided outreach to potential participants. By April, participants were enrolled in the program and attending in-person three days a week. The program was open to reentry residents in all eight South Central PA counties. The program, dedicated to reducing recidivism, uniquely targets individuals touched by the criminal justice system and provides workforce system services that address the cognitive behaviors of a reentry individual.

The RENEW program provides holistic support for women who have been involved in the criminal justice system. In addition to the cognitive behavioral services, program participants receive one-on-one job placement services, education and training opportunities, and reentry support. RENEW participants are also screened for WIOA eligibility to ensure that every participant is empowered and equipped with the necessary tools to rebuild their lives and foster lasting positive changes within themselves, their homes, and, ultimately, the South Central PA workforce. In 2024, the RENEW Program reached 121 women in reentry, provided 148 collective supportive services, and achieved 30 job placements.

Community Partnerships

SCPa Works is approaching workforce challenges to align the labor market with employer demand through several effective avenues. The following groups, task force committees, boards, and networks provide opportunities to work with stakeholders within the community, and to partner on the common goals of fostering a strong workforce ecosystem:

- SCPa Works Board and Local Elected Officials (LEOs)
- Taskforce groups in ALICE, re-entry, higher education, and Opportunity Youth
- Partners in Regional Economic Performance (PREP)
- PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Engage! program
- United Way of the Capital Region – Income Task Force
- Three Industry Partnerships in key sectors (manufacturing, IT and Construction)
- Regional Business Service Team (RBST) meetings – (representatives from more than 40+ organizations providing input into business services strategies)
- PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) Workforce Assemblies
- Harrisburg Chamber of Commerce – Education/Business Partnership
- Re-entry Coalitions (Capital Region; Franklin; York)

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Vision and Goals

Section 2.1

2.1. Local Board's Strategic Vision and Alignment with the Governor's Strategic Vision – What are the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing its workforce and its strategy for achieving the vision and goals? *How will the local board's vision and goals align with, support, and contribute to the governor's vision and goals for the state's workforce development system, as well as any of the goals and strategies articulated in the regional plan?* [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E), (b)(1)(F), and (b)(2); 20 CFR § 679.560(a)(5), (a)(6), and (b)(1)(ii). Reviewed by ATO and PA WDB]

SCPa Works envisions a region where everyone, including job seekers and businesses, has opportunities for growth and prosperity.

To carry out the mission, SCPa Works has crafted a strategic direction to invest in the region's businesses and people in ways that are accessible, driven, and impactful. These five pillars support the vision for supporting the region's workforce:

- ✓ **Employer Engagement** – Strengthen relationships with the regional business community so that our system can better understand current and projected labor demand, support sector-driven training models, and invest in future workforce development.
- ✓ **Individual Investment** – Connect all job seekers (youth, adults, displaced workers, incumbent workers, etc.) to career pathways and career ladders aligning education with job opportunities and lifelong learning through the PA CareerLink® system. The focus will be on youth services (Opportunity Youth, summer employment, internships, college/career readiness, registered and pre-apprenticeship programs) and displaced workers (upskilling, re-skilling, short-term industry-recognized credentials).
- ✓ **Systems Connection** - Build a productive network of business, economic development, and community partners to create a demand-driven opportunity engine for the region. Integrate education, training programs, and community partners with the needs of industry and the regional economy, including WIOA-mandated and non-mandated partners. In support of the Commonwealth's five goals for workforce development, this goal will help strengthen the one-stop delivery system by having a seamless connection of partners, "No Wrong Door" for job seekers, and a singular point of contact for employers through the PA CareerLink® system.
- ✓ **Thought Leadership** – Invest in, evaluate, and advance what works in workforce development. Promote the impact and value of the workforce development system and share trends and best practices with our community to better promote the region's growth. In support of the Commonwealth's five goals for workforce development, this goal will bolster the continuous improvement of the workforce development system by advocating for best practices and data-driven impactful programs to share across the system.
- ✓ **People and Process** – Support and foster a healthy environment where all team members can pursue excellence with accountability, openness and transparency, career growth, and

professional development while maintaining the values of equity and respect in all we do. Build internal processes of stewardship and accountability in our program, fiscal, and compliance departments to serve as trusted stewards of public resources. Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusive (DEI) frameworks into our business model and investments. To support the region's job seekers and businesses most effectively, SCPa Works has outlined several fundamental values that guide all of our work. These values are embedded in our programs, investments, services, people, and process, as well as the values that we endeavor that our partners and vendors would emulate:

- Performance
- Equity
- Flexibility
- Collaboration
- Accountability

The following goals are aligned with our five key strategic pillars. While this is not an exhaustive list of initiatives, goals, or priorities within each category, it represents how SCPa Works proposes to support the Commonwealth's WIOA workforce goals.

Investment in Research

Research conducted by Knovva Academy during Program Year 2024 provided SCPa Works with quantified data on the targeted Opportunity Youth demographic, providing SCPa Works with insight into building keyword gaps into SCPa Works' digital content to ensure search engine optimization (SEO). This study prompted a substantial leap into SEO, online content development, digital material creation, and social media branding to establish many content opportunities via online workforce development searches throughout the SCPa Works service area.

SCPa Works utilized the metrics produced by the Knovva research initiative. They launched digital campaigns through collaboration with the OSO, PA CareerLink® communications teams, digital marketing, development technicians, and digital and social media site management.

The launch of a mixed-methods research study in partnership with Knovva Academy resulted in the provision of a granular level of data analysis, data mapping, alignment of data and Community Access Point (CAP) model, systems connection, and best practices for serving Opportunity Youth in the South Central PA region.

The Envoy Recovery Ready Workplace-Implementing Policies and Practices training sessions provided insight into implementing policies and procedures to better serve ADA-protected recovery staff members, vendor team members, and participants employed by local businesses and organizations.

The ECHO Project Shatter the Stigma, Supporting Recovery in the Workplace training program, promoted by the PA Department of Labor, provided content relevant to supporting workers in recovery, directly aligning with the SCPa Works Youth Reentry grant initiatives as well as future plans to further develop reentry programming incorporating recovery-friendly workplaces for all staff and participants within the South Central PA workforce development system.

Through research and collaboration with SCPa Work, Envoy produced an OSY Toolkit for Employer engagement to include labor market metrics and measurable employer survey results. The toolkit and data were coupled with research data pulled from the Knovva report to strategically align Opportunity

Youth with labor gaps in the local workforce.

Opportunity Youth

In early 2023, SCPa Works issued a Request for Proposals Titled "Opportunity Youth in South Central PA Analysis and Needs Assessment." Knovva Academy answered the request with a proactive, results-oriented, data-driven proposal.

In 2024, SCPa Works launched the mixed-methods research study through the partnership with Knovva Academy, resulting in the provision of a granular level of data analysis, data mapping, alignment of data and Community Access Point (CAP) model, systems connection, and best practices for serving Opportunity Youth in the South Central PA region. The study collected data across the South Central PA region, encompassing Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York counties. The study focused on Opportunity Youth, previously referred to as Out-of-School Youth, and engagement with workforce development services through regional PA CareerLink® centers and Community Access Points (CAPs). The study revealed that Opportunity Youth are largely disconnected from both school and work, often facing significant personal, economic, and social challenges. These factors highlight the importance of prioritizing Opportunity Youth within the service area and underscore the need to deepen Opportunity Youth engagement. The disconnection of Opportunity Youth also illustrates the challenges service providers face in locating and effectively engaging disconnected youth as long-term employees.

Key Opportunity Youth Data

South Central Pennsylvania in the Context of State and National Comparators

	scPA	PA	US
Population density of youths aged 15—24	12.1%	12.3%	13.2%
Dropout rate	1.5%	1.1%	5.2% ⁴
Population density of youths aged 18—24 without a high school diploma	16.7%	11.6%	11.7%
Unemployment rate	4.3%	3.4%	3.4%
BIPOC population density	15.3%	24.3%	39.9%
Poverty rate	9.2%	12%	12.8%
Households without vehicles	6.1%	10.7%	8.5%

Table 1 reproduced⁵

[Knovva, 2024]

SCPa Works answered the Knovva research and analysis results with the implementation of four main Opportunity Youth initiatives:

1. Digital and Social Media Outreach Campaign
2. CAP Outreach, Business Services, Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion
3. Youth Reentry Grant Acquisition
4. Summer Youth Programming

All four initiatives targeted Opportunity Youth, increased overall program participation, increased employer engagement, and broadened Paid Work Experience opportunities.

Employer Engagement

Sector partnerships/industry-specific initiatives:

- **Manufacturing** is a critical sector in the SCPa Works region that contributes the highest proportion of regional GDP and is an industry that is rapidly aging out key occupations over the next 5- 10 years.
- **Healthcare** is the fastest-growing sector in the region and one with the highest occupational gap (healthcare practitioners). SCPa Works recognizes the Healthcare Industry as one of the top priority industries in the region. Between 2019 and 2023, the South Central region saw a 5.8% increase in healthcare and social assistance jobs, with roughly 109,000 jobs in 2023 (10% higher than the national average). By 2033, there will be an estimated 126,000 jobs in the healthcare industry. (*Lightcast, 2024*)
 - Out-of-School Youth (also referred to as Opportunity Youth in this RFP) are recognized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and SCPa Works as a priority population for workforce and education services.
 - Opportunity Youth (defined in the RFP scope of work section as OSY) often need significant community support and facilitated access to workforce services. Frequently lacking education beyond high school and limited formal work experience, the perception of attainable job opportunities may be limited. Through this RFP, SCPa Works seeks to fulfill employer demand and provide pathways to family-sustaining wages for opportunity youth.
- **Information Technology** is a growing industry group that spans health, manufacturing, finance/banking, and professional services. This industry has a low unemployment rate and many “opportunity occupations” that are well-positioned for career pathway growth.
- **Construction and Building Trades** is a critical industry with a growing demand for labor. Provides job opportunities for a variety of careers and backgrounds. We have launched the 2023 establishment of the South Central Construction Industry Partnership.

Business Services Team

The SCPa Works specialized Business Services Team is comprised of one vendor who delivers the business Services to all programs with an integrated approach to reduce duplicative employer fatigue. Working collaboratively to reach out to employers and PA CareerLink® partners, workforce agencies, economic development, K-12/higher education, and other community groups that invest in and implement business-facing workforce initiatives through the Regional Business Services Team (RBST) group.

The Business Services Department has been a driving force in workforce development across South Central Pennsylvania. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of supporting economic growth and workforce readiness.

In 2024, the SCPa Works Business Services Team successfully engaged with 1,923 new businesses, broadening the network of employers served by SCPa Works. In addition, the Business Services Team established 65 Paid Work Experience (PWE) sites, providing hands-on job experience to participants. In July and August of 2024 alone, 34 youth were provided PWEs with local employers.

During Program Year '23-24, the Business Services Team hosted 30 PA CareerLink® internal job fairs and attended 56 external job fairs. This community engagement enabled the team to provide valuable opportunities for job seekers and employers to connect directly and forge results-driven relationships.

Digital Literacy

To elevate access to PA CareerLink® services to all residents of South Central PA regardless of age or technical aptitude, SCPa Works launched a series of Digital Literacy Classes through partnerships with numerous Education Service Centers (ESCs) throughout the region through the award of a Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant.

SCPa Works recognized the job-skills gap in the region's workforce, which has created a shortage of qualified candidates for jobs. Low-wage workers are at great risk of being replaced in the labor market due to a lack of the skills necessary to compete for in-demand jobs. A lack of digital literacy skills can result in lost economic and personal opportunities.

SCPa Work plays a vital role in closing this skills gap by providing education and training to those in need to prepare workers for the demands of the technological age. Even jobs not traditionally seen as "technology jobs" often require a degree of digital literacy. The National Skills Coalition states that "92 percent of all job ads require 'definitely digital' or likely 'digital skills.' This demand is present across all industries. Small businesses are just as likely as larger peers to seek workers with technology skills."

Eleven percent (29,544) of Cumberland County residents do not have access to a broadband internet subscription, and eight percent (21,486) reported not owning a computer. (*Census, 2022*) Cumberland County has a large non-native-speaking and non-white population of approximately 16% and a large elderly population (65 or older) of about 19%. (*DataUSA, 2021*) Between November 2022 and January 2023, there were 876 job postings in Perry, Cumberland, Adams, and Franklin County that referenced computer literacy as a necessary skill for the job. This is higher than the national average of 665. (*Lightcast*)

In response to labor market research and corresponding data, SCPa Works implemented digital literacy programming that provides residents of Cumberland, Perry, Adams, and Franklin Counties with Digital Literacy skills necessary to navigate daily life and compete in today's workforce. Services will be provided through on-site face-to-face instruction, staffed computer labs, and off-site learning opportunities. Computer labs remain open during operating hours and are available to all learners. All centers are staffed for assistance with learning, software, and hardware issues, and more.

The SCPa Works digital literacy project focuses on technical, civic, communicative, collaborative, investigative, and productive skills that lead to greater success in the workplace. The activities that support this project include the following:

- Instructor-based learning
- Access to services & technology support
- Job search & Employability skills

The SCPa Works digital literacy project curriculum, NorthStar, integrates digital literacy and workplace skills into all coursework and will align with state and national standards for digital literacy, English language learning, and adult education. The lessons are aligned with career readiness standards and can be supplemented with additional online, self-directed instruction. The NorthStar curriculum is incorporated into workforce development training by introducing students to three main areas.

- Essential Computer Skills - Computer Basics, Internet Basics, Email, Windows OS
- Essential Software Skills - Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs
- Using Technology to Accomplish Tasks-Social Media, Information Literacy, Career Search Skills, and Your Digital Footprint

Virtual Reality (VR) Integration in Pre-release Services

Eligible pre-release participants who are completing a term of incarceration engage in SCPa Works Virtual Reality Program utilizing Transfr VR equipment and curriculum for career exploration and hands-on 'virtual' training in over 20 different in-demand occupations. The virtual reality experience is broken into two primary categories: career exploration and the virtual training facility. Through career exploration modules provided prior to a return to the workforce, participants have the opportunity to explore the following careers:

- o Health Sciences (Registered nurse, EMT, Surgical Technologist)
- o Architecture and Construction (Broadband Utility Construction, Electricians, etc.)
- o Information Technology (Network Technician)
- o Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security (Emergency Medical Technician)
- o Manufacturing (Welders, Semiconductor Manufacturing Technician)

Once a participant determines which career field they are most interested in, they are able to move on to the virtual training facility component. In the facility, participants take part in multiple real-life simulations guided by a virtual coach. Participant progress is tracked through the virtual classroom, allowing for assessment of learning and skill gains. The following are examples of career modules in the training facility:

- Healthcare Clinic and Health Sciences Field (the clinic simulates what happens in a real-life healthcare facility, and the Health Sciences Field covers the fundamentals of healthcare careers with modules on patient care foundations, technical skills, safety, etc.)
- Manufacturing and Construction: The Skilled Trades (plant safety, construction safety, blueprint reading, precision measurement, mechatronics, etc.)
- Hospitality and Tourism (Culinary, Hospitality soft skills)
- Automotive (Auto body/collision repair, plant safety, precision measurement, etc.)
- Diesel Technology (Diesel vehicle maintenance, engine overhaul, electrical fundamentals, etc.)
- Aviation Maintenance (General skills, airframe skills, powerplant skills, etc.)
- Electrical Construction (Plant safety, fundamentals, etc.)

Partnerships through Referrals

In 2024, the SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team, in partnership with the Title I WIOA Youth program, Crispus Attucks, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) engaged 70 participants and issued 13 internal referrals for enhanced services.

SCPa Works' goal of co-enrollment and program integration for all eligible participants expands access to employment, education, and supportive services to individuals with barriers to employment. Coordinating efforts across programs builds viable and clear career pathways and robust connections, referrals, and data sharing between WIOA Title I-IV programs.

Co-enrollment of eligible participants is an example of the benefits of partners within the PA CareerLink® system and is designed to provide universal access to all individuals while providing exceptional services to address the barriers to entry for high-priority populations.

To fully integrate service with Title II, SCPs Works has a standardized referral process to/from regional

Title II partners. We have created a policy that allows for any diagnostic testing results to be shared with Title II partners, with the permission of the program participants, thus allowing for streamlined enrollment.

At the start of 2025, the SCPa Works Program team met with Title II representatives and the PA CareerLink® one-stop team to revise the referral process. This new referral initiative encompasses processes within each partner program and a universal referral form to be used by multiple referring partners including Wagner Peyser Act staff. The new referral process initiative does not replace the referral system in CWDS; however, it provides each partner with relevant and unique information for each referral. The new SCPa Works referral system and the CWDS referral system create a natural checks and balances element so that no individual is overlooked for services across all partners within the South Central PA workforce development service delivery system. SCPa Works projects to have created the new referral process system in writing for a 2025 roll-out.

During a participant's WIOA/TANF enrollment process, an objective career-based aptitude assessment identifies an individual's strengths and barriers to employment or career enhancement. This assessment is part of a first tier of basic services for WIOA-eligible participants that include affirmative outreach (see Section 4.4), intake, orientation, initial assessment, job search assistance, job opening information, performance, and cost information on training providers, information on filing for unemployment compensation, and eligibility determination for education and job skills training.

This stage of enrollment includes the issuance of referrals to partner programs for participants to receive WIOA Title II services for individuals in need of a high school equivalency diploma (GED), individuals in need of attaining elevated math or English proficiency, and English Language Learners (ELL).

This stage of enrollment is also the period of time in which a referral to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) would be issued for those in need of such services. Title I partners issue referrals for participants to be assessed by OVR for program eligibility. As a core partner within the workforce development service delivery arena, OVR provides Vocational Rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that include but are not limited to diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement, and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. These individualized services are designed to prepare OVR customers to become qualified, trained members of the workforce. OVR provides multiple services to the business community that are designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. OVR onboarding support for a qualified new hire can include reasonable accommodation consultation, on-the-job (OJT) wage reimbursement, and referral to tax credits or deductions. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards, and helping a business retain current employees following an accident, injury, or disability. The statewide business services staff identifies resources to assist any organization on how to improve access compliance and steps to diversify their workforce to include citizens with a disability.

Engage! Business Calling Program:

SCPa Works has been instrumental in representing the Engage! program in the community by providing profound expertise in workforce development and significantly enhancing community partners' understanding of the fundamental needs within target industry sectors. In 2024, total SCPa Works contributions to the Engage! program have proven invaluable in efforts to support and adapt to the changing landscape of the business environment, marking a successful year of collaboration.

SCPa Works, in collaboration with the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce, hosted an Engage! Round Table on March 22nd, 2024, for construction leaders in Lebanon County. Employers reflected on both the opportunities and challenges shaping local industry today. Through collaborative efforts and leveraging resources, the attendees navigated through dynamics that led to an impactful engagement. First, by hosting the construction Engage! round table at the Lebanon Chamber, members were able to grow industry partnerships with five new members. Following the meeting, one new member, the Carpenters Union, hosted a Youth Tour at their apprenticeship and training facility in Lebanon. This event provided introductions with local school districts, and the Carpenters Union was able to host 16 local high school students at their facility, promoting apprenticeship programs. The Youth Tour also included a PA CareerLink® VR headset class on power tools for the construction industry. By harnessing identified opportunities, leveraging state-funded resources, collaborating with local chambers, connecting with school districts, and PA CareerLink® Youth services, SCPa Works has paved the way for a prosperous future for high school students interested in construction careers.

Individual Investment

- A.L.I.C.E. Population
 - A significant population of job-seekers in the region qualify for WIOA but do not fall into one of the categories of having a priority service barrier to employment. In particular, the ALICE (asset-limited, income-constrained, and employed) population is a target population to be served at PA CareerLink® centers. SCPa Works has added the Alice Population to focus on when recruiting enrollment participants.
 - By adding this population to be served under the 5th priority of service, SCPa Works has encouraged a focus on ensuring our services' utilization to provide economic mobility. In addition to this option, SCPa Works has sought to add alternative hours of operation to serve working individuals. SCPa Works will develop opportunities for these individuals to upskill and create higher household incomes. While individuals may not qualify under traditional funding streams, working with and supporting the individuals representing 39% of our community is a priority. This unseen and hard-working group goes to work daily and struggles to stabilize ever-decreasing financial security due to income constraints. SCPa Works is committed to finding a solution for our community.
 - In 2024, SCPa Works embarked on its first Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) contract and services to five workers assessed as part of the ALICE population and necessary upskilling to earn a sustainable living. SCPa Works IWT funds are uniquely available to individuals who may not be WIOA-eligible due to household income but are considered a part of the ALICE population in need of services. SCPa Works will report the progress and outcomes of this IWT experience upon completion at the end of 2025.
- Barriers to employment
 - Individuals Impacted by the Criminal Justice System and persons with disabilities
- Trauma-informed care and counseling
 - Supportive and holistic services – training and a job is no guarantee for long-term, sustainable economic mobility and success. SCPa Works partners with community agencies and organizations that provide trauma-informed care, support for childcare and transportation, and other key supports, such as affordable housing.

Systems Connection

Co-enrollment and program integration, whenever possible

- SCPa Works is committed to better integrating all programs in the PA CareerLink®, especially in collecting and analyzing program and participant data, tracking referrals better, and making outcome-oriented decisions about whether program integration works. For instance, UCX

outreach integrates with Title I Displaced Worker programs to ensure that UC is connected with career services. Additionally, dual enrollment in programs such as EARN, TANF, and WIOA is a win for both programs and supports the participant in different aspects of the program and their journey without duplicating services among funding streams.

- Alignment of workforce development priorities across the workforce, economic development, and education.
- SCPa Works leverages investments by aligning programs with other workforce organizations and agencies to ensure more impact and better outcomes.

Building a network of partners that provide critical services and programs that complement and supplement the PA CareerLink® system

- Workforce development services are not the only programs that help bring job seekers and businesses more growth opportunities. SCPa Works prioritizes building and expanding a network of partners to support childcare, transportation, affordable housing, trauma-informed care, and other programs.
- Community Access Points (CAP) integrate partners across sectors to best serve the needs of SCPa Works communities. CAPs initiate and support a place-based workforce development approach based on data, community input, and geography.

Registered Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship

- In alignment with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship, SCPa Works delivers quality pre-apprenticeship programs as those that incorporate hands-on, instructional-based learning program that is partnered directly with a Registered Apprenticeship Program and serves as a feeder program into the Registered Apprenticeship Program. Pre-apprenticeship programs play a role in developing career pathways for diverse populations and are a benefit for the changing workforce. With high-quality implementation, pre-apprenticeship is a bridge to career opportunities for students, new workers, or underprepared learners. Pre-apprenticeship serves as an effective strategy for preparing underrepresented populations for high-quality employment opportunities and increasing diversity and equity through the apprenticeship and workforce systems. In addition, pre-apprenticeship plays a vital role in upskilling Opportunity Youth, enabling young workers to step into apprenticeship roles, and shrinking the skill gap in South Central PA.
- SCPa Works creates an avenue of federal funding in support of enrolling WIOA-eligible participants into Registered Apprenticeship programming, a workforce development program formally registered through the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) that assists individuals in obtaining the fundamental skills needed to enter the workforce and should include the following elements:
 - Approved training and curriculum;
 - Opportunity to earn an industry-recognized credential;
 - Hands-on learning with a career focus; and
 - Access to support services and career counseling through the PA CareerLink® workforce development system of service providers.

Registered apprenticeships and registered pre-apprenticeships through the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) produce ready, able and eager graduates year over year in Pennsylvania. SCPa Works aims to match this result within the South Central PA region through strategic business services development and key practices in identifying eligible individuals within targeted populations to fulfill registered apprentice and pre-apprentice requirements as set forth by the Pennsylvania Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO). With more than 17,000 apprentices in Pennsylvania [RAPIDS], in 2021, Pennsylvania ranked

2nd in STEM graduates [*National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems*].

In alignment with the Governor's vision and goals for registered apprenticeship, SCPa Works keeps South Central PA residents working within the region through the expansion and availability of PA registered apprenticeship opportunities that lead to long-term employment in the Commonwealth. Through an investment in employer engagement and community outreach programs and initiatives, SCPa Works paves the way for individuals to be matched with sustainable employment and for employers to fill vacancies and skill gaps within existing worker populations.

SCPa Works' commitment to expand registered apprenticeship opportunities and pre-apprenticeships through relevant, cost-effective alternatives to traditional post-secondary education. Registered apprenticeship programs benefit job seekers, eligible high school students, and employers throughout the South Central PA region. Registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities provide pathways for eligible Title I participants to acquire in-demand skills while earning a paycheck. Registered apprenticeships reduce education costs for individuals and ensure that local employers have access to a skilled labor pool. SCPa Works recognizes that registered apprenticeship programming addresses employer challenges in filling open vacancies and skill gaps within existing workforce populations.

In answer to the Governor's call for an improved workforce service delivery model in Pennsylvania, SCPa Works recently contracted a Business Services consulting firm to increase the relevancy and impact of employer engagement within the South Central PA region. Through strategy development and outreach, SCPa Works looks forward to actively educating employers and stakeholders on the benefits of serving the community as a registered apprenticeship employer or sponsor. These initiatives include, but will not be limited to, outreach through PA CareerLink® staff, the development of employer guidance tools, and highlighting apprenticeships in Industry Partnership meetings. In addition, SCPa Works continues to hone strategies that include an improved reverse referral process for employers, partnership with labor unions, and ensure scalable and replicable solutions.

SCPa Works integrates its Industry Partnership (IP) program into registered apprenticeship programming by serving as a catalyst for employers to explore the benefits of applying for registered apprenticeship status through the ATO. The SCPa Works in-house Apprenticeship Navigator serves as a registered apprenticeship advisor to employers on all SCPa Works IP committees, is a member of the Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance, and is currently supporting the process of ATO approval for two IT registered apprenticeships and a construction industry apprenticeship. In addition, SCPa Works is in active partnership with PPATEC and avidly supports the Pennsylvania State University registered butcher apprenticeship.

In addition to the already established employer engagement programs, SCPa Works is currently assigning the ATO registered apprenticeship training to all contracted business services team members in the region as a means to further engage employers in becoming registered apprenticeships in the South Central PA region. This initiative is to train all business services contacts on the benefits of registered apprenticeship. These team members come in direct contact with employers and work closely with businesses to match potential job seekers to open vacancies within local companies. Equipped with the ATO registered apprenticeship education and training model, business services teams will evolve and rebrand as registered apprenticeship experts who can provide every employer in the South Central PA region with the opportunity to enter into the process of becoming a registered apprenticeship. In addition, with the expertise provided by the ATO and the resources available through the ATO, case managers and career

advisors proactively engage job seekers to consider registered apprenticeship as a long-term, sustainable career path.

To support the growth of registered apprenticeships, SCPa Works has leveraged grant funding to support employers with the costs of Related Technical Instruction (RTI) and on-the-job (OJT) training for apprentices. By using WIOA funding to support RTI and OJT, SCPa Works aims to further enhance opportunities targeting underserved communities, including low-skilled workers, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, the homeless, formerly incarcerated individuals, and youth facing barriers. By focusing on the growth of registered apprenticeships as a vital strategy to increase the talent pool, SCPa Works is able to address immediate workforce needs while preparing the region for long-term, sustainable economic success.

To further align with the Governor's plan, SCPa Works aims to partner with institutions of higher education, labor unions, and industry partners while driving community and high school outreach to identify and match students and job seekers with registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships. SCPa Works meets weekly with the contracted One-Stop Operator team located in the PA CareerLink® centers through which outreach and engagement strategies are discussed and developed regularly, as well as the process through which talent is identified, deemed eligible for WIOA funding, and matched with registered apprenticeship programs and registered pre-apprenticeship opportunities. In adherence to the State plan, SCPa Works will continue to target Opportunity Youth as the next generation of talent as a means to fill the labor gap with local residents in need of sustainable employment.

Thought Leadership

Focus on living wage jobs

- Research from MIT and the United Way of Pennsylvania illustrates how challenging it is for workers to support their families on less than a living wage. SCPa Works supports career pathways to a living wage and family-sustaining jobs, especially those that have on-ramps to other viable career pathways. SCPa Works has focused on ensuring that our vendors embody this value and pay their staff living wages.

Fair Chance Hiring

- SCPa Works promotes Fair Chance Hiring across our Regional Business Service team members and employer engagement. A key part of the U.S. workforce, those with past criminal justice system involvement, play an integral role in solving the labor shortage.

Emphasis on opportunity occupations

- SCPa Works prioritizes research and labor market analysis to identify the occupations that share common skills, knowledge, and abilities between low-wage/entry-level and high-wage/highly-educated jobs.

Changing nature of work

- SCPa Works will prioritize staying current with the changing nature of work, particularly how that will impact certain occupations or industries and how those changes will impact education, training, and career pathway development.
- Opportunity Youth
 - For the first time in South Central PA LWDB history, SCPa Works advances a program based on data-driven technological research that resulted in the promotion and impact of the region's workforce development system. Within a year of program launch, the SCPa

Works CAP Outreach Team engaged 70 Opportunity Youth participants in a PA CareerLink® overview, resulting in 13 internal referrals to PA CareerLink® partners, including the WIOA Youth Program, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to address the needs of Opportunity Youth with disabilities. This has been the groundwork for a program exhibiting exponential growth potential, and SCPa Works seeks to continue to increase the number of CAPs per county throughout the region.

- o SCPa Works continues to empower young individuals by providing them with the skills and opportunities necessary for career success. Key initiatives this year were the launch of Virtual Paid Work Experience, the Youth Ambassador Program, and Summer Earn & Learn.

Investment in Research

- Research conducted by Knovva Academy during Program Year 2024 provided SCPa Works with quantified data on the targeted Opportunity Youth demographic, providing SCPa Works with insight into building keyword gaps into SCPa Works' digital content to ensure search engine optimization (SEO). This study prompted a substantial leap into the realm of SEO, online content development, digital material creation, and social media branding to establish a high number of content opportunities via online workforce development searches throughout the SCPa Works service area.
 - o SCPa Works utilized the metrics produced by the Knovva research initiative and launched digital campaigns through collaboration with the OSO, PA CareerLink® communications teams, digital marketing, development technicians, and digital and social media site management.
- Through the launch of a mixed-methods research study in partnership with Knovva Academy, resulted in the provision of a granular level of data analysis, data mapping, alignment of data and Community Access Point (CAP) model, systems connection, and best practices for serving Opportunity Youth in the South Central PA region.
- The Envoy Recovery Ready Workplace-Implementing Policies and Practices training sessions provided insight into the practice of implementing policies and procedures to better serve ADA-protected staff members in recovery, vendor team members, and participants who are employed by local businesses and organizations.
- The ECHO Project Shatter the Stigma, Supporting Recovery in the Workplace training program, promoted by the PA Department of Labor, provided content relevant to supporting workers in recovery, directly aligning with the SCPa Works Youth Reentry grant initiatives as well as future plans to further develop reentry programming incorporating recovery-friendly workplaces for all staff and participants within the South Central PA workforce development system.
- Through research and collaboration with SCPa Work, Envoy produced an OSY Toolkit for Employer engagement to include labor market metrics and measurable employer survey results. The toolkit and data were coupled with research data pulled from the Knovva report to strategically align Opportunity Youth with labor gaps in the local workforce.

People and Processes

Excellence in program, compliance, and fiscal practices

- One key way in which SCPa Works supports the strategic vision of our region's workforce is to identify key performance indicators (KPIs) in the SCPa Works program, compliance, and fiscal departments. The foundation of the organization's impact on the community begins with being trusted stewards of public resources. The internal tracking of clean monitoring reports, proper procurement methods, and solid audits are foundational ways we deliver on our programmatic

impact.

Model workplace best practices in wages/benefits and professional development

- SCPa Works strives to demonstrate best practices in operations by being a place where team members are in a healthy environment, can grow their careers, and can support themselves and their families with a good work/life balance.

Industry Partnerships

SCPa Works continues to support three industry partnerships: construction, manufacturing, and technology, and will continue to build an agriculture community. These industry partnerships align with the Governors' Strategic Action Plan and complement many SCPa Works Programs through our PA CareerLink® Workforce system to include registered apprenticeship, Title I ITA and OJT programs, incumbent worker training funding, and our non-formula-funded construction grant. SCPa Works is organized under the Next Gen model, where action committees are created to address the challenges and goals of the industry partnerships.

SCPa Works relies on the Engage! Business Outreach Program for industry sector round tables to understand industry opportunities, challenges, and needs and provide resources through industry partnerships.

Section 2.2

2.2. Negotiated levels of performance -What are the local levels of performance that have been negotiated with the governor and chief elected officials? How will the local board's goals relate to the achievement of these measures? [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17); 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5); WIOA 116(c); 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(16). Reviewed by CWIA]

SCPa Works sets a high standard for achieving and exceeding state-negotiated WIOA program performance. SCPa Works communicates regularly with all sub-recipients and staff to ensure that performance outcomes are continually improving. Subcontractors are made aware of the performance measures and the importance of exceeding those measures, beginning with the Request for Proposals and throughout the contractual relationship. The WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker programs are vital in helping individuals across the South Central Workforce Development Area achieve employment and training goals. In 2024, these programs continued to meet and exceed expectations, guiding participants toward sustainable careers and industry-recognized credentials.

Technical assistance is provided throughout the program year to all vendors to help providers understand the quarterly and yearly goals and identify proactive ways to help these vendors with best practices for goal tracking, performance evaluation, and continuous improvement.

SCPa Works strives to meet and exceed the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth negotiated performance measures established for the SCPa Works service area.

SCPa Works maintains optimal relationship management with all vendors, subrecipients, LWDB staff, and PA CareerLink® staff to ensure that all expected performance measures are acquired and to guarantee that outcomes continuously improve.

The following strategies, which are included in detail throughout this Local Plan, serve as vital touchpoints to the achievement of WIOA negotiated performance levels within the SCPa Works service area:

- BST employer engagement and industry partnership work;
- Ensuring that SCPa Works programs are providing the skills, competencies, credentials, support services, and other services that lead to jobs following program completion;
- A commitment to WIOA-funded employment, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skills gains;
- Ensuring the access and availability of one-stop system resources and services to job seekers, workers, and youth, with the expansion of services through virtual and remote service opportunities;
- The creation and oversight of Industry Partnerships to ensure that programs and services are aligned with labor market demand, support retention of employment, and lead to the advancement of better jobs; and
- The establishment of a talent pipeline through the launch of WIOA-funded registered apprenticeship.

SCPa Works' perspective is to set the negotiated levels of performance in a way that provides a high standard of excellence – achievable and realistic, but assuming continuous improvement. The WIOA local performance levels should not be a “minimum compliance” measure – one that is easy to achieve and outlines that compliance to the law has been met – but rather an example of the Board's goal of the pursuit of excellence in all services and programs.

SCPa Works Programmatic Goals

Our efforts have been consistently aligned with the overarching goal of transforming education and workforce systems for local economic advancement. SCPa Works has played a pivotal role in removing barriers to quality employment and fostering better lives through partnerships across various sectors, focusing on opportunity creation, program quality, integrating learning with work, and strengthening regional economies.

SCPa Works has actively participated in transformative efforts. The WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Opportunity Youth investment champions community-centered, equity-driven solutions to workforce challenges, emphasizing collaboration, strategic problem-solving, and human-centered design principles.

At the core of the WIOA program initiatives is the commitment to using data-driven strategies to transform how SCPa Works approaches workforce development. In a rapidly changing economic landscape, data is a crucial tool for understanding emerging trends, identifying skill gaps, and predicting future workforce needs. Through local partnerships with employers, training providers, and contracted research teams, SCPa Works is enhancing its capacity to collect, analyze, and utilize data to inform decisions and strategies. This data-centric approach enables SCPa Works to tailor WIOA programs to meet the specific needs of the South Central PA region, ensuring that SCPa Works responds to current demands but also proactively prepares for future changes.

One key objective of administrating WIOA programming is to identify the best possible use of funding to support innovative workforce programs. Securing diverse and sustainable funding streams is essential for the longevity and impact of all-encompassing initiatives. SCPa Works is exploring a variety of funding opportunities, including federal and state grants, private-sector partnerships, and philanthropic contributions to blend and braid with WIOA funding streams to ensure that all negotiated goals are achieved or exceeded. By diversifying funding sources, SCPa Works ensures that WIOA programs result in measurable outcomes.

Attachment 1: Local Area WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Tables

Table A	LWDA Name: SCPa Works		
WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker-Youth) Performance Measures	<u>Attained</u> <u>Performance Results</u>	<u>Negotiated</u> <u>Performance Goals</u>	<u>Negotiated</u> <u>Performance Goals</u>
	*Program Year 2023	*Program Year 2024	*Program Year 2025
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	68.3%	77%	78%
Dislocated Worker	81.7%	80%	81%
Youth	72.2%	68%	69%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	72.1%	75%	76%
Dislocated Worker	77.6%	80%	81%
Youth	74.3%	66%	67%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	\$8,454	\$8,100	\$8,200
Dislocated Worker	\$10,333	\$9,500	\$9,750
Youth	\$3,846	\$4,100	\$4,200
Credential Attainment Rate			
Adult	77.6%	76%	78%
Dislocated Worker	63.6%	74%	75%
Youth	44.4%	63%	64%
Measurable Skill Gains			
Adult	85.0%	66%	67%
Dislocated Worker	95.5%	66%	67%
Youth	45.3%	57%	58%

3. OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce System and Investment Strategies

Section 3.1

3.1. Local workforce system structure - Provide a descriptive overview of the workforce system structure, including key stakeholders and entities in the local area. [Reviewed by OS and PPCS]

SCPa Works serves as the LWDB for the South Central Region of Pennsylvania. This represents the development and oversight of workforce policy, strategic direction, and monitoring of program operations and administration of an eight-county region.

SCPa Works has been designated as the fiscal agent and administrative entity for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funding. SCPa Works also administers Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training services and the Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN).

Fiscal Agent duties include:

- General financial management;
- Regular reporting of financial status and transactions to local elected officials and workforce development board;
- Dispersal of funds directed by the workforce development board and local elected officials, with a determination that such dispersions comply with applicable laws and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) standards;
- Monitoring and oversight of financial procedures of contractors, including training and technical assistance as needed;
- Duties related to staff support for the Board include program compliance reviews;
- Monitoring of programs, services, and other investments;
- Negotiating/reaching agreement on local and regional performance standards with Chief Local Elected Officials and the Governor;
- Conducting workforce research and regional analysis of labor market information in collaboration with the state; and
- Convening local partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the local plan of service, including identifying and leveraging a wide array of government and private funding sources to support the workforce development activities in the plan.

SCPa Works' dedicated local elected officials, board, and staff work across the eight-county region of South Central Pennsylvania to support the organizational mission of unlocking the human talent that drives the development of businesses and individuals across the region. SCPa Works' local elected officials (LEOs) are Commissioners from each of the eight counties. LEOs provide oversight and assume fiscal responsibility for SCPa Works funding and investments while empowering the SCPa Works Board to set policy and strategy for the workforce area and the Board's staff.

South Central PA Local Elected Officials:

Adams County - Commissioner James Martin
Cumberland County - Commissioner Gary Eichelberger

Dauphin County - Commissioner Justin Douglas
Franklin County - Commissioner Robert G. Ziobrowski
Juniata County - Commissioner Alice Gray
Lebanon County - Commissioner Jo Ellen Litz
Perry County - Commissioner Frank Campbell
York County - Commissioner Douglas Hoke

The SCPa Works Board comprises at least 51% private sector members and is divided into committees that help manage and oversee key programmatic and administrative areas of SCPa Works. These committees include Executive, Administrative/Finance, Local Management, and Program Committees. Each of these committees meets at least quarterly, with the Executive Committee meeting monthly to enable efficient programmatic, administrative, and fiscal initiatives to pass into the operational and organizational structure in a timely manner. All committees provide detailed reports to the full Board of Directors meetings each quarter. SCPa Works staff implements the policies of the Board and the LEOs through day-to-day oversight of operations and programs of the comprehensive, affiliate, and specialized PA CareerLink® sites and by monitoring and ensuring compliance with contracts that are maintained with the one-stop operator, service providers, training providers, along with the terms outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) commitments of PA CareerLink® partners.

Duties of the Board's standing committees include:

- **Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee meets monthly and decides on time-sensitive issues that must be settled between regularly scheduled SCPa Works full Board meetings. Action items considered by the Executive Committee are decided upon monthly. The SCPa Works Executive Committee has Board authority to pass policy, administrative, and fiscal matters into organizational operations and administration. All initiatives are presented to the SCPa Works full Board on a quarterly basis.
 - The Executive Committee assists the Chairperson in administering SCPa Works, makes recommendations on policy matters, and evaluates functions. It also reviews and advances the committees' findings to the SCPa Works Board.
- **Administrative/Finance Committee:** The Administration/Finance Committee oversees management, policy creation, budget negotiation, and finance review. It also handles such other duties as may be assigned by the Chair.
- **Local Management Committee (LMC):** The LMC ensures that the programs are running effectively and efficiently, with a focus on meeting the needs of the individuals they serve. Welfare-to-work programs are designed to provide services that support individuals in transitioning from welfare to employment, providing services and support that help participants gain skills and find work. The individuals eligible for these programs are identified and referred by local County Assistance Offices, which means the LMC coordinates with these offices to ensure the right people are receiving services. The LMC is also responsible for procuring services or contractors needed to run these programs. All activities must adhere to state and federal guidelines, ensuring compliance with regulations and laws.
- **Program Committee:** The SCPa Works Program Committee has a multifaceted role, overseeing and guiding various workforce development initiatives. The committee develops new program initiatives through brainstorming, research, and networking with adjacent LWDBs across the U.S. In addition, the committee works closely with consultants to enhance new and existing programs to meet regional workforce development needs. The Program Committee issues requests for proposals (RFPs) for open opportunities for external organizations or individuals to propose projects or services that align with SCPa Works' regional goals. The committee also reviews and recommends RFPs for approval, playing a role in the allocation of resources. The Program

Committee plays an active role in shaping the criteria and processes that ensure equitable access to training and workforce development opportunities, specifically in the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs. Furthermore, the oversight and monitoring completed by Program Officers ensures that funded initiatives meet the intended objectives and are accountable for outcomes.

As featured in the SCPa Works WIOA Local Workforce Development System Organization Chart model, Attachment 2, SCPa Works Board contracts with a variety of funded partners to provide a suite of workforce development services across the South Central PA region, including:

One-Stop Operator:

Equus

Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker:

Equus

Title I Youth Services:

Equus

PA CareerLink® sites are maintained at:

PA CareerLink® Adams County, Affiliate
150 V-Twin Drive
Gettysburg, PA 17325
Phone: 717-334-6610 / TTY: 717-334-0521
Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PA CareerLink® Capitol Region, Comprehensive
100 North Cameron Street, Suite 101
Harrisburg, PA 17110
Phone: 717-783-3270 / TTY: 717-236-7144
Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PA CareerLink® Cumberland County, Affiliate
40 Noble Blvd., Suite 12
Carlisle, PA 17013
Phone: 717-243-4431 / TTY: 717-243-3236
Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PA CareerLink® Franklin County, Affiliate
600 Norland Avenue
Chambersburg, PA 17201
Phone: 717-264-4584 / TTY: 717-264-2855
Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

PA CareerLink® Lebanon County, Affiliate
718 Poplar Street, Suite C
Lebanon, PA 17042-6763
Phone: 717-274-2554 / TTY: 717-279-2828
Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PA CareerLink® Perry County, Community Access Point
133 S. 5th Street, PO Box 37
Newport, PA 17074
Phone: 717-567-7323
Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PA CareerLink® York County, Comprehensive
841 Vogelsong Road
York, PA 17404
Phone: 717-767-7600 / TTY: 717-767-7604
Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Juniata County, Community Access Point
498 Jefferson St
Mifflintown, PA 17059
Phone: 717-436-6378
By Appointment

The South Central PA workforce development system is comprised of an extensive network of organizations, partnerships, and relationships with community stakeholders to support the eight-county service region. The South Central Workforce Development Board (SCPa Works) comprises the counties of Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York in South Central Pennsylvania. SCPa Works envisions a region where everyone has the opportunity for prosperity and growth. The SCPa Works mission is to unlock the human talent that drives the development of businesses and individuals.

SCPa Works funds employment and training programs across the region that empower job seekers to obtain new skills and career opportunities and allow businesses to build talent pipelines that meet workforce demands. SCPa Works operates six PA CareerLink® sites that serve tens of thousands of PA residents each year, representing an annual workforce investment of nearly \$14M into employment and training programs for youth and adults across South Central PA.

To support the region's job seekers and businesses most effectively, SCPa Works has outlined several key values that guide the administration of workforce development systems. The following values are embedded in SCPa Works' programs, investments, services, people, and processes, as well as the values that SCPa Works endeavors to have partners and providers emulate:

- Performance
- Equity
- Flexibility
- Collaboration
- Accountability

Additionally, SCPa Works prioritizes the following in all programs:

- Employer Engagement – Strengthen relationships with the regional business community so that the region's system can better understand current and projected labor demand, support sector-driven training models, and invest in future workforce development.
- Individual Investment – Connect all job seekers (youth, adults, displaced workers, incumbent workers, etc.) to career pathways and career ladders, aligning education with job opportunities and lifelong learning through the PA CareerLink® system.
- People and Process – Support and foster a healthy environment where all team members can pursue excellence with accountability, openness and transparency, career growth, and

professional development while maintaining the values of equity and respect across workforce development initiatives. Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) frameworks into every aspect of SCPa Works' business model and investments.

Selection of One-Stop Operators:

SCPa Works designates and certifies a One-Stop Operator who exhibits the following eligibility criteria:

1. Uniform evaluation of proposals submitted through a competitive process; and
2. Demonstrated effectiveness as indicated through past practice and documentation within competitive proposals.

Selected One-Stop Operators contracted to provide services under SCPa Works WIOA funding are required to:

1. Disclose actual and potential conflicts of interest that may arise from relationships between the One-Stop Operator with individual SCPa Works training service providers and other service providers;
2. Avoid the establishment of practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term services, such as intensive employment, training, and education services; and
3. Comply with all State and Federal statutes, regulations, and procurement policies relating to the calculation and use of profits.

SCPa Works competitively procures the workforce system operator. This procurement meets procurement criteria, as stated in 20 CFR § 678.605:

In adherence to WIOA section 121(d)(2)(A), SCPa Works selects the One-Stop Operator through a competitive procurement process at a minimum of once every four years. The process adheres to the principles of competitive procurement, as outlined in federal guidelines, including the Uniform Administrative Guidance at 2 CFR 200.318-326. The SCPa Works Operator procurement process ensures an efficient and effective selection of the operator, meeting criteria as outlined in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Bureau of Workforce Development Administration Local Workforce Delivery System, PA CareerLink® System Operator Workforce System Policy.

SCPa Works houses a General Procurement Policy #P-32-1.23 through which the definition of a competitive procurement process is provided and implemented during the selection of a One-Stop Operator.

PA CareerLink® System Operator Procurement Planning and Preparation Phase:

SCPa Works identifies the need for a One-Stop Operator through guidance from state and federal grantors. SCPa Works assesses the specific expectations, duties, services, and requirements of an Operator. Research and planning at this stage in the process determine key factors for the procurement solicitation. Data on area programming, demographics, geography, population characteristics, and service accessibility is collected and analyzed to determine the specific expectations that are included in the One-Stop Operator Request for Proposals (RFP). This data is merged with state and federal guidelines to create a profile of the optimal Operator role.

During this phase, SCPa Works determines the operator's role and responsibilities as described in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Workforce System Policy, Local Workforce Delivery System, PA CareerLink® System Operator, Attachment B: One-Stop Operator Procurement. SCPa Works

also creates a timeline of deliverables and budgetary allocations during this phase of planning and preparation.

It is also during this phase that the RFP timeline is established and entered into the SCPa Works Contract Lifecycle Management tool under the RFP/RFQ Tracking Process to ensure that all deadlines are met to include the process elements that are assigned specific dates and teams to which the tasks are assigned. The following line-items reflect the data that is created, stored, and tracked in the SCPa Works Contract Management Lifecycle tool:

- RFP Preparation launch deadline - the Operations team provides guidance to the Program team to begin RFP creation;
- RFP draft submission deadline for the Program team to the Operations team for review;
- RFP final proofreading by the Operations team deadline;
- RFP legal publication/advertisement date;
- RFP open to application date of posting on RFP software tool;
- Deadline to submit response to bidders' conference;
- Date of bidders' conference;
- Notice of intent deadline;
- RFP application deadline;
- RFP internal staff application review and scoring for application completeness;
- Date of RFP review panel, comprised of volunteers and Board members, completes RFP review and scoring orientation and education with in-house legal advisor;
- RFP review panel scoring deadline;
- Date that RFP review panel meets with the Operations team to delivery final Operator role recommendation;
- Date that the Operations team prepares the awardee recommendation packet to present to the SCPa Works Admin-Finance Committee;
- Date that the Admin-Finance Committee recommends approval of the award to the Executive Committee; and
- Date that the Executive Committee recommends approval of the award to the Full Board.

From this point in the process, the Contract Lifecycle Management Tool manages the stages of contract creation, approval, and lifecycle, including monitoring allocations for all SCPa Works contracts and subcontracts.

Release and Evaluation Phase:

SCPa Works utilizes research data and content to create an RFP to launch the competitive procurement process. The RFP serves as the procurement solicitation and includes expected performance levels, payment terms, and contract details. It also provides an overview of the project's scope of work.

The RFP is publicized for public access to attract potential bidders who can review and respond with proposals. During the period of public posting of the RFP, SCPa Works holds a bidders' conference to provide a platform upon which bidders can inquire about the expectations of the Operator position and gain insight into the requirements listed in the RFP. The inquiries can include questions regarding the contract cycle, invoicing, and generalized programming to clarify the solicitation for potential bidders. Following the bidders conference, proposals are submitted to SCPa Works for review, evaluation, and scoring based on predetermined criteria.

Following the close of the RFP response period, SCPa Works evaluates the full proposals that have been submitted by each bidder. SCPa Works conducts this evaluation based on programmatic factors and scoring systems to assess potential One-Stop Operator proposals. Through the evaluation process, SCPa Works assigns proposal review and scoring to a select set of individuals comprised of full Board members and volunteers who complete an RFP review and scoring process orientation conducted by the SCPa Works legal advisor. The process of scoring identifies proposals that are suitable for selection. The RFP scoring team utilizes a scoring tool that includes descriptive, predetermined criteria that enable the reviewers to fairly score each submitted proposal.

SCPa Works maintains policies and procedures to address conflicts of interest, especially under the circumstance that an RFP bidder is financially or otherwise affiliated with an SCPa Works Board member or volunteer RFP reviewer.

One-Stop Operator Selection:

When proposal scoring is complete, SCPa Works determines the best possible candidate to fill the Operator position through a series of date-stamped tasks and process points previously included in this plan section.

A contract is executed with a scope of work and additional negotiated terms that adhere to WIOA final rule and state requirements. The agreement is signed by the SCPa Works CEO and Board Chair. Once the agreement is signed by all parties, the contract certifies or designates the One-Stop Operator.

Implementation Phase:

SCPa Works monitors the contracted One-Stop Operator regularly to ensure the regulatory compliance of project oversight, invoicing, payments, Operator performance, deliverables, contract modifications, and corrective actions for improvement where necessary.

SCPa Works maintains stringent records sufficient to detail the history of each procurement transaction. Procurement records include the rationale for the procurement method used, contract type selection, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price. The SCPa Works Contract Lifecycle Management tool and procedures manual ensure the timeliness and date stamps on all process tasks, contractual deliverables, contract documentation, process implementation, contracted dollar amounts, further allocations, contract renewal dates, RFP/RFQ creation, and process launch dates.

To achieve regional goals in collaboration with the PA CareerLink® one-stop centers throughout the region, SCPa Works fosters strong relationships with local school districts, training centers, colleges, and additional educational institutes, as well as scores of regional employers, for and nonprofit community organizations, and agencies aligning education and workforce development. SCPa Works partners with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU), Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC, the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce, and York County Alliance for Learning to develop collective impact goals for the South Central PA Workforce development region. SCPa Works delivers targeted programming in HPO sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and IT. Programs like Career Connections, employer-led site visits, and pre-apprenticeships raise awareness of in-demand careers and support individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, SCPa Works partners with Wagner Peyser Act teams within PA CareerLink® centers, Title II service providers, and Title IV OVR staff members to ensure that all-encompassing workforce needs are met within the region.

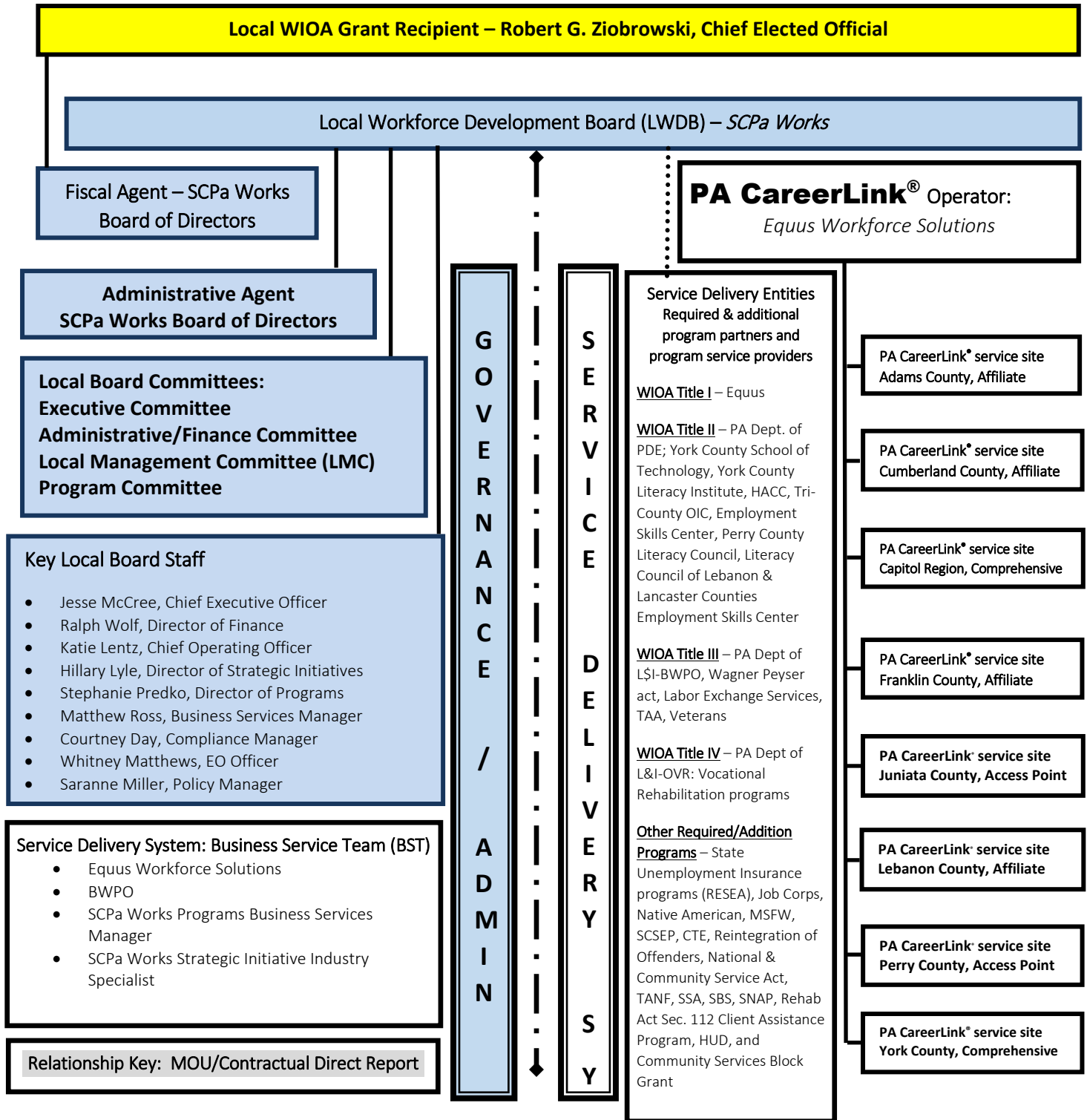
SCPa Works programs and initiatives are interwoven with policy strategies from the Governor's plan and

local strategies from the LWDB. The LEOs appoint members to the full SCPa Works Board who serve on the required LWDB committees. The full Board is responsible for the programmatic and fiscal approval of all SCPa Works activities. To align the Board's vision and strategy with programmatic and operational implementation, SCPa Works utilizes a structure of committees. SCPa Works Board membership follows the applicable federal and state statutes and all appropriate regulations under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). SCPa Works employs a Compliance EO Officer, Ms. Whitney Matthews, 717-236-7936 ext. 123/wmatthews@scpaworks.org, to monitor and evaluate compliance with equal opportunity laws, guidelines, and policies to ensure that employment practices and contracting arrangements give equal opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The EO Officer investigates employment practices, grievances, and alleged violations of local, state, and federal laws to document and correct discriminatory factors.

The SCPa Works workforce development system, including the comprehensive, affiliate, access, and specialized PA CareerLink® sites under the direction of the LWDB, responds to employer, job seeker, and worker needs. The system remains flexible to the ever-changing business environment and is driven by the commitment to continuously enhance quality, customer satisfaction, and fiscal responsibility principles.

The chart displayed in Attachment 2 describes the attributes of the LWDB and the system it oversees. Attachment 2 is reviewed annually for changes and revisions, and coincides with SCPa Works staff names, titles, and contact information found at scpaworks.org.

Attachment 2: WIOA Local Workforce Development System Organizational Chart 2025



Section 3.2

3.2. Programs included in local workforce delivery system -What programs are included in the local workforce delivery system and how will the local board work with the entities carrying out all workforce programs to support service alignment? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(1) and (b)(5)(iv).
Reviewed by OS and PPCS]

SCPa Works' role in the local workforce development system is to act as an intermediary that brings the various components together for collaborative and innovative purposes. In doing so, SCPa Works plays an essential role in creating an environment where businesses and their employees in the private sector can prosper.

SCPa Works' vision and policy directs investment in workforce preparation, skill development, education, and training. These investments are targeted for and align with assisting youth, job seekers, and employers. By promoting partnerships among businesses, non-profit agencies, economic development providers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and employers, SCPa Works helps align regional resources. Through working together, all these stakeholders enhance the skills needed for workforce inclusion, employability, and educational and training levels of the current and future workforce. To accomplish this vision, and under Federal and State regulations, SCPa Works utilizes the following core services, resources, and programs.

Title I Adult (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)

Authorized under WIOA, the Adult program is one of three Title I core programs designed to assist participants in attaining employment. The programming for adult job seekers and workers is aimed at adequate preparation and expeditious connection of work-ready individuals to open jobs simultaneously and through meaningful collaboration, strengthening the workforce delivery system. At the same time, a better understanding of employers' needs is factored into implementing systemic solutions to the challenges employers face.

Title I Dislocated Worker (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)

To help facilitate rapid reemployment, the Dislocated Worker program assists workers before or after a layoff in identifying basic skills training, on-the-job or customized training programs, and apprenticeship opportunities. Dislocated workers are triaged at the point of entry to determine potential program eligibility. This initial intake and triage allow for the development of a streamlined service strategy that maximizes all entities' funding for core reemployment activities.

Title I Youth (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)

Youth programming is designed to serve eligible youth and young adults through a variety of services: high-quality case management support toward educational attainment that includes career guidance and exploration, summer and year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, and any necessary supportive services. The ultimate goal for program participants is either advancement into post-secondary education or attaining employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. Youth program services are prioritized for Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and youth with significant barriers to success, such as a disability, being a pregnant or parenting youth, or being subject to the juvenile/adult justice system.

Programs authorized under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act:

Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy

Title II programs are provided by local adult literacy training providers, depending on the availability of literacy training in the individual counties. The one-stop operator works closely with the network of adult basic education and literacy services providers to ensure the integration of services into individual employment plans and to develop appropriate on-site programming at individual PA CareerLink® centers in the local area.

Wagner-Peyser Act Programs

Partners from the Bureau of Workforce Partnerships & Operations (BWPO) in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry provide services under the Wagner-Peyser Act. These services are provided within the PA CareerLink® System and include vocational counseling, employee profiling, job matching, job search assistance, and posting employer job orders.

Programs authorized under Title IV of the Workforce Innovation Act

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation provides programs authorized under Title IV of the Workforce Innovation Act and available through the PA CareerLink® System. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors work with WIOA Title IV Eligible customers to develop an Individual Plan for Employment, providing services necessary to meet their specific vocational goal. Examples of services include diagnostic assessment and evaluation, counseling and guidance, restoration, training, and placement services. OVR often collaborates with other workforce program partners to provide services, outreach, and assessment. It should be noted that all local partners serve a percentage of individuals with disabilities, and not all individuals need or want to be served by OVR programs. All individuals with disabilities, whether served directly by OVR programs or not, have access to the full range of programs and services provided by the PA CareerLink® partners.

Programs authorized under Section 403(a)(5) of the Social Security Act (as added by Section 5001 of the Balanced Budget Act of 1977)

Operating under the State Department of Public Welfare, the local County Assistance Offices provide services through TANF, authorized under Section 403(a)(5) of the Social Security Act. These services are targeted to welfare recipients and include information about and disseminating welfare benefits. The services are the sole determinant for eligibility for those benefits and are a referral resource to many local services, programs, and training options.

Postsecondary vocational education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act

Vocational Technical School and Career and Technology Center partners provide these services as part of the PA CareerLink® services. Program services include disseminating information about financial assistance to attend post-secondary training and providing post-secondary occupational skills training.

Activities authorized under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974

These activities include Trade Readjustment Act Program administration, including tuition assistance to Dislocated Workers who have lost their jobs due to imports. Program services authorized under this funding and provided within the PA CareerLink® system include rapid response to employees in the event of massive layoff or plant closure, tuition assistance for post-secondary occupational skills training, and income subsidies to assist candidates while in training. BWPO provides this service through the Department of Labor and Industry.

Veteran's activities authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code

Veterans Representatives provide veterans' activities from BWPO through the Pennsylvania Department

of Labor and Industry. Services include career counseling, information on veterans' benefits, and tuition assistance for skill training.

Programs authorized under Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

SCPa Works and the one-stop operator work closely with the AARP, Crispus Attucks, A4TD, and Pathstone Inc. to provide Title V services in the PA CareerLink® system. Current services include access to work experience, job coaching, and job matching services for older workers and job seekers.

Programs Authorized under State Unemployment Compensation Laws

The Department of Labor and Industry's Unemployment Compensation (UC) Department operates programs authorized by State and Federal Unemployment Compensation laws. Service priority by the Department includes the dissemination of information under the UC laws for claim filing assistance. The BWPO provides access to those seeking to file UC applications and claims for benefits, including eligible WIOA Title IV applicants, which in the Commonwealth means those individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Core program alignment is driven by SCPa Works strategies to coordinate and convene across all programs and partners. This is primarily delivered through the one-stop delivery system MOU and the one-stop operator functions; however, as is discussed in this plan, coordination across all partners needs to include key implementation elements of data sharing, alignment of eligibility/enrollment, leveraged, braided, and blended funding to best support job seekers, and transparent metrics and program outcomes.

Expanding collaboration between partners beyond those located within the facility is essential to ensure a seamless service experience for participants. Inevitably, services and resources extend far beyond the walls of a single location. By fostering partnerships with external organizations, experts, and support systems, SCPa Works will connect with a broader range of resources, knowledge, and services that are critical to meeting participants' needs.

This growth allows for the exchange of information, expertise, and resources, which can help address challenges that may not be fully covered by the immediate team at the facility. Whether it's bringing in specialized knowledge, handling overflow needs, or offering remote support, working with external partners broadens the capacity to serve participants with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

For a full set of partners, entities, and organizations, see the following Attachment 3 following this section of the plan.

Selection of Title I Contracted Service Providers or Grant Subrecipients

SCPa Works implements and utilizes a competitive proposal process to identify and choose optimal, high-functioning Title I service providers through the development of RFPs when more than one source is submitting an offer to provide services that reflect a fixed-price or cost-reimbursement contract award.

Title I contracts procured by competitive proposals must be awarded through a contractual agreement and approved by the SCPa Works Board of Directors. RFPs must be sent to all entities on the SCPa Works potential vendor list, as appropriate, and identify all evaluation factors and relative importance as related to the procurement of goods and/or services. All proposals must be considered to the maximum extent practical. Proposals must be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources. SCPa Works awards contracts via a stringent review process of all proposals submitted within a timely manner from entities that meet the requirements specified in the RFP.

SCPa Works ensures that each contract is awarded to the responsible entity whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, considering price and other factors. SCPa Works also ensures that all successful proposals reflect fair and reasonable compensation.

The SCPa Works Contracts Standard Operating Procedure outlines the requirements, policy, and process that should be followed by SCPa Works' staff when executing contracts with grant sub-recipients. Contracts include: Service Agreements, Consulting Agreements, Contracted Services, and Formula Fund Agreements. The disbursement of funds over \$3,000 to any sub-recipient requires a contract. Contracts over \$25,000 require Board of Directors approval before disbursement of funds.

In addition, the SCPa Works Contract Lifecycle Management Process and Tracking Tool outlines the specific steps taken by SCPa Works to manage contracts from RFP development and posting to award determination to contract termination. The Tracking Tool ensures timeliness and accuracy during the competitive procurement process and incorporates key staff members at all stages of the process. The SCPa Works competitive procurement procedures apply to all Title I funding and improve efficiency, reduce risk, and increase compliance with all state and federal guidelines.

Attachment 3: Local Workforce Development Delivery System Program/Partner List

Local Workforce Development Area Name: SCPa Works

Effective Date (must align with current MOU): July 1, 2025

Local workforce development boards (local boards) may supplement this template with their own version if all required template information is reflected. Local boards must publicly post this list to address the public's need for access to service as mandated by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Required programs (as listed in WIOA sec. 121(b)(1)) and the corresponding program authorization information are pre-filled for convenience. In the event multiple providers provide the same program, it is the local board's responsibility to add this information accordingly. WIOA also specifies that one-stop centers may incorporate additional partner programs. Thus, the local board must ensure this document reflects the current PA CareerLink® Memoranda of Understanding and include any necessary additional partner program(s) contact information.

This list should be reviewed annually for revisions. If further revisions are required after a local area plan (or subsequent plan modification) is approved, another separate plan modification is not required.

Program Name	Program Authorization	Local Area Partner/Provider
POC address	POC telephone	POC website/email & POC Name (if known)
Adult Employment and Training Activities	WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 3	Equus
100 N. Cameron St. Harrisburg, PA 17110	(717) 783-3270	www.equusworks.com
Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities	WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 3	Equus
100 N. Cameron St. Harrisburg, PA 17110	(717) 783-3270	www.equusworks.com
WIOA Youth Workforce Activities	WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 2	Equus
100 N. Cameron St. Harrisburg, PA 17110	(717) 783-3270	www.equusworks.com
TANF Youth	WIOA Title I, Sec. 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221)	Equus
100 N. Cameron St. Harrisburg, PA 17110	(717) 783-3270	www.equusworks.com
National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)	WIOA Title I, Sec. 167	Pathstone, Inc. – All counties Nita D'Agostino
2150 Carlisle Road P.O. Box 128 Aspers, PA 17304	717-677-6150	www.pathstone.org
		ricounty.org
Postsecondary Career & Technical Education (Perkins V)	Carl D. Perkins Vocational & Applied Technology Act of 2006	Harrisburg Area Community College

	(20 U.S.C. 2301 et. seq.) and (as amended Pub. L. No. 155-224)	Lisa A. Delorenzo
One HACC Drive, Midtown 1 Harrisburg, PA 17110	717-736-4113	www.hacc.edu ladelore@hacc.edu
YouthBuild Program	WIOA Title I, Sec. 171 (29 U.S.C. 3226)	Crispus Attucks
605 S. Duke St. York, PA 17401	717-848-3610	www.crispusattucks.org
Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services Programs	Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title III	BWPO Keith Baker, Regional Director
PA Department of Labor & Industry	814-641-6408 x127	www.dol.gov kebaker@pa.gov
Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA)	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program	Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon Cheryl Hiester Executive Director
Lebanon County	717-295-5523	www.literacysuccess.org cheryl@literacysuccess.org
Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA)	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program	Tri-County OIC-Dauphin Sharon Bowser
500 Maclay St. Harrisburg, PA 17110	717-238-7318	www.tricountyioic.org
Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA)	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program	LIU12, Lincoln IU12, Waynesboro School District – Franklin/Adams Sharon Hagenberger
65 Billerbeck St. New Oxford, PA 17350	717-624-4616	www.iu12.org sahagenberger@iu12.org
Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA)	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program	York County School of Technology
2179 S. Queen St. York, PA 17402	717-741-0820	
Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA)	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program	Employment Skills Center-Cumberland Mindy Tremblay
29 S. Hanover St. Carlisle, PA 17013	717-243-6040	www.employmentskillscenter.org @employmentskillscenter.org
Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA)	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program	Perry County Literacy Council Leslie Heimbaugh
133 S 5th St, Newport, PA 17074	866-781-7323	literacy@pa.net

Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA)	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program	Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13
1 Cumberland St. Lebanon, PA 17042	717-606-1793	www.iu13.org tim_shenk@iu13.org
Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA)	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program	York County Literacy Institute
1416 6th Ave, York, PA 17403	(717) 845-8719 ext. 1123	info@yorkliteracy.org
Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Programs	Title I of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title IV	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Tracie Maille
555 Walnut Street, 8 th Floor Harrisburg PA 17101	717-787-7502	www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/ovr
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)	AARP Elizabeth Stachiw
2101 N. Front Street, Bldg #3, Suite 100	717-234-5961	www.aarp.org
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)	AARP Kelly Fetsko
321 Main Street, Suite 4-H Johnstown, PA 15901		www.aarp.org
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)	AARP Patricia Vergnetti
355 Memorial Blvd, Room 5 Tobyhanna, PA 18466		www.aarp.org
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)	Mary Branagan, MBA, PMP Asst. Vice President of Communications and Policy Associates for Training and Development
	802.524.3200 x117	mbranagan@a4td.org
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)	Pathstone, Inc.-Franklin County Nita D'Agnostino
2150 Carlisle Road PO Box 128 Aspers PA 17304		www.pathstone.org

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)	Tri-County Community Action Jennifer Wintermyer
1514 Derry Street Harrisburg, PA 17104	717-232-9757	jwintermyer@cactricounty.org www.cactricounty.org
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et. seq.)	BWPO Keith Baker, Regional Director
PA Department of Labor & Industry	814-641-6408 x127	www.dol.gov kebaker@pa.gov
Jobs for Veterans State Grant Programs	38 U.S.C. Chapter 41	BWPO Keith Baker, Regional Director
PA Department of Labor & Industry	814-641-6408 x127	www.dol.gov kebaker@pa.gov
Employment and Training Activities—Department of Community Economic Development	Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et. seq.)	Community Progress Council Inc. Robin Rohrbaugh, President/CEO Carolyn Lerew, Organizational Development Director
226 E. College Ave. York, PA 17403	717-846-4600	www.yorkcpc.org rrohrbaugh@yorkcpc.org clerew@yorkcpc.org
Employment and Training Activities—Department of Community Economic Development	Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et. seq.)	Southcentral Community Action Programs -Adams/Franklin Megan Shreve
153 N Stratton St. Gettysburg, PA 17325 533 S. Main Street Chambersburg, PA 17201	717-334-7634	www.sccap.org mschreve@sccap.org
Employment and Training Activities— Department of Housing and Urban Development	Employment and Training activities carried out under Department of Housing and Urban Development	Lebanon County Community Action- Lebanon Phyllis Holtry, Executive Director
503 Oak St. Lebanon, PA 17042	717-273-9328	www.lebanon-county-com munity-action-partnership.business.site pholtry@lebcnty.org
State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program	Social Security Act 9 of 1935 (Title III, IX, and XII) and Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) of 1939	Department of Labor & Industry William L. Trusky, Jr.
PA Department of Labor & Industry	717-787-7107	www.dol.gov karencam@pa.gov
Pennsylvania Department of Corrections	Second Chance Act of 2007, Sec. 212 (42 U.S.C. 17532) and WIOA Title I, Sec. 169	Laurel Harry Secretary of Corrections

1920 Technology Pkwy, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050		717.728.4109 ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Second Chance Act of 2007, Sec. 212 (42 U.S.C. 17532) and WIOA Title I, Sec. 169	Kia Hansard Harrisburg Director
100 N Cameron Street Harrisburg, PA 17101		khansard@ceoworks.org
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	(43 U.S.C. 601 et. seq.)	Department of Human Services
625 Forster St. Harrisburg, PA 17120	800-692-7462	www.dhs.pa.gov
RAPID RESPONSE	Title III	BWPO Keith Baker, Regional Director
PA Department of Labor & Industry	814-641-6408 x127	www.dol.gov kebaker@pa.gov
State Housing Finance and Development Authority Employment & Training	Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	York County Regina Mitchell, Executive Director
31 S. Broad Street York, PA 17403	717-845-2601	www.yorkhousingauthority.com rmitchell@yhud.org
State Housing Finance and Development Authority Employment & Training	Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Housing Authority of the County of Dauphin Leah Eppinger, Executive Director
501 Mohn Street Steelton, PA 17113	717-939-9301 x 512	leppinger@dauphinhousing.org
Job Corps	Title I, Subtitle C	Job Corps Ed Weaver
100 N. Cameron St. Harrisburg, PA 17110	570-708-0692	
Native American Programs	WIOA Title I, Sec. 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221)	Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center
120 Charles Street Pittsburgh, PA 15238	800-895-8721	www.cotraic.org rjohn@cotraic.org

Section 3.3

3.3. Adult and Dislocated Worker training activities - Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(6). Reviewed by DHS, OS, and BWPO]

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult & Dislocated Worker (DW) programs have been vital in helping individuals across the South Central Workforce Development Area achieve employment and training goals. In 2024, these programs continued to meet and exceed expectations, guiding participants toward sustainable careers and industry-recognized credentials. In the South Central PA region, 263 Adult participants were served, and 89 were placed in employment, earning an average wage of more than \$20 per hour. During the same time period, 121 Dislocated workers were enrolled, and 52 were placed in employment earning more than \$21 per hour in wages. Thirty-four Adult participants and 20 Dislocated Worker participants attained industry-recognized credentials during the program year.

Participants	Number Served	Placed in Employment	Credentials Earned	Average Placement Wage
Adult	263	89	34	\$20.04/hour
Dislocated Worker	121	52	20	\$21.37/hour

WIOA requires priority of service to be provided to public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are deficient in basic skills when providing training and employment services using WIOA Title I Adult program funds. Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 3-15 specifies that priority should also be applied to individuals who are both underemployed and low-income. WIOA final rule focuses on serving individuals with barriers to employment with a priority of service required regardless of the funding levels and is expanded to include individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Priority of Service

SCPa Works abides by the guidance provided in the Priority of Service WSP to include individuals with a barrier to training, education, and employment as individuals most in need of workforce development system services. SCPa Works has forged and maintains a workforce development network as a seamless system to provide exemplary comprehensive services to all individuals regardless of background and lifestyle characteristics, with a focus on serving individuals with barriers to employment. WIOA programs ensure a broad spectrum of eligibility for individuals to access services. As illustrated in 20 CFR 680.320(b), Adult and Dislocated Worker Activities, the following populations within the SCPa Works service area are indicative of individuals with barriers to employment:

- Displaced homemakers;
- Low-income individuals;
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, as such terms are defined in WIOA Sec. 166;
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities;
- Older individuals (individuals age 55 or older);

- Ex-offenders;
- Homeless individuals (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6)), or homeless children and youths (as defined in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434(a)(2)));
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system;
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;
- Eligible migrant and season farmworkers, as defined in WIOA Sec. 167(i);
- Individuals within two (2) years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et. seq.);
- Single parents (including single pregnant women);
- Long-term unemployed individuals; or
- Such other groups as the Governor involved determined to have barriers to employment.

The SCPa Works Priority of Service Policy #P-1-11.22 serves as guidance for the implementation of priority of service for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I program customers. The element of priority of service enables WIOA Title I contracted service providers to place a focused interest on individuals in need and who can most benefit from the public workforce system onto a career pathway to self-sufficiency. The goal of SCPa Works is to serve at least 51% of Adult participants from the priority groups. This goal is tracked through data collected in CWDS. If it has been determined that goals are not being met, contracted service providers will be expected to conduct action outreach to recruit participants who meet the requirements of the priority groups.

Priority for receipt of individualized career services and training services will be given to individuals who qualify for WIOA Title I Adult services in the following order:

1. **First Priority** indicates funding for veterans and eligible spouses who also meet the qualifications as being included in one or more of the statutory priority groups that include recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, including those who are underemployed, and those who are basic skills deficient.
2. **Second Priority** indicates funding for individuals who are included in the category of one or more statutory priority groups to include recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals including those who are underemployed, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.
3. **Third Priority** indicates funding for veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in the statutory priority groups or **who are not** recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, including underemployed individuals, and those **who are not** basic skills deficient.
4. **Fourth Priority** indicates individuals who have been touched by the criminal justice system (not veterans or eligible spouses) who meet WIOA general eligibility but do not meet the statutory priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including underemployed, or basic skills deficient), but do meet a local discretionary priority and Adult program eligibility.
5. **Fifth Priority** indicates individuals who meet WIOA general eligibility but who do not meet WIOA Adult Program eligibility for priorities 1, 2, 3, or 4.

Fifth Priority candidates are enrolled for WIOA-funded services on a case-by-case basis with documented Title I program manager approval. The Fifth Priority enables service providers to enroll individuals into a WIOA Adult program who are not low income, are not public assistance recipients, are not basic skills deficient, or are underemployed but not considered low income. The request for all Fifth Priority

enrollments must be submitted in writing to the contracted Title I service provider programs manager utilizing the SCPa Works Fifth Priority Request Form. The SCPa Works Fifth Priority serves as a tool to provide services to existing registered apprentices, honoring reverse referrals for service and ensuring that individuals who are underemployed or included within the ALICE population are provided basic and individualized career services that lead to long-term, self-sustaining household income. Regardless of the need, the three statutorily mandated priorities indicated by and stated in WIOA law are observed prior to accepting a fifth priority referral.

As part of the local employment and training services provided through the PA CareerLink® system, SCPa Works provides Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Paid Work Experience (PWE), WIOA-funded Registered Apprenticeship Programming (RAP), and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) to support job-seeking customers. WIOA eligibility and intake processes determine an individual's eligibility for WIOA-funded training and employment services.

WIOA-funded Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) services are provided through the PA CareerLink® one-stop system to individuals who meet WIOA eligibility criteria found at 20 CFR 680.210 for WIOA Adult and DW program candidates as follows:

Under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(A) training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who:

(a) A one-stop center or one-stop partner determines, after an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning, are:

(1) Unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services;

(2) In need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; and

(3) Have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services;

(b) Select a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individuals are willing to commute or relocate;

(c) Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including such sources as State-funded training funds, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Federal Pell Grants established under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, or require WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants (provisions relating to fund coordination are found at [§ 680.230](#) and WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(B)); and

(d) If training services are provided through the adult funding stream, are determined eligible in accordance with the State and local priority system in effect for adults under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and [§ 680.600](#).

SCPa Works acknowledges allowable training services for Adults and DWs through WIOA funding found at 20 CFR 680.200 as follows:

Types of training services are listed in WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(D) and in [paragraphs \(a\)](#) through [\(k\)](#) of this

section. This list is not all-inclusive and additional training services may be provided.

- (a) Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- (b) On-the-job training (OJT) (see [§§ 680.700, 680.710, 680.720, and 680.730](#));
- (c) Incumbent worker training, in accordance with WIOA sec. 134(d)(4) and [§§ 680.780, 680.790, 680.800, 680.810, and 680.820](#);
- (d) Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- (e) Training programs operated by the private sector;
- (f) Skills upgrading and retraining;
- (g) Entrepreneurial training;
- (h) Transitional jobs in accordance with WIOA sec 134(d)(5) and [§§ 680.190 and 680.195](#);
- (i) Job readiness training provided in combination with services listed in [paragraphs \(a\) through \(h\)](#) of this section;
- (j) Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with training services listed in [paragraphs \(a\) through \(g\)](#) of this section; and
- (k) Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training (see [§§ 680.760 and 680.770](#)).

Career Pathway Assessment and Career Advising

Once a participant chooses to enroll in services, the Title I vendor deploys a series of assessments. TABE or CASAS testing is administered to assess a job seeker's English language proficiency. The O*NET assessment serves as an interest survey, a job skills assessment, and a basic aptitude test, and is administered to measure the training-specific abilities of the job seeker. The O*NET assessment also provides Title I case managers with a measure of the skills gap between job seeker competencies and data that is pulled on labor market demands. The assessments identify areas where a participant requires intervention.

For example, if a participant scores below the basic literacy level, results are explained to participants, and a referral is made to the partnering Title II provider for the blending of WIOA services. The assessment process enhances the journey a participant takes in choosing a career pathway. A participant signs a form stating they clearly understand the assessment and the jobs for which that individual is best suited based on individual assessments.

Using these assessments drives the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP), developed and maintained in CWDS. The IEP is a living document prepared with the participant and services as a "road map" of training and career trajectory. Career advisors and clients work together to develop a plan based on outcomes and to set benchmarks. The IEP is continuously updated as the participant progresses and new goals are developed.

Elevating Access to Services

To expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services to WIOA-eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers, SCPa Works launched its first-ever Community Access Point (CAP) initiative.

In 2024, having applied Knowva, Inc. demographic and geographic research project results and GIS mapping results, to resolve workforce development system gaps, SCPa Works identified a need to meet customers within the communities they lived. This insight launched an initiative to expand access to and the effectiveness of Community Access Points, referred to as CAPs, as strategic hubs to reach customers who have transportation and technology barriers within home-based communities. CAPs provide a flexible and accessible entry point for WIOA-eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers who face barriers in addition to transportation and technology and can include a lack of engagement with formal institutions, a need for childcare, hunger, primary education needs, addiction, reentry, and additional challenges. CAPs establish services that are visible to the general public and positioned in areas that are more accessible to customers than traditional workforce development service sites.

Community Access Points (CAP) emerged from the idea that everyone should be within 15 minutes walking distance of the opportunity to improve their lives. As a place-based workforce development strategy, CAPs meet individuals where they are, build trust through community relationships, and eliminate common barriers to accessing the traditional brick-and-mortar workforce system. The SCPa Works CAP strategy tackles the challenges of accessibility head-on and directs resources to those most in need of services.

In order to roll out the CAP program from concept to implementation, SCPa Works maintained a positive and flexible approach to a theory of change that allowed for growth through trial and error. Utilizing the data-driven outreach strategy to connect with Opportunity Youth, coupled with demographic and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, SCPa Works engaged the CAP Outreach Team to drive the establishment of CAPs across the South Central PA region. The geographical diversity of the eight-county service region of SCPa Works and the region's demographic diversity and economic inequality increased the potential of CAPs to expand access and direct resources more efficiently.

Utilizing GIS mapping to pinpoint effective CAP sites and measure the 15-minute walkable distance footprint for each site, SCPa Works dissected the eight-county service region, narrowing areas of the region where access to workforce development services was limited. Rather than focus on how to transport individuals with barriers to a PA CareerLink® site for services, SCPa Works conceptualized a strategic plan to bring the services to the individuals in the communities where they live.

The data launched a full CAP Outreach investment into forging relationships with organizations and agencies throughout the South Central PA region. This was a first in history for SCPa Works to evaluate and advance a program based on data-driven research that resulted in the promotion and impact of the region's workforce development system. SCPa Works has trailblazed programming that will continue to define and improve the value of the workforce system as a whole.

The One-Stop Operator PA CareerLink® partners have an established process connected with many participants across the region, showcasing the vital role of place-based workforce development. Through the establishment and implementation of more than 70 local CAPs and Referral Partner Organizations, PA CareerLink® site services have expanded to reach Opportunity Youth in all eight counties of the SCPa Works service region.

Expanding collaboration between partners beyond those located within the facility is essential to ensure a seamless service experience for participants. Inevitably, services and resources extend far beyond the walls of a single location. By fostering partnerships with external organizations, experts, and support systems, SCPa Works will connect with a broader range of resources, knowledge, and services that are critical to meeting participants' needs.

This growth allows for the exchange of information, expertise, and resources, which can help address challenges that may not be fully covered by the immediate team at the facility. Whether it's bringing in specialized knowledge, handling overflow needs, or offering remote support, working with external partners broadens the capacity to serve participants with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Braiding Funds to Increase Outcomes

Although the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant is our greatest funding stream with the most accessible measurable gains per participant, WIOA poses capped limitations of workforce funding. Building sustainable career pathways that serve individuals from beginning to self-sustainability requires the implementation and fiscal oversight of braided funding strategies. In today's high-demand market for skilled workers and trades-people, it is imperative that SCPa Works leverage funding streams to share costs, partner on training needs, and eliminate the duplication of services.

SCPa Works commits to establishing a cohesive, flexible, and results-driven career preparation ecosystem that aligns funding streams and resources to close the gap between well-resourced programming and under-served communities. As we target new funding resources, we aim to braid these new streams with existing WIOA grant dollars while maintaining the autonomy, eligibility, allocation requirements, and fiscal accountability of each grant within the integrated funding system. This brief defines the proven benefits and outcomes of braiding complementary funds with existing WIOA programming. Braided funding provides versatility and flexibility to LWDBs to fill in the gaps of WIOA-based funding opportunities and expand services beyond WIOA.

The U.S. Department of Labor Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development encourages LWDBs to partner with multiple agencies and administer multiple funding sources to result in the development of a braided funding plan. SCPa Works maintains a dedicated commitment to braiding funds between WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), TANF, and EARN. All job seekers must register with PA CareerLink® which is followed by program eligibility determination and a basic assessment provided by the Title I contractor. This assessment is used to determine if the job seeker is appropriate for WIOA enrollment and what kind of services the individual is seeking. This is also a stage where goals and employment objectives are discussed.

Once eligibility for a WIOA program is determined, it is then assessed by the Title I intake specialist or career advisor whether or not the participant is eligible for co-enrollment in a second or third program of benefit. Most Dislocated Workers are automatically eligible for and enrolled in the WIOA Adult program due to the low-income priority of service. Oftentimes, DWs will be recipients of Department of Human Services (DHS) services that include Medical Assistance benefits, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) assistance, or cash assistance which all qualify an individual for WIOA Adult services in addition to DW services. It is the responsibility of Title I contractors to determine eligibility for multiple programs under the PA CareerLink® one-stop umbrella in coordination with DHS programming.

SCPa Works contracts Equus Workforce Solutions to administer the delivery of the Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) program within the eight-county South Central PA region. The EARN program targets individuals enrolled in and eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

(TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) services within the region. The focus of this project is grounded in the creation and implementation of workforce development strategies that reach EARN participant populations within communities and local organizations and institutions with the intent to overcome historic inequity and generational poverty. Integrated, solution-driven strategies, coupled with public positioning, are crucial to the success of this project. SCPa Works relies on the PA CareerLink® system to create engaging program design models and address the all-encompassing needs of this diversified client base.

Strategies for motivating individuals are necessary when working with participants enrolled in the EARN program. Implementing employment-ready programming is a challenge for providers working with the underserved adult population. In 2023, SCPa Works served 440 individuals through the EARN program. Of those 440, 163 began working while in the program. Of those 163, 95 worked four consecutive weeks, clocking at least 80 hours of work during program participation.

Among the roadblocks to administering the EARN program are a lack of childcare, a lack of transportation, barriers related to mental health challenges, language barriers, and individuals not having a support system to ensure the cultivation of positive work habits. Through fortitude and a passion for helping those in need, the challenges unique to working with the underserved adult population can be overcome with the proper program structure, a dedicated commitment to performance outcomes, and an intellectual curiosity to understand the human condition of impoverishment. SCPa Works has grown and expanded the EARN program from this solid foundation by maintaining a human-centered design and implementing a strategic combination of case management, coaching, and licensed counseling. By adding two-generation program strategies that meet the needs of parents, children, and the family as a whole, as well as peer-to-peer experiences, the EARN program is a design model for success.

The priority of the EARN program is to assist participants in developing a career pathway, and, therefore, WIOA eligibility determination for potential Adults and Dislocated Workers is a part of the assessment process in the EARN program. When EARN program participants are WIOA-eligible and have been assessed on workforce aptitudes and interests, the Title I provider ensures that participants are co-enrolled into programs and that funding streams are braided. This process optimizes program components such as WIOA supportive services to remove barriers. Through co-enrolling EARN participants who are WIOA-eligible, SCPa increases the achievement of job placement and retention goals necessary for successful outcomes during program participation, a journey into industry-based career pathways that lead to long-term, family-sustaining income and enhanced employment security.

Since January 2024, the Whole Home Repairs Grant has supported Dauphin County participants in residential construction training. Participants have been dual-enrolled in WIOA services, ensuring comprehensive support. The co-enrollment between programs and the braiding of two funding streams has improved outcomes and provided WIOA Adult participants with elevated skill sets and full-time employment following program completion.

Metric	Outcome
Participants Enrolled	27
Participants in Training	8
Supportive Services Provided	25
Participants Obtained Employment	3

[2024 SCPa Works Annual Report]

To ensure optimal training and employment outcomes for participants, SCPa Works vendors identify and refer participants to necessary and appropriate local community resources. SCPa Works coordinates service delivery with and refers TANF and SNAP eligible participants to the following programs:

- **Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS):** KEYS is a collaborative program between DHS and Pennsylvania Community Colleges. KEYS assists low-income individuals in earning a career-specific credit or non-credit bearing certificate or an associate degree, leading to employment in high-priority occupations with family-sustaining wages and benefits, as well as greater opportunities for advancement. KEYS programs currently operate at 14 out of the 15 Pennsylvania Community Colleges.
- **SNAP Job Experience Training and Support (JETS):** SNAP JETS sites are partnerships between non-profit organizations, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Human Services (DHS) at the state level. Non-profit organizations leverage funding with matched funds from the federal government to provide career-specific skills training for people receiving SNAP benefits. SNAP JETS program participants gain skills through program completion that assists participants in acquiring a job and excel in career paths like culinary arts, hospitality, banking, health care, and skilled labor. The programs also helps participants with job placement and job retention skills.
- Pennsylvania's **Education Leading to Employment and Career Training Program (ELECT)** is a federally funded program that works collaboratively to assist expectant and parenting youth. The ELECT assists school districts, cyber and charter schools in coordinating the continuity of educational services for pregnant and parenting youth, under 22 years of age, to obtain community resources that will allow them to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Outreach

The One-Stop-Operator's robust outreach efforts connect South Central PA workforce development participants with employment opportunities, subsidized training and educational opportunities that lead to long-term sustainable employment. In 2024, SCPa Works, in partnership with the South Central PA CareerLink® centers, prioritized place-based workforce development outreach programs resulting in the establishment of more than 70 partnered Community Access Points (CAPs) and Referral Partner Organizations.

Digital campaigns significantly impacted outreach during Program Year 23-24. Approximately 18,000 digital media accounts were reached through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The highest rate of engagement was 20%, with accounts interacting with PA CareerLink® accounts. Other avenues of outreach included career fairs, workshops, grassroots outreach through partnerships, and digital campaign initiatives.

Outreach Metric	Number
Career fairs, workshops, and events	40+
Local organizations partnered with	70+
Digital campaign accounts reached	18,000
Engagement rate on social media platforms	20%

[2024 SCPa Works Annual Report]

Determining Future Workforce Needs

The South Central region continues to experience steady growth. As of November 2024, the population stands at 1,514,460. On average, the population in South Central PA has increased by 11,195 people annually over the past five years and is projected to experience continued growth over the next five years with an annual growth rate of 10,730 people per year.

The recent growth of the South Central PA region in population, coupled with the substantial growth in available jobs, creates a call for attracting new industry partnerships. In 2025, SCPa Works procured a Business Services Consultant contract with Knovva Consulting, LLC. The focus of this work is to source an action plan targeting employer engagement to acquire a detailed analysis of the future job market. In addition to the continuous collection of data pertaining to job seeker needs, current outcomes, and employment accessibility throughout the region, SCPa Works aims to increase business engagement, foster industry partnerships, and create a sustainable talent pipeline for regional employers to support South Central Pennsylvania's overall workforce development system. SCPa Works is dedicated to addressing the needs of specific industry sectors and the identified workforce challenges unique to the SCPa Works region. The Business Services Consultant strategy will complement and support the region's existing workforce development teams. SCPa Works seeks a creative and innovative individual or team to conceptualize an outcome-driven approach to developing and implementing a three-year, all-encompassing Business Services plan to expand and enhance business service delivery across all aspects of workforce development systems. All work performed by this solicitation will be under the direction of the SCPa Works Programs Director to enhance relationship management between the high-performing Programs team members and the existing Business Services Representatives. In addition, the Business Services Consultant vendor will create a business model to return business to PA CareerLink® career centers through business engagements with employers seeking to fill job vacancies and upskill employees. To ensure the viability of investment, the Business Services Consultant contract ensures increased enrollment in registered apprenticeships, a locally based focus on employment opportunities, and workforce projections and forecasting to ensure that the training and employment preparation of individuals remains on course with the evolution of market demands in the region. Looking ahead, SCPa Works aims to attract, develop, and maintain a world-class workforce relevant to the needs of this ever-changing workforce landscape.

As a part of future-based initiatives, SCPa Works expects to see growth in registered apprenticeship opportunities. To support such growth, SCPa Works recently leveraged grant funding to assist employers with the costs of RTI and on-the-job training for WIOA-eligible individuals. In addition, as expansion is underway, the SCPa Works Industry Partnership program has served as the catalyst to two new registered apprenticeships in 2025, and is looking forward to seeing a third application submitted by the end of the year. These initiatives open career pathways for eligible participants to engage in careers including health care, IT, and construction; all three included in the growing industries in the South Central PA region.

Procurement and Assessment of Title I Service Providers

The SCPa Works Contract Lifecycle Management Process and Tracking Tool outlines the specific steps taken by SCPa Works to manage contracts from RFP development and posting to award determination to contract termination. The Tracking Tool ensures timeliness and accuracy during the competitive procurement process and incorporates key staff members at all stages of the process. The SCPa Works competitive procurement procedures apply to all Title I funding and improve efficiency, reduce risk, and increase compliance with all state and federal guidelines.

SCPa Works adheres to a stringent monitoring and review schedule of all Title I subrecipients and service delivery, enabling the SCPa Works Compliance Department to identify and assess Title I programmatic, fiscal, and one-stop discrepancies within the business operations of contracted Title I service providers.

To ensure optimal performance and state and federal regulatory compliance, the SCPa Works Compliance team conducts regular and stringent monitoring reviews on activities to include ITAs, OJTs, PWE, IWT, and Registered Apprenticeship activities. SCPa Works adheres to the SCPa Works Monitoring Plan and follows the SCPa Works Monitoring Schedule based upon contracted vendor Risk Assessment results which determine the frequency and number of review sessions per program year. During training and on-the-job learning activities reviews, detailed review tools are utilized to determine the effectiveness of the programming, participant interest, employer or training provider attentiveness, and overall training or on-the-job learning relevancy to the participant attaining long-term, sustainable employment.

Identifying New Training Providers

Eligible providers in the SCPa Works service area have the opportunity to engage with local employers and have accessed labor market information through the LWDB to ensure they are meeting the future needs of our local economy. SCPa Works has expanded its capacity to serve all geographical areas within the eight-county region by opening additional CAP sites throughout the area to enable access to training and services to individual with barriers. SCPa Works has expanded course offerings to include virtual and online training options and new technical training options to include a partnership with the Pennsylvania Academic, Career, and Technical Training (PACTT) Alliance. Several training providers in the SCPa Works area are also exploring the benefits of registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programs.

Section 3.4

3.4. Youth workforce investment activities -Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area. [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(8). Reviewed by DHS and BWPO-Youth]

Overview and Priorities

SCPa Works provides workforce preparation to youth ages 14-26 through a blend of academic enrichment, occupational skills training, and hands-on work experience. Through four innovative youth initiatives launched in 2024 with anticipated annual growth potential, SCPa Works ensures that youth are positioned for long-term success contributing to the region's global competitiveness and meeting the needs of the local workforce and employers. The four youth initiatives create structured career pathways that equip youth with the tools necessary to secure and maintain meaningful employment through the provision of job readiness training, enrichment activities and paid work experiences at community work sites and with public and private employers.

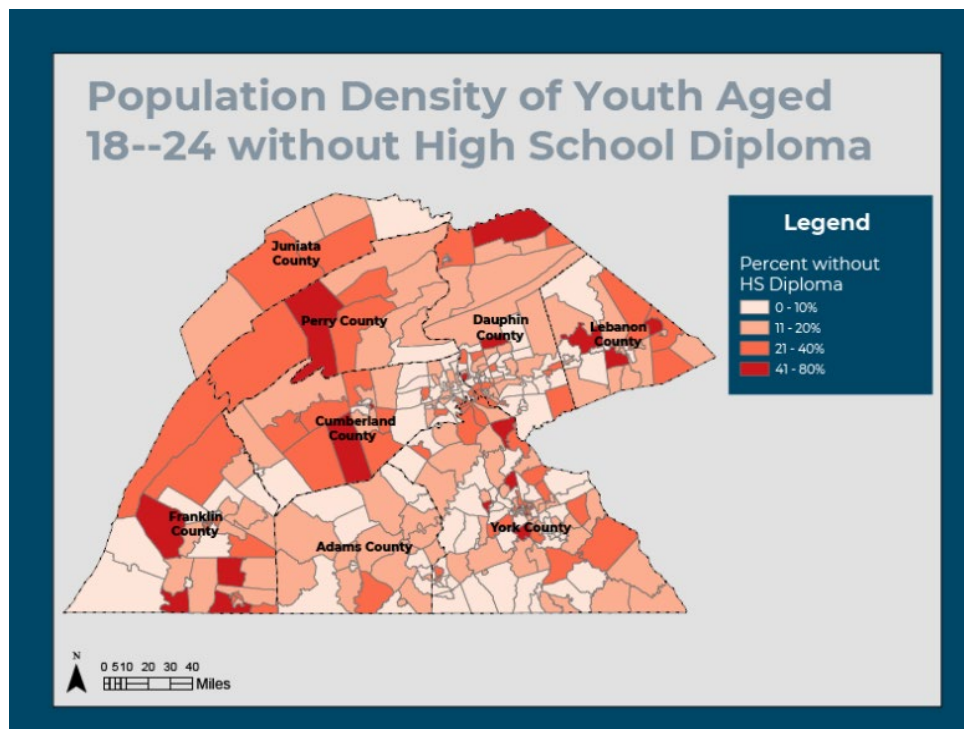
Developing Strong Career Pathways

Career pathway development is a cornerstone of SCPa Works youth programming. Each participant undergoes a comprehensive career assessment to align aptitudes, strengths, and interests with potential career paths. Title I vendor staff guide youth participants through an in-depth review of existing skill sets, experience, workplace values, and personal goals. It is through this program enrollment process and career assessment completion that Title I staff engage youth participants in hands-on career exploration that is specific to the participant's interests and aptitudes. For WIOA OSY, eligible participants work with career advisors to develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs). Through traditional and virtual work experiences as described throughout this plan section, the career pathway approach prepares youth for post-secondary education, unsubsidized employment, and advanced training programs, facilitating a structured approach to workforce development.

Prioritizing Recruitment and Services for Out-of-School Youth (Opportunity Youth)

Youth disconnection from workforce engagement is viewed through the lenses of the judicial system, the lack of education, the need for public health, or social services intervention. As record numbers of employees retire throughout the South Central region, the growing number of youth and young adults without work experience or skills will increasingly become a pressing issue for both SCPa Works and the communities it serves.

This workforce challenge has prompted SCPa Works to allocate 100% of WIOA Youth funding to the recruitment, engagement, and professional development of Out-of-School Youth (Opportunity Youth). Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Local Workforce Development Boards are required to spend, at a minimum, 75% of grant dollars on Opportunity Youth initiatives. Based on geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic research, SCPa Works exceeds this requirement in dedicating 100% of designated youth funding to support Opportunity Youth throughout the South Central Pennsylvania (PA) region.



[Mapping Opportunity Youth Population Density in South Central Pennsylvania, 2024]

Partnering with Businesses

In the Fall of 2024, SCPa Works contracted with Envoy to conduct research on employer engagement. The result was the creation of a WIOA Out-of-School Toolkit for Employer Engagement, matching labor market demands and concerns with a target population enrolled in credential-earning workforce development programs. The study included data and research from Aspen Community Solutions, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation, Rite Aid Healthy Futures, and workforce development program focus points of reference from Partner4Work and Philly Works.

The Envoy study showed that South Central PA is comprised of employers looking for new, sustainable ways to build a strong workforce. Out-of-School Youth (OSY) represents an untapped labor pool that can help South Central PA companies meet staffing needs while driving community engagement. There are approximately 5 million OSY in the United States defined as youth between the ages of 16-24 (*Aspen Community Solutions, 2024*) who are neither enrolled in school nor employed. This population represents individuals who possess valuable skills and talents that remain underutilized due to systemic barriers to employment, as well as undertraining, noncredentialed youth. SCPa Works utilized the Envoy research and resolution data to acquire an understanding of how businesses can integrate OSY into the workforce, highlighting business opportunities and practical strategies for implementation and success. The findings underscore the importance of community partnerships in addressing local employer needs while offering young people meaningful workforce opportunities that lay the foundation for building solid industry-specific career pathways.

As businesses across the region face growing challenges in filling open roles, OSY represent an untapped talent pool with the potential to meet these needs. Envoy conducted an analysis of employer attitudes toward OSY in South Central Pennsylvania, surveying 24 businesses and engaging with key employer conveners like the York County Economic Alliance (YCEA) and SHRM of York County. Findings revealed a divided landscape, with half of respondents having formal recruitment strategies for young adults, while the other half lacked targeted efforts. The survey also highlighted the importance of workforce

development partnerships, mentorship, and skills-based training to support OSY in gaining meaningful employment.

Based on the Envoy survey of South Central PA employers, only 50% of employers have systems and partnerships in place to recruit young talent. The data encouraged a need for employers to connect with workforce development systems to formalize hiring efforts, collaborate with program directors, partner with community-based organizations, and acquire new ways of approaching the existing job vacancy problem with employers across the region.

SCPa Works devised a proactive approach to addressing labor shortages through building an OSY talent pipeline through the implementation and success of CAP locations throughout the service area. Second to the employer challenge of not having hiring systems in place, Envoy reported that nearly 50% of employers in South Central PA experience challenges in attracting and hiring workers between the ages of 16 and 24.

SCPa Works' strategic programming, piloted initiatives, leveraging of funds, relationship management, referral processes, employer and training provider relations, and CAP sites combine workforce development elements to provide Opportunity Youth in South Central PA access to all 14 WIOA Youth Elements as featured in 20 CFR 681.460 and listed below with interactive links to definitions of service via Workforce GPS, published by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor:

-  Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, and Dropout Prevention
-  Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery Services
-  Paid and Unpaid Work Experience
-  Occupational Skills Training
-  Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation
-  Leadership Development Opportunities
-  Supportive Services
-  Adult Mentoring
-  Follow-up Services
-  Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
-  Financial Literacy Education
-  Entrepreneurial Skills Training
-  Services that Provide Labor Market Information
-  Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities

Strategic Alignment

In early 2023, SCPa Works issued a Request for Proposals Titled, "Opportunity Youth in South Central PA Analysis and Needs Assessment." Knovva Academy answered the request with a proactive, results-oriented, data-driven proposal.

In 2024, SCPa Works launched a mixed-methods research study through the partnership with Knovva Academy, resulting in the provision of a granular level of data analysis, data mapping, alignment of data and Community Access Point (CAP) model, systems connection, and best practices for serving Opportunity Youth in the South Central PA region. The study collected data across the South Central PA region, encompassing Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York counties. The

study focused on Opportunity Youth, previously referred to as Out-of-School Youth, and engagement with workforce development services through regional PA CareerLink® centers and Community Access Points (CAPs). The study revealed that Opportunity Youth are largely disconnected from both school and work, often facing significant personal, economic, and social challenges. These factors highlight the importance of prioritizing Opportunity Youth within the service area and underscore the need to deepen Opportunity Youth engagement. The disconnection of Opportunity Youth also illustrates the challenges service providers face in locating and effectively engaging disconnected youth as long-term employees.

Key Opportunity Youth Data

South Central Pennsylvania in the Context of State and National Comparators

	scPA	PA	US
Population density of youths aged 15—24	12.1%	12.3%	13.2%
Dropout rate	1.5%	1.1%	5.2% ⁴
Population density of youths aged 18—24 without a high school diploma	16.7%	11.6%	11.7%
Unemployment rate	4.3%	3.4%	3.4%
BIPOC population density	15.3%	24.3%	39.9%
Poverty rate	9.2%	12%	12.8%
Households without vehicles	6.1%	10.7%	8.5%

Table 1 reproduced⁵

[Knovva, 2024]

SCPa Works answered the Knovva research and analysis results with the implementation of four main Opportunity Youth initiatives:

1. Digital and Social Media Outreach Campaign
2. CAP Outreach, Business Services Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion
3. Youth Reentry Grant Acquisition
4. Summer Youth Programming

All four initiatives targeted Opportunity Youth, increased overall program participation, increased employer engagement, and broadened Paid Work Experience opportunities.

Digital and Social Media Outreach Campaign

Meeting a Critical Regional Need

South Central PA houses businesses and employers that face a significant need for skilled workers. Industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and construction are seeing an increase in job openings, but many employers struggle to find qualified candidates to fill positions. At the same time, Opportunity Youth—youth who are not currently enrolled in school and who are not working—represent a significant untapped resource for these employers. Many of these youth face barriers to employment, such as lack of work experience, limited skills, lack of access to resources, and disengagement from traditional educational pathways.

Research conducted by Knovva Academy during Program Year 2024 provided SCPa Works with quantified data on the targeted Opportunity Youth demographic. The Knovva report supplied SCPa Works with

insight on building keyword gaps into SCPa Works digital content to ensure search engine optimization (SEO). This method enabled SCPa Works to create specific online content related to specific keywords, prompting a higher rank on search engines. Top-ranking keyword searches included “youth employment near me,” “youth job services,” “youth employment opportunity program,” and youth job programs near me.” The study compared SEO between SCPa Works and three out-of-state local workforce development boards (LWDB). For example, SCPa Works identified that the search phrase, “youth employment program near me,” was an online hit for a New York-based LWDB at a rate of 81 while SCPa Works could not produce data on the search term hit at the time of the study, meaning, SCPa works had zero hits on the search engine phrase or terms. This study prompted a substantial leap into the realm of SEO, online content development, digital material creation, and social media branding to establish a high number of content opportunities via online workforce development searches throughout the SCPa Works service area.

The Knovva report revealed that 33.3 percent of Opportunity Youth in South Central PA are under the age of 20 while a staggering 50 percent of Opportunity Youth are between the ages of 20 and 24. According to Knovva's research, exposure to employment and training opportunities occurs at a high rate through social media users between the ages of 18 and 24 years. This age demographic coupled with the market analysis provided by Knovva prompted the SCPa Works team to launch a digital and social media campaign as a means to grab the attention of Opportunity Youth.

SCPa Works utilized the metrics produced by the Knovva research initiative and launched digital campaigns through collaboration with the OSO, PA CareerLink® communications teams, digital marketing, development technicians, and digital and social media site management.

Digital and social media campaigns made a significant impact on regional data, reaching approximately 18,000 accounts through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, with a high engagement rate of 20% interaction. These strategic efforts raised awareness of workforce development opportunities and activities increased a drive in participation, and expanded community and participant interest in crucial workforce programs that led to employment placement in high-demand industry sectors.

Branding became a priority for SCPa Works as a key element in digital and social media strategy. According to Knovva, it takes 50 milliseconds for social media content to impact a consumer. SCPa Works identified an aesthetically appealing media color palette to complement existing logos and designs. Messaging and content creation were established through a cohesive and communicative team process to ensure consistency in the branding and public messaging.

With targeted audiences identified, data collected and implemented, content created, and the branding design complete, SCPa Works launched a social media campaign to broaden the foundation of the workforce development system reach and increase the level of engagement in workforce development system activities in South Central PA. The strong branding and content strategy attracted more than 80 Opportunity Youth in 2024 which contributed to a surge in South Central PA CareerLink® sites documenting 18,754 new job seeker accounts; a testament to the public positioning of all six PA CareerLink® sites in the region.

The communications and outreach teams engage with Opportunity Youth through YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook comment section interaction to ensure that connections are established Opportunity Youth seeking workforce development services. In addition, SCPa Works gathered additional data on Opportunity Youth stakeholders through the Knovva research project. Opportunity Youth stakeholders are individuals who come in contact with potential Opportunity Youth participants on a daily, weekly, or

monthly basis, and who want to see Opportunity Youth individuals succeed in education, training, and employment scenarios.

Opportunity Youth stakeholders include teachers, athletic coaches, extracurricular activity leaders, school administrators, advocates, community organization or agency leaders, and family members. These individuals want to see the Opportunity Youth individuals in their lives find employment, establish independence, and improve their overall quality of life. This data prompted SCPa Works in the direction of reaching Opportunity Youth stakeholders through LinkedIn and Facebook.

CAP Outreach, Business Services, Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion

Increasing Work Experience Opportunities through Community Access Points (CAP)

In 2024, having applied the Knovva research project results to resolve workforce development system gaps, SCPa Works identified a need to meet Opportunity Youth within the communities they lived. This insight launched an initiative to expand access to and the effectiveness of Community Access Points, referred to as CAPs, as strategic hubs to reach Opportunity Youth within home-based communities. Opportunity Youth are disconnected from the opportunity to explore and engage in traditional educational or workforce development programs. CAPs provide a flexible and accessible entry point for youth who face barriers to employment, whether it's transportation, lack of engagement with formal institutions, a need for childcare, hunger, primary education needs, addiction, reentry, and other challenges. CAPs establish services that are more visible and accessible than traditional workforce development service sites, increasing the likelihood of Opportunity Youth seeking out and receiving the support they need.

Community Access Points (CAP) emerged from the idea that everyone should be within 15 minutes walking distance of the opportunity to improve their lives. As a place-based workforce development strategy, CAPs meet individuals where they are, build trust through community relationships, and eliminate common barriers to accessing the traditional brick-and-mortar workforce system. The SCPa Works CAP strategy tackles the challenges of accessibility head-on and directs resources to those most in need of services.

In order to roll out the CAP program from concept to implementation, SCPa Works maintained a positive and flexible approach to a theory of change that allowed for growth through trial and error. Utilizing the data-driven outreach strategy to connect with Opportunity Youth, coupled with demographic and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, SCPa Works engaged the CAP Outreach Team to drive the establishment of CAPs across the South Central PA region. The geographical diversity of the eight-county service region of SCPa Works and the region's demographic diversity and economic inequality increased the potential of CAPs to expand access and direct resources more efficiently.

Utilizing GIS mapping to pinpoint effective CAP sites and measure the 15-minute walkable distance footprint for each site, SCPa Works dissected the eight-county service region, narrowing areas of the region where access to workforce development services was limited.

The data launched a full CAP Outreach investment into forging relationships with organizations and agencies throughout the South Central PA region. This was a first in history for SCPa Works to evaluate and advance a program based on data-driven research that resulted in the promotion and impact of the region's workforce development system. SCPa Works has trailblazed programming that will continue to define and improve the value of the workforce system as a whole.

Through the establishment and implementation of more than 70 local CAPs and Referral Partner Organizations, PA CareerLink® site services have expanded to reach Opportunity Youth in all eight counties of the SCPa Works service region.

In 2024, in partnership with Crispus Attucks, the SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team engaged 70 Opportunity Youth participants in a PA CareerLink® overview resulting in 13 internal referrals to PA CareerLink® partners including the WIOA Youth Program, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to address the needs of Opportunity Youth with disabilities. This having been the groundwork for a program exhibiting an exponential growth potential, SCPa Works seeks to continue to increase the number of CAPs per county throughout the region.

The SCPa Works Business Services Department has been a driving force in reaching Opportunity Youth across the South Central region. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of reaching and engaging Opportunity Youth.

In 2024, the Business Services Department engaged with 1,923 new businesses, broadening the network of job placement sites for Opportunity Youth. Through direct business owner outreach, Business Services established 65 Paid Work Experience (PWE) sites, providing an expanded opportunity for hands-on job experience to Opportunity Youth in the region.

PWE is a required element of Opportunity Youth within the SCPa Works service area. PWE ensures that Opportunity Youth participants receive applicable workforce assessments including CareerScope, O*NET, and additional assessments to identify feasible work experiences for each youth participant. Assessment results are individualized so that career advisors can easily pinpoint an Opportunity Youth participant's industry aptitude and career interests. The assessment results serve as the key source of data entered into the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) where career advisors create Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for Opportunity Youth participants. The ISS is utilized to track goal attainment, training outcomes, and employment placement while actively encouraging Opportunity Youth participant accountability as they professionally evolve through the workforce development system. This journey begins with applicable PWE.

SCPa Works has implemented an innovative Virtual Reality (VR) paid work experience program, enabling participants to explore various careers virtually and complete in-depth modules on specific fields of interest. Working individually with career advisors or within cohort groups, Opportunity Youth participants gain hands-on skills and real-world insights through VR simulations, complemented by presentations from employers and training providers. This approach offers a comprehensive experience that empowers participants to make informed career choices, assess long-term fit, and evaluate the potential value of further training or education.

SCPa Works supports sustained engagement by providing a bi-weekly stipend to eligible participants while completing VR modules. This incentive, along with financial support, encourages participant commitment while enabling participants to build essential skills for future careers, mirroring traditional, face-to-face PWE practices and stipend processes.

SCPa Works Youth Engagement and Success Outcomes

Through strategic partnerships with CAP sites and the community outreach efforts of SCPa Works' Business Services Consultants (BSCs), in collaboration with PA CareerLink®, SCPa Works successfully enrolled 89 WIOA Out-of-School Youth (Opportunity Youth) in individualized career services. Additionally,

45 In-School Youth (ISY) received support, and 237 TANF Youth were enrolled in the TANF Youth Development Program (YDP).

In 2024, 76 youth participants secured employment, 127 earned industry-recognized credentials, and 81 completed work experience opportunities. On average, participants earned a wage of \$15.74 per hour.

While the existing community access points are strategically located to meet the geographic needs of the eight-county region, SCPa Works is dedicated to continuously improving access by engaging new geographic areas. This proactive approach reflects a dedicated commitment to identifying potential partners for collective impact and establishing service points that are accessible to all residents across the region.

SCPa Works also collaborates with vendors to foster connections with local school districts and community partners, enhancing service delivery and career development for our participants. By building relationships with guidance counselors, career educators, and superintendents, we ensure that information about available services is effectively disseminated throughout the districts and to students.

In addition, SCPa Works vendor staff actively participate in Direct Service Team meetings with County Assistance Offices to align services with regional partners and ensure that staff are informed about the support offered through TANF Youth programming.

Youth Reentry

Since 2019, SCPa Works and its PA CareerLink® partners have successfully designed and implemented Youth Reentry programs across our service region. The foundation of our programming is:

- Mentorship and embracing the lived experiences of staff and partners to enhance participant success;
- Engaging, participant-focused service delivery;
- Removal of barriers to success;
- Meeting participants where they are through our Community Access Point Initiative and
- Embracing and embodying the belief that “Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.” - Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*

Key grants that supplement Opportunity Youth programming include a \$450,000 Youth Reentry grant. These funds are strategically blended and braided with WIOA Opportunity Youth funding in compliance with 2 CFR 200 requirements to maximize available resources.

The Pennsylvania Academic, Career, and Technical Training (PACTT) Alliance is a unique public/private partnership consisting of community-based agencies, residential facilities, and probation programs that easily partner with SCPa Works reentry initiatives. The SCPa Works Youth Reentry Program focuses on the following four strategic Youth Reentry program goals:

- Community Outreach and Referral Process for Service Providers
 - Connect with service providers, county criminal justice system agencies, community agencies, and PA CareerLink® partners to share program information, referral process, and conduct general outreach. Goal of 10 (minimum) meetings/presentations/outreach activities per month.
- Connection and Relationship Building with Mentor

- The talent Development Specialist will meet with the participant and determine the best mentor fit (Inside Track or in-house mentor), TDS will complete the referral and track participant engagement with a mentor.
- Enroll 40 participants in the program and place them in appropriate workforce experience roles, including, but not limited to, paid work experience, training, pre-apprenticeship, Workshop 101 series, job placement, digital career exploration, partner referrals, career pathway assessments, and so forth.
 - Through successful outreach, enroll 40+ individuals into the program and develop customized career development activities based on short and long term goals, interests and aptitudes, and all other factors.
- Enhance Relationships between PA CareerLink® and PACTT affiliates, juvenile and adult probation.
 - Continue relationships with PACTT affiliates by offering workshops, paid work experience, job placement, virtual reality career exposure, etc. to individuals involved in the program. Continue work with PACTT leadership to develop a model for PA CareerLink® and county probation referral network and programming.

In addition to implementing programming specific to the needs of OSY reentering the workforce, or entering the workforce for the first time, SCPa Works partners with social services agencies, probation entities, alternative education institutions, ARD programs, local and state judges, and local business to broaden OSY outreach and recruitment strategies.

The South Central Construction Industry Partnerships hosted two employer learning cohorts in 2024. Fair Chance Learning Series and Recovery Ready Workplaces were presented and led by Envoy, the social impact advisory firm contracted by SCPa Works to research and collect data on OSY across South Central PA. The informational training sessions focused on creating job opportunities for justice-impacted individuals and those struggling with addiction. The series provided employers with a framework for inclusive hiring practices and policies, opening new talent pipelines.

Leveraging TANF Two-Generational (2Gen) Youth Development Funding

SCPa Works leverages Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Youth Development Program (YDP) funding to deliver a comprehensive range of workforce activities aimed at reducing dependency by fostering job preparation, employment, and supportive services.

TANF Youth Development Program (YDP) funding serves youth ages 14 through 24 in the SCPa Works service area. TANF YDP service providers focus on identifying work experience opportunities and workforce exposure activities for eligible youth. All TANF YDP participants require verification to ensure that eligibility requirements have been met.

To be verified as a qualified participant for the TANF YDP an individual must:

1. Be between the ages of 12 (or has completed the 5th grade) and 24 years at the time of enrollment.
2. Have proof of Social Security Number (SSN).
3. Have proof of identity.
4. Be a U.S. citizen or a TANF-eligible non-citizen.
5. Be a Pennsylvania resident.
6. Have a household monthly gross earned income that does not exceed 235% of the FPIG.

The SCPa Works TANF Youth Development Program (YDP) integrates all 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements, as mentioned earlier in this plan section, through diverse offerings that promote skill

development and career readiness activities for youth throughout South Central PA. The TANF Summer Earn and Learn program is a standout initiative, combining two weeks of intensive workforce preparation with a six-week paid work experience, providing youth with hands-on skills and professional exposure.

SCPa Works' goal to engage each participant fully and continuously in the program includes providing all-encompassing services to a household. SCPa Works WIOA, TANF, and EARN vendors collaborate to facilitate a two-generational approach with wraparound services to benefit TANF Youth participants who are dependents of WIOA or EARN-eligible participants. Two-generational approaches to providing services to those in need is a proven method of breaking the cycle of generational poverty. By providing contact to all clients as frequently as needed, workforce development teams remain better informed about the needs of every family and can provide the necessary referrals and follow-ups. This methodology enables vendors to provide wraparound services that are required to sustain the family and build success, including timely remediation of critical barriers, such as transportation, housing, and childcare. This two-generational approach supports the theory that if a family or caregivers of a youth workforce development is supported, then the youth participant will experience that same level of support from the household in which they live. These strategies ensure participants can work toward greater employability without sacrificing family stability and security.

Two-generational funding allows the family as a whole to receive services that can help them improve their skills and marketability to pave desired career pathways. Programming that offers workforce training, career readiness workshops, financial literacy education, and job placement assistance to all eligible household members of a youth participant keeps a family intact, economically stable, and self-sufficient. The knowledge and skills they receive inspire other family members, which in turn cultivates a stronger extended family.

For TANF parents enrolled in the EARN program, SCPa Works provides career advising, paid work experiences, on-the-job training, and occupational skills training. These activities, coordinated with local providers, are customized to support each parent's unique employment goals. Available year-round, these offerings are designed to promote long-term employment stability and career advancement.

TANF Summer Youth Programming

Engaging Opportunity Youth in Intensified Paid Work

Year-round, SCPa Works offers TANF Youth participants workforce readiness workshops covering essential areas such as labor market information, career exploration, job search strategies, mock interviews, college and trade exploration, and financial literacy. Additional services include short-term certifications, pre-apprenticeships, and programs centered on community engagement and leadership development. STEM camps and academic support further enable TANF youth to build a versatile skill set, chart a career pathway, and pursue goals such as unsubsidized employment or post-secondary education.

SCPa Works provides incentives to TANF youth participants for achieving defined milestones, in accordance with our incentives and supportive services policy. These opportunities are clearly communicated to participants, and achievements are tracked to ensure equitable distribution of incentives. TANF youth may earn incentives for attaining Measurable Skill Gains or Credentials, with all incentive offerings structured to align with the Department of Labor & Industry's guidelines.

With an increase in Opportunity Youth participants in the region during Program Year '23-24 and an increased demand for skilled workers, SCPa Works identified a need to expand the available PWE opportunities within each of the communities served. To support this initiative, SCPa Works broadened partnerships with local employers and community organizations to create a robust network of host worksites and mentors for the Summer Earn and Learn program through which Opportunity Youth can

learn the skills necessary for career success while earning a stipend of up to \$15.00 an hour, with the flexibility to increase if a worksite offers a higher rate.

While not a requirement for TANF Youth participants, SCPa Works extends similar paid work experience opportunities to this group which may also include individuals within the Opportunity Youth population. The Summer Earn and Learn maintains a primary focus on opportunities that occur during the summer months and limited availability during the year. The Summer Earn and Learn program for TANF Youth exemplifies SCPa Works' commitment to combining high-quality work experiences with academic and workforce development. This program includes two weeks of intensive employability and workforce-related instruction, followed by a six-week paid work experience, supporting participants' academic and career growth through hands-on learning and real-world exposure.

Appropriate PWE sites are chosen collectively with input from the Opportunity Youth participant and guidance from the career advisor through the use of assessments and the creation of the ISS per Opportunity Youth participant.

In 2024, SCPa Works placed 76 Opportunity Youth in employment following the completion of PWE. One participant who engaged in the Summer Earn and Learn program acquired valuable media and production skills during a PWE with Lancaster Inferno. The participant's dedication and newly developed skills led to a career opportunity with the ESPN ACC Network, where the participant now works as a media manager on *All Access with Syracuse Football*; a long-term, sustainable career.

Youth Ambassador Program

SCPa Works has established a Youth Ambassador Program through which a role is established following a participant's completion of a PWE and is administered through a contracted vendor partnership. The Youth Ambassador Program is designed for Opportunity Youth or TANF participants who have successfully completed a PWE program and are interested in outreach as a career path. The position involves recruiting participants to provide peer support and to support new youth participants as they navigate the enrollment process into a workforce development program. A career ladder has also been developed allowing Youth Ambassadors the opportunity to transition from a limited-duration contract position into a staff role with the vendor, where the ambassadors can continue supporting Opportunity Youth participants in a dual capacity.

SCPa Works boasted a positive outcome in 2024 in supporting the career pathway development of a recent Youth Ambassador participant. The individual completed the subsidized youth programming and was ultimately hired by Equus Workforce Solutions with life-sustaining wages. The Youth Ambassador program is unique in the support and mentorship that is provided by existing Ambassadors and youth program participants. The extra support and attention provided to individuals has resulted in the proven success and outcomes of the SCPa Works Youth Ambassador program.

Community Partnerships and Resources

To maximize resources, SCPa Works encourages co-enrollment of youth participants with partner programs aligned with each individual's ISS and career goals. Career advisors work closely with each participant to assess needs, identify relevant partner programs, and create a feasible plan for training and employment goals to transition to a reality for each participant. Through a "soft hand-off" approach, participants are referred to partners for additional services offered by programs such as the Title I Adult program, where co-enrollment has proven beneficial for many Opportunity Youth participants.

In 2024, by connecting local businesses, high schools, and community organizations, SCPa Works is bridging the gap between the next generation of talent and local employers. Through 12 community-

driven projects, SCPa Works in partnership with the PA CareerLink® Title I staff, 2,000 students with career awareness activities, pre-apprenticeships, and skill-building opportunities. Following the completion of each program, SCPa Works convened with the Title I service provider to review program outcomes and interviewed all employers who had taken part in the activities. The SCPa Program team collected and analyzed data, interview results, and Title I staff input to devise an improved project plan for a 2025 launch.

The SCPa Works Opportunity Youth social media initiative laid the foundation for bridging the skills gap by attracting youth who have been disengaged from traditional education or employment paths into PA CareerLink® sites where their journey into the workforce begins. To further the process, SCPa Works launched the Opportunity Youth Paid Work Experience (PWE) program through which every Opportunity Youth participant received a workforce development training curriculum that includes PWE.

A key element of the Opportunity Youth initiative is the outreach to local employers through the Business Services Outreach Team. By building strong partnerships with businesses, SCPa Works ensures that Opportunity Youth participants have access to real-world job opportunities, internships, and apprenticeships, giving them hands-on experience and a direct pathway to employment in these high-demand sectors.

The Business-Education Partnership (BEP) Program supports employers, students, parents, and guardians by connecting them to each other to share information about career pathway opportunities that lead to family-sustaining wages in PA and the career-ready skills employers are looking for when they recruit workers. This year, the SCPa Works BEP program reached over 1,000 students through career fairs and 517 through career exploration programs and partnered with 45 organizations in workforce readiness activities.

BEP Project highlights include the Cumberland Perry Area Career and Technical Center (CPACTC) middle school camp in June 2024. The camp offered six career exploration pathways, including Healthcare, Automation and electromechanical Technology, and Automotive Technology. The camps provided hands-on learning and career pathway exploration for 92 middle school students.

MANTEC facilitated video production projects. School students visited manufacturers to learn about operations and interview employees. Students worked with manufacturers to create videos for a regional contest. The region's videos gained nearly 60,000 votes, and seven awards were presented for categories like "Outstanding Creativity" and "Outstanding Educational Value." The effort to engage students and educators resulted in successful partnerships and high-quality learning experiences.

York County Alliance for Learning (YCAL) organized Career Exploration Programs and the Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship Program, both of which offered hands-on, immersive career activities for youth. YCAL partnered with businesses to provide career exploration sessions across 15 different in-demand industries. The programs prompted a 16.8% increase in youth participation from the previous year. YCAL maximized student engagement and ensured program capacity, offering career pathway exploration that exposed 1,235 students to multiple in-demand industries in 2023-2024.

Shippensburg University conducted the Construction Youth Discovery Camp in June 2024. Students received construction training and participated in hands-on projects such as building a copper lamp and a wood cutting board. The camp provided significant hands-on construction experiences, partnerships with employers, and the use of virtual reality equipment to explore construction trades for 24 students.

SCPa Works seeks to partner with organizations that deliver dynamic programs that address communities' hardest-to-solve challenges. An example of this type of partnership is found in partnership with Dauphin County's Neighboring Academy. The Neighboring Academy breaks cycles of poverty by creating pathways to homeownership that combine local neighborhood capital with 21st-century skills at Steelton-Highspire for high school students.

Through the partnership, 24 TANF students completed summer programs focusing on essential life and professional skills. Activities included conflict resolution, communication, and financial literacy. Participants also engaged in community beautification projects, fostering a sense of civic responsibility, in preparation for the responsibilities that come with adulthood.

Entrepreneurship as a Career Pathway

SCPa Works prioritizes Entrepreneurship as a strong career pathway for individuals. Partnering with Harrisburg University, Opportunity Youth participated in a two-week Technology Innovation & Entrepreneurship Education Program, during which they competed in a Shark Tank-style business competition. Each young adult completed the program, presented business ideas, and received a \$500.000 stipend for completing the program.

One of the participants and their proposed company, ELEMENTOF, has been invited to incubate the company at Harrisburg University's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The innovative approach to enhancing sports equipment and training impressed the judges with its potential for significant impact in the industry. The Entrepreneurship Cohort program is a resounding success, providing students with invaluable skills and experiences.

Increasing Co-Enrollment with Partner Programs

Title I youth service providers ensure that all OSY who qualify for WIOA Adult benefits are enrolled as such. In alignment with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), SCPa Works co-enrolls all eligible WIOA participants with state-funded, institution-funded, and privately funded programs. Co-enrolled programming can be funded through federally appropriated funds, such as co-enrolling an eligible individual in WIOA OSY and WIOA Adult to maximize the number of resources available to participants while minimizing the duplication of services.

Employer and Organization Recruitment

Our Business Services team proactively recruits employers for work experience placements and cultivates strong, ongoing partnerships with these host sites. Vendor career advisors conduct outreach to various organizations to promote awareness of their programs and to recruit eligible youth participants. Recruitment efforts include targeted outreach, networking events, and leveraging established connections within the local business community.

Collaboration with local schools, PACTT affiliates, businesses, and community organizations to support youth recruitment, foster community engagement, and provide mentorship opportunities. These partnerships also offer access to relevant local activities, which advisors share with youth participants, and identify potential host worksites for work experience placements.

Monitoring and Oversight

The TANF Youth Development program is overseen by the Youth Program Officer at SCPa Works in collaboration with the Department of Human Services (DHS), Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP), The SCPa Works Youth Program Officer is responsible for monitoring contracted vendors. Monitoring includes program audits, file reviews, bi-weekly check-ins, monthly leadership meetings, outcome reporting, and

quarterly training sessions. Regular communication and oversight ensure program quality and compliance.

The SCPa Works Program and Compliance team members monitor all TANF Youth programming utilizing the standard Title I Youth monitoring template to ensure that all standards and requirements are met across all TANF Youth programming elements. In addition, and in alignment with the Pennsylvania Child Labor Laws, SCPa Works Program and Compliance team members conduct thorough monitoring reviews of all TANF YDP worksites to ensure all aspects of state and federal regulatory compliance.

The following key staff are directly responsible for monitoring and overseeing TANF Youth activities:

Judy Santiago, Youth Program Officer
Phone: 717-236-7936
Email: jsantiago@scpaworks.org

The Youth Program Officer is responsible for all regional youth programs and works under the supervision of the LWDB program management to develop and manage all aspects of youth and TANF funding.

Equus Workforce Solutions is accountable for the administration, operations, and oversight of WIOA and TANF youth programming in Adams, Dauphin, Cumberland, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York Counties.

The following is a list of TANF Youth vendors responsible for the recruitment, enrollment, and delivery of services for TANF Youth in the South Central PA region:

Equus Workforce Solutions
Cumberland, Franklin, and Adams Counties
Soroya Tucker, Deputy Director
PHONE: 252-702-4207
EMAIL: soroya.tucker@equusworks.com

Crispus Attucks
York City
Gregory Smith, Director of Programs
PHONE: 717-848-3610
EMAIL Gsmith@crispusattucks.org

Section 3.5

3.5. Coordination between Title I and Title II - How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education literacy activities under WIOA Title II? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(12). Reviewed by PDE-ABE]

SCPa Works provides effective alignment and integration between WIOA Title I and Title II services to support the comprehensive workforce development needs of the South Central Pennsylvania region. While the local board does not directly manage the solicitation or procurement of WIOA Title II funds, functions solely handled by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the board plays a critical role in ensuring that Title II activities align with the goals and strategies of the local workforce development plan.

WIOA Title II Alignment

Under federal regulations, the PDE must establish a process for local workforce development boards (LWDBs) to review WIOA Title II funding applications. SCPa Works' responsibilities in this process include:

- Reviewing Applications for Alignment
 - SCPa Works reviews Title II applications to assess their alignment with the local area plan's goals and strategies.
- Providing Recommendations
 - The board recommends to PDE how to enhance alignment, if necessary.
- Utilizing PDE-Provided Tools
 - PDE provides the review documents, rubrics, and training necessary for SCPa Works to conduct this review. These tools standardize the process across the state and ensure consistency in evaluation.

To uphold integrity, SCPa Works ensures that any board members affiliated with entities submitting Title II applications or with potential conflicts of interest are excluded from the review process. The flexibility to involve a diverse range of board members in this review helps ensure robust and unbiased evaluation.

Collaboration Between Title I and Title II

Collaboration between WIOA Title I and Title II programs is a cornerstone of SCPa Works' approach to integrated service delivery.

In January 2025, SCPa Works met with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Title II, to discuss and exchange ideas surrounding the creation and development of the South Central PA Local and Regional Plans. Insight was provided by PDE representatives in relation to a gap in the referral process between the PA CareerLink® Title I staff, BWPO, and PDE staff members. PDE provided input on how an effective referral process among partners would benefit all participants, students, and organizations involved.

A New Referral Process

Following the meeting between SCPa Works Program team members and Title II representatives, SCPa Works Program team members met with the PA CareerLink® one-stop team to revise the referral process. Drafting the new process and the new referral tool was greatly influenced by PDE insight and suggestions in relation to the expectation of process effectiveness. This new referral initiative encompasses processes within each partner program and a universal referral form to be used by multiple referring partners. The new referral process initiative does not replace the referral system in CWDS; however, it provides each

partner with relevant and unique information for each referral. The new SCPa Works referral system and the CWDS referral system create a natural checks and balances element so that no individual is overlooked for services across all partners within the South Central PA workforce development service delivery system. SCPa Works projects to have created the new referral process system in writing for a 2025 roll-out.

In addition to collaboration on referral process development, the Title II partner was invited to further contribute to local and regional plan development, Title I and Title II program enhancements, and the efficiency of overall administrative and operational components of providing services to those in need.

Additional key activities between partners include:

1. Annual Title I and Title II Summits
 - Facilitated by the One-Stop Operator, these summits promote collaboration, sharing of best practices, and enhanced communication between Title I and Title II providers.
 - Summits address acceptable practices, collaboration strategies, resource sharing, and establishment of communication pathways.
 - Follow-up discussions occur during PA CareerLink® meetings, including all-staff meetings, Business Services meetings, and annual partner meetings, ensuring that progress is continuously evaluated and strengthened.
2. Coordinated Client Services
 - When individuals enroll in WIOA Title I-funded programs, comprehensive skills assessments and literacy testing are conducted.
 - Participants identified with literacy challenges or without a high school diploma are referred to Title II services for intervention. Referrals are documented, signed by the participant and case manager, and shared with Title II providers upon the client's consent.
 - Title I and Title II facilitate referrals by contacting colleagues directly and arranging appointments, ensuring seamless transitions for participants between Title I and Title II services. They also refer individuals to services through the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS).
3. Communication and Follow-Through
 - Title I providers communicate actively with Title II counterparts to confirm that referred participants receive necessary literacy services while continuing their workforce training and placement activities.

Leveraging Partnerships for Regional Impact

SCPa Works leverages partnerships and grants to address regional workforce development needs:

- Digital Literacy Initiatives
 - SCPa Works obtained grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry to enhance digital literacy skills within the region. This effort has been executed in collaboration with two Title II providers, ensuring that participants receive critical digital skills training alongside traditional literacy and workforce services.

Through structured alignment processes, active collaboration between Title I and Title II providers, and strategic use of partnerships and grants, SCPa Works ensures that WIOA Title II services effectively support the goals of the local workforce development plan. This integrated approach empowers individuals with the literacy, digital skills, and workforce readiness needed to achieve sustainable employment and meet the region's evolving labor market demands.

Digital Literacy

To elevate access to PA CareerLink® services to all residents of South Central PA regardless of age or technical aptitude, SCPa Works launched a series of Digital Literacy Classes through partnerships with numerous Education Service Centers (ESCs) throughout the region through the award of a Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant.

SCPa Works recognized the job-skills gap in the region's workforce, which has created a shortage of qualified candidates for jobs. Low-wage workers are at great risk of being replaced in the labor market due to a lack of the skills necessary to compete for in-demand jobs. A lack of digital literacy skills can result in lost economic and personal opportunities. SCPa Work plays a vital role in closing this skills gap by providing education and training to those in need to prepare workers for the demands of the technological age. Even jobs not traditionally seen as "technology jobs" often require a degree of digital literacy. The National Skills Coalition states that "92 percent of all job ads require 'definitely digital' or likely 'digital skills.' This demand is present across all industries. Small businesses are just as likely as larger peers to seek workers with technology skills."

Eleven percent (29,544) of Cumberland County residents do not have access to a broadband internet subscription, and eight percent (21,486) reported not owning a computer. (*Census, 2022*) Cumberland County has a large non-native-speaking and non-white population of approximately 16% and a large elderly population (65 or older) of about 19%. (*DataUSA, 2021*) Between November 2022- January 2023,

There were 876 job postings in Perry, Cumberland, Adams, and Franklin County that referenced computer literacy as a necessary skill for the job. This is higher than the national average of 665. (*Lightcast*)

In response to labor market research and corresponding data, SCPa Works implemented digital literacy programming that provides residents of Cumberland, Perry, Adams, and Franklin Counties with Digital Literacy skills necessary to navigate daily life and compete in today's workforce. Services will be provided through on-site face-to-face instruction, staffed computer labs, and off-site learning opportunities. Computer labs remain open during operating hours and are available to all learners. All centers are staffed for assistance with learning, software, and hardware issues, and more.

The SCPa Works digital literacy project focuses on technical, civic, communicative, collaborative, investigative, and productive skills that lead to greater success in the workplace. The activities that support this project include the following:

- Instructor-based learning
- Access to services & technology support
- Job search & Employability skills

The SCPa Works digital literacy project curriculum, NorthStar, integrates digital literacy and workplace skills into all coursework and will align with state and national standards for digital literacy, English language learning, and adult education. The lessons are aligned with career readiness standards and can be supplemented with additional online, self-directed instruction. The NorthStar curriculum is incorporated into workforce development training by introducing students to three main areas.

- Essential Computer Skills - Computer Basics, Internet Basics, Email, Windows OS
- Essential Software Skills - Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs
- Using Technology to Accomplish Tasks-Social Media, Information Literacy, Career Search Skills, and Your Digital Footprint

Section 3.6

3.6. Wagner-Peyser Act - Describe the plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the one-stop service delivery system. [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(11). Reviewed by BWPO]

During Program Year '23-24, PA CareerLink® partners provided essential workforce development services to a unique count of 5,826 Title I and Title III customers collectively. According to the analysis of CWDS data, WIOA Title I and Wagner Peyser Title III staff assisted job seekers across South Central PA to secure meaningful employment and build sustainable careers. Of the total number of customers served, 4,347 individuals who came through the PA CareerLink® workforce development service system successfully gained employment by the second quarter following program exit.

The PA CareerLink® one-stop service delivery system is designed as a comprehensive, one-stop solution to help individuals with barriers to education, training, and employment access a variety of career pathways and workforce development services.

The PA CareerLink® is designed as a comprehensive, one-stop solution to benefit and guide individuals with barriers through employment and workforce development services. Its seamless delivery system is built on a "no wrong door" approach, ensuring that participants are properly matched with effective resources regardless of how they initially engage with the system. Whether individuals seek assistance with job searches, career advancement, or training opportunities, the universal one-stop system provides support based on each individual's unique needs.

SCPa Works maintains the continuous improvement and implementation of a workforce development delivery system that honors the basic, individualized, and follow-up career services listed in 20 CFR 678.430 and identified in section 134(c)(2) of WIOA. In partnership with the One-Stop Operator, the Bureau of Workforce Partnerships and Operations (BWPO), the Title II-based agencies, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), and the contracted Title I service provider staff located within the PA CareerLink® centers through South Central PA, individuals with barriers to education and employment can access full-spectrum career pathway services in all eight counties of the region.

BWPO acts as the state workforce agency (SWA), as amended under WIOA Title III, and plays a vital role in providing Wagner Peyser Act services to individuals with barriers seeking employment and career services in South Central PA through the PA CareerLink® one-stop centers. In support of the Governor's State Workforce Plan, SCPa Works continuously cultivates and maintains relationships with the Title III partner to leverage resources that promote an integrated workforce system across the region.

Wagner-Peyser Act staff, referred to as Title III staff or BWPO, provides employment services to job seekers and employers through PA CareerLink® centers. Basic career services offered include:

- Job search and job placement assistance;
- Career counseling;
- Customer needs and interest assessments;
- Proficiency testing;
- Workshops;

- Development of an individual employment plan; and
- Case management.

Wagner-Peyser Act services provided to employers include:

- Assistance in developing and posting job orders;
- Providing referrals of qualified job seekers to hiring employers; and
- Organizing job fairs.

BWPO staff also provide labor market information to job seekers and employers, helping to inform customers of upcoming activities and shifts in the local labor and job markets.

The general provisions of 20 CFR 651 reinforce the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) team as a vital component in the South Central PA workforce development ecosystem. Under the guidance and administration of the BWPO and well positioned in PA CareerLink® job centers, the Wagner-Peyser Act ES are available to customers through walk-in inquiries, call-in appointments, and referrals.

Referrals for services are made by Title I staff and Title II partners and through the one-stop process of assessing individual job seekers as they enter into the workforce development service arena.

BWPO, Title I staff, and the one-stop teams operate under the roof of the PA CareerLink® system; however, there is no duplication of services, overlapping program elements, or duplicated roles. As determined by Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 10-23, the U.S. Department of Labor issued a requirement for states to utilize merit staff for the provision and delivery of basic career services.

Under the guidance of the Wagner-Peyser Act, the BWPO strengthens the provision of basic career services to all job seekers entering the workforce development system.

Within the South Central PA region, Pennsylvania state personnel laws and collective bargaining agreements govern all state merit staff, referred to as BWPO staff, in a PA CareerLink® site. No activity infringes upon any collective bargaining agreement in relation to the presence of BWPO staff working within PA CareerLink® centers and collaborating with PA CareerLink® workforce partners.

The commonwealth retains authority over BWPO staff members and the resources affiliated with BWPO administrative operations and service delivery. The commonwealth retains responsibility for BWPO staff and affiliated components of workforce development service delivery. The commonwealth is committed to achieving innovation, service integration, and process improvement at the local level.

In alignment with the issuance of TEN 10-23, the SCPa Works Chief Operating Officer assessed the federal guidance and launched a series of work sessions that united the One-Stop-Operator, BWPO team members, and Title I leadership to conceive the best possible customer flow from a customer's point of entrance into a PA CareerLink® center.

Through collaboration among partner entities, a customer process flow was drafted and constituted as an operational trial. It was unanimously decided among partners and initiated by the One-Stop-Operator to designate services rendered based on various criteria.

Relying on the WIOA Service Level Chart, the process development team determined that all services provided to a customer without triggering participation in CWDS will be provided and administered by BWPO merit staff within the PA CareerLink® centers. This move toward efficiency increased accuracy and reduced Title I full-time employee (FTE) costs. By creating a lean team comprised of staff members who focus primarily on a distinct set of services, SCPa Works ensures compliance with federal and state regulations while serving each job seeker with prompt and efficient service.

[Future Work Systems]

SCPa Works Business Services, Programs, and Strategic Development teams enforce specific process flows and professional roles that enable participants to

receive benefits from all PA CareerLink® entities simultaneously through dual enrollment in multiple programs. The multi-organizational arrangement is mutually beneficial for all parties involved, creating a team of professionals with specialized skill sets coming together with a common goal: providing the best possible workforce services to individuals with barriers.

The responsibilities of the Wagner Peyser Act ES staff do not overlap with the Title I staff services but rather complement the services of all partner agencies, organizations, training entities, and employers. SCPa Works coordinates roles, responsibility descriptors, and specified process flows designed through collaboration with each partner entity while ensuring a separation of duties between Title III, Title I, and one-stop teams.

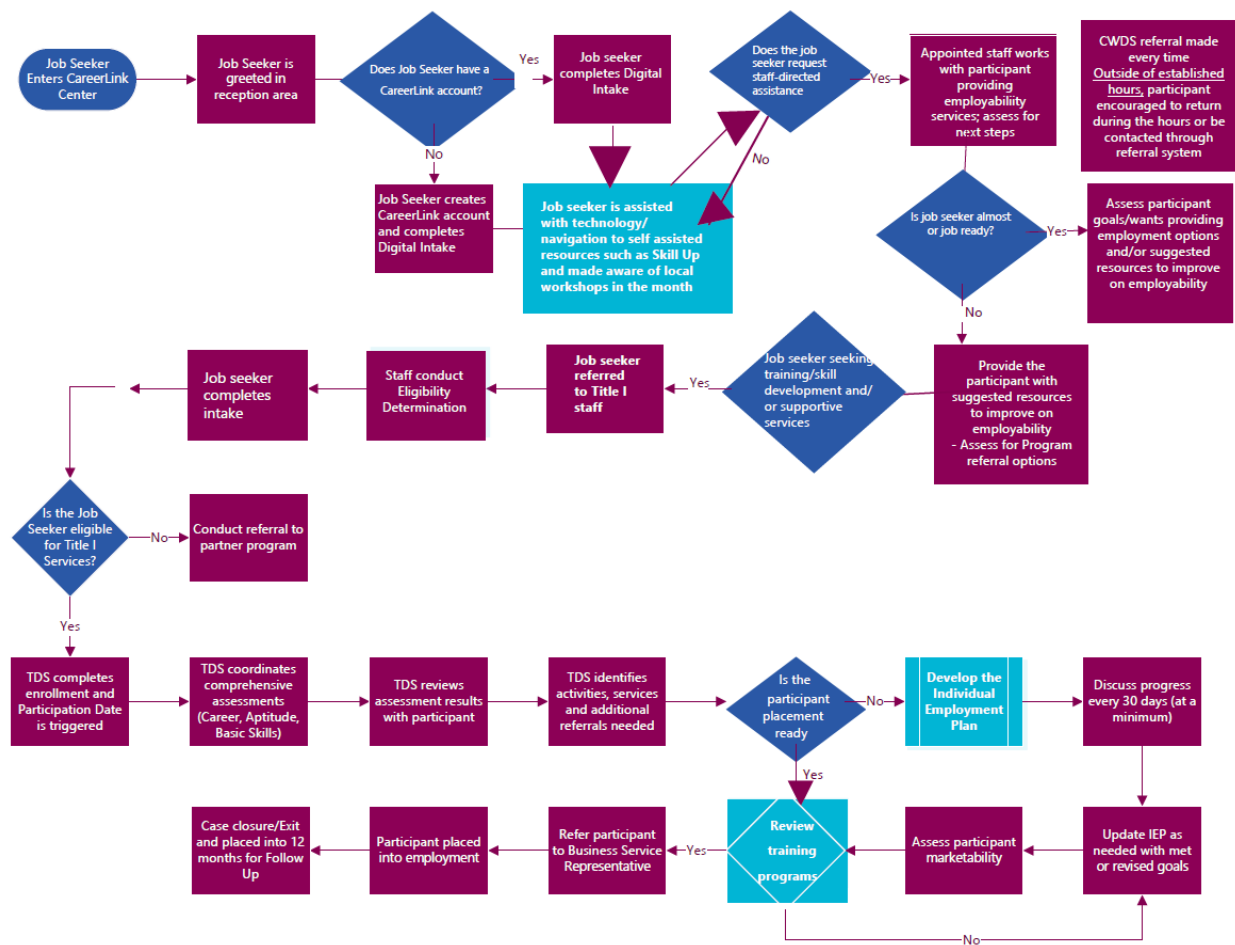
The primary purpose of service coordination is to ensure that channels of communication are established for the swift initiation of referrals from one entity to another within the PA CareerLink® centers. Regular leadership meetings among the various PA CareerLink® center partners ensure regular communication and clear, concise referrals among entities. The following Job Seeker Customer Flow Chart, collectively developed, was piloted among partners in 2024:

WIOA SERVICE LEVEL CHART – Title I Adult & DW and Title III Wagner-Peyser

Defining Reportable Individuals and Participants – Based on TEGL 10-16 Att. 7 A- Released 12-19-16



REQUIRED CAREER SERVICES Sec 134 (c)	Reportable Individual	Triggers Participation	PIRL DATA ELEMENT # USDOL PIRL specification
Basic Career Services	Reportable Individual Only; not subject to performance indicators. Only "short form" to register.	Participant; subject to indicators. Requires full registration	
Eligibility Determination	X		N/A
Outreach, Intake & Orientation	X		N/A
Providing info on in-demand sectors and occupations	X		1100, 1101
Provision of referrals and associated coordination	X		1100, 1101, 1113, 1115
Provision of workforce and labor market info	X		1100, 1101, 1103
Provision of info on job vacancies	X		1100, 1101, 1103
Provision of info on job skills necessary to fill vacancies	X		1100, 1101, 1103
Provision of info on local demand occupations, with earnings, skill requirements	X		1100, 1101, 1103
Provision of performance and program cost info	X		1100, 1101
Provision of info on local performance	X		1100, 1101
Provision of info on availability of supportive services or assistance	X		1100, 1101
Referral to supportive services	X		1113
Job search assistance (Self-directed)	X		N/A
Job search assistance (Staff-assisted)	X	X	1003, 1004, 1104
Initial assessment of skill levels & supportive service needs	X	X	1003, 1004, 1102
Placement assistance (includes "Referred to Employment")	X	X	1003, 1004, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1110, 1111
Career Counseling (includes "Staff-assisted career guidance")	X	X	1003, 1004, 1102
Info and assistance filing for UI	X	X	1003, 1004, 1112
Assistance establishing eligibility for financial aid	X	X	1003, 1004, 1116



[PA CareerLink® One-Stop Operator]

At the start of 2025, the SCPa Works Program team met with Title II representatives and the PA CareerLink® one-stop team to revise the referral process. This new referral initiative encompasses processes within each partner program and a universal referral form to be used by multiple referring partners, including Wagner Peyser Act staff. The new referral process initiative does not replace the referral system in CWDS; however, it provides each partner with relevant and unique information for each referral. The new SCPa Works referral system and the CWDS referral system create a natural checks and balances element so that no individual is overlooked for services across all partners within the South Central PA workforce development service delivery system. SCPa Works projects to have created the new referral process system in writing for a 2025 roll-out.

The SCPa Works Operations team meets weekly with the One-Stop-Operator and PA CareerLink® site administrators, while the SCPa Works Programs team meets regularly with the Title I leadership staff. Once a week, SCPa Works Programs, Operations, and Strategic Development team leaders meet with the SCPa Works Executive Committee to discuss administrative operations and system processes that thrive within the PA CareerLink® system of operations to ensure that no services are duplicated and to abide by the separation of duties between the one-stop staff and Title I staff. In addition, the One-Stop-Operator coordinates monthly or bi-monthly meetings to update core partners on operational concerns, problems, anticipated changes, or enhancements to service integration. It is the responsibility of the One-Stop-Operator to communicate significant changes within the service delivery system that would impact the BWPO commonwealth programs, staff, or resources. This level of urgency in communication between partners ensures continuity and stability of commonwealth and partnering programs and services.

Whether seeking assistance with job searches, career advancement, or training opportunities, the system supports all individuals seeking assistance based on unique needs.

The SCPa Works One-Stop-Operator centralizes customer service functions, coordinates with workforce development and human services providers, and ensures that county and appropriate agencies can access employment and training services provided by the workforce development system. In addition, the operator manages and guides the development of the one-stop delivery system. The Operator and Local Partner Consortium members will work together through a consensus decision-making system to accomplish the objectives defined by SCPa Works. In adherence to 20 CFR 680.220, SCPa Works ensures that all participants receive, at a minimum, an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning or any other method offered through the PA CareerLink® centers. In addition to overseeing the One-Stop-Operator and PA CareerLink® site admins, SCPa Works relies on BWPO to receive referrals from the one-stop team and to provide such basic career services as described in the above-mentioned Service Level Chart.

The PA CareerLink® partners have an established process for efficiently referring participants for service. It is through this collective service delivery effort, collaborative process flow, and methodology of service delivery that all teams located within the PA CareerLink® offices work together to ensure that all job seekers have access to career exploration, training, labor exchange, and education services. Integral to the workforce development service delivery system, job seekers are identified by shared staff at the point of entry to meet workforce development needs and then referred to the appropriate program(s).

Expanding collaboration between partners beyond those located within the facility is essential to ensure a seamless service experience for participants. Inevitably, services and resources extend far beyond the walls of a single location. By fostering partnerships with external organizations, experts, and support systems, SCPa Works will connect with a broader range of resources, knowledge, and services that are critical to meeting participants' needs.

This growth allows for the exchange of information, expertise, and resources, which can help address challenges that may not be fully covered by the immediate team at the facility. Whether it's bringing in specialized knowledge, handling overflow needs, or offering remote support, working with external partners broadens the capacity to serve participants with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Section 3.7

3.7. Core program facilitation - How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:

- Expand access to employment, training, education, supportive services, and co-enrollment for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.
- Facilitate the development of Career Pathways in core programs (specify on-ramps from adult education).
- Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (industry-recognized certifications or portable, and stackable certifications).

[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(2). Reviewed by OS, BWPO, and OVR]

The South Central Workforce Development Board (SCPa Works) comprises the counties of Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York in South Central Pennsylvania. SCPa Works envisions a region where everyone has the opportunity for prosperity and growth. The SCPa Works mission is to unlock the human talent that drives the development of businesses and individuals.

SCPa Works funds regional employment and training programs that empower job seekers to obtain new skills and career opportunities and allow businesses to build talent pipelines that meet workforce demands. SCPa Works operates six PA CareerLink® sites that serve tens of thousands of PA residents each year, representing an annual workforce investment of nearly \$14M into employment and training programs for youth and adults across South Central PA.

To support the region's job seekers and businesses most effectively, SCPa Works outlines several key values that guide the administration of workforce development systems. The following values are embedded in SCPa Works' programs, investments, services, people, and processes, as well as the values that SCPa Works endeavors to have partners and providers emulate:

- Performance
- Equity
- Flexibility
- Collaboration
- Accountability

Additionally, SCPa Works prioritizes the following in all programs:

- Employer Engagement – Strengthen relationships with the regional business community so that the region's system can better understand current and projected labor demand, support sector-driven training models, and invest in future workforce development.
- Individual Investment – Connect all job seekers (youth, adults, displaced workers, incumbent workers, etc.) to career pathways and career ladders, aligning education with job opportunities and lifelong learning through the PA CareerLink® system.
- People and Process – Support and foster a healthy environment where all team members can pursue excellence with accountability, openness and transparency, career growth, and professional development while maintaining the values of equity and respect across workforce development initiatives. Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusive (DEI) frameworks into every aspect of SCPa Works' business model and investments.

SCPa Works is dedicated to ensuring that all eligible adult, dislocated worker, and youth participants are co-enrolled or dual-enrolled in every applicable program that will ensure education, training, credentialing, and ultimately, long-term sustainable employment.

WIOA Eligibility & Enrollment

The SCPa Works Title I contractor performs initial WIOA intake for individuals seeking workforce development services to determine the program and level of service for which the individual may be eligible. Individuals are screened for eligibility for the following programs:

- WIOA Adult
- WIOA DW
- WIOA Out-of-School Youth
- WIOA In-School Youth

The Title I contractor collects data element verification sources from the participant in alignment with TEGL No. 23-19, U.S. Department of Labor-only Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL). Eligibility data is validated by attaining copies of the following articles of documentation and uploading the proper documentation into the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS):

- Government-issued photo ID;
- Birth certificate;
- Social Security card;
- Proof of household income;
- Citizenship documentation;
- Proof of physical address; and
- Additional data points.

When individuals do not have the proper data validation articles, SCPa Works honors Self-Certification and Telephone/Document Inspection Verification. Verification means to confirm eligibility requirements through the examination of documents which can include birth certificates or public assistance records, or by speaking with representatives of authorized agencies. Documentation means to maintain physical evidence, which is obtained during the verification process, in participant files. Examples of such evidence are copies of documents, where legally permitted.

Self-certification is a viable source for documenting eligibility and is limited to and only available after all other sources of eligibility verification are exhausted as indicative of self-certification serving as the last resort for documenting WIOA program eligibility. SCPa Works allows for self-certification to verify those eligibility items requiring documentation that, in rare cases, may cause undue hardship for applicants to obtain, particularly those with barriers to employment. Self-attestation/certification for out-of-school youth is permitted for WIOA eligibility determination.

In instances where self-attestation is an allowable form of documentation due the case note indicates that the participant declares their status for eligibility to participate in the program and may declare other barriers to work through a written and signed statement using the pre-authorized self-certification. Self-attestation should be used as a last resort, and grantees should attempt to collect other recognized forms of documentation when possible.

The key elements for self-attestation include:

- The individual identifying his or her status for permitted elements;
- Signing and dating a form attesting to this self-identification; and
- A detailed case note to include all attempts to collect eligibility verification.

Self-certification is a viable source for documenting eligibility and is limited to and only available after all other sources of eligibility verification are exhausted as indicative of self-certification serving as the last

resort for documenting WIOA/TANF program eligibility. Self-certification is utilized due to the loss of eligibility documentation or the inability of a participant to retrieve eligibility documentation. The scenario and circumstances surrounding the loss of the identification documents are detailed in a case note logged in CWDS by the contracted Title I intake specialist or case manager. SCPa Works allows for self-certification to verify those eligibility items requiring documentation that, in rare cases, may cause undue hardship for applicants to obtain, particularly those with barriers to employment. Self-certification may be accepted from an individual who has experienced a loss of documentation due to:

1. Natural or man-made disasters such as fire, flood, or tornado;
2. Eviction from residence resulting in a loss of supporting documentation; or
3. Individuals fleeing or have fled an abusive or untenable home situation.

SCPa Works also encourages *telephone verification* and *documentation inspection verification* to verify eligibility. SCPa Works honors the use of telephone verification before self-certification to verify eligibility criteria when another agency or organization may have access to eligibility documents. Data is validated when eligibility criteria are verified by telephone contact with recognized governmental or social services agencies or confirmed through document inspection. The information obtained using these methods is verified and recorded on the Telephone Verification, and Document Inspection Form found in CWDS.

When applicable and feasible, documents should be acquired, copied, scanned, and/or maintained in a participant's physical file; however, when all attempts to do so have failed, document inspection will suffice. Document inspection occurs when a document is in the possession of an agency or organization and the data on the document is verbally verified over the telephone to the service provider to ensure that eligibility requirements are validated, and then detailed in a case note. Telephone verifications can only be administered when a service provider makes a phone call to a formal agency or organization. Verbal verifications are recorded on a standardized, state-issued form that is retrieved from CWDS and is detailed in a case note to include the name of the agency or organization from which the eligibility data has been verbally confirmed and recorded, the name of the individual who received the telephone call, and the exact nature of the eligibility verification to include the data validation category as listed in the U.S. Department of Labor-only Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL).

The information recorded during a telephone call or document inspection must be adequate enough to enable a monitor or auditor to report back to the cognizant agency or able to confirm the data included on a verified document. The information provided by the agency through telephone contact may be sufficient to satisfy multiple eligibility criteria, while the verification of eligibility through document inspection is appropriate when documents cannot or may not be copied.

A hand-written or printed applicant statement is a form of self-attestation and may be used to validate family size/family income if all other means of collecting proof have been exhausted. If an applicant's statement or self-attestation form is used in the eligibility-determination process, all workforce staff must adhere to the stringent SCPa Works case-noting practices to ensure that:

1. The self-attestation case note includes all failed attempts to secure eligibility verification;
2. The self-attestation case note includes a record of all phone calls and discussions that took place surrounding the attempt to acquire eligibility verification from an individual, agency, or organization; and
3. The self-attestation email references email correspondence when applicable, and that all email correspondence is copied (cut and pasted) into a separate case note.

SCPa Works Self-Certification Policy #P-29-8.22 further highlights local guidance and procedures in

accordance with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Self-Attestation Workforce System Policy published January 27, 2025. SCPa Works applies these same standards when determining eligibility for an individual entering the WIOA Youth Program as well as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Youth Development Program (TANF YDP).

The List of Policies and Procedures under WIOA in the CWDS Help Center contains standardized forms to assist in verifying eligibility criteria and acceptable documentation sources, including self-certification, telephone verification, and document inspection verification.

WIOA Program Enrollment & Co-Enrollment

SCPa Works, in partnership with the Bureau of Workforce Partnerships and Operations (BWPO), maintains regulatory compliance with TAA Final Rule 20 CFR 618.325(a)(1) in which states must co-enroll all affected workers who meet eligibility requirements for the WIOA Dislocated Worker (DW) program. BWPO is a key partner within the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. The BWPO plays a vital role in the one-stop service system, providing services under the Wagner-Peyser Act (Title III) through the PA CareerLink® centers. These services include vocational counseling, employee profiling, job matching, job search assistance, and posting job orders. The BWPO also refers individuals to WIOA funding and other grant-funded services available through the PA CareerLink® staff.

SCPa Works honors Pennsylvania Workforce System Policy, Co-Enrollment of Participants in the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program, and WIOA DW Program. The SCPa Works Title I DW service provider communicates with and receives referrals from BWPO staff at the time of TAA program entry. Participants are directly referred by BWPO to the Title I contractor for the WIOA DW program eligibility assessment, the WIOA intake process, and enrollment into the WIOA DW program. This includes completing a full application for services in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) to include all data validation, verification, and upload of source data elements in alignment with TEGL No. 23-19, U.S. Department of Labor-only Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL).

The TAA program was first established at the USDOL by the Trade Act of 1974, and has been amended several times. Individual workers who are members of the certified worker group apply for benefits and services at a PA CareerLink® office. Individual workers who meet the qualifying criteria may receive job search assistance and skill training as well as case-management services, including basic and individualized career services either through the TAA program or through and in coordination with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act (TEGL No. 3-15).

WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of states and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's six core programs. WIOA core programs, as well as the TAA Program (Sec. 239(j)(3) of the Trade Act of 1974), are required to follow the data validation framework established by the U.S. Department of Labor and as outlined in TEGL No. 23-19, Change 1.

Eligibility to receive services under WIOA Title IV may only be determined by a qualified OVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Vocational rehabilitation counselors determine eligibility for and work with customers to develop an Individual Plan for Employment, providing services necessary to meet their specific vocational goal. As a core partner, OVR provides Vocational Rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that may include but not be limited to, diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement, and preemployment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. These individualized services are designed to prepare OVR customers to become

qualified, trained members of the workforce. OVR recognizes the value of customer access to various services and resources and encourages co-enrollment across programs as appropriate.

Beyond basic career services, the second tier includes individualized career services, such as a comprehensive assessment of job skill levels, counseling and career planning, case management, individual employment plans, short-term pre-vocational services, and literacy services will be offered if it is apparent that the customer needs additional educational and job skill services to obtain or retain the employment necessary to be self-sufficient. If the individual needs education or job training to secure a job placement or to ensure job retention/growth, the customer may be eligible for the third tier of services, which involves actual training.

Referrals Processes

In 2024, the SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team, in partnership with the Title I WIOA Youth program, Crispus Attucks, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) engaged 70 participants, issuing 13 internal referrals for enhanced services.

SCPa Works' goal of co-enrollment and program integration for all eligible participants expands access to employment, education, and supportive services to individuals with barriers to employment. Coordinating efforts across programs builds viable and clear career pathways and robust connections, referrals, and data sharing between WIOA Title I-IV programs.

Co-enrollment of eligible participants is an example of the benefits of partners within the PA CareerLink® system and is designed to provide universal access to all individuals while providing exceptional services to address the barriers to entry for high-priority populations.

To fully integrate service with Title II, SCPs Works has a standardized referral process to/from regional Title II partners. We have created a policy that allows for any diagnostic testing results to be shared with Title II partners, with the permission of the program participants, thus allowing for streamlined enrollment.

At the start of 2025, the SCPa Works Program team met with Title II representatives and the PA CareerLink® one-stop team to revise the referral process. This new referral initiative encompasses processes within each partner program and a universal referral form to be used by multiple referring partners including Wagner Peyser Act staff. The new referral process initiative does not replace the referral system in CWDS; however, it provides each partner with relevant and unique information for each referral. The new SCPa Works referral system and the CWDS referral system create a natural checks and balances element so that no individual is overlooked for services across all partners within the South Central PA workforce development service delivery system. SCPa Works projects to have created the new referral process system in writing for a 2025 roll-out.

During a participant's WIOA/TANF enrollment process, an objective career-based aptitude assessment identifies an individual's strengths and barriers to employment or career enhancement. This assessment is part of a first tier of basic services for WIOA-eligible participants that include affirmative outreach (see Section 4.4), intake, orientation, initial assessment, job search assistance, job opening information, performance, and cost information on training providers, information on filing for unemployment compensation, and eligibility determination for education and job skills training.

This stage of enrollment includes the issuance of referrals to partner programs for participants to receive WIOA Title II services for individuals in need of a high school equivalency diploma (GED), individuals in

need of attaining an elevated math or English proficiency, and English Language Learners (ELL).

This stage of enrollment is also the period of time in which a referral to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) would be issued for those in need of such services. Title I partners issue referrals for participants to be assessed by OVR for program eligibility. As a core partner within the workforce development service delivery arena, OVR provides Vocational Rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that include but are not limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement, and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. These individualized services are designed to prepare OVR customers to become qualified, trained members of the workforce. OVR provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. OVR on-boarding support for a qualified new hire can include; reasonable accommodation consultation, on-the-job training (OJT) wage reimbursement, and referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards, and helping a business retain current employees following an accident, injury, or disability. The statewide business services staff identifies resources to assist any organization on how to improve access compliance and steps to diversify their workforce to include citizens with a disability.

Career Pathways

SCPa Works expands career pathways and training services for individuals facing barriers to employment. In partnership with Adult Basic Education providers, the organization is focusing on Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) and collaborating with Title II partners to create an integrated system for job seekers and adult learners. A key part of this effort is improving co-enrollment between Title I and Title II programs, addressing the issue that many individuals qualify for both services but are not properly identified or referred. To enhance this, SCPa Works has issued a directive requiring all participants to undergo basic literacy assessments. After the assessment, participants are informed about any literacy gaps, and a document outlining their literacy grade level is added to their required records. The participant signs an acknowledgment of the testing results and agrees to seek additional support from Title II services. A case manager from SCPa Works will then formally refer the participant to Title II services and schedule an appointment on their behalf.

It is crucial to ensure individuals with barriers gain access to employment and training. The following content reflects several strategies that SCPa Works has implemented through forging local workforce partnerships, cultivating high-performing contractors, and continuously innovating and improving workforce development strategies:

Partnerships with Employers and Industry Leaders

- Collaboration with and among local businesses, corporations, and trade associations creates training opportunities aligned with current job market demands.
- The development of apprenticeship and internship programs offering hands-on experience while participants are still in training.

Customized Career Counseling and Guidance

- WIOA Title 1 program offers one-on-one career counseling enabling adult learners to identify skills, interests, and goals, and how these elements translate into specific career pathways.
- Providing career coaching, resume workshops, and interview training tailored to individual career pathways and goals.

Flexible Training Programs via the ETPL on CWDS

- Training providers offer online and hybrid learning options for adult learners who need to balance education with other responsibilities, such as work or family.
- Alternative training methods include accelerated or modular programs that allow individuals to earn certifications and credentials at a faster pace than in-person classroom education allows, allowing participants to enter the workforce sooner with work-ready skills attained.

Industry-Specific Certifications and Credentials

- Partnering with training providers that offer industry-recognized credentials directly linked to high-demand jobs within South Central PA in fields like healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and logistics.
- Assisting participants in accessing financial aid and scholarships to subsidize and cover the cost of credentialing programs including available funding from WIOA Title 1 funds and non-formula grant funding.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

- Developing job shadowing, internships, and work experience programs connect adult learners with employers in their desired fields, opening channels to chosen career pathways.
- Organizing career fairs and networking events where participants and recent training and education graduates meet potential employers and learn about available job opportunities.

Community Engagement and Support Services

- Involve the local community and social service agencies, as well as the PA CareerLink®
- Ecosystem to provide wraparound support, such as childcare, transportation, and financial assistance, to reduce barriers to employment and training.
- Mentorship programs enable adult learners to connect with experienced professionals in fields of interest serving as a launch pad into career pathways.

Data-Driven Decision Making

- Collecting labor market data on high-demand sectors to align program offerings with industry demands.
- Tracking participants' employment outcomes to refine and improve educational offerings.

Employer-Led Career Pathways

- Engaging employers in designing curricula that reflect skills and qualifications needed in specific industries, ensuring that training programs are directly relevant to the job market.
- Offering employers the knowledge and services of adult education programs, such as tax credits and recognition programs.

Incentives for Participation

- Providing financial incentives like stipends and wage subsidies for students and participants who complete training programs or obtain certifications.
- Offering career advancement programs that include skill upgrades, job placement support, and long-term career counseling to ensure continuous professional growth.

These strategies collectively contribute to building robust career pathways, and empowering adult learners with the education, training, and resources necessary to succeed in the workforce.

Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) and Pre-Apprenticeship Program:

Title I WIOA/TANF funding resources are available to support registered apprenticeship programs and registered pre-apprenticeships within the SCPa Works service area through partnership and engagement with the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) and local employers and program sponsors that carry out workforce development programs registered under the Act of August 16, 1937, the National Apprenticeship Act, 50 Stat. 644, chapter 633; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.

A Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) is considered by the United States Department of Labor as one of the oldest and most effective evidence-based workforce models to train individuals for long-term, sustainable careers while providing a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. RAP is a business-driven training model specifically designed for job preparation within a skilled trade through which employers invest in workforce development by developing skilled workers employed in on-the-job learning programs specific to the needs of industries. RAP has evolved into an extraordinary opportunity for the workforce system to expand Pennsylvania's business base, offer job seekers highly skilled workers, and provide employers with a strategic approach to talent development. Employers provide apprentices with a required minimum of 2,000 hours of paid, mentored, work-based learning experiences or On-the-Job Training (OJT) experience, with a start-to-finish duration of one to six years. All WIOA-eligible RAP candidates are eligible for WIOA-funded subsidies for on-the-job learning through OJT contracts and related technical training through ITAs. Eligible RAP candidates may also receive allowable Supportive Services.

Pre-apprenticeship programs are for individuals or workers who may not have the fundamental skills to succeed in a RAP and for youth who are exploring career options and entry into a RAP. Pre-apprenticeship programs operate within an approved plan under which candidates participate in a short, intensified training period in a school or training center, with the intent to result in placement into a RAP upon completion of the program. Throughout the pre-apprenticeship programming, service providers will support the participants through the benefit of Supportive Services, as well as guide apprenticeship candidates on an occupational track, and foundational skill development, and to improve productivity once employed. New apprentices enrolled in RAP can receive a lifetime maximum of \$7,500 per OJT or ITA and a Supportive Services lifetime maximum of \$2,000.

SCPa Works ensures that all individuals who access career services through a PA CareerLink® career center will be connected with registered apprenticeship programs in the area. In 2025, SCPa Works will mandate that contracted vendors complete training and education through the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO), which enables case managers, business services consultants, and career advisors to educate Title I-eligible participants on the availability and benefits of registered apprenticeship opportunities in South Central PA. This process will ensure a cohesiveness between WIOA-funded programming and the integration of registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

PA CareerLink® career centers offer resources for apprenticeships to include an ATO-issued Quick Guide as well as information on funding opportunities through WIOA. Registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships have access to various federal and state funding programs. These programs offer support for tuition, fees, and other related expenses. PA CareerLink® staff are equipped with the tools necessary to engage participants in registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships through partnership with in-house Apprenticeship and Training Representatives (ATR).

Currently, SCPa Works boasts three registered apprenticeship opportunities in affiliation with the SCPa Works Industry Partnership (IP) program led by the SCPa Works Apprenticeship Navigator. The apprenticeships target two IT industry careers and one construction industry career. The Apprenticeship Navigator also works closely with the ATRs and attends regular meetings with the Keystone

Apprenticeship Alliance.

Section 3.8

3.8. ITA Accounts - How will training services be provided using ITAs, fund programs of study, or through the use of contracts for training services that fund work-based trainings. [20 CFR 679.560(b)(18). Reviewed by ATO, OS, and BWPO]

Proven Success

During Program Year 23-24, SCPa Works collectively served 384 WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) participants. Of that population, 54 participants earned credentials through the completion of subsidized training with the application of an Individual Training Account (ITA). In partnership with PA CareerLink® partners and local training providers who have applied to be included on Pennsylvania's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), SCPa Works Title I partners were able to place 141 of the total Adult and DW participants into employment.

Through the training providers partnerships, in 2024, the PA CareerLink® Title I partners sent participants to training programs that led to employment in high-priority occupations. A new addition to the ETPL is the Pennsylvania Petroleum Association Technical Education Center (PPATEC). PPATEC offers leading hands-on training solutions for the HVAC and energy industry.

PPATEC is the trade school of the Pennsylvania Petroleum Association, which represents 450+ companies in the HVAC and energy industries through the commonwealth. The program curriculum was designed by PPA employer members who are interested in hiring program graduates, forging a partnership that ensures success for WIOA participants in the South Central PA region.

This unique workforce development program is subsidized by WIOA Adult and DW grant funding through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and results in participants attaining an industry-recognized credential and acquiring specialized skills necessary to excel within the workforce. The skill sets gained by participants through the application of ITAs provide the opportunity for competitive employment package offerings and long-term career growth. The ETPL-approved programming is a 10-week HVAC & Energy Professional Program that covers electrical, air conditioning systems, heating systems, and propane distribution systems. To date, 13 participants have completed the training with PPATEC in the South Central PA workforce service region.

ITA Process

In South Central PA the local board educates the Title 1 provider on the importance of customer choice. The Title 1 career advisors require participants to review the approved Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) provider list on the PA CareerLink® website. The website is easy to navigate and it includes all of the approved training providers that are approved to provide the training for a multitude of occupations. Career advisors request the individuals do research on three training providers and discuss which training provider would best meet the needs of the participant.

Following the discussion and review of any possible barriers that would stop the participant from being successful, the participant completes an academic assessment. This determines if the participant meets the prerequisites for training. Upon completion of the assessment, the individual is evaluated holistically with the skill set, aptitude, and interest assessment. If deemed appropriate an ITA packet is completed and submitted by the case manager to the Title I manager for approval.

The SCPa Works ITA cap of \$7,000 per eligible participant is allocated based upon previous program year outcomes and market projections for each upcoming program year. The cap has evolved over the years due to changes in funding, the local economy, targeted program objectives, and forecasting. SCPa Works does not utilize a participant's anticipated wages in determining the ITA cap per participant.

Individual Training Account (ITA): *(SCPa Works ITA Policy #P-17-2.22)*

An ITA is designed to provide services to participants who need training that prepares the individual for employment in an HPO (High Priority Occupation) within the South Central region. Based on individual assessment and funds available, an ITA can be awarded to eligible WIOA Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Out-of-School Youth (OSY) ages 18-24. Training services are available to those participants who cannot find employment or need upskilling to ensure a self-sustaining wage. WIOA participants who receive funds for training have been assessed by Title I staff and determined to have specific skill-related barriers to employment. Training programs selected for ITA's must be within High-Priority Occupations (HPOs) based on current labor market information, emphasizing employment opportunities within the South Central Region. Training shall lead to an industry-recognized certificate, competency, or skill recognized by employers. SCPa Works encourages participants entering training to focus on certain occupations within the industries identified (HPOs) as most applicable to the Region's labor market. The target industries are Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation, Construction, and Information Technology. Training providers must be determined as Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) and listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The ETPL is determined, compiled, and distributed by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. ITA-funded training programs cannot exceed 12 months. The maximum amount allocated for an ITA within the SCPa Works service area is \$7,500.00.

Individualized Training Services May Be Provided to an Individual who:

- Is WIOA-eligible and is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
- Is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment;
- Has the skills and qualifications to participate in the selected program of training services successfully;
- Is unable to obtain sufficient grant assistance from other sources to pay the full cost of training from sources such as Federal Pell Grants and State-funded training grants through PHEAA;
- It is determined eligible according to the State and local priority system in effect for adults under WIOA sec.134(c)(3)(E) if training services are provided through the adult funding stream; and
- Select a training program directly linked to employment opportunities within the South Central Workforce region or in another region where the applicant is willing to commute and relocate.

Depending on the skill set and appropriateness of the upskilling a participant needs, it might be more appropriate for the participant to utilize an OJT contract instead of an ITA.

On-the-Job Training (OJT): *(SCPa Works OJT Policy #P-15-2.22)*

On-the-job training (OJT) is career-based training provided by an employer to a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participant. During the training, the participant is engaged in productive work in a job for which the participant is paid. The training the participant acquires provides the knowledge or skills essential to full and adequate performance in an occupation defined as a high-priority or in-demand occupation.

SCPa Works supports local employers determined eligible based on the Employer Eligibility section in the

SCPa Works OJT Policy #P-15-2.22. Based on the OJT Master Agreement, SCPa Works reimburses employers up to \$7,500.00 per eligible paid employee. The duration of an OJT opportunity is determined by several elements listed in the SCPa Works OJT Policy and cannot extend longer than six months.

SCPa Works OJT funding supports WIOA-eligible adults, dislocated workers, and out-of-school youth, as well as WIOA-eligible individuals who are enrolled and actively engaged in Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP). An individual enrolled in WIOA while participating in an OJT can receive a lifetime allotment of \$2,000 in allowable supportive services.

In adherence to the SCPa Works Registered Apprenticeship Policy #P-18-6.22, WIOA funding is available to new and registered apprentices through an OJT. An OJT is honored as a means to develop skilled workers through structured learning in a work setting and can be subsidized through a WIOA-funded OJT. WIOA-eligible participants seeking funding for RAP activities must fulfill all WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, ISY, OSY, or TANF Youth eligibility requirements before receiving WIOA/TANF funding under contracts to include OJT. Within the SCPa Works service area, WIOA OJT funding is limited to a lifetime maximum of \$7500.00 per RAP participant, and the duration of the OJT period cannot extend longer than six months and is available in alignment with the guidelines provided in OJT Policy #P-15-2.22. WIOA-funded time allotments are based on SCPa Works policies.

RTI for WIOA-eligible apprentices is defined as in-person classroom or virtual instruction in subjects specifically related to the trade that the apprentice is actively learning through the mentored on-the-job learning experience. RTI can be subsidized using WIOA ITA funds, limited to a lifetime maximum of \$7500.00 per RAP participant. The duration of the ITA period cannot extend longer than 12 months. SCPa Works ITA contracts must adhere to the guidelines in the SCPa Works ITA Policy #P-17-2.22.

All RAP participants within the SCPa Works service area are also eligible for Supportive Services and may receive a lifetime allotment of \$2000.00 in allowable Supportive Services costs to help with overcoming barriers to employment. The SCPa Works Supportive Services Policy #P-7A-1.22 provides specific guidance on allowable costs within the South Central region.

Registered Apprenticeship Programming

SCPa Works ensures that all individuals who access career services through a PA CareerLink® career center will be connected with registered apprenticeship programs in the area. In 2025, SCPa Works will mandate that contracted vendors complete training and education through the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO), which enables case managers, business services consultants, and career advisors to educate Title I-eligible participants on the availability and benefits of registered apprenticeship opportunities in South Central PA. This process will ensure a cohesiveness between WIOA-funded programming and the integration of registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

PA CareerLink® career centers offer resources for apprenticeships to include an ATO-issued Quick Guide as well as information on funding opportunities through WIOA. [Registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships have access to various federal and state funding programs. These programs offer support for tuition, fees, and other related expenses.](#) PA CareerLink® staff are equipped with the tools necessary to engage participants in [registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships through partnership with in-house Apprenticeship and Training Representatives \(ATR\).](#)

SCPa Works administers funding for WIOA and TANF-eligible participants interested in registered apprenticeships. This is accomplished through an intake process to determine eligibility for individuals who can benefit from programs encompassing WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, WIOA OSY, TANF Youth, WIOA

IWT, and WIOA ISY. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) are included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and training providers must be "ATO Approved" in the CWDS 2.0 system. To receive benefits, RAP participants must be WIOA or TANF eligible and actively enrolled in a WIOA or TANF program, unless receiving training through WIOA Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), which does not require WIOA eligibility.

SCPa Works incorporates multiple WIOA/TANF funding options to offset and subsidize the costs associated with RAP and pre-RAP opportunities directly related to RAP. To support registered apprentices in South Central PA, SCPa Works ensures that all eligible apprentices receive the maximum allotment in training dollars, in addition to continuous case management services and eligible supportive services.

WIOA/TANF funding integration can include, but is not limited to:

1. The use of WIOA OJT funds for RAP on-the-job learning;
2. The use of WIOA ITA funds for RAP Related Technical Instruction (RTI);
3. The use of WIOA fund for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) within RAP;
4. The provision of WIOA/TANF Supportive Services funds for eligible RAP/Pre-RAP participants;
5. The integration of WIOA/TANF-funded Youth program paid work experience (PWE) funds and occupational skills training services for Pre-RAP.
6. The use of PWE funds for eligible WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers (DW) providing 12 weeks of paid work to determine whether a participant is a good fit for a registered apprenticeship.

Following the initial eligibility determination, a participant is referred to an Apprenticeship Navigator to enter into the process of applying for a registered apprenticeship program. SCPa Works acknowledges all apprenticeship-related credentials earned within the standard WIOA 12-month training period as measurable skill gains in CWDS. Funding for registered apprenticeships is based on processes and procedures already in place for OJT, ITA, PWE, IWT, Occupational Skills Training, and Supportive Services. The only requirement for a participant to receive WIOA funding within the SCPa Works service area is that the participant must achieve all eligibility requirements for WIOA programs.

In support of registered apprenticeships through the South Central PA region, SCPa Works issued an apprentice flow process that enables contracted Title I vendors to standardize the step-by-step path that a newly enrolled apprentice follows.

Diagram Key:

- Intake
- Case Management
- RAP Navigator
- Training Specialist

Flowchart Details:

Intake Specialist:

- WIOA Intake; RAP must be mentioned in the intake case note.
- Case Manager is contacted to discuss plan of action.

Case Manager:

- WIOA Enrollment.
- RAP Navigator is contacted to discuss plan of action.
- Standard Assessments.
- Assess/Resolve Barriers.
- Career Exploration.

RAP Navigator:

- Identifies possible RAP plan of action with Case Manager.
- Remain aware of barriers.
- Provide RAP vacancies.

Training Specialist:

- Service Code Entry.
- Service Code Entry.
- Service Code Entry.

Weekly catch-up sessions to discuss RAP progress, gains, and continued support.

Intake Specialist:

- Resume.
- Identify Supportive Services.
- ITA.

Case Manager:

- Weekly contact with the RAP Participants.
- Weekly contact with the RAP employer.

RAP Navigator:

- Cater Resume to RAP.
- Apply to RAP.
- Interview with RAP.
- RAP Enrollment & start date.
- OJT.

Training Specialist:

- Service Code Entry if SS are funded.
- Service Code Entry.
- Service Code Entry.

The flow incorporates Title I team members significant to the apprenticeship pathway from start to launch. The flow also ensures that members of the apprentice service team communicate regularly and work seamlessly to ensure that the apprentice is a good fit for the industry chosen and that the employer is equally satisfied with the funding and support provided.

All Title I staff are required to follow stringent case note practices during the flow of a WIOA-eligible participant entering a new registered apprenticeship program. Case noting is vital to the function of a cohesive team as an apprentice navigates from one stage to the next. With the coordination of processes between case managers, apprenticeship navigators, training specialists, and additional staff who come in contact with the administrative process, case notes serve as a source of communication from one staff member to the other. Case notes tell the story of the progress that the new apprentice is making as they journey through the program to completion.

Case Note Components Answer these Questions:

- **When** did the event occur, or when will it occur?
- **What** actions or activities were completed, and what are the next steps for both the participant and the case manager?
- **Who** provided the service or information relevant to the case?
- **Why** is the participant receiving this service or interaction?
- **What's Next** for the participant?
- **How** will the next steps be carried out, and who will be involved?

SCPa Works ensures that PA CareerLink® staff are well-informed about the benefits of registered apprenticeship programs (RAP) and can effectively connect individuals to these opportunities. When RAP aligns with a participant's career goals and local employer needs, PA CareerLink® staff introduce available local RAP opportunities via the PA ETPL Registered Apprenticeship link. Regional staff educate participants about WIOA/TANF funding, which helps with career exploration, skill development, and long-term employment opportunities. Additionally, RAP provides industry-recognized credentials that demonstrate measurable skill gains.

SCPa Works also highlights how individuals who complete a pre-apprenticeship program under WIOA/TANF can be placed in a registered apprenticeship, leading to employment after exit, which is another important measurable outcome.

New apprentices are considered "walk-in" participants while existing apprentices are "reverse referred" by employers for funding benefits. Apprentices must provide proof of their RAP with a signed Apprenticeship Agreement. Apprentices are required to complete at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning, which is supported by funding for eligible individuals. SCPa Works provides up to \$7,500 for on-the-job training (OJT) and related technical instruction (RTI), which can be delivered by eligible institutions or employers. RTI is mandatory, with apprentices needing to complete 144 hours of instruction.

New and registered apprentices who are WIOA/TANF eligible receive comprehensive services, including up to \$2,000 in Supportive Services funding for training materials, uniforms, transportation, and other needs. PA CareerLink® staff are trained to identify and address barriers to training and employment, with priority given to underserved communities.

SCPa Works ensures apprentices meet eligibility requirements for funding. If eligibility is uncertain, PA CareerLink® staff can apply for Fifth Priority of Service under SCPa Works policy. Regional staff help connect apprentices to RAP opportunities, guiding them through the WIOA/TANF funding streams and explaining the benefits of these programs, such as career exploration, skill development, and sustainable employment.

SCPa Works connects job seekers to RAP opportunities through vendor training, business services team initiatives, and partnerships with employers in sectors such as agribusiness. Monthly training sessions provide specialized content, and SCPa Works integrates RAP into job fairs and community events, emphasizing long-term, sustainable career opportunities for job seekers.

SCPa Works offers topic-specific training for vendors which can include training on the subject of registered apprenticeship for training providers, employers, and state employees. These sessions are recorded and available in a Library on the SCPa Works Online Vendor Portal. Additionally, Industry Partnership funding supports apprentices in the region.

Section 3.9

3.9. Coordination with adult education programs - How will the local board coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with workforce investment activities to support strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of service(s). [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(9). Reviewed by ATO, PDE-ABE, and PDE-CTE]

SCPa Works coordinates and collaborates with many post-secondary institutions. At the same time, SCPa Works strives to cultivate a wide range of resources and work with as many diversified partners as possible. SCPa Works' role as stewards of public funds is to ensure training programs selected for ITAs must be within a High-Priority Occupation (HOP), based on current labor market information with an emphasis on employment opportunities within the South Central PA Region.

Training leads to an industry-recognized certificate, competency, or skill recognized by employers. SCPa Works pilots new programs by working with a post-secondary institution, Career and Technical Centers (CTC), or other educational providers. Once the proof of concept is established, the opportunity is shared with other stakeholders in the region to replicate it in adjacent regions. A service area as vast as the SCPa Works region requires multiple locations for equal training opportunities to ensure ease and convenience for our service demographic.

SCPa Works partners with Career and Technical Centers throughout the region to identify common training needs and align curriculum. Meetings are essential to develop open dialog and discuss best practices. When necessary, SCPa Works brokers collaborative training opportunities with two or more training institutions, building a hybrid program that creates synergies for the regional industry and participants' best interests.

SCPa Works partners with CTE schools that are Perkins V recipients whenever possible. SCPa Works strives to support Perkins V's work by enacting in-kind relationships with each recipient. This includes Perkins V plan evaluation, hosting of public information sessions, technical assistance, and High-Priority Occupation emphasizing emerging workplace trends. As each Perkins V-funded partner is required to host and manage an advisory council, SCPa Works is integrating these groups into our Industry Partnership efforts.

Proven Success

During Program Year 23-24, SCPa Works collectively served 384 WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) participants. Of that population, 54 participants earned credentials through the completion of subsidized training with the application of an Individual Training Account (ITA).

In partnership with PA CareerLink® partners and local training providers who have applied to be included on Pennsylvania's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), SCPa Works Title I partners were able to place 141 of the total Adult and DW participants into employment.

Through forging training provider partnerships, in 2024, the PA CareerLink® Title I partners sent participants to training programs that led to employment in high-priority occupations. A new addition to the ETPL is the Pennsylvania Petroleum Association Technical Education Center (PPATEC). PPATEC offers leading hands-on training solutions for the HVAC and energy industry.

PPATEC is the trade school of the Pennsylvania Petroleum Association, which represents 450+ companies in the HVAC and energy industries through the commonwealth. The program curriculum was designed by

PPA employer members who are interested in hiring program graduates, forging a partnership that ensures success for WIOA participants in the South Central PA region.

This unique workforce development program is subsidized by WIOA Adult and DW grant funding through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and results in participants attaining an industry-recognized credential and acquiring specialized skills necessary to excel within the workforce. The skill sets gained by participants through the application of ITAs provide the opportunity for competitive employment package offerings and long-term career growth.

The ETPL-approved programming is a 10-week HVAC & Energy Professional Program that covers electrical, air conditioning systems, heating systems, and propane distribution systems. To date, 13 participants have completed the training with PPATEC in the South Central PA workforce service region.

Innovative Partnerships

Programs funded through state, federal, and private grants within the South Central PA service region provide state-of-the-art equipment and capacity for adult education opportunities. SCPa Works partners with each county technology school to establish a seamless referral process.

SCPa Works Community Access Points (CAPs) broaden the workforce development outreach, enabling increased access to PA CareerLink® services in all eight counties. SCPa participates in all regional Perkins V Act 134 activities, including attending quarterly/annual meetings and reviewing plans, and partners with Perkins V-funded programs for Adult education certification trainings. SCPa Works has made a strategic effort to support short-term industry-recognized HPO certifications.

SCPA Works partners with the following postsecondary educational institutions:

- § Harrisburg Area Community College
- § Harrisburg University
- § Central Penn College
- § Penn State
- § York College
- § Messiah College
- § Elizabethtown College
- § Shippensburg University

SCPA Works partners with the following CTE schools:

- § Dauphin County CTE
- § York County School of Technology
- § Dover High School CTE program
- § Lebanon County CTE Cumberland Perry CTE
- § Franklin County CTE
- § Adams County CTE

SCPA Works partners with the following organizations:

- § NuPaths
- § MASCPA
- § MANTEC
- § YTI

SCPa Works is also working closely with SCPa Works Title II partners to help build a stronger, more integrated system to serve job seekers and adult learners. Part of this strategy involves investing time and resources into a more cohesive plan to bolster co-enrollment levels between Title I and II.

SCPa Works is closely connected to the PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) schools, which provide high-quality, two and four-year degrees to students seeking Associate's or Bachelor's degrees. Conversations have begun about ways in which SCPa Works can build more vital pathways and pipelines for PA CareerLink® customers to CTCs, community colleges, and post-secondary institutions, including:

- § Short-term training
- § GED-to-college pathways
- § Badging and micro-credentialing
- § Collaborative space/equipment sharing

SCPa Works utilizes existing programs that constitute established, board-approved practices in place to provide the optimal level of service to eligible participants. With the addition and implementation of new and registered apprentices into the WIOA service delivery platform, these existing foundational services will increase and grow the region as a whole.

Since CWDS does not permit the duplication of service entry through astute State monitoring and review practices already in place, duplication of services across programs is not probable. In this same system of record, CWDS enables daily tracking opportunities through Ad-Hoc reporting, case noting, service record logs, and detailed performance documentation that is entered under due diligence by skilled service provider specialists. Quarterly reports are presented to the full board by the SCPa Works Programs Director and are board-approved through standardized voting procedures.

Registered Apprenticeship

SCPa Works currently supports three registered apprenticeship opportunities in affiliation with the SCPa Works Industry Partnership (IP) program led by the SCPa Works Apprenticeship Navigator. The apprenticeships target two IT industry careers and one construction industry career. The Apprenticeship Navigator also works closely with the ATRs and attends regular meetings with the Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance. In addition to WIOA funding, SCPa Works Industry Partnership funding also supports apprentices in the region.

In addition to reporting on WIOA-funded registered apprenticeships at full board meetings, SCPa Works provides regular vendor trainings that are open to BWPO, PA DLI, the ATO, employers, and partner agencies that are interested in learning more about registered apprenticeships within the SCPa Works service area.

SCPa Works administers funding for WIOA and TANF-eligible participants interested in registered apprenticeships. This is accomplished through an intake process to determine eligibility for individuals who can benefit from programs encompassing WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, WIOA OSY, TANF Youth, WIOA IWT, and WIOA ISY.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) are included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and training providers must be "ATO Approved" in the CWDS 2.0 system. To receive benefits, RAP participants must be WIOA or TANF eligible and actively enrolled in a WIOA or TANF program, unless receiving training through WIOA Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), which does not require WIOA eligibility.

SCPa Works incorporates multiple WIOA/TANF funding options to offset and subsidize the costs associated with RAP and pre-RAP opportunities directly related to RAP. To support registered apprentices in South Central PA, SCPa Works ensures that all eligible apprentices receive the maximum allotment in training dollars, in addition to continuous case management services and eligible supportive services.

WIOA/TANF funding integration can include, but is not limited to:

1. The use of WIOA OJT funds for RAP on-the-job learning;
2. The use of WIOA ITA funds for RAP Related Technical Instruction (RTI);
3. The use of WIOA fund for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) within RAP;
4. The provision of WIOA/TANF Supportive Services funds for eligible RAP/Pre-RAP participants;
5. The integration of WIOA/TANF-funded Youth program Paid Work Experience (PWE) funds and occupational skills training services for Pre-RAP.
6. The use of PWE funds for eligible WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers (DW) providing 12 weeks of paid work to determine whether a participant is a good fit to enroll in a registered apprenticeship program.

Entering valid data into CWDS allows transparency between partners and will aid in eliminating the duplication of employer outreach and services. As mentioned previously in this plan subsection, CWDS does not permit the duplication of service entry through astute State monitoring and review practices already in place, duplication of services across programs is not probable. In this same system of record, CWDS enables daily tracking opportunities through Ad-Hoc reporting, case noting, service record logs, and detailed performance documentation that is entered under due diligence by skilled service provider specialists. Quarterly reports are presented to the full board by the SCPa Works Programs Director and are board-approved through standardized voting procedures.

SCPa Works acknowledges all apprenticeship-related credentials earned within the standard WIOA 12-month training period as measurable skill gains in CWDS. Funding for registered apprenticeships is based on processes and procedures already in place for OJT, ITA, PWE, IWT, Occupational Skills Training, and Supportive Services. The only requirement for a participant to receive WIOA funding within the SCPa Works service area is that the participant must achieve all eligibility requirements for WIOA programs.

In support of registered apprenticeships through the South Central PA region, SCPa Works issued an apprentice flow process that enables contracted Title I vendors to standardize the step-by-step path that a newly enrolled apprentice follows. The flow incorporates the vital relationships between team members that are significant to the apprenticeship pathway from start to program completion. The flow also ensures that members of the apprentice service team communicate regularly and work seamlessly to ensure that the apprentice is a good fit for the industry chosen and that the employer is equally satisfied with the funding and support provided.

All Title I staff are required to follow stringent case note practices during the flow of a WIOA-eligible participant entering a new registered apprenticeship program. Case noting is vital to the function of a cohesive team as an apprentice navigates from one stage to the next. With the coordination of processes between case managers, apprenticeship navigators, training specialists, and additional staff who come in contact with the administrative process, case notes serve as a source of communication from one staff member to the other. Case notes tell the story of the progress that the new apprentice is making as they journey through the program to completion.

SCPa Works ensures that PA CareerLink® staff are well-informed about the benefits of registered apprenticeship programs (RAP) and can effectively connect individuals to these opportunities. When RAP aligns with a participant's career goals and local employer needs, PA CareerLink® staff introduce available local RAP opportunities via the PA ETPL Registered Apprenticeship link. Regional staff educate participants about WIOA/TANF funding, which helps with career exploration, skill development, and long-term employment opportunities. Additionally, RAP provides industry-recognized credentials that demonstrate measurable skill gains.

SCPa Works also highlights how individuals who complete a pre-apprenticeship program under WIOA/TANF can be placed in a registered apprenticeship, which leads to employment after exit, another important measurable outcome.

Apprentices are required to complete at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning, which is supported through federal funding for eligible individuals. SCPa Works maintains relationships with training providers on the ETPL and local industry-specific employers that are vital to the success of the subsidized apprenticeship programming. SCPa Works provides up to \$7,500 for on-the-job training (OJT) and related technical instruction (RTI), which can be delivered by eligible institutions or employers. RTI is mandatory, and can be funded using WIOA-funded ITA scholarships with apprentices needing to complete 144 hours of instruction.

New and registered apprentices who are WIOA/TANF eligible receive comprehensive services, including up to \$2,000 in Supportive Services funding for training materials, uniforms, transportation, and other needs. PA CareerLink® staff are trained to identify and address barriers to training and employment, with priority given to underserved communities.

SCPa Works ensures apprentices meet funding eligibility requirements. If eligibility is uncertain, PA CareerLink® staff can apply for Fifth Priority of Service under SCPa Works policy. Regional staff help connect apprentices to RAP opportunities, guiding them through the WIOA/TANF funding streams and explaining the benefits of these programs, such as career exploration, skill development, and sustainable employment.

SCPa Works connects job seekers to RAP opportunities through vendor training, business services team initiatives, and partnerships with employers in sectors such as agribusiness. Monthly training sessions provide specialized content, and SCPa Works integrates RAP into job fairs and community events, emphasizing long-term, sustainable career opportunities for job seekers.

In 2024, 236 new employers registered with PA CareerLink®, expanding the network of businesses seeking top talent. These partnerships are essential in bridging the gap between job seekers and employers, driving economic growth, and providing local companies with the skilled workforce they need to thrive. Each new employer registration strengthens the region's job market, offering more opportunities for meaningful employment.

In addition, the York County Alliance for Learning (YCAL) organized Career Exploration Programs and the Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship Program, both of which offered hands-on, immersive career activities. YCAL partnered with various businesses to provide career exploration sessions across 15 different industries. The Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship Program was in high demand with a 16.8% increase in participation from the previous year's enrollment. YCAL maximized student engagement and ensured program capacity, offering career pathways that helped 1,235 students explore different industries in Program Year '23-24.

SCPa Works offers topic-specific training for vendors, including training on registered apprenticeships for training providers, employers, and state employees. These sessions are recorded and available at scpaworks.org. SCPa Works training modules are created collectively by the SCPa Works Apprenticeship Navigator and Policy Manager to ensure that all aspects of the training sessions are in stringent alignment with ATO resources.

4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce Delivery System

Section 4.1

- 4.1. Business and Employer Engagement - What strategies will be implemented in the local area to improve business and employer engagement that:
- Support a local area workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;
 - Manage activities or services that will be implemented to improve business engagement;
 - Better coordinate regional workforce and economic development strategy, messaging, engagement and programs; and
 - Strengthen linkages between the PA CareerLink® service delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs.
- [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(3). Reviewed by ATO, BWPO, OVR, and UC]

In 2024, SCPa Works documented 236 new employer registrations with PA CareerLink®. This flux in new employer partnerships expanded the network of businesses seeking top talent in the South Central PA region. Employer partnerships are essential in bridging the gap between job seekers and employers, driving economic growth, and providing local companies with the skilled workforce they need to thrive. Each new employer registration strengthens the region's job market, offering more opportunities for meaningful employment.

The SCPa Works Title I Business Services Team is a driving force in workforce development across South Central PA. By engaging employers to understand workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the Business Services Team has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of supporting economic growth and workforce readiness.

In addition to the new employer registrations through PA CareerLink®, the SCPa Works Business Services Team engaged with 1,923 new businesses overall in 2024. The team also established 65 Paid Work Experience (PWE) sites with employers. The sites provided hands-on job experience to participants eligible for WIOA and TANF grant funding. In July and August of 2024 alone, 34 youth participants were provided paid work experiences with local employers through the establishment of pivotal workforce partnerships.

During Program Year 24-25, the Business Services Team hosted 30 PA CareerLink® internal job fairs and 56 external job fairs. The team's commitment provided valuable opportunities for employers to network with a skilled workforce seeking employment.

The valuable employer relationships that the Business Services Team has forged throughout South Central PA resulted in the curriculum development for a 10-week HVAC & Energy Professional Program that covered training across electrical, air conditioning systems, heating systems, and propane distribution systems. The program was designed by Pennsylvania Petroleum Association (PPA) employer members who have an interest in hiring program graduates. In partnership with PA CareerLink® partners and the Pennsylvania Petroleum Association Technical Education Center (PPATEC), 13 participants have completed training through the ETPL training program utilizing WIOA funding to subsidize the training which provided graduates with competitive employment packages and long-term career growth. The PPA represents more than 450 companies specializing in HVAC throughout the Commonwealth.

In a series of recent presentations to the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), and the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA), CEO Jesse McCree addressed state and local leaders on the transformative impact of artificial intelligence in the workforce system.

By using AI to identify skills gaps, align training with industry needs, and provide personalized career pathways, SCPa Works enhances responsiveness to the current labor market and matches skilled workers with employers for sustainable, long-term growth. This integration of AI into workforce development is a significant advancement, offering more precise, data-driven strategies that can be scaled to meet the evolving needs of employers, ultimately leading to a more resilient and adaptable workforce system. Most importantly, SCPa Works identifies ways to use AI tools in an ethical way, to drive economic mobility, and to leverage these tools as economic mobility levers for those who are at the highest risk of being left behind in the digital movement.

Meeting Employer Needs

SCPa Works supports employer needs in our community in a number of ways:

- Engage Business Outreach Program
 - Collaborates with Capital Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC) and local chambers of commerce;
 - Engages with C-level employer executives throughout the local communities;
 - Conducts regional workforce outreach through focus groups and one-on-one meetings with employers and industry sectors for nine counties;
 - Collaborates with economic development organizations, chambers, and state agencies to host focus groups; and
 - Main Street Business walks to support local communities.
- Industry Partnership Sectors include;
 - Manufacturing, IT, and Construction
 - Entrepreneurs & Innovators
 - Education K-12 & Higher Education
 - OVR
 - Justice-impacted
 - ALICE population
 - VR Headsets
 - Justice-impacted communities
- Apprenticeship Programs include:
 - IT Industry Sector Group Registered Apprenticeship
 - PA CareerLink®
 - Individual employers
- Strengthen linkages between Businesses, Industry Partnerships, and education partners through the PA CareerLink® workforce system programs and training opportunities that include:
 - Job seekers
 - Youth programs
 - Justice-impacted programs
 - Apprenticeships & WIOA funding

Work-based Training Opportunities

Career pathway training opportunities within South Central PA thrive through the leadership and drive of the Title I Business Services and Career Advisor teams within the PA CareerLink® workforce system. In

2024, SCPa Works connected local businesses, high schools, and community organizations to bridge the gap between the next generation of talent and local employers. Having cultivated previously established partnerships with more than 1000 employers in South Central PA, the SCPa Works Business Services Team worked with Title I service providers to roll out 12 community-driven projects and empowered 2,000 students through career awareness activities, pre-apprenticeships, and skill-building opportunities. These partnerships are shaping the future workforce, and fostering a stronger workforce in South Central PA.

Programs include but are not limited to:

On-the-Job Training (OJT): *(SCPa Works OJT Policy #P-15-2.22)*

- On-the-job training (OJT) is career-based training provided by an employer to a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participant. During the training, the participant is engaged in productive work in a job for which the participant is paid. The training the participant acquires provides the knowledge or skills essential to full and adequate performance in an occupation defined as a high-priority or in-demand occupation.

Incumbent worker training (IWT): *(SCPa Works IWT Policy #P-8-5.22)*

- Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer, including a group of employers, to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees by assisting the workers in obtaining advanced skills necessary to retain employment. IWT is conducted with a commitment by the employer to retain or avert the layoff of the incumbent worker. IWT funds will target participants in high-demand occupations and sectors to acquire new skills allowing the worker to move into a higher-skilled and higher-paid job within the company. This strategy is directly focused on moving incumbent workers into positions that pay a living wage. Incumbent Worker Training funding preference will be given to IWT programming that results in an industry-recognized credential or certificate for the participant.

Paid Work Experience: *(SCPa Works PWE Policy #P-16-5.22)*

- Paid Work Experience (PWE) program is designed to provide youth and adults an opportunity to obtain work-based training and skills with an employer within an industry of interest. Employers benefit from the PWE program, as it offers the opportunity to gauge potential candidates while not being deemed the employer of record. The Title I vendor supports all wages, liability, insurance, and workers' compensation obligations. Employers also have the potential to develop a traditional or non-traditional pipeline of candidates through the PWE program.

Career Pathways

- SCPa Works' goal is to connect all job seekers (youth, adult, displaced workers, incumbent workers, etc.) to career pathways and career ladders that align education to job opportunities and lifelong learning through the PA CareerLink® system. A particular focus will be on youth services (obtaining paid work experience opportunities, internships, college/career readiness, registered and pre-apprenticeship programs); and the Alice Population (upskilling, re-skilling, short-term industry-recognized credentials).

Key facilitators in employer engagement with workforce development programs

- SCPa Works helps coordinate a regional business service team composed of a single agency within an ecosystem that works directly with businesses. This helps to streamline communication and reduces employer fatigue. This service is a direct conduit between companies and the various workforce programs across WIOA Titles that assist enterprises (such as on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, paid work experience, etc.). Through research, data, and labor market intelligence, SCPa Works has identified key sectors in the region that are critical to driving economic growth for businesses and job seekers. These sectors include Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology (IT), and Construction, representing most of our region's total economic output and employment. To achieve a more substantial return on investment for

the community, SCPa Works is aligning the majority of its resources, programs, investments, and initiatives around these sectors.

Collaboration with WIOA Title IV

- The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) supports businesses by providing no-cost services, including ADA Awareness training, ADA Accessibility evaluations, accommodation recommendations for current employees, and retention services. Similar to WIOA Title I services, OVR partners with employers to offer On-the-Job Training (OJT), providing 100% wage reimbursement to businesses that hire OVR customers. A critical part of the local business service strategy is aligning and leveraging the business services of multiple programs and funding sources wherever possible.
- OVR Business Services team staff members participate in the local Business Services team meetings, allowing them to share information and integrate services more efficiently. Using the strategy, various partners and programs can provide market intelligence about what employers are specifically looking for and how the various programs can provide an integrated solution that best meets the identified employer's needs.

Aligning employment and training activities with industry sectors

- A critical part of our effective employer engagement involves building Industry Partnership (IP) groups around each of the above-mentioned four key sectors (Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology, and Construction). These IP groups help identify critical training needs in each sector and provide input on how and where on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, career pathways, and apprenticeships can be most effectively used by SCPa Works to help the regional economy grow. This participation provides a strong voice for common training needs and strategic solutions. As the Industry Partnerships identify new skill and training gaps, SCPa Works will work with the region's educational partners to develop new training programs and services that will fill employment and training gaps to keep the industries competitive. To this end, SCPa Works uses input from its workforce, education, economic development, and labor market intelligence networks that support new or changing data.

Business Engagement Services Function

- Each staff member who is a part of the local region's Business Services team is responsible for entering all case notes and employer services on the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). Entering valid data into CWDS allows transparency between partners and will aid in eliminating the duplication of employer outreach and services.
- In addition to CWDS reporting, the Business Services Team, who operate within Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, TANF, and EARN, is responsible for submitting a monthly employer and job seeker outreach report. The accumulation of data entered in the outreach report is specific to the funding streams the team operates within, as well as collaborative efforts with PA CareerLink® employment services staff.

PA CareerLink® service delivery system and Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs

- SCPa Works and the PA CareerLink® system have built a strong relationship with unemployment insurance (UI) programs. A key component of that relationship is communicating with employers about the benefits of collaboration with the Unemployment Compensation system. In partnership with the Commonwealth, information is provided to employers on State Unemployment Compensation Law, the claims process as it relates to employers and UC claimants, and the benefits of working with the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA). Through the RESEA program, SCPa Works and the PA CareerLink® partners can demonstrate to employers the effectiveness of this program and the cost savings that it provides their organization.
- The UC Connect initiative is a good example of the types of linkages that SCPa Works and the PA CareerLink® one-stop system need to expand regarding partnership with UI. A UC agent is

available at the PA CareerLink® a minimum of once a week, or the UC agent is available (per holidays or building closures) to meet by appointment with participants who are having UC issues or questions. Although the PA CareerLink® is not the Unemployment Center, participants can utilize the computers within the PA CareerLink® Computer Resource Center in the event they need to complete computer-related UC activities. The computers can also be used for the UC participants who need to complete job searches to satisfy their job searching requirement for collecting UC benefits. Participants who participate in the RESEA program (collecting UC benefits) also come to the PA CareerLink® to attend the workshops and meet with necessary personnel to satisfy UC guidelines and requirements.

- Potential UC eligibility issues identified during RESEA or other UC claimant interactions are referred to UC for adjudication. For UC Claimants looking to file an appeal, forms are provided and submitted via fax at no charge and with a limited wait. Staff provide copies of the confirmation printout for all faxes sent on behalf of the Claimants.
- A kiosk system is being deployed throughout the Commonwealth to assist with ID.me connectivity issues some claimants have encountered. The kiosk will assist with identification verification in order for the claimant to have full access to the unemployment compensation claim dashboard on the state website, in addition to a variety of printable resources for both Claimants and employers. UC handbooks are also made available.

PA CareerLink® service delivery system and LVERs

- SCPa Works supports the PA CareerLink® Local Veterans' Employment Representative staff (LVERs) in the administration and operations of the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP). Through effective communication and partnership with the BWPO, Title I staff have the prompt availability of the LVERs for referrals and inquiries on serving Veterans in the PA CareerLink® career centers.

Engaging Employers in Registered Apprenticeship

SCPa Works maintains a proactive approach to introducing and engaging employers in registered apprenticeships through a consultative approach that focuses on understanding the specific needs of tailoring employer recruitment. The process begins with the SCPa Works mandate that all vendor staff complete ATO training and education. This foundation of knowledge ensures that business services representatives, case managers, intake specialists, and career advisors rely on relationships forged through the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) with Apprenticeship and Training Representatives (ATRs) and in-house Apprenticeship Navigators to ensure that all employers are educated on the benefits of registered apprenticeship programming. Successful engagement of employers also leverages the benefits of registered apprenticeships for individuals who are enrolled in workforce development programming. The PA CareerLink® registered apprenticeship team ensures that all eligible participants are equally matched with available registered apprenticeships in South Central PA.

Section 4.2

4.2. Promotion and Coordination of Entrepreneurial Skills and Microenterprise - How will the local board coordinate local area workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are specific to a local area? How will the local board promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(4). Reviewed by DCED]

Entrepreneurship as a Career Pathway

SCPa Works supports the Governor’s goal of increasing business start-ups in Pennsylvania from 6.6% to 10%, becoming a leader in entrepreneurial growth. SCPa Works ensures that Title I vendors prioritize Entrepreneurship as a strong career pathway for individuals. SCPa Works identifies entrepreneurs as innovators of technology, industry, and commercialization. By providing WIOA-subsidized career pathway opportunities for eligible individuals, SCPa Works paves the way as a leader in workforce growth and the evolution of a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem across South Central PA.

In alignment with the Governor’s Ten-Year Strategic Plan for economic development in Pennsylvania, SCPa Works partners with organizations that offer innovators the opportunity to become entrepreneurs. SCPa Works believes that Opportunity Youth and Adult participants in WIOA programs are key to identifying entrepreneurial solutions to Pennsylvania’s pressing challenges. Through investing in Opportunity Youth endeavors, the next generation of South Central PA workers, SCPa Works drives workforce development breakthroughs where a resilient economy is cultivated and where LWDBs invest in people and communities. SCPa Works plays a vital role in developing a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem through initiatives driven by economic development metrics of job creation and wage growth, and modern, qualitative outcomes. Partnering with Harrisburg University, Opportunity Youth participated in a two-week Technology Innovation & Entrepreneurship Education Program, during which they competed in a Shark Tank-style business competition.

Entrepreneurship Cohort Summary

In June 2024, the SCPa Works Entrepreneurship Cohort program, launchU-SE!, showcased the potential and innovation of five driven students. Throughout the program, the participants learned to ideate their new business concepts, present their companies, and learn the mechanics of starting their businesses, resulting in an impressive display of entrepreneurial spirit.

The Program Structure

The launchU-SE! featured a blend of in-person and virtual sessions, with three in-person meetings and six virtual sessions. This hybrid format allowed for flexibility and dynamic interaction, ensuring that the participants could fully engage with the content and each other.

Participant Companies

The cohort resulted in the formation of four unique and promising businesses:

1. Balton's Mobile Home Park
 - Location: York, Pennsylvania
 - Specialization: Mobile Homes and Modular Homes
 - Overview: Balton's Mobile Home Park focuses on providing affordable, high-quality housing solutions through mobile and modular homes, addressing the growing demand for flexible living options.

2. TristenWaters.com

- Industry: Lifestyle Brand
- Focus: Skills and Agility Training for Basketball
- Overview: TristenWaters.com aims to enhance the skills and agility of basketball players through specialized training programs, offering a comprehensive platform for athletic development.

3. Brand U University

- Industry: Graphic Design and Creative Agency
- Overview: Brand U University is a boutique agency dedicated to providing high-quality graphic design and creative services. It focuses on helping businesses build strong, visually appealing brands.

4. ELEMENTOF

- Industry: Combat Sports Equipment and Training
- Overview: ELEMENTOF is committed to inventing and innovating training equipment for combat sports and self-defense. The company aims to perfect the tools and techniques used in combat sports, enhancing performance and safety.

Program Highlights

- **Ideation and Development:** Participants learned the essentials of business ideation, including identifying market needs, developing unique value propositions, and creating business plans.
- **Business Formation:** Students were guided through the process of forming their companies, from legal considerations to branding and marketing strategies.
- **Presentation Skills:** The program culminated in a presentation competition, during which participants showcased their business ideas, demonstrating their newfound skills and confidence.

Each young adult completed the program, presented their business ideas, and received a \$500.00 stipend for completing the program. One of the participants and their company ELEMENTOF has been invited to incubate their company at the CIE. Their innovative approach to combat sports equipment and training impressed the judges with its potential for significant impact in the industry.

The Entrepreneurship Cohort program was a resounding success, providing students with invaluable skills and experiences. The diversity of business ideas and the commitment shown by each participant highlight the program's effectiveness in fostering entrepreneurial talent. We look forward to seeing the continued growth and success of these young entrepreneurs and their businesses.

- How will the local board better coordinate regional workforce and economic development strategy; and
- If the local area has the Engage! Program, how will Engage! further strengthen the relationship between the workforce and economic development.

Measuring Employer Engagement

To best determine the concentration of employer engagements and measure program performance, the SCPa Works Programs Team compiles and analyzes a monthly Business Service report comprised of data reflecting the frequency of employer engagements, local business, industry specifics, and the county in which engagement occurs.

Labor market penetration is measured by the number of On-the-Job Trainings (OJTs), Paid Work Experiences (PWEs), Apprenticeships, and direct hires by employers who match with job seekers through PA CareerLink® services. Program services are documented and measured across a one to three-year period, and reviewed and analyzed by the SCPa Works Business Services Manager monthly.

Engage! Business Calling Program:

SCPa Works has developed a comprehensive Title I Business Services Team that manages Industry Partnerships and sector structures in the South Central PA region. The Business Services Team also leads the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Engage! program. Throughout the region, the team contacts businesses and economic development corporations to create resourceful partnerships. With these partnerships, WIOA, TANF, and EARN participants are exposed to opportunities that provide work experience, allowing participants to gain long-term sustainable employment with local companies.

SCPa Works has been instrumental in representing the Engage! program in the community by providing profound expertise in workforce development and significantly enhancing community partners' understanding of the fundamental needs within target industry sectors. In 2024, SCPa Works contributed to the Engage! program in support of local businesses adapted to the changing landscape of the South Central PA business environment, marking a successful year of collaboration.

SCPa Works, in collaboration with the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce, hosted an Engage! Round Table on March 22nd, 2024, for construction leaders in Lebanon County. Employers reflected on both the opportunities and challenges shaping local industry today. Through collaborative efforts and leveraging resources, the attendees navigated through dynamics that led to an impactful engagement. First, by hosting the construction Engage! Round table at the Lebanon Chamber, members were able to grow industry partnerships with five new members. Following the meeting, one new member, the Carpenters Union, hosted a Youth Tour at their apprenticeship and training facility in Lebanon.

This event provided introductions with local school districts, and the Carpenters Union was able to host 16 local high school students at their facility, promoting apprenticeship programs. The Youth Tour also included a PA CareerLink® VR headset class on power tools for the construction industry. By harnessing identified opportunities, leveraging state-funded resources, collaborating with local chambers, connecting with school districts, and PA CareerLink® Youth services, SCPa Works has paved the way for a prosperous future for high school students interested in construction careers.

SCPa Works has developed a team to coordinate efforts across the region in the DCED Engage! sector structure. Through Business Service Team members, each business and participant have access to real-time information on market needs and employment demand.

Registered Apprenticeship

In addition to reporting on WIOA-funded registered apprenticeships at full board meetings, SCPa Works provides regular vendor trainings sessions that are open to BWPO, PA DLI, the ATO, employers, and partner agencies that are interested in learning more about registered apprenticeships within the SCPa Works service area.

Fair Chance Hiring

The South Central PA Fair Chance Hiring and Reentry Program mission is to work with individuals pre- and post-release as they transition into the community and help them achieve their short- and long-term education and career goals. A dedicated reentry team engages individuals at multiple points in the criminal justice system and serves as a resource for county and State agencies to reduce recidivism. The reentry team does this by leveraging PA CareerLink® partners and community organizations to create a cohesive network of service providers. The reentry team focuses on each participant's individualized services and bases all interactions on a trauma-informed approach through the following process:

1. Meet with potential participants through referrals from the judicial system, work release, county jail pre-release, prison post-release programs, self-identified referral or walk-in, and probation or parole officers and programs;
2. Discuss the participant's interests, goals, challenges, criminal system involvement, etc.;
3. Explain the program to the participant and enroll or refer to the appropriate service;
4. Document supportive service needs and remediation plans;
5. Enroll the participants appropriately and determine eligibility for all possible funding streams;
6. Plan for each of the following barrier assessments and resolve: Transportation, Child Care, Housing, Living Expenses, etc.;
7. Deliver pre-release workforce services in York, Adams, and Cumberland Counties that include Workforce 101 (Equus curriculum) and Competency-Based Interviewing (CBI) workshops;
8. Leverage outside funding sources to enhance existing workforce funding such as WIOA training, education, and supportive services;
9. Provide community outreach and forge partnerships as we collaborate effectively with parole, probation, PACCT, Reentry Coalitions, etc.;
10. Integrate Youth Reentry services through JusticeWorks in all eight counties through a community-based model.
11. Enforce the SCPa Works Fourth Priority is a direct reflection of the region's Re-Entry program delivery through which SCPa Works has been the subrecipient of both the Youth Re-Entry Grant (2024) and the Women's Re-Entry Grant (2023). The inclusion of this Fourth Priority ensures that contracted service providers are prioritizing the need to serve individuals whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system;
12. Ensure that the Dauphin County PA CareerLink® participates in the Harrisburg Group Violence Intervention Group as a service provider;
13. Connect reentry participants with Reentry Correctional Reception Centers to ensure that participants have the services they need to transition back to communities and
14. Cultivate the CAP partnership with the International Service Center for serving refugees.

The SCPa Works Fair Chance Hiring and Reentry Programming has been widely embraced by criminal justice system partners in the incorporation of a cognitive behavioral curriculum specifically designed for individuals with criminal justice system involvement who are searching for employment. While traditional workforce services address the various needs of individuals searching for employment, they often place too little focus on addressing the internal beliefs and perceptions that lead to a lack of job retention and continued recidivism. Through cognitive behavioral interventions, service providers are able to adequately address work, conflict, and relationship building. By incorporating this programming into existing workforce services, reentrants are better prepared to obtain and maintain employment. University of Cincinnati Correctional Institute's Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions for Employment curriculum will be used for group sessions.

"Designed for criminal and juvenile involved individuals in moderate to high need in employment. The curriculum integrates cognitive-behavioral interventions with more traditional employment approaches. The program teaches individuals how to identify and manage high-risk situations related to obtaining and maintaining employment. Heavy emphasis is placed on skill-building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skill development for the work environment. Using a modified closed group format with multiple entry points, the curriculum is designed to allow for flexibility across various service settings and intervention lengths. This curriculum was developed in partnership with MDRC." - *University of Cincinnati Correctional Institute*

The five program modules focus on motivational enhancement, cognitive restructuring, social skills/emotional regulation skills, problem-solving, and success planning. The CBI-EMP contains 30 sessions for about 45 dosage hours. This curriculum can be expanded for higher-risk/needful offenders by adding advanced practice sessions to any modules. Each session is intended to be delivered in approximately 90 minutes.

Workforce System Alignment with Local Economic Development Activities

Capital Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC) has actively fostered communication links between SCPa Works' employer-focused endeavors and initiatives spearheaded by Partners for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) directed toward meeting business demands. This entailed arranging frequent meetings and providing a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on prevailing needs and obstacles. A sequence of task force dialogues was coordinated, enabling SCPa Works representatives, local businesses, and PREP partners to exchange perspectives on workforce needs and industry trends.

One such example is the Cradle to Career Alliance, a collective impact effort, convening for the Harrisburg Region, to align businesses, schools, and community organizations to develop and sustain a vibrant workforce in the region. The Alliance is to support existing work, define and assist with gaps, and create accessible support services through partnership and collaboration. The Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC is the guiding partner of the Alliance alongside the Partnership for Career Development and the Capital Area Intermediate Unit.

In addition to honing expertise in assessing the labor market and identifying business sector opportunities, SCPa Works builds innovative entrepreneurial ecosystems throughout South Central PA. As an active member of the South Central Pennsylvania Partnerships for Regional Economics Performance (PREP), SCPa Works partners with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCEC) providing real-time data on labor market demands and skill gaps through the Business Services Team.

Section 4.3

4.3. Business and Employer Program Support - What services, activities, and program resources will be provided to businesses and employers in the local area? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(3). Reviewed by ATO, BWPO, OVR, and UC]

Business Services Team:

The SCPa Works specialized Business Service team comprises one vendor who delivers the Business Services to all programs with an integrated approach to reduce duplicative employer fatigue. Working collaboratively to outreach to employers and PA CareerLink® partners, workforce agencies, economic development, K-12/higher education, and other community groups that invest in and implement business-facing workforce initiatives through the Regional Business Services Team (RBST) group.

The Business Services Department is a driving force in workforce development across South Central Pennsylvania. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of supporting economic growth and workforce readiness.

In 2024, the SCPa Works Business Services Team successfully engaged with 1,923 new businesses, broadening the network of employers served by SCPa Works. In addition, the Business Services Team established 65 Paid Work Experience (PWE) sites, providing hand-on job experience to participants. In July and August of 2024 alone, 34 youth were provided PWEs with local employers.

PWE is a required element of Opportunity Youth within the SCPa Works service area. PWE ensures that Opportunity Youth participants receive applicable workforce assessments including CareerScope, O*NET, and additional assessments to identify feasible work experiences for each youth participant. Assessment results are individualized so that career advisors can easily pinpoint an Opportunity Youth participant's industry aptitude and career interests. The assessment results serve as the key source of data entered into the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) where career advisors create Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for Opportunity Youth participants. The ISS is utilized to track goal attainment, training outcomes, and employment placement while actively encouraging Opportunity Youth participant accountability as they professionally evolve through the workforce development system. This journey begins with applicable PWE.

The SCPa Works region is well-positioned for future economic growth to include excellent opportunities to chart a course for sustainable expansion. The population is growing, businesses are moving into the region, key sectors and industries such as TDL (Transportation, Distribution, Logistics, and Healthcare) are growing, and technological advancement will provide opportunities for new occupations and markets to emerge in the region. With regional growth and expansion as it relates to people, business, and jobs, SCPa Works consistently creates applicable training opportunities for participants who are then matched with employment opportunities based on market demand.

In addition, the Title I Business Services Team hosted 30 PA CareerLink® job fairs further increasing employer outreach and access to available workforce development participants. The Business Services Team attended an additional 56 job fairs, providing valuable opportunities for job seekers and employers to connect directly.

During the rolling four quarters ending March 31, 2024, our PA CareerLink® partners provided essential workforce development services to a unique count of 5,826 Title I and Title III customers. WIOA Title I and Wagner Peyser Title III staff helped job seekers across South Central Pennsylvania secure meaningful employment and build sustainable careers.

Metric (Title I & Title III) By Q2, Post-Exit	
Unique customers served	5,826
Individuals gaining employment	4,347
Average earnings	\$8,782
Total estimated annual earnings	\$152,703,428

[2024 SCPa Works Annual Report]

Regional impact is evident in the 4,347 individuals who successfully gained employment by the second quarter, after exiting with average earnings of \$8,782 during that period. The total estimated annual earnings for those employed in the second quarter alone reached a significant \$152,703,428, highlighting the far-reaching economic impact of SCPa Works and its partners on the regional economy.

Also, in 2024, the South Central PA CareerLink® service delivery system surged with momentum, welcoming 18,754 new job seeker accounts. This influx represents a wave of individuals seeking career opportunities, upskilling, and personalized support to launch or advance their careers. Each new account marks a step toward meaningful employment, highlighting the pivotal role in driving economic prosperity across the region.

In addition, 236 new employers registered through South Central PA CareerLink®, expanding the network of businesses seeking top talent. These partnerships are essential in bridging the gap between job seekers and employers, driving economic growth, and providing local companies with the skilled workforce they need to thrive. Each new employer registration strengthens the region's job market, offering more opportunities for meaningful employment.

With the launch of the Community Access Points and Referral Partner Organizations throughout the region, SCPa Works elevated public positioning and expanded workforce development awareness to multiple employers, reaching businesses across the region to include rural Perry and Juniata Counties where WIOA and TANF Youth participants engaged in and completed paid work experiences in 2024.

The SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team, in partnership with the Title I WIOA Youth program, Crispus Attucks, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), engaged 70 participants and issued 13 internal referrals for enhanced services.

Employer Engagement Data:

Employer engagements and interactions are captured through data collection and entry into CWDS. PA CareerLink® one-stop services are presented during each new employer engagement event to ensure the registration of new employers into the PA CareerLink® system.

The SCPa Works Business Services Department has been a driving force in reaching Opportunity Youth across the South Central region. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing

tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of reaching and engaging Opportunity Youth.

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Sector partnerships/industry-specific initiatives:

- **Manufacturing** is a critical sector in the SCPa Works region that contributes the highest proportion of regional GDP and is an industry that is rapidly aging out key occupations over the next 5- 10 years.
- **Healthcare** one of the fastest growing sector in the region and one with the highest occupational gap (Healthcare practitioners), SCPa Works recognizes the Healthcare Industry as one of the top priority industries in the region. Between 2019 and 2023, the South Central region saw a 5.8% increase in healthcare and social assistance jobs, with roughly 109,000 jobs in 2023 (10% higher than the national average). By 2033, there will be an estimated 126,000 jobs in the healthcare industry. (*Lightcast, 2024*)
 - Out-of-School Youth (also referred to as Opportunity Youth in this RFP) are recognized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and SCPa Works as a priority population for workforce and education services. Opportunity Youth (defined in the RFP scope of work section as OSY) often need significant community support and facilitated access to workforce services. Frequently lacking education beyond high school and limited formal work experience, the perception of attainable job opportunities may be limited. Through this RFP, SCPa Works seeks to fulfill employer demand and provide pathways to family-sustaining wages for opportunity youth.
- **Information Technology** is a growing industry group that spans health, manufacturing, finance/banking, and professional services. This industry has a low unemployment rate and many “opportunity occupations” well-positioned for career pathway growth.
- **Construction and Building Trades** is a critical industry with a growing demand for labor. Provides job opportunities for a variety of careers and backgrounds. We have launched the 2023 establishment of the South Central Construction Industry Partnership.

Business Engagement Services Function

- Each staff member who is a part of the local region's Business Services team is responsible for entering all case notes and employer services on the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). Entering valid data into CWDS allows transparency between partners and will aid in eliminating the duplication of employer outreach and services.
- In addition to CWDS reporting, the Business Services Team who operate within Tile I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, TANF, and EARN responsible for submitting a monthly employer and job seeker outreach report. The accumulation of data entered in the outreach report is specific to the funding streams the team operates within, as well as collaborative efforts with PA CareerLink® employment services staff.

CAP Outreach, Business Services, Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion

Increasing Work Experience Opportunities through Community Access Points (CAP)

In 2024, having applied the Knovva research project results to resolve workforce development system gaps, SCPa Works identified a need to meet Opportunity Youth within the communities in which they lived. This insight launched an initiative to expand access to and the effectiveness of Community Access Points, referred to as CAPs, as strategic hubs to reach Opportunity Youth within home-based communities. Opportunity Youth are disconnected from the opportunity to explore and engage in traditional educational or workforce development programs. CAPs provide a flexible and accessible entry point for youth who face barriers to employment, whether it's transportation, lack of engagement with formal institutions, a need for childcare, hunger, primary education needs, addiction, reentry, and other challenges. CAPs establish services that are more visible and accessible than traditional workforce development service sites, increasing the likelihood of Opportunity Youth seeking out and receiving the support they need.

Community Access Points (CAP) emerged from the idea that everyone should be within 15 minutes walking distance of the opportunity to improve their lives. As a place-based workforce development strategy, CAPs meet individuals where they are, build trust through community relationships, and eliminate common barriers to accessing the traditional brick-and-mortar workforce system. The SCPa Works CAP strategy tackles the challenges of accessibility head-on and directs resources to those most in need of services.

To roll out the CAP program from concept to implementation, SCPa Works maintained a positive and flexible approach to a theory of change that allowed for growth through trial and error. Using the data-driven outreach strategy to connect with Opportunity Youth and demographic and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, SCPa Works engaged the CAP Outreach Team to drive the establishment of CAPs across the South Central PA region. The geographical diversity of the eight-county service region of SCPa Works and the region's demographic diversity and economic inequality increased the potential of CAPs to expand access and direct resources more efficiently.

Using GIS mapping to pinpoint effective CAP sites and measure each site's 15-minute walkable distance footprint, SCPa Works dissected the eight-county service region, narrowing areas of the region where access to workforce development services was limited.

Upon the initial launch of the CAP program, 16 sites were identified within the region, established, and equipped with access to workforce development services. York County served as one of the pilot areas within the region, reflecting more than 50,000 residents per square mile and 16 bus routes to enable residents access to services. Before the CAP program roll-out, SCPa Works ensured that CAP sites were

established throughout the county. SCPa Works Strategic Development Department combined GIS data and public transportation data to ensure that all access points were relevant and could provide services to residents within a 15-minute walk to a center, agency, or organization. The Strategic Development Department gathered demographic data to include Black county residents, Indigenous residents, and residents who identified as people of color. The data concluded that up to 20,000 minority residents lived within a one-mile radius in some parts of the county. The study included youth populations who were more apt to seek workforce development services within a 15-minute walk from a home base. GIS mapping revealed that upwards of 9,000 youth lived within a one-mile radius in areas throughout York County. This included those youth living in poverty, without a high school diploma, residents identifying as people of color, and those living with a disability. The same research points were applied to Adams County, the second area where SCPa Works piloted CAP programming. Adams County is considered a rural area within South Central PA, and it also recorded areas of the county reflecting more than 9,000 youth residents within a one-mile radius.

The data launched a full CAP Outreach investment into forging relationships with organizations and agencies throughout the South Central PA region. This was a first in history for SCPa Works to evaluate and advance a program based on data-driven research that promoted and impacted the region's workforce development system. SCPa Works has trailblazed programming that will continue to define and improve the value of the workforce system as a whole.

In 2024, in partnership with Crispus Attucks, the SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team engaged 70 Opportunity Youth participants in a PA CareerLink® overview, resulting in 13 internal referrals to PA CareerLink® partners, including the WIOA Youth Program, BWPO, and OVR to address the needs of workforce development participants with disabilities. This has laid the groundwork for a program exhibiting exponential growth potential, and SCPa Works seeks to continue to increase the number of CAP locations per county through 2025.

Community Outreach:

The One-Stop Operator's outreach initiative resulted in connections with a multitude of participants across the region, showcasing the vital role of place-based workforce development. By establishing and implementing more than 70 local CAPs and Referral Partner Organizations, PA CareerLink® site services have expanded to reach Opportunity Youth in all eight counties of the SCPa Works service region.

Expanding collaboration between partners beyond those located within the facility is essential to ensure a seamless service experience for participants. Inevitably, services and resources extend far beyond the walls of a single location. By fostering partnerships with external organizations, experts, and support systems, SCPa Works will connect with a broader range of resources, knowledge, and services that are critical to meeting participants' needs.

This growth allows for the exchange of information, expertise, and resources, which can help address challenges that may not be fully covered by the immediate team at the facility. Whether it's bringing in specialized knowledge, handling overflow needs, or offering remote support, working with external partners broadens the capacity to serve participants with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The SCPa Works Business Services Department has been a driving force in reaching Opportunity Youth across the South Central region. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of reaching and engaging Opportunity Youth.

Registered Apprenticeship

SCPa Works embeds a focus on apprenticeship within the State's workforce system by requiring the training of frontline staff on the apprenticeship model with an emphasis on the unique value of on-the-job learning, WIOA-funded related technical training, and participant choice of multiple industry-specific, long-term, sustainable career opportunities. SCPa Works defines the roles that PA CareerLink® staff play in promoting and supporting registered apprenticeship through the SCPa Works Registered Apprenticeship Flow and Process. A key resource for frontline staff in the registered apprenticeship effort is the utilization of the *Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Desk Guide for PA CareerLink® Staff*.

This guide provides PA CareerLink® staff with a comprehensive overview of strategies to connect job seekers and employers to Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs. It outlines practical steps for leveraging various WIOA funding streams to support RA programs, subject to local policies, procedures, and available funding. Additionally, the guide offers detailed instructions on how staff can contribute to achieving targeted WIOA performance indicators and goals within the SCPa Works service area.

The ATO provides the *Registered Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide*. This guide is designed to assist SCPa Works Business Services Representatives and Apprenticeship Navigators in mapping and supporting the apprenticeship ecosystem within the region. The guide provides a structured approach for identifying regional apprenticeship assets, gaps, and opportunities, enabling SCPa Works to develop targeted strategies that strengthen the local apprenticeship infrastructure. The guide offers practical guidance for aligning apprenticeship efforts with regional workforce priorities and for fostering partnerships that expand access to apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented populations. Ultimately, the guide supports SCPa Works Programs teams in creating a more inclusive and sustainable pipeline that connects individuals to high-quality career pathways through Registered Apprenticeship.

By equipping staff with this knowledge and multiple resources found at the ATO website, as well as multiple desk aids available on CWDS, the SCPa Works frontline workforce staff easily and effectively integrate apprenticeship into its service delivery, expanding opportunities for job seekers and helping employers build a skilled talent pipeline. CWDS how-to guides provide frontline staff with access to clear, concise, step-by-step instructional materials related to administering all aspects of WIOA-funded registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship. The ATO website provides materials that comprise an overview of how registered apprenticeship benefits job seekers, employers, and required WIOA outcomes. In addition to providing a wealth of information, training, and education, the ATO also provides the Employer Needs Assessment for business services team members to use during employer engagement activities.

In addition to ATO and CWDS resources, Title I frontline staff have access to all registered apprenticeship policy and procedures with links to ATO processes, forms, desk aids, and how-to guides through the SCPa Works website, scpaworks.org.

Currently, SCPa Works boasts three registered apprenticeship opportunities in affiliation with the SCPa Works Industry Partnership (IP) program led by the SCPa Works Apprenticeship Navigator. The apprenticeships target two IT industry careers and one construction industry career. The Apprenticeship Navigator also works closely with the ATRs and attends regular meetings with the Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance.

Engage! Business Calling Program:

SCPa Works has been instrumental in representing the Engage! program in the community by providing profound expertise in workforce development and significantly enhancing community partners' understanding of the fundamental needs within target industry sectors. In 2024, SCPa Works contributions to the Engage! program have proven invaluable in efforts to support and adapt to the changing landscape of the business environment, marking a successful year of collaboration.

SCPa Works, in collaboration with the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce, hosted an Engage! Round Table on March 22nd, 2024, for construction leaders in Lebanon County. Employers reflected on both the opportunities and challenges shaping local industry today. Through collaborative efforts and leveraging resources, the attendees navigated through dynamics that led to an impactful engagement. First, by hosting the construction Engage! Round table at the Lebanon Chamber, members were able to grow industry partnerships with five new members. Following the meeting, one new member, the Carpenters Union hosted a Youth Tour at their apprenticeship and training facility in Lebanon. This event provided introductions with local school districts, and the Carpenters Union was able to host 16 local high school students at their facility, promoting apprenticeship programs. The Youth Tour also included a PA CareerLink® VR headset class on power tools for the construction industry. By harnessing identified opportunities, leveraging state-funded resources, collaborating with local chambers, connecting with school districts, and PA CareerLink® Youth services, SCPa Works has paved the way for a prosperous future for high school students interested in construction careers.

Business Services Team (BST) Organizational Structure

Monthly BST meetings are held with all internal/external stakeholders and partners to ensure information is properly shared in regard to employer/community outreach. The PA CareerLink® Business Services Team shares calendars specific to scheduled employer outreach. Engagements that require the collaboration of additional partners are discussed at the time of the request and are reviewed during the monthly BST meeting. The goal of the monthly BST meetings and overall communication between partners is to de-duplicate efforts of employer and community outreach. The BST coordinates monthly with the PA CareerLink® One-Stop Operator, site administrators, and the SCPa Works Business Manager. This regularly scheduled meeting empowers site administrators as key facilitators in providing administrative and operational updates on each PA CareerLink® site throughout the service area. Updates include facility foot traffic, UC engagements, physical plant operations, new partner engagements, past and future calendar events, and content regarding CAP sites to include newly launched CAP sites. The BST meeting also covers content on participant referrals, external job/career fairs, rapid response events, and additional components of operational facets surrounding the PA CareerLink® facility and service management.

The SCPa Works Business Services Manager provides local board updates to include RFP/RFQ statuses, the development of vendor scopes of work, upcoming board meeting dates, labor market participation rate, industry/occupational trends, and employer trends including open positions, average per county wage according to job postings, top employer per job posting, top occupations per job posting, top skills/education/experience per job posting, updates on new local board partnerships and initiatives relative to PA CareerLink® ecosystem.

BST meetings also include WIOA staff members who provide the following input:

- Title I Staff (WIOA Adult / Youth) - Provides status of enrollments, new board-driven initiatives, staffing updates

- Title II Staff—Provides updates on current programs/resources and new PY-specific programs. It also provides an update on staffing and discusses the Title II Summit, which takes place bi-annually.
- Title III Staff - Provides updates on new employer CWDS registrations, monthly RESEA report, status of job seeker referred employment services, veteran-specific outreach

Meeting Employer Needs

SCPa Works supports employer needs in our community in a number of ways:

- Engage Business Outreach Program
 - Collaborates with Capital Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC) and local chambers of commerce;
 - Engages with C-level employer executives throughout the local communities;
 - Conducts regional workforce outreach through focus groups and one-on-one meetings with employers and industry sectors for nine counties;
 - Collaborates with economic development organizations, chambers, and state agencies to host focus groups; and
 - Main Street Business walks to support local communities.
- Industry Partnership Sectors include;
 - Manufacturing, IT, and Construction
 - Entrepreneurs & Innovators
 - Education K-12 & Higher Education
 - OVR
 - Justice-impacted
 - ALICE population
 - Redocracy
 - VR Headsets
 - Justice-impacted communities
- Apprenticeship Programs include:
 - IT Industry Sector Group Registered Apprenticeship
 - PA CareerLink®
 - Individual employers
- Strengthen linkages between Businesses, Industry Partnerships, and education partners through the PA CareerLink® workforce system programs and training opportunities that include:
 - Job seekers
 - Youth programs
 - Justice-impacted programs
 - Apprenticeships & WIOA funding

Rapid Response

SCPa Works maintains a critical focus on rapid response strategy development and implementation in alignment with Rapid Response Services (RRS) through a partnership with Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO). The SCPa Works approach to coordinating workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response services is designed to assist workers facing permanent business closure or mass layoff at a plant, facility, enterprise, or a natural or other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation. Through the partnership with BWPO, this program aims to promptly, efficiently, and effectively assist dislocated workers in obtaining reemployment. SCPa Work's rapid response program implementation aims to provide immediate, on-the-ground support to workers and employers to minimize the social and economic impact of workforce reductions and an excess of job vacancies throughout the region.

SCPa Works, through the work of Title I contractors, partners, and in-house program management, maintains a dedicated commitment to the U.S. Department of Labor's ten quality principles of rapid response, which are also found in Section 4 of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Workforce System Guidance RRS1, Rapid Response Process and Procedures (*January 8, 2024*). In accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 03-23 and 2 CFR 200, Subpart E, SCPa Works adheres to allowable costs related to effectively and equitably conducting outreach to meet the needs of and to better engage businesses and job seekers during a mass layoff, company downsizing, and a cease of business scenario.

To ensure fast-acting plans are launched under the duress of a mass layoff or business closure, SCPa Works adheres to the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), a U.S. labor law that protects employees, their families, and communities by requiring that covered employers provide a 60-day notice of plant closing and mass layoffs. Employers must file a WARN notice with the state when a business or plant expects to lay off 50 or more workers at a single site. The filing of a WARN notice triggers early intervention from the BWPO Rapid Response team to the SCPa Works Business Services Manager, at which point strategic planning for outreach and support is initiated. This early intervention allows employers and workers to communicate about worker concerns, take advantage of Title I workforce system services and opportunities, initiate partner collaboration, and identify, design, and manage layoff aversion and incumbent worker strategies. During a rapid response scenario, SCPa Works links partner-based initiatives such as Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs, Community Access Points (CAPs) place-based services, SCPa Works Business Services relationship management oversight, and Outreach Team specialists. Working in unison through daily communication, rapid response teams reduce worker absenteeism and provide workers and employers with a stress-free environment to identify and implement solutions. This proactive approach enables Title I staff and team members, in collaboration with Title III partner programs and additional service providers, to engage workers in services and training before the layoff occurs.

The SCPa Works Business Services Manager maintains a proactive partnership with the BWPO to identify an influx of dislocated workers at any time. In addition to the BWPO, SCPa Works manages working relationships and productive relationships with PA CareerLink® staff and partners, the PA CareerLink® One-Stop Operator, the PA CareerLink® Business Services Manager, and the BWPO PA CareerLink® Managers. All rapid response partners regularly receive a WARN notice report from the Statewide Rapid Response team. To best serve the region's workforce needs during economic disruption and employment upheaval, SCPa Works relies on the close relationships among the entities of the PA CareerLink® ecosystem of partners. Although the rapid response strategy is developed to be unique to each scenario's demand, industry, and number of workers needing workforce services, the general flow of operations pivots on the relational quality of each partnership. In addition to the relationships directly managed and maintained by SCPa Works, the success and outcomes of rapid response initiatives in the South Central region rely heavily on the connection of external partner agencies that coordinate staff and services to comprise the statewide Rapid Response Team (RRT). The RRT comprises coordinators and staff from local partner agencies that work together to provide rapid response services to employers and dislocated workers, as described in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry Rapid Response Process and Procedures Workforce System Guidance.

Adjacent to the forging and maintenance of internal partnerships, the SCPa Works Business Services Manager cultivates and maintains relationships with local small and large-scale businesses across many industries. This proactive work lays the foundation for times of workforce turbulence. These external relationships with businesses and employers serve as a direct pipeline to Title I benefits. Employers have

direct access to the SCPa Works Business Services Manager, which impacts rapid response strategy development and expedites strategy implementation. In addition, the SCPa Works Programs Team is instantly onboard and maintains direct contact with the Business Services Manager. Together, the two internal teams maintain constant contact and communication with external partners to ensure the fast-tracking of eligible workers into training, education, employment, and all access to basic career services through the PA CareerLink® system.

Workers affected by layoffs are introduced to the resources available at PA CareerLink® centers through direct referrals from employers, the SCPa Works Business Services Team, non and for-profit agencies, government agencies, and adjacent workforce system organizations. PA CareerLink® centers offer job placement services, skills training, and workshops to ensure individuals can re-enter the workforce following a layoff.

Partner collaboration throughout the South Central region enables a network of service providers that offer abundant and accessible resources for employers and workers. The PA CareerLink® Regional Business Services team and the One-Stop Operator collaborate and coordinate consistently when a rapid response alert comes to the team. The SCPa Works Business Services Manager, PA CareerLink® One-Stop Operator, PA CareerLink® Business Services team, and the BWPO PA CareerLink® Managers receive weekly to WARN notice reports the SRR team provides bi-weekly. Once the report is reviewed, it is forwarded to the appropriate PA CareerLink® ecosystem of partners who provide strategic input relating to the availability and accessibility of resources for employers and workers experiencing the effects of a layoff or downsizing of a business. The One-Stop Operator disperses the WARN Notice report to the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators team and the PA CareerLink® Outreach representatives. Open channels of communication and astute attentiveness to the conditions of employers and workers are vital to implementing strategic action plans surrounding the urgency of dislocated workers in the South Central PA region.

Under the duress of a layoff aversion, the statewide RRS and PA CareerLink® Business Services teams collaborate on respective Layoff Aversion programs and identify the best possible outcome for the employer. When an employee layoff aversion is a benefit of interest to an employer in the SCPa Works service area, the PA CareerLink® Business Services team refers the employer to the SCPa Works Business Services Manager or Industry Specialist who guides the employer through the Title I Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program application. The SCPa Works IWT application is easily accessed at scpaworks.org under the Employers tab on the website. IWT funding does not require existing employees to be WIOA-eligible. This element expedites funding for skills training to avoid layoffs. The SCPa Works IWT application aligns with the SCPa Works ITW Policy, which details how an employer can avoid a layoff through upskilling employees and preparing existing employees for an increased scope of work and advanced professional level. Rather than lay off a collection of workers due to a lack of skillsets, SCPa Works makes it possible for employers to retain a workforce of individuals who are willing and eligible for continued training and education applicable to the employer's needs.

When SCPa Works is alerted of a business or plant closure or the pending downsize of a company, all partners collaborate to assess the full-spectrum effects of a mass layoff. The PA CareerLink® Business Services Team conducts on-site visits to the business location. These visits allow members of the RRT to assess the specific needs of the affected workers during a cease of business or downsizing phase and enable the Business Services team to determine what types of services will be most helpful. The team meets with company representatives, union officials (if applicable), and local workforce development partners to discuss available resources.

The SRR team, PA CareerLink® Business Services team, PA CareerLink® Outreach team, and the SCPa Works Business Services Business Manager work collectively to mitigate the negative impacts of layoffs. This rapid response team of workforce system professionals offers workers new opportunities through job retention with upskilling, re-employment, and career development to identify and work toward a new career pathway in the wake of a layoff experience. This process is crucial to workforce development and economic stability, especially during large-scale layoffs or economic downturns.

PA CareerLink® service delivery system and LVERs

SCPa Works supports the PA CareerLink® Local Veterans' Employment Representative staff (LVERs) in the administration and operations of the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP). Through effective communication and partnership with the BWPO, Title I staff have the prompt availability of the LVERs for referrals and inquiries on serving Veterans in the PA CareerLink® career centers. The program ensures the education and promotion of hiring veterans in the South Central PA region.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

WIOA Title IV staff offer employers various services to improve the inclusion and participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. These services include reasonable accommodation consultation, OJT, referral on tax credits or deductions, consultation on ADA accessibility standards, and guidance on retaining current employees following an accident, injury, or disability. OVR meets the needs of businesses by providing no-cost services, including ADA Awareness training, ADA Accessibility evaluations, accommodation recommendations for current employees, and retention services. OVR also continues to partner with employers with On-the-Job Training (OJT), providing 100% wage reimbursement to businesses that hire OVR customers. OVR also works with companies by connecting students involved in OVR's pre-employment transition services. Services under pre-employment transition services include programs like paid work experiences, job shadowing, and workplace tours.

Section 4.4

4.4. Continuous Improvement - Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local area employers, workers and job seekers. [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(i). Reviewed by OS and BWPO]

Proven Success

During Program Year 23-24, SCPa Works collectively served 384 WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) participants. Of that population, 54 participants earned credentials through the completion of subsidized training with the application of an Individual Training Account (ITA). In partnership with PA CareerLink® partners and local training providers who have applied to be included on Pennsylvania's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), SCPa Works Title I partners were able to place 141 of the total Adult and DW participants into employment.

Through the training providers partnerships, in 2024, the PA CareerLink® Title I partners sent participants to training programs that led to employment in high-priority occupations. A new addition to the ETPL is the Pennsylvania Petroleum Association Technical Education Center (PPATEC). PPATEC offers leading hands-on training solutions for the HVAC and energy industry.

PPATEC is the trade school of the Pennsylvania Petroleum Association, which represents 450+ companies in the HVAC and energy industries through the commonwealth. The program curriculum was designed by PPA employer members who are interested in hiring program graduates, forging a partnership that ensures success for WIOA participants in the South Central PA region.

This unique workforce development program is subsidized by WIOA Adult and DW grant funding through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and results in participants attaining an industry-recognized credential and acquiring specialized skills necessary to excel within the workforce. The skill sets gained by participants through the application of ITAs provide the opportunity for competitive employment package offerings and long-term career growth. The ETPL-approved programming is a 10-week HVAC & Energy Professional Program that covers electrical, air conditioning systems, heating systems, and propane distribution systems. To date, 13 participants have completed the training with PPATEC in the South Central PA workforce service region.

Individual Training Account (ITA): *(SCPa Works ITA Policy #P-17-2.22)*

An ITA is designed to provide services to participants who need training that prepares the individual for employment in an HPO (High Priority Occupation) within the South Central region. Based on individual assessment and funds available, an ITA can be awarded to eligible WIOA Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Out-of-School Youth (OSY) ages 18-24. Training services are available to those participants who cannot find employment or need upskilling to ensure a self-sustaining wage. WIOA participants who receive funds for training have been assessed by Title I staff and determined to have specific skill-related barriers to employment. Training programs selected for ITAs must be within high-priority occupations (HPOs) based on current labor market information and emphasize employment opportunities within the South Central Region. Training shall lead to an industry-recognized certificate, competency, or skill recognized by employers. SCPa Works encourages participants entering training to focus on certain occupations within the industries identified (HPOs) as most applicable to the Region's labor market. The target industries are Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation, Construction, and Information Technology. Training providers must be determined as Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) and listed on the Eligible Training

Provider List (ETPL). The ETPL is determined, compiled, and distributed by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. ITA-funded training programs cannot exceed 12 months. The maximum amount allocated for an ITA within the SCPa Works service area is \$7,500.00.

Workforce System Processes

Assessing employers' workforce needs is a top priority for the Title I Business Service Team. SCPa Works Title I contractors map career pathways that lead to top employers in the region and use the career pathway maps in discussions with participants when considering what career path would be appropriate.

The ETPL is a key element in ensuring that participants have access to an array of quality, knowledgeable training providers. SCPa Works commits to ensuring the availability of a sufficient number of these quality providers. The ETPL serves as a critical resource that connects job seekers with programs to suit the needs and interests of both parties while aligning with the demands of the labor market and employer needs.

To ensure the utilization of the best training providers possible, SCPa Works collaborates with the Commonwealth to ensure that each provider's curriculum and program outcomes are in alignment with the high-demand occupations needed for the South Central PA region. These industries include healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, hospitality, and construction. SCPa Works assesses training providers for proven track records of measurable outcomes. Training providers new to the South Central PA region are required to understand the need to report outcomes data at the end of the fiscal year. In addition, providers must reapply for acceptance on the ETPL annually.

The SCPa Works Compliance team monitors all training providers who provide training through an ITA. The oversight is conducted annually to ensure that all training providers are within local, state, and federal regulatory compliance. Regular training provider review and assessment also enables curriculum adjustments to be made as needed. Another component of keeping abreast of the ETPL is to ensure that there is an abundance of quality training providers available in the region. Having this network of providers benefits both employers and job seekers and gives them skills, education, and individuals who are work-ready with in-demand skill sets to enter the workforce.

SCPa Works leverages Labor & Industry's policies for the ETPL to enhance the quality and quantity of training providers, in order to offer the most training opportunities possible to job seekers. A key aspect of this is being sure to actively engage with employers to identify emerging skill gaps and encourage providers to develop programs that address those gaps.

Using ETPL to Address Labor Market Skill Gaps

In a series of recent presentations to the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), and the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA), SCPa Works CEO Jesse McCree addressed state and local leaders on the transformative impact of artificial intelligence in the workforce system.

Using AI to identify skills gaps, align training with industry needs, and provide personalized career pathways, SCPa Works enhances responsiveness to the current labor market while positioning a workforce for sustainable, long-term growth. This integration of AI into workforce development is a significant advancement in identifying and addressing the skill gaps that exist between employer demands and under-skilled workers. It offers more precise, data-driven strategies that are scaled to meet the evolving needs of both workers and employers, ultimately leading to a more resilient and adaptable workforce system.

In a rapidly changing economic landscape, data is crucial for understanding emerging trends, identifying skill gaps, and predicting future workforce needs. Through the partnership with JFF, SCPa Works is enhancing its capacity to collect, analyze, and utilize data to inform decisions and strategies. This data-centric approach enables us to tailor programs to meet the region's specific needs, ensuring that we are responding to current demands and proactively preparing for future changes.

In 2024, SCPa Works launched an initiative through the established relationship with Business Education Partnerships. SCPa Works identified an untapped market of talent and, in doing so, connected local businesses, high schools, and community organizations to bridge the gap between this next generation of talent and local employers. Through 12 community-driven projects launched through data collection and analysis, SCPa Works, via the dedicated commitment of contracted vendors, empowered more than 2,000 students with career awareness activities, pre-apprenticeships, and skill-building opportunities. These activities laid the foundation for students to gravitate toward post-secondary education in alignment with local employer workforce needs.

Analyzing skills gaps between the labor force and industry is a core component of SCPa Works' workforce development programs, services, and initiatives. SCPa Works continuously monitors critical skills gaps to ensure the proper assistive resources are applied to effectively shorten or even diminish such gaps.

Skills gap data provides an overview of the supply and demand of specific skills and knowledge. It outlines the region's capacity to meet employer demands concerning specific skill sets within the South Central PA labor force. This data allows workforce development boards, training providers, educators, and other agencies and organizations to invest in the programs that contribute to meeting the needs of the most significant or critical skills gaps within the service area. This data is one of the essential evaluations as to the efficacy of investments and programs.

Partnering with Technology

SCPa Works coordinates and collaborates with many post-secondary institutions. At the same time, SCPa Works strives to cultivate a wide range of resources and work with as many diversified partners as possible. SCPa Works' role as stewards of public funds is to ensure training programs selected for ITAs must be within a High-Priority Occupation (HOP) based on current labor market information with an emphasis on employment opportunities within the South Central PA Region. Training leads to an industry-recognized certificate, competency, or skill recognized by employers. SCPa Works pilots new programs by working with a post-secondary institution, Career and Technical Centers (CTC), or other educational providers. Once the proof of concept is established, the opportunity is shared with other stakeholders in the region to replicate it in adjacent regions. A service area as vast as the SCPa Works region requires multiple locations for equal training opportunities to ensure ease and convenience for our service demographic.

SCPa Works partners with Career and Technical Centers throughout the region to identify common training needs and align curriculum. Meetings are essential to develop open dialog and discuss best practices. When necessary, SCPa Works brokers collaborative training opportunities with two or more training institutions, building a hybrid program that creates synergies for the regional industry and participants' best interests. SCPa Works partners with CTE schools that are Perkins V recipients whenever possible. SCPa Works strives to support Perkins V's work by enacting in-kind relationships with each recipient. This includes Perkins V plan evaluation, hosting of public information sessions, technical assistance, and High-Priority Occupation emphasizing emerging workplace trends. As each Perkins V-funded partner is required to host and manage an advisory council, SCPa Works is integrating these groups into our Industry Partnership efforts.

Programs funded through state, federal, and private grants within the South Central PA service region provide state-of-the-art equipment and capacity for adult education opportunities. SCPa Works partners with each county technology school to establish a seamless referral process. SCPa Works Community Access Points (CAPs) broaden the workforce development outreach, enabling increased access to PA CareerLink® services in all eight counties. SCPa participates in all regional Perkins V Act 134 activities, including attending quarterly/annual meetings and reviewing plans, and partners with Perkins V-funded programs for Adult education certification trainings. SCPa Works has made a strategic effort to support short-term industry-recognized HPO certifications.

SCPa Works partners with the following postsecondary educational institutions:

- § Harrisburg Area Community College
- § Harrisburg University
- § Central Penn College
- § Penn State
- § York College
- § Messiah College
- § Elizabethtown College
- § Shippensburg University

SCPa Works partners with the following CTE schools:

- § Dauphin County CTE
- § York County School of Technology
- § Dover High School CTE program
- § Lebanon County CTE Cumberland Perry CTE
- § Franklin County CTE
- § Adams County CTE

SCPa Works partners with the following organizations:

- § NuPaths
- § MASCPA
- § MANTEC
- § YTI

SCPa Works is also working closely with SCPa Works Title II partners to help build a stronger, more integrated system to serve job seekers and adult learners. Part of this strategy involves investing time and resources into a more cohesive plan to bolster co-enrollment levels between Title I and II.

SCPa Works is closely connected to the PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) schools, which provide high-quality, two and four-year degrees to students seeking Associate's or Bachelor's degrees. Conversations have begun about ways in which SCPa Works can build more vital pathways and pipelines for PA CareerLink® customers to CTCs, community colleges, and post-secondary institutions, including:

- § Short-term training
- § GED-to-college pathways
- § Badging and micro-credentialing
- § Collaborative space/equipment sharing

SCPa Works utilizes existing programs that constitute established, board-approved practices in place to provide the optimal level of service to eligible participants. With the addition and implementation of new

and registered apprentices into the WIOA service delivery platform, these existing foundational services will increase and grow the region as a whole. Since CWDS does not permit the duplication of service entry through astute State monitoring and review practices already in place, duplication of services across programs is not probable. In this same system of record, CWDS enables daily tracking opportunities through Ad-Hoc reporting, case noting, service record logs, and detailed performance documentation that is entered under due diligence by skilled service provider specialists. Quarterly reports are presented to the full board by the SCPa Works Programs Director and are board-approved through standardized voting procedures.

Registered Apprenticeship

In addition to reporting on WIOA-funded registered apprenticeships at full board meetings, SCPa Works provides regular vendor trainings that are open to BWPO, PA DLI, the ATO, employers, and partner agencies that are interested in learning more about registered apprenticeships within the SCPa Works service area.

SCPa Works administers funding for WIOA and TANF-eligible participants interested in registered apprenticeships. This is accomplished through an intake process to determine eligibility for individuals who can benefit from programs encompassing WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, WIOA OSY, TANF Youth, WIOA IWT, and WIOA ISY. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) are included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and training providers must be "ATO Approved" in the CWDS 2.0 system. To receive benefits, RAP participants must be WIOA or TANF eligible and actively enrolled in a WIOA or TANF program unless receiving training through WIOA Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), which does not require WIOA eligibility.

SCPa Works incorporates multiple WIOA/TANF funding options to offset and subsidize the costs associated with RAP and pre-RAP opportunities directly related to RAP. To support registered apprentices in South Central PA, SCPa Works ensures that all eligible apprentices receive the maximum allotment in training dollars, in addition to continuous case management services and eligible supportive services.

WIOA/TANF funding integration can include, but is not limited to:

1. The use of WIOA OJT funds for RAP on-the-job learning;
2. The use of WIOA ITA funds for RAP Related Technical Instruction (RTI);
3. The use of WIOA fund for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) within RAP;
4. The provision of WIOA/TANF Supportive Services funds for eligible RAP/Pre-RAP participants;
5. The integration of WIOA/TANF-funded Youth Paid Work Experience (PWE) funds and occupational skills training services for Pre-RAP.
6. The use of PWE funds for eligible WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers (DW) providing 12 weeks of paid work to determine whether a participant is a good fit to enroll in a registered apprenticeship program.

SCPa Works acknowledges all apprenticeship-related credentials earned within the standard WIOA 12-month training period as measurable skill gains in CWDS. Funding for registered apprenticeships is based on processes and procedures already in place for OJT, ITA, PWE, IWT, Occupational Skills Training, and Supportive Services. The only requirement for a participant to receive WIOA funding within the SCPa Works service area is that the participant must achieve all eligibility requirements for WIOA programs.

One-Stop, Title II, Title III Collaboration

At the start of 2025, the SCPa Works Program team met with Title II representatives and the PA

CareerLink® one-stop team to revise the referral process. This new referral initiative encompasses processes within each partner program and a universal referral form to be used by multiple referring partners, including Wagner Peyser Act staff. The new referral process initiative does not replace the referral system in CWDS; however, it provides each partner with relevant and unique information for each referral. The new SCPa Works referral system and the CWDS referral system create a natural checks and balances element so that no individual is overlooked for services across all partners within the South Central PA workforce development service delivery system. SCPa Works projects to have created the new referral process system in writing for a 2025 roll-out.

During a participant's WIOA/TANF enrollment process, an objective career-based aptitude assessment identifies an individual's strengths and barriers to employment or career enhancement. This assessment is part of a first tier of basic services for WIOA-eligible participants that include affirmative outreach (see Section 4.4), intake, orientation, initial assessment, job search assistance, job opening information, performance, and cost information on training providers, information on filing for unemployment compensation, and eligibility determination for education and job skills training.

This stage of enrollment includes the issuance of referrals to partner programs for participants to receive WIOA Title II services for individuals in need of a high school equivalency diploma (GED), individuals in need of attaining elevated math or English proficiency, and English Language Learners (ELL).

The O*NET assessment serves as an interest survey, a job skills assessment, and a basic aptitude test and is administered to measure the training-specific abilities of the job seeker. The O*NET assessment also provides Title I case managers with a measure of the skills gap between job seeker competencies and data that is pulled on labor market demands. The assessments identify areas where a participant requires intervention. For example, if a participant scores below the basic literacy level, results are explained to participants, and a referral is made to the partnering Title II provider for the blending of WIOA services. The assessment process enhances the journey a participant takes in choosing a career pathway. A participant signs a form stating they clearly understand the assessment and the jobs for which that individual is best suited based on individual assessments.

SCPa Works provides equitable access to services to various groups protected by Federal law and regulations, including, but not limited to, persons of different sexes, various racial and ethnic groups, religions, ages, individuals with disabilities, and limited English language proficiency. This affirmative outreach for the South Central region includes the following efforts to ensure SCPa Works services are accessible:

- Identifying agencies, organizations, non-profits, and other community-based organizations that serve specific populations and building key partnerships with those entities.
- Through these partnerships, SCPa Works provides outreach material, information, and programmatic access to various populations through braille, large print, audio assist, and TTY.
- Ensuring that customers at each PA CareerLink® site have opportunities to share their experiences about ways SCPa Works can improve service delivery.

Continuous Improvement Process Components

SCPa Works uses a continuous improvement process to enhance WIOA-funded workforce development services. This process focuses on improving One-Stop Centers, meeting workforce development needs,

and integrating various services. The SCPa Works Compliance team monitors activities that emphasize a continuous improvement process to enhance workforce development services, particularly Title I services, activities, and programming. This monitoring and review process includes assessing vendor risk, program outcomes, service effectiveness, staff performance, participant satisfaction, employer satisfaction, and training provider performance. Following all monitoring and review sessions, the SCPa Works Compliance Manager authors a monitoring report, risk assessment, and/or a request for corrective action to ensure continuous improvement across all aspects of Title I grant management and service delivery.

SCPa Works aims to continually improve One-Stop Center services to meet the needs of job seekers and employers, while promoting innovative strategies and achieving performance goals, which involve the regular assessment of service effectiveness, accessibility, and the need for innovation, as well as incorporating customer feedback and staff development. In addition, SCPa Works identifies and responds to technical assistance needs to support partners and ensure the successful implementation of WIOA-funded programs.

Section 4.5

4.5. Technology and Remote Access - Through the use of technology, how will the local board facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop service delivery system, including in remote areas? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(ii). Reviewed by DHS, OS, BWPO, OEO, OVR, UC, and PDE-ABE]

Digital and Social Media Outreach Campaign

Meeting a Critical Regional Need

South Central PA houses businesses and employers that face a significant need for skilled workers. Industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and construction are seeing an increase in job openings, but many employers struggle to find qualified candidates to fill positions. At the same time, Opportunity Youth—youth who are not currently enrolled in school and who are not working—represent a significant untapped resource for these employers. Many of these youth face barriers to employment, such as lack of work experience, limited skills, lack of access to resources, and disengagement from traditional educational pathways.

Research conducted by Knovva Academy during Program Year 2024 provided SCPa Works with quantified data on the targeted Opportunity Youth demographic. The Knovva report supplied SCPa Works with insight on building keyword gaps into SCPa Works digital content to ensure search engine optimization (SEO). This method enabled SCPa Works to create specific online content related to specific keywords, prompting a higher rank on search engines. Top-ranking keyword searches included “youth employment near me,” “youth job services,” “youth employment opportunity program,” and youth job programs near me.” The study compared SEO between SCPa Works and three out-of-state local workforce development boards (LWDB). For example, SCPa Works identified that the search phrase, “youth employment program near me,” was an online hit for a New York-based LWDB at a rate of 81 while SCPa Works could not produce data on the search term hit at the time of the study, meaning, SCPa works had zero hits on the search engine phrase or terms. This study prompted a substantial leap into the realm of SEO, online content development, digital material creation, and social media branding to establish a high number of content opportunities via online workforce development searches throughout the SCPa Works service area.

The Knovva report revealed that 33.3 percent of Opportunity Youth in South Central PA are under the age of 20, while a staggering 50 percent of Opportunity Youth are between the ages of 20 and 24. According to Knovva's research, exposure to employment and training opportunities occurs at a high rate through social media users between the ages of 18 and 24 years. This age demographic, coupled with the market analysis provided by Knovva, prompted the SCPa Works team to launch a digital and social media campaign to grab the attention of Opportunity Youth.

SCPa Works utilized the metrics produced by the Knovva research initiative and launched digital campaigns through collaboration with the OSO, PA CareerLink® communications teams, digital marketing, development technicians, and digital and social media site management.

Digital and social media campaigns made a significant impact on regional data, reaching approximately 18,000 accounts through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, with a high engagement rate of 20% interaction. These strategic efforts raised awareness of workforce development opportunities and activities increased a drive in participation, and expanded community and participant interest in crucial workforce programs that led to employment placement in high-demand industry sectors.

Branding became a priority for SCPa Works as a key element in digital and social media strategy. According to Knovva, it takes 50 milliseconds for social media content to impact a consumer. SCPa Works identified an aesthetically appealing media color palette to complement existing logos and designs. Messaging and content creation were established through a cohesive and communicative team process to ensure consistency in the branding and public messaging.

With targeted audiences identified, data collected and implemented, content created, and the branding design complete, SCPa Works launched a social media campaign to broaden the foundation of the workforce development system reach and increase the level of engagement in workforce development system activities in South Central PA. The strong branding and content strategy attracted more than 80 Opportunity Youth in 2024, which contributed to a surge in South Central PA CareerLink® sites documenting 18,754 new job seeker accounts, a testament to the public positioning of all six PA CareerLink® sites in the region.

The communications and outreach teams engage with Opportunity Youth through YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook comment section interaction to ensure that connections are established. Opportunity Youth seeking workforce development services. In addition, SCPa Works gathered additional data on Opportunity Youth stakeholders through the Knovva research project. Opportunity Youth stakeholders are individuals who come in contact with potential Opportunity Youth participants on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis and who want to see Opportunity Youth individuals succeed in education, training, and employment scenarios. Opportunity Youth stakeholders include teachers, athletic coaches, extracurricular activity leaders, school administrators, advocates, community organization or agency leaders, and family members. These individuals want to see the Opportunity Youth individuals in their lives find employment, establish independence, and improve their overall quality of life. This data prompted SCPa Works to reach Opportunity Youth stakeholders through LinkedIn and Facebook.

Paid Work Experience Expansion

SCPa Works has implemented an innovative Virtual Reality (VR) paid work experience program, enabling participants to explore various careers virtually and complete in-depth modules on specific fields of interest. Working individually with career advisors or within cohort groups, Opportunity Youth participants gain hands-on skills and real-world insights through VR simulations, complemented by presentations from employers and training providers. This approach offers a comprehensive experience that empowers participants to make informed career choices, assess long-term fit, and evaluate the potential value of further training or education.

SCPa Works supports sustained engagement by providing a bi-weekly stipend to eligible participants while completing VR modules. This incentive, along with financial support, encourages participant commitment while enabling participants to build essential skills for future careers, mirroring traditional, face-to-face PWE practices and stipend processes.

SCPa Works believes in pushing the boundaries of workforce development through technology. In 2024, the Programs Team introduced Transfer VR, an immersive virtual reality tool that takes career exploration to the next level. Participants can now step into the shoes of professionals across industries like Automotive, Aviation, Construction, Diesel Technology, Electrical Construction, Manufacturing, and Health Sciences.

This technology enables participants to experience real-world careers in a virtual environment, opening doors and sparking interest in pathways never before considered. Since rolling out VR, engagement and career exploration have surged across WIOA programming, driving impactful outcomes. SCPa Works will

continue to invest in further technology to create a platform upon which workforce services are engaging and dynamic.

Implementing GIS Mapping Technology

Through the establishment and implementation of more than 70 local CAPs and Referral Partner Organizations, PA CareerLink® site services have expanded to reach Opportunity Youth in all eight counties of the SCPa Works service region.

In 2024, having applied the Knovva research project results to resolve workforce development system gaps, SCPa Works identified a need to meet Opportunity Youth within the communities in which they lived. This insight launched an initiative to expand access to and the effectiveness of Community Access Points, referred to as CAPs, as strategic hubs to reach Opportunity Youth within home-based communities. Opportunity Youth are disconnected from the opportunity to explore and engage in traditional educational or workforce development programs. CAPs provide a flexible and accessible entry point for youth who face barriers to employment, whether it's transportation, lack of engagement with formal institutions, a need for childcare, hunger, primary education needs, addiction, reentry, and other challenges. CAPs establish services that are more visible and accessible than traditional workforce development service sites, increasing the likelihood of Opportunity Youth seeking out and receiving the support they need.

Utilizing GIS mapping to pinpoint effective CAP sites and measure the 15-minute walkable distance footprint for each site, SCPa Works dissected the eight-county service region, narrowing areas of the region where access to workforce development services was limited.

The data launched a full CAP Outreach investment into forging relationships with organizations and agencies through which PA CareerLink® one-stop services could be delivered to individuals in their own neighborhoods. This was a first in history for SCPa Works to evaluate and advance a program based on data-driven technological research that resulted in the promotion and impact of the region's workforce development system.

Within a year of program launch, the SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team engaged 70 Opportunity Youth participants in a PA CareerLink® overview, resulting in 13 internal referrals to PA CareerLink® partners, including the WIOA Youth Program, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to address the needs of Opportunity Youth with disabilities. This has been the groundwork for a program exhibiting exponential growth potential, and SCPa Works seeks to continue to increase the number of CAPs per county throughout the region.

Future Technological Advancement Projections

In a series of recent presentations to the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), and the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA), SCPa Works CEO Jesse McCree addressed state and local leaders on the transformative impact of artificial intelligence in the workforce system.

By using AI to identify skills gaps, align training with industry needs, and provide personalized career pathways, SCPa Works is enhancing responsiveness to the current labor market while positioning the workforce for sustainable, long-term growth. This integration of AI into workforce development is a significant advancement, offering more precise, data-driven strategies that can be scaled to meet the evolving needs of both workers and employers, ultimately leading to a more resilient and adaptable workforce system. Most importantly, SCPa Works views AI as a responsibility of workforce development

leaders to identify ways to use AI tools in an ethical way, to drive economic mobility, and to leverage these tools as economic mobility levers for those who are at the highest risk of being left behind in the digital divide.

With JFF's guidance, SCPa Works is exploring various funding opportunities, including federal and state grants, private-sector partnerships, and philanthropic contributions. By diversifying funding sources and braiding funding streams, WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers can be co-enrolled for an expanded pallet of available and allowable workforce system services.

Engagement in the Workforce Communities in Action cohort has resulted in a \$10,000 grant awarded by JFF and JP Morgan Chase, recognizing SCPa Works' commitment to workforce strategies that enhance economic mobility. This award recognizes SCPa Works' proven track record in advancing workforce development impact and serves as a catalyst for future endeavors.

Virtual Reality (VR) Integration in Pre-release Services:

Eligible pre-release participants who are completing a term of incarceration engage in SCPa Works Virtual Reality Program utilizing Transfr VR equipment and curriculum for career exploration and hands-on 'virtual' training in over 20 different in-demand occupations. The virtual reality experience is broken into two primary categories: career exploration and the virtual training facility. Through career exploration modules provided prior to a return to the workforce, participants have the opportunity to explore the following careers:

- o Health Sciences (Registered nurse, EMT, Surgical Technologist)
- o Architecture and Construction (Broadband Utility Construction, Electricians, etc.)
- o Information Technology (Network Technician)
- o Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security (Emergency Medical Technician)
- o Manufacturing (Welders, Semiconductor Manufacturing Technician)

Once a participant determines which career field they are most interested in, they are able to move on to the virtual training facility component. In the facility, participants take part in multiple real-life simulations, guided by a virtual coach. Participant progress is tracked through the virtual classroom, allowing for assessment of learning and skill gains. The following are examples of career modules in the training facility:

- Healthcare Clinic and Health Sciences Field (the clinic simulates what happens in a real-life healthcare facility, and the Health Sciences Field covers the fundamentals of healthcare careers with modules on patient care foundations, technical skills, safety, etc.)
- Manufacturing and Construction: The Skilled Trades (plant safety, construction safety, blueprint reading, precision measurement, mechatronics, etc.)
- Hospitality and Tourism (Culinary, Hospitality soft skills)
- Automotive (Auto body/collision repair, plant safety, precision measurement, etc.)
- Diesel Technology (Diesel vehicle maintenance, engine overhaul, electrical fundamentals, etc.)
- Aviation Maintenance (General skills, airframe skills, powerplant skills, etc.)
- Electrical Construction (Plant safety, fundamentals, etc.)

Leveraging Resources through Regional Partnerships

SCPa Works maintains regional partnerships with community agencies, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and healthcare organizations by initiating discovery meetings among partners that reveal new outreach and service delivery opportunities. Through conducting follow-up digital surveys at the completion of every partner meeting, SCPa Works grew confident in the increased awareness of PA CareerLink® one-stop services among new partnering organizations and affiliates. Specifically, the Youth Advisory Board highlighted awareness of PA CareerLink® services among high school juniors and seniors, aligning with updated PA Department of Education requirements.

Initiatives among education partners sourced a referral pathway for at-risk students, enabling the availability of education and training services, as well as case management and supportive services for eligible students. Secondary education and IU13 partners now include PA CareerLink® service awareness as a standing agenda item in local school district meetings with teaching staff, counselors, leadership meetings, IU13 staff, and regional advisory meetings. Students, family, and community exposure include curriculum development integration, social media, marketing, and continued public positioning via print and visual media avenues.

The SCPa Works Regional Workforce Board implemented two interactive kiosks in rural library locations. In addition, Lebanon County PA CareerLink® transitioned to a new location. Following a successful trial period with the kiosks at the library locations, both locations were deemed full-functioning CAP sites through which PA CareerLink® services are available to program participants. Both initiatives have increased participant and employer engagement through general foot traffic through the library locations and at the more easily accessible Lebanon County PA CareerLink® site.

SCPa Works' partnership with the Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce resulted in online exposure for PA CareerLink® services. The Chamber published an updated workforce page on the main chamber website, including an updated asset map and economic data reflecting the region's workforce households. Chamber membership is provided with PA CareerLink® business services packets, resulting in warm handoffs and ongoing engagement with new and current members.

As a key thought leader in the regional workforce development landscape, SCPa Works consistently aligns initiatives with the overarching goal of Jobs for the Future (JFF) to transform the U.S. education and workforce systems for equitable economic advancement. Over the past 40 years, JFF has played a pivotal role in removing barriers to quality employment and fostering better lives through partnerships across various sectors, focusing on opportunity creation, program quality, integrating learning with work and strengthening regional economies.

SCPa Works actively participated in the Workforce Communities of Action initiative supported by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation. This initiative champions community-centered solutions to workforce challenges, emphasizing collaboration, strategic problem-solving, and human-centered design principles.

In a rapidly changing economic landscape, data is a crucial tool for understanding emerging trends, identifying skill gaps, and predicting future workforce needs. Through the partnership with JFF, SCPa Works is enhancing its capacity to collect, analyze, and utilize data to inform decisions and strategies. This data-driven approach enables program development tailored to the specific needs of the South Central PA region, ensuring that South Central PA workforce development is proactively preparing for future changes.

In addition to matching employers with workforce hiring systems, processes, and talent through community partnerships, SCPa Works continues to unite community businesses, agencies, and

organizations through regular Local Management Committee (LMC) meetings where training and recruitment strategies and statistics are shared among partners. It is through regular communication and interaction with local community agencies that SCPa Works acquires a regional perspective on agency caseloads, opportunities for referrals, and collaboration among entities united for a common workforce development cause.

Artificial Intelligence Application for EARN

In 2023, SCPa Works piloted SkyHive as an artificial intelligence application that creates a profile for individual EARN participants. The application comprises the development of personalized career pathway maps based on participant assessments, interests, and goals. SkyHive enables career advisors to manage EARN cases through meaningful communication with participants while providing relevant and effective assistance with services that lead to education and employment goals. SkyHive maintains an up-to-date database containing Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) job postings, Pennsylvania's Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) postings, and additional employment opportunities that match a participant's interests and aptitudes. SkyHive data is updated daily to ensure that a participant's career pathway map illustrates an accurate customer profile, skill set, and steps necessary to achieve employment goals. Using SkyHive, participants can also access Job Scan and workshops available through the PA CareerLink® system. Overall, SkyHive expands participant access to job opportunities and postings. The Title I Business Services Team focuses on participant progress, relevant career pathway connects, and the ultimate goal of attaining long-term, sustainable employment that is meaningful to the participant.

Digital Literacy

To elevate access to PA CareerLink® services to all residents of South Central PA regardless of age or technical aptitude, SCPa Works launched a series of Digital Literacy Classes through partnerships with numerous Education Service Centers (ESCs) throughout the region through the award of a Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant.

SCPa Works recognized the job-skills gap in the region's workforce, which has created a shortage of qualified candidates for jobs. Low-wage workers are at great risk of being replaced in the labor market due to a lack of the skills necessary to compete for in-demand jobs. A lack of digital literacy skills can result in lost economic and personal opportunities. SCPa Work plays a vital role in closing this skills gap by providing education and training to those in need to prepare workers for the demands of the technological age. Even jobs not traditionally seen as "technology jobs" often require a degree of digital literacy. The National Skills Coalition states that "92 percent of all job ads require 'definitely digital' or likely 'digital skills.' This demand is present across all industries. Small businesses are just as likely as larger peers to seek workers with technology skills."

Eleven percent (29,544) of Cumberland County residents do not have access to a broadband internet subscription, and eight percent (21,486) reported not owning a computer. (*Census, 2022*) Cumberland County has a large non-native-speaking and non-white population of approximately 16% and a large elderly population (65 or older) of about 19%. (*DataUSA, 2021*) Between November 2022- January 2023,

There were 876 job postings in Perry, Cumberland, Adams, and Franklin County that referenced computer literacy as a necessary skill for the job. This is higher than the national average of 665. (*Lightcast*)

In response to labor market research and corresponding data, SCPa Works implemented digital literacy programming that provides residents of Cumberland, Perry, Adams, and Franklin Counties with Digital Literacy skills necessary to navigate daily life and compete in today's workforce. Services will be provided

through on-site face-to-face instruction, staffed computer labs, and off-site learning opportunities. Computer labs remain open during operating hours and are available to all learners. All centers are staffed for assistance with learning, software, and hardware issues, and more.

The SCPa Works digital literacy project focuses on technical, civic, communicative, collaborative, investigative, and productive skills that lead to greater success in the workplace. The activities that support this project include the following:

- Instructor-based learning
- Access to services & technology support
- Job search & Employability skills

The SCPa Works digital literacy project curriculum, NorthStar, integrates digital literacy and workplace skills into all coursework and will align with state and national standards for digital literacy, English language learning, and adult education. The lessons are aligned with career readiness standards and can be supplemented with additional online, self-directed instruction. The NorthStar curriculum is incorporated into workforce development training by introducing students to three main areas.

- Essential Computer Skills - Computer Basics, Internet Basics, Email, Windows OS
- Essential Software Skills - Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs
- Using Technology to Accomplish Tasks-Social Media, Information Literacy, Career Search Skills, and Your Digital Footprint

Information Technology (IT) Industry Partnership

The South Central IT Industry Partnership launched TechConnect.jobs, a resource for local IT professionals and students. The website includes workforce data on the South Central Region's IT sector to evaluate, analyze, and gauge workforce development projections and programming. In addition, the site includes videos highlighting the top five IT occupations and links to career pathways that provide detailed steps for students exploring IT industry career pathway development.

CWDS Data Entry

SCPa Works acknowledges a number of Title I staff members who are authorized to enter participant and employer data into CWDS. This includes PII, which is managed through the SCPa Works PII Policy and is located at scpaworks.org.

The following roles are tasked with entering a plethora of data into CWDS to ensure the proper eligibility, enrollment, measurable skill gains, primary indicators of performance, ETPL, and all additional points of data reporting are accurate and entered into the system in a timely manner. This ensures the provision of services for participants, employer engagement, local, state, and federal reporting, and data-driven initiatives. CWDS data entry is standardized and required for all PA CareerLink® programming.

- Intake Specialists
- Business Services Staff
- Case Managers and Career Advisors
- Training Specialists
- PA CareerLink® Site Administrators
- SCPa Works Policy Manager (IWT data)
- Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Contracted Service Providers
- EARN and TANF Team Members and Leadership

SCPa Works does not utilize non-Commonwealth-owned or leased case management information systems for WIOA, TANF, or EARN participant or employer data entry or storage. All WIOA, TANF, and EARN

participant cases and employer information are entered, stored, documented, and tracked through the standardized use of CWDS. SCPa Works and its contracted vendors retrieve WIOA, TANF, and EARN participant, program, and employer data from CWDS.

Language Accessibility

The SCPa Works One-Stop Operator and Site Administrators provide a language accessibility sheet to all patrons who enter PA CareerLink® career centers and who do not speak English as a native language. The sheet provides a statement of assistance in 25 different languages, ensuring that all who enter a PA CareerLink® job center receive access to the necessary services. The language notice includes a TTY number in each distinct language that can be called for translation services when a translator is not available.

In 2025, SCPa Works will purchase and pilot TranslateLive for the EARN Program. TranslateLive will be used for one-to-one translation with customers, workshops, and community outreach.

Physical Accessibility to Technology

The PA CareerLink® centers are equipped with computer labs for customer use, including ADA-accessible computer stations throughout the region. The ADA computer stations are equipped with a 21-inch monitor, adjustable height table, flexible monitor arm, standard keyboard, standard mouse, Kensington Ball Mouse, internal speakers, headset, and large-print low-vision. In addition, mini keyboards are available along with standard keyboards, standard pointer navigation mice, ergonomic chairs, and access to Windows accessibility features in all computers. PA CareerLink® centers all have ADA TTY devices and foam wrist rests with the digital option of ZoomText, JAWS, and Fusion, which combines ZoomText and JAWS, and provides access to all Windows accessibility features.

In addition, South Central PA CareerLink® centers house bilingual staff members and offer access to a multitude of language accessibility services to enable non-English-speaking customers to navigate the PA CareerLink® system to career pathway services.

Furthermore, SCPa Works has instituted a laptop-lending service for EARN participants who have barriers to transportation and childcare, hindering their ability to complete goal-oriented tasks in a brick-and-mortar facility. SCPa Works has also authored directives to support internet connectivity through supportive services and has expanded internet WIFI capabilities at every PA CareerLink® center parking lot.

ADA Compliance

SCPa Works remains in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensures this compliance within all facilities in which Title I services are delivered. In alignment with the ADA, SCPa Works accommodates reasonable accommodations to enable an otherwise qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodation where necessary. The physical ADA compliance of facilities ensures that newly constructed and altered state and local government facilities, places of public accommodation, and commercial facilities are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. This involves adherence to the [ADA Accessibility Guidelines \(ADAAG\)](#), which outlines specific standards for building design and construction that include accessible routes, parking, ramps and elevators, doors and entrances, restrooms, and regulatory signage.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation(OVR)

PA CareerLink® OVR staff are trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, comprehension, or education level. All requests for accommodations must

be addressed, and reasonable accommodations will be made available to customers as necessary to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility to all customers within the PA CareerLink®. Such accommodations will include but are not limited to an interpreter provided in real-time or, if not available, within a reasonable timeframe to any customer with a language barrier, assistive devices, such as screen-reading software programs (e.g., JAWS and DRAGON), and assistive listening devices.

Adult Education Distance Learning PDE supports a program dedicated to providing adult basic education at a distance for residents who cannot access traditional instruction. In Pennsylvania, distance learning for GED preparation and the GED test itself is offered through various avenues. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) supports programs that provide adult basic education at a distance. Additionally, online GED prep courses are available, offering a flexible learning experience. The Distance Learning Project (DLP) works with local adult education programs to provide online and correspondence courses for adults who want to study outside of the traditional classroom setting. Students have a distance teacher who provides guidance, feedback, and encouragement.

Students can prepare for high school equivalency tests, the workplace, or post-secondary education and training. English language learners can also improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. For more information, please go to the [Distance Learning Project](#) website.

Section 4.6

4.6. Transportation and Supportive Services - How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(10). Reviewed by OS]

Overview

SCPa Works defines supportive services as services that are required or necessary for an individual to participate in workforce activities as defined under WIOA Final Rule for eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers in Sections 3(59) and 134(c)(2) and (3), for WIOA Youth in Section 129(c)(2)(G), and as specified in the TANF Youth Development Program Manual. Supportive services are designed to provide an individual with the resources necessary to enable participation in career and training services. Further guidance on supportive services for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker participants is provided in 20 CFR 680.900 and TEGL 19-16. Further guidance on supportive services for WIOA Youth participants is available in 20 CFR 681.570 and 681.580, and TEGL 21-16, as well as for TANF Youth participants. SCPa Works Title I service providers authorize the payment of supportive services when a WIOA/TANF participant meets the supportive services requirements and when funding for the services is not otherwise available from sources outside of Title I grants.

SCPa Works has an extensive network of community-based organizations, partners, and government agencies that provide customer support. Transportation is one of the region's biggest challenges regarding workforce development. Outside of having one's vehicle, there is a patchwork of for-profit and county-based transportation agencies such as Capital Area Transit, Rabbit Transit, commuter services, and other local service providers to help workers travel to and from work. However, no significant regional planning body is coordinating all of these disparate transportation providers. SCPa Work actively meets with the Rabbit Transit and the Dart system, and our vendors purchase bus passes as support services for participants.

SCPa Works is committed to leveraging and aligning workforce development activities to improve TANF, EARN, and WIOA-eligible individuals access to transportation. Working closely with the South Central Partners for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), SCPa Works conducts a series of meetings to discuss strategies to establish a uniform means to identify regional transportation challenges. Challenges individuals accessing transportation include:

- In-flow and outflow of commuters in the workforce areas;
- A needs assessment of transportation challenges, in conjunction with Chambers of Commerce, Department of Transportation, and other stakeholders; and
- The need for innovative strategies to identify and serve rural areas with job seekers with high barriers to employment.

SCPa Works has also built a growing partnership with the Capital Region's United Way regarding supportive services. Through the Road to Success program, low-income workers have access to significant resources that help with childcare and transportation. SCPa Works is also beginning to explore options for new hires and customers served via the PA CareerLink® network.

The total lifetime amount allotted for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth, and TANF Youth participants in the SCPa Works service area is \$2000.00. Training-related expenses that are listed under, and covered by, an Individual Training Account (ITA) do not count against the supportive services limit for each WIOA participant. ITA-related expenses may include but are not limited to, assistance with the

purchase of tools required for a specific course, current school admission fees, computer lab fees, and books/supplies directly related to training courses.

Eligibility

Eligible WIOA/TANF participants who meet SCPa Works supportive service requirements can be eligible for supportive services, as determined by WIOA/TANF service provider(s). The individual requesting supportive services must be enrolled in WIOA/TANF and actively engaged in WIOA/TANF career services and/or a WIOA/TANF training program which must be documented in the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP), case notes, and/or Individual Service Strategy (ISS), and lends to the achievement of pre-established career goals.

Supportive services requirements for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker participants:

1. The individual requesting supportive services must be enrolled in WIOA/TANF and actively engaged in one or more of the following WIOA/TANF-funded activities:
 - a. Basic career and/or individualized services;
 - b. Enrollment or anticipated enrollment in a WIOA/TANF-funded training program or postsecondary enrollment with an eligible training provider;
 - c. Title I funded on-the-job training; and/or
 - d. Title I placement in a paid work experience.
2. The participant's goal and plan of action must be included in the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP) which must directly relate to the achievement of pre-established career goals, as defined in WIOA Sections 134(c)(2) and (3), and
3. The participant must demonstrate a financial need; and
4. The participant is unable to obtain supportive services through other programs, agencies, or individuals providing such services.
5. Adults and Dislocated Workers who have been exited from a WIOA/TANF program, and are currently in the 12-month follow-up period are not eligible for paid supportive services. Follow-up services do not delay program exit, nor trigger a participant's exit date to change.

Supportive services are available for actively enrolled WIOA/TANF Youth participants. The participants must be enrolled in WIOA/TANF and actively engaged in one or more of the following WIOA/TANF-funded activities:

1. Basic or individualized career services to include RAP and pre-apprenticeship;
2. Enrollment or anticipated enrollment in a WIOA/TANF-funded training program with an eligible training provider;
3. WIOA/TANF-funded on-the-job training; and/or
4. WIOA/TANF-funded placement in a paid work experience.
5. WIOA/TANF placement in an internship, pre-apprenticeship, RAP, mentorship, or unpaid work experience.

The participant's goal and plan of action must be included in the participant's Individual Service Strategy (ISS) or Individual Employment Plan (IEP) which must directly relate to the achievement of documented career goals. The participant must demonstrate a financial need and is expected to provide proof of being unable to obtain supportive services through other programs, agencies, or individuals providing such services. Youth participants who have been exited from WIOA/TANF program, and are currently in the 12-month follow-up period are eligible for paid supportive services during the 12-month follow-up period. Follow-up services do not delay program exit, nor trigger a participant's exit date to change, and therefore, the supportive services can take place after program exit without delaying the exit date.

Process

The participant and the case manager work together to identify the need for a supportive service as a part of the initial enrollment or as a part of the ongoing assessment, and based on the eligibility requirements included in this policy. The case manager works with the participant to identify and source funding from partner agencies, community organizations, private funding entities, or individuals such as a friend or family member of the participant willing and able to cover the cost of the supportive service. In a case note, the case manager will detail the attempt that the participant or case manager initiated to identify a funding source or to provide a referral to a community organization for the requested supportive service. The date of the referral, outreach, or attempt to source the funds is included in the case note as well as the name of the entity, community organization, or individual from which the participant and/or case manager sought funding for supportive services or referral to an outside agency. Supportive service payments are reasonable and necessary, in accordance with 2 CFR 200, and required for the client to participate in WIOA/TANF-funded services and activities. The need for the supportive service must be described in the case note as it directly relates to the participant's career and/or training goals.

Section 4.7

4.7. Rapid Response - How will the local board coordinate workforce investment activities and ensure they are carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(7). Reviewed by BWPO]

SCPa Works maintains a critical focus on rapid response strategy development and implementation in alignment with Rapid Response Services (RRS) through a partnership with Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO). The SCPa Works approach to coordinating workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response services is designed to assist workers facing permanent business closure or mass layoff at a plant, facility, enterprise, or a natural or other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation. Through the partnership with BWPO, this program aims to promptly, efficiently, and effectively assist dislocated workers in obtaining reemployment. SCPa Work's rapid response program implementation aims to provide immediate, on-the-ground support to workers and employers to minimize the social and economic impact of workforce reductions and an excess of job vacancies throughout the region.

SCPa Works, through the work of Title I contractors, partners, and in-house program management, maintains a dedicated commitment to the U.S. Department of Labor's ten quality principles of rapid response, which are also found in Section 4 of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Workforce System Guidance RRS1, Rapid Response Process and Procedures (*January 8, 2024*). In accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 03-23 and 2 CFR 200, Subpart E, SCPa Works adheres to allowable costs related to effectively and equitably conducting outreach to meet the needs of and to better engage businesses and job seekers during a mass layoff, company downsizing, and a cease of business scenario.

The following U.S. DOL ten quality principles of rapid response are carried out within the SCPa Works service region:

1. Timeliness

To ensure fast-acting plans are launched under the duress of a mass layoff or business closure, SCPa Works adheres to the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), a U.S. labor law that protects employees, their families, and communities by requiring that covered employers provide a 60-day notice of plant closing and mass layoffs. Employers must file a WARN notice with the state when a business or plant expects to lay off 50 or more workers at a single site. The filing of a WARN notice triggers early intervention from the BWPO Rapid Response team to the SCPa Works Business Services Manager, at this point, strategic planning for outreach and support is initiated. This early intervention allows employers and workers to communicate about worker concerns, take advantage of Title I workforce system services and opportunities, initiate partner collaboration, and identify, design, and manage layoff aversion and incumbent worker strategies. During a rapid response scenario, SCPa Works links partner-based initiatives such as Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs, Community Access Points (CAPs) place-based services, SCPa Works Business Services relationship management oversight, and Outreach Team specialists. Working in unison through daily communication, rapid response teams reduce worker absenteeism and provide workers and employers with a stress-free environment to identify and implement solutions. This proactive approach enables Title I staff and team members, in collaboration with Title III partner programs and additional service providers, to engage workers in services and training before the layoff occurs.

When a layoff has occurred, workers are referred for Title I services as dislocated workers. Under these circumstances, SCPa Works ensures that outreach, enrollment, and services are in place with optimal efficiency and effectiveness. The goal is to provide individuals with the full array of benefits to obtain re-employment in the shortest timeframe. The SCPa Works service provider teams are trained to operate within fast-paced environments, understanding that re-employment and training services are prioritized and initiated promptly to achieve timeliness standards during a rapid response initiative.

2. Internal & External Partnerships

SCPa Works Business Services Manager maintains a proactive partnership with the BWPO to identify an influx of dislocated workers at any time. In addition to the BWPO, SCPa Works manages working relationships and productive relationships with PA CareerLink® staff and partners, the PA CareerLink® One-Stop Operator, the PA CareerLink® Business Services Manager, and the BWPO PA CareerLink® Managers. All rapid response partners regularly receive a WARN notice report from the Statewide Rapid Response team. To best serve the region's workforce needs during economic disruption and employment upheaval, SCPa Works relies on the close relationships among the entities of the PA CareerLink® ecosystem of partners. Although the rapid response strategy is developed to be unique to each scenario's demand, industry, and number of workers needing workforce services, the general flow of operations pivots on the relational quality of each partnership. In addition to the relationships directly managed and maintained by SCPa Works, the success and outcomes of rapid response initiatives in the South Central region rely heavily on the connection of external partner agencies that coordinate staff and services to comprise the statewide Rapid Response Team (RRT). The RRT comprises coordinators and staff from local partner agencies that work together to provide rapid response services to employers and dislocated workers, as described in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry Rapid Response Process and Procedures Workforce System Guidance.

Adjacent to the forging and maintenance of internal partnerships, the SCPa Works Business Services Manager cultivates and maintains relationships with local small and large-scale businesses across many industries. This proactive work lays the foundation for times of workforce turbulence. These external relationships with businesses and employers serve as a direct pipeline to Title I benefits. Employers have direct access to the SCPa Works Business Services Manager, which impacts rapid response strategy development and expedites strategy implementation. In addition, the SCPa Works Programs Team is instantly onboard and maintains direct contact with the Business Services Manager. Together, the two internal teams maintain constant contact and communication with external partners to ensure the fast-tracking of eligible workers into training, education, employment, and all access to basic career services through the PA CareerLink® system.

3. Leveraging Resources

SCPa Works' rapid response strategy, in alignment with the Pennsylvania Rapid Response Information Guide, coordinates layoff aversion and outplacement services for employers and workers affected by or anticipating layoffs, plant closures, or natural disasters by making relevant resources available to incumbent or recently laid off workers.

SCPa Works coordinates with various local, state, and federal programs to support workers during transitions. These may include programs like Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for workers who lose jobs due to foreign trade or other specialized retraining programs. Through open channels of communication and information exchange, SCPa Works ignites connections between workers needing services and agencies and organizations equipped to support such workers.

Workers affected by layoffs are introduced to the resources available at PA CareerLink® centers through direct referrals from employers, the SCPa Works Business Services Team, non and for-profit agencies, government agencies, and adjacent workforce system organizations. PA CareerLink® centers offer job placement services, skills training, and workshops to ensure individuals can re-enter the workforce following a layoff.

Partner collaboration throughout the South Central region enables a network of service providers that offer abundant and accessible resources for employers and workers. The PA CareerLink® Regional Business Services team and the One-Stop Operator collaborate and coordinate consistently when a rapid response alert comes to the team. The SCPa Works Business Services Manager, PA CareerLink® One-Stop Operator, PA CareerLink® Business Services team, and the BWPO PA CareerLink® Managers receive weekly to WARN notice reports the SRR team provides bi-weekly. Once the report is reviewed, it is forwarded to the appropriate PA CareerLink® ecosystem of partners who provide strategic input relating to the availability and accessibility of resources for employers and workers experiencing the effects of a layoff or downsizing of a business. The One-Stop Operator disperses the WARN Notice report to the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators team and the PA CareerLink® Outreach representatives. Open channels of communication and astute attentiveness to the conditions of employers and workers are vital to implementing strategic action plans surrounding the urgency of dislocated workers in the South Central PA region.

4. Seamless Service Delivery

Prompted by a mass layoff or business closure, a WARN notice is issued to the unit of Rapid Response merit staff operating under the BWPO. Following the issuance of a WARN notice, the statewide Rapid Response Services (RRS) team establishes initial meetings with the employers who disclose WARN notices or cease of operations. When applicable, the team invites PA CareerLink® Outreach and Business Services team members to contribute to the strategy development. The South Central One-Stop-Operator also receives the notice and distributes the report to the designated and relevant team of PA CareerLink® Site Administrators and PA CareerLink® Outreach Representatives. The PA CareerLink® Business Services Manager forwards the WARN notice report to an in-house team of PA CareerLink® Business Services Representatives who work in conjunction with the SCPa Works Business Service Manager and Programs Team to develop and roll out an effective rapid response strategy that encompasses the needs of employers and employees affected by the closure or layoff.

5. Active Promotion

SCPa Works and the region's contracted service providers and vendors aim to maximize the reach of workforce development services through a proactive approach to mass layoffs, layoff aversion, and upskilling workers who a more advanced workforce would otherwise replace. SCPa Works expands rapid response impact through the robust outreach efforts of the One-Stop-Operator's Outreach and Engagement Team. These efforts align with PA Workforce System Guidance, *Guidance Regarding Public Outreach Costs*, connect dislocated workers with results-driven services, and showcase place-based workforce development's vital role and effect. SCPa Works ensures adherence to the cost principle guidance provided by the BWDA as featured in Workforce System Policy (WSP) No. 03-2015 and the accompanying Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Financial Management Guide (pg. 36). In addition, SCPa Works strives to adhere to TEGL 03-23 when managing cost principles and allowable costs allocated to outreach, all of which are found at 2 CFR 200, §200.421 (subpart E).

The PA CareerLink® Site Administrators under the One-Stop-Operator supervision work in coordination with the Regional Rapid Response Coordination Services Representatives, who cover the local area. This initiative includes coordination between the SCPa Works Business Services Manager, the PA CareerLink®

partners, and any additional vendors who provide services relevant to the nature of the mass layoff, the demographics of dislocated workers, and the geographic location. The SCPa Works Programs team assesses and analyzes these elements to determine the best possible outcome for the employers and the recently dislocated workers.

6. Layoff Aversion

Under the duress of a layoff aversion, the statewide RRS and PA CareerLink® Business Services teams collaborate on respective Layoff Aversion programs and identify the best possible outcome for the employer. When an employee layoff aversion is a benefit of interest to an employer in the SCPa Works service area, the PA CareerLink® Business Services team refers the employer to the SCPa Works Business Services Manager or Industry Specialist who guides the employer through the Title I Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program application. The SCPa Works IWT application is easily accessed at scpaworks.org under the Employers tab on the website. IWT funding does not require existing employees to be WIOA-eligible. This element expedites funding for skills training to avoid layoffs. The SCPa Works IWT application aligns with the SCPa Works ITW Policy, which details how an employer can avoid a layoff through upskilling employees and preparing existing employees for an increased scope of work and advanced professional level. Rather than lay off a collection of workers due to a lack of skillsets, SCPa Works makes it possible for employers to retain a workforce of individuals who are willing and eligible for continued training and education applicable to the employer's needs.

When SCPa Works is alerted of a business or plant closure or the pending downsize of a company, all partners collaborate to assess the full-spectrum effects of a mass layoff. The PA CareerLink® Business Services Team conducts on-site visits to the business location. These visits allow members of the RRT to assess the specific needs of the affected workers during a cease of business or downsizing phase and enable the Business Services team to determine what types of services will be most helpful. The team meets with company representatives, union officials (if applicable), and local workforce development partners to discuss available resources.

Depending on the circumstances, services may include job search assistance, resume workshops, career counseling, and information regarding unemployment insurance and training programs. Eligible dislocated workers are also referred to the PA CareerLink® workforce system programming for WIOA-funded individualized career services that include subsidized On-the-Job Training (OJT), Paid Work Experience (PWE), Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RA), and Individualized Training Accounts (ITA). In anticipation of an employer downsizing or ceasing business, The PA CareerLink® Outreach Team co-facilitates events with partners to engage workers before their layoff. SCPa Works ensures that an on-site or PA CareerLink® Resource Fair is detailed in a discussion between the employer and the SCPa Works Business Services Manager. This discussion launches a mass layoff aversion initiative to inform employees or anticipated dislocated workers of re-employment opportunities with operational businesses throughout the eight-county region. The PA CareerLink® Business Services and Outreach Teams co-facilitate job fair events with partners and employers to engage staff prior to the layoff date. The goal is to provide a PA CareerLink® guide of services and to register each employee on the pacareerlink.gov website.

In addition to the PA CareerLink® Outreach team providing initial support to existing staff who anticipate a layoff or cease of operations, the PA CareerLink® team co-facilitates an employer hiring event with the RRS team. In anticipation of a lay-off or loss of employment, the PA CareerLink® coordinates and hosts an employer hiring event to properly connect potentially laid-off staff members to employment opportunities before the last day in the incumbent position. SCPa Works captures the outcomes of rapid response events through data entry into the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS)

online platform, logging all service records and labor exchange occurrences to include the training and employment outcomes of incumbent workers as well as employees who benefit from IWT as a means to remain employed.

The SRR team, PA CareerLink® Business Services team, PA CareerLink® Outreach team, and the SCPa Works Business Services Business Manager work collectively to mitigate the negative impacts of layoffs. This rapid response team of workforce system professionals offers workers new opportunities through job retention with upskilling, re-employment, and career development to identify and work toward a new career pathway in the wake of a layoff experience. This process is crucial to workforce development and economic stability, especially during large-scale layoffs or economic downturns.

7. Consistent & Accurate Information

The SCPa Works Business Services Manager fosters communication and collaboration among partners within the PA CareerLink® system. This collaboration ensures timely responses to businesses in need of assistance, particularly in situations where layoffs or plant closures are anticipated.

After receiving a WARN notice, the RRS, the SCPa Works Business Services Manager, and collective Title I contractors work with affected individuals to ensure that workers access necessary resources. Rapid Response also offers services for businesses facing closures or large-scale layoffs. The PA CareerLink® Business Services team and the SCPa Works Business Services Manager provide employers with guidance on managing the transition, including options for outplacement services, layoff avoidance strategies, and funding for employee retraining. The SCPa Works Strategic Development Team tracks the outcomes of rapid response and dislocated worker activities to ensure that services are consistent and effective and to identify trends that might require further intervention or support to improve the accuracy and efficiency of service delivery. The data collection and analysis process ensures the effectiveness of the information provided by the Title I programs teams when coordinating services for workers. This data also lends to the consistent nature of information delivery from the SCPa Works Business Services Manager when working with employers facing the downsizing of a business.

The monthly meetings between internal teams and external partners help inform all relevant stakeholders about important developments, such as WARN notices and impending business closures or operational shifts. By integrating updates from internal and external partners, including the SRR team, SCPa Works effectively coordinates services and resources for affected workers during a layoff aversion initiative, a period of IWT, or re-employing workers before a layoff date. This level of coordination ensures that businesses and workers receive the support they need during transitions while minimizing the impact of workforce disruptions.

8. Convenience

With more than 70 local Community Access Points (CAPs) and Referral Partner Organizations, PA CareerLink® services geographically expand to meet those most in need of services. Community Access Points (CAP) emerged from the idea that everyone should be within 15 minutes walking distance of the opportunity to improve their lives. As a place-based workforce development strategy, CAPs meet individuals where they are, build trust through community relationships, and eliminate common barriers to accessing the traditional brick-and-mortar workforce system. The SCPa Works CAP strategy tackles the challenges of accessibility head-on and directs resources to those most in need of services.

To roll out the CAP program from concept to implementation, SCPa Works maintained a positive and flexible approach to a theory of change that allowed for growth through trial and error. It utilized the data-driven outreach strategy to connect with Dislocated Workers and employers anticipating a mass

layoff, a business closure, or the need to upskill incumbent workers who would otherwise be laid off and replaced with higher-skilled workers.

Using GIS mapping to pinpoint effective CAP sites and measure each site's 15-minute walkable distance footprint, SCPa Works dissected the eight-county service region, narrowing areas of the region where access to workforce development services was limited.

CAP locations create easy and simple access to WIOA enrollment and services for workers and employers to meet with Title I contractors who guide business owners through the SCPa Works IWT process. In addition, CAP sites house Title I contractors who can meet with Dislocated Workers in the geographic areas where they live and work. Meeting workers where they are enables SCPa Works Title I contractors to enter Dislocated Workers into CWDS onsite and provide basic career services (*20 CFR § 678.430(a)*) to all affected workers and to provide program enrollment services to workers eligible for individualized career services (*20 CFR § 678.430(b)*). In coordination with the SCPa Works Business Services Manager and Programs Team, CAP site Title I service providers can meet with employers who face job vacancies, skill gaps, and the inability to expand business operations within competitive industries.

9. Customer Choice

The SCPa Works Title I contracted service providers ensure that all displaced workers and those facing employment termination are provided with diverse education, training, and employment opportunities within the South Central region. The Title I contractors provide WIOA-eligible individuals access to the most up-to-date Pennsylvania Eligible Training Provider List (EPTL) and workforce system navigation assistance through the PA CareerLink® website. This service to workers includes access to all basic and individualized career services, a wide array of in-house and virtual career exploration services, and hands-on career counseling provided by trained Title I professionals.

As a part of the employment and training program process for eligible Title I participants, career advisors engage the participants in researching three varying training provider choices. Career advisors also guide participants through skill assessments and aptitude tests that indicate a participant's skill set, interest in particular industries and career paths, skill gaps in which additional or preliminary training will be required, and removing barriers to training and employment. Throughout the process, participants are empowered to make choices with the guidance and support of the Title I staff.

10. Measure of Success

The SCPa Works Dislocated Worker (DW) program has been vital to the rapid response initiative across the South Central region. The WIOA-funded DW program ensures that individuals laid off from long-term employment or who have exhausted Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits can achieve employment, training, and education goals to continue and further career development while enhancing employability. In 2024, the SCPa Works Title I service provider met and exceeded projected expectations in guiding participants toward long-term, sustainable employment, and industry-recognized credentials, securing employment for individuals who qualified for subsidized training opportunities. Across the South Central region, 121 dislocated workers received PA CareerLink® basic and individualized career services, 52 of which were employed, while 20 earned an industry-recognized credential.

Section 4.8

4.8. Individuals with Barriers to Employment - What services, activities and program resources will be provided to participants, including those outlined at WIOA Sec. 3(24), Individuals with a Barrier to Employment, and WIOA Sec. 188, in the local area? [Reviewed by BWPO, OVR, and OEO]

The One-Stop Delivery System:

SCPa Works increases coordination, maximizes service delivery, and leverages resources to develop a high-demand, skilled workforce that the needs of businesses and industry in the South Central PA region. The SCPa Works workforce delivery system in South Central PA comprises a diverse collection of partners, agencies, educational institutions, employers, and training providers that utilize WIOA funding streams to deliver critical workforce services across the eight-county region.

SCPa Works maintains the continuous improvement and implementation of a workforce development delivery system that honors the basic, individualized, and follow-up career services listed in 20 CFR 678.430 and identified in section 134(c)(2) of WIOA. In partnership with the One-Stop Operator, the Bureau of Workforce Partnerships and Operations (BWPO), the Title II-based agencies, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), and the contracted Title I service provider staff located within the PA CareerLink® centers through South Central PA, individuals with barriers to education and employment can access full-spectrum career pathway services in all eight counties of the region. BWPO acts as the state workforce agency (SWA), as amended under WIOA Title III, and plays a vital role in providing Wagner Peyser Act services to individuals with barriers seeking employment and career services in South Central PA through the PA CareerLink® one-stop centers. In support of the Governor's State Workforce Plan, SCPa Works continuously cultivates and maintains relationships with the Title III partner to leverage resources that promote an integrated workforce system across the region.

The PA CareerLink® one-stop service delivery system is designed as a comprehensive, one-stop solution to help individuals with barriers to education, training, and employment access a variety of career pathways and workforce development services. The PA CareerLink® is designed as a comprehensive, one-stop solution to benefit and guide individuals with barriers through employment and workforce development services. Its seamless delivery system is built on a "no wrong door" approach, ensuring that participants are properly matched with effective resources regardless of how they initially engage with the system. Whether individuals seek assistance with job searches, career advancement, or training opportunities, the universal one-stop system provides support based on each individual's unique needs.

Through this grand scale of coordination between workforce development agencies and organizations, individuals with barriers to employment receive initial intake interviews and basic career assessments for identifying, assessing, understanding, and removing barriers.

Braiding Services through Separation of Duties:

BWPO, Title I staff, and the one-stop staff all operate under the roof of the PA CareerLink® system; however, there is no duplication of services or overlapping program elements and roles. SCPa Works Business Services, Programs, and Strategic Development teams enforce specific process flows and professional roles that enable participants to receive benefits from all PA CareerLink® entities simultaneously through dual enrollment in multiple programs. The service-driven entities include but are not limited to Titles I, II, III, and IV and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), among others. The multi-organizational arrangement is mutually beneficial for all parties involved, creating a team of

professionals with specialized skill sets coming together with a common goal: providing the best possible workforce services to individuals with barriers. The responsibilities of the one-stop staff do not overlap with the Title I staff services but rather complement the services of all partner agencies, organizations, training entities, and employers. SCPa Works coordinates roles, responsibility descriptors, and specified process flows designed through collaboration with each partner entity while ensuring a separation of duties from the One-Stop-Operator. In addition, the relationship forged among the various partners ensures regular communication and clear, concise referrals among entities.

At the start of 2025, the SCPa Works Program team met with Title II representatives and the PA CareerLink® one-stop team to revise the referral process. This new referral initiative encompasses processes within each partner program and a universal referral form to be used by multiple referring partners. The new referral process initiative does not replace the referral system in CWDS; however, it provides each partner with relevant and unique information for each referral. The new SCPa Works referral system and the CWDS referral system create a natural checks and balances element so that no individual is overlooked for services across all partners within the South Central PA workforce development service delivery system. SCPa Works projects to have created the new referral process system in writing for a 2025 roll-out.

The SCPa Works Operations team meets weekly with the One-Stop-Operator and PA CareerLink® site administrators, while the SCPa Works Programs team meets regularly with the Title I leadership staff. Once a week, SCPa Works Programs, Operations, and Strategic Development team leaders meet with the SCPa Works Executive Committee to discuss administrative operations and system processes that thrive within the PA CareerLink® system of operations to ensure that no services are duplicated and to abide by the separation of duties between the one-stop staff and Title I staff. Whether seeking assistance with job searches, career advancement, or training opportunities, the system supports all individuals seeking assistance based on unique needs.

The SCPa Works One-Stop-Operator centralizes customer service functions, coordinates with workforce development and human services providers, and ensures that county and appropriate agencies can access employment and training services provided by the workforce development system. In addition, the operator manages and guides the development of the one-stop delivery system. The Operator and Local Partner Consortium members will work together through a consensus decision-making system to accomplish the objectives defined by SCPa Works. In adherence to 20 CFR 680.220, SCPa Works ensures that all participants receive, at a minimum, an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning or any other method offered through the PA CareerLink® centers. In addition to overseeing the One-Stop-Operator and PA CareerLink® site admins, SCPa Works relies on BWPO to receive referrals from the one-stop team and to provide such basic career services as described in this paragraph.

SCPa Works staff meets multiple times a week with the One-Stop-Operator and the contracted Title I service provider, Equus Workforce Solutions, leadership staff to develop and deploy an inventory of tools, including phone scripts, call logs, and various processes, to ensure job seekers' access to services. A single toll-free phone line per each service county was established to allow participants in need access to call into the center and receive assistance with little to no delay. The toll-free phone lines are staffed by highly trained customer service professionals who clearly understand PA CareerLink® partners and have an established process for efficiently referring participants for service. It is through this collective service delivery effort, collaborated process flow, and methodology of service delivery that ensures all individuals with barriers to training and employment are assessed and served to the fullest capacity of the one-stop, the Title III BWPO, Title I, and partner teams throughout the PA CareerLink® job centers.

SCPa Works manages relationships with many career and technical centers (CTCs), community colleges, and four-year colleges, as well as a collective of private and nonprofit training providers, which allows for a flexible suite of options for job seekers seeking skills training. In addition, SCPa Works delivers highly integrated services to employers, job seekers, and youth through strong partnerships with the region's economic development organizations, higher educational institutes, Intermediate Units (IUs), school districts, county agencies, libraries, and community-based organizations.

Registered Apprenticeship

SCPa Works prioritizes making all career services available to individuals with barriers. This initiative includes the availability of Registered Apprenticeship as a career pathway. Three SCPa Works staff members completed the Apprenticeship Navigator Training by the close of 2024. In conjunction with the SCPa Works Policy Manager, who created, implemented, and presented a full-spectrum training on WIOA-funded RAP, the SCPa Works Apprenticeship Navigator coordinated a local kickoff with the ATO, PA CareerLink® staff, and Partners. Equus included a RAP launch activity with staff to generate enthusiasm and success. The event also included two employer RAPs with success stories.

Working with the SCPa Works Policy Manager, Equus developed a PA CareerLink® process for Registered Apprenticeship Programming (RAP) and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Programming (Pre-RAP). The Equus team has two employees enrolled in the KDP Apprenticeship Navigator Program. Existing RAP and Pre-RAP lists are regularly provided to the PA CareerLink® project lead for distribution. In addition to creating program processes, the Business Services Team and Job Seeker processes have been established.

The SCPa Works WIOA-funded RAP initiative aligns with Governor Shapiro's workforce plans with increased investment in career and technical education centers (CTCs) so that more students can access technical education and programming. Connecting with and including CTC representatives in meetings for pre-apprenticeship programs, Industry Partnerships, and employer engagement is vital to the success of WIOA-funded RAP in South Central PA.

Industry Partnerships promote RAP and Pre-RAP employers and sponsors to hire and train within their industry without requiring employees to earn four-year degrees. Monthly training calls are planned to introduce all new RAPs and Pre-RAPs to the PA CareerLink® programs team.

In addition to the newly WIOA-funded RAP launch activities, the Navigator keeps abreast of ATO updates, attends LWDB in-person meetings with larger companies, leverages leftover ABA funds through ATO programs, and uses the grant opportunity website for apprenticeship funding opportunities for the community.

Programmatic Policy

The SCPa Works Policy Department authored ITA, OJT, IWT, PWE, and TANF Youth policies related to RAP and Pre-RAP and distributed the policy-driven content to PA CareerLink® staff. These policies complement the SCPa Works RAP Policy #P-18-6.22. All policies are board-approved and reviewed for updates and revisions every 365 days, as reflected in the Summary of Changes at the bottom of every SCPa Works policy.

In 2024, SCPa Works focused on advancing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (I.D.E.A.) through Business Education Partnerships. By connecting local businesses, high schools, and community organizations, SCPa Works is bridging the gap between the next generation of talent and local employers. Through 12 community-driven projects, SCPa Works, in partnership with the PA CareerLink® Title I staff, 2,000 students with career awareness activities, pre-apprenticeships, and skill-building opportunities.

Following the completion of each program, SCPa Works convened with the Title I service provider to review program outcomes and interviewed all employers who had taken part in the activities. The SCPa Program team collected and analyzed data, interview results, and Title I staff input to devise an improved project plan for a 2025 launch.

Digital Intake Literacy

A key feature of the PA CareerLink® system is its digital intake process, which has proven to be highly effective in identifying participant needs and highlighting barriers. This data-driven approach allows the system to quantify challenges and address them strategically. For example, through recent data collection efforts, it has become clear that digital literacy is the greatest barrier for many job seekers. Recognizing this need, the PA CareerLink® has responded by promoting digital literacy courses at its locations, offering participants a chance to develop crucial skills to enhance their employability and career prospects.

As a practice to reaching individuals with barriers to technology, SCPa Works has invested significant time and resources into expanding digital literacy offerings, developing a technology lending library, expanding front office staff, launching a mobile outreach team, and increasing the WIOA supportive service lifetime limit to \$2,000 per eligible participant.

This tailored, responsive approach ensures that each participant receives the support necessary to initiate a career pathway and that barriers like digital literacy are addressed to help individuals overcome challenges and advance in their career paths.

This digital intake process is the first step in connecting our job seeker to the most appropriate resource to support them on their journey. Upon completion of digital intake, a Talent Engagement Specialist will follow up with the participant on the next steps in the process. Depending on the information provided, the participant either begins self-services to address needs or the individual meets with a BWPO or Title I staff member for basic and individualized services.

Priority of Service

When assessing participant needs, the workforce development staff ensures equitable services to individuals and those most in need. To guide workforce development staff in the South Central Region, the SCPa Works Policy Manager created the SCPa Works Priority of Service Policy #P-1-11.22 in adherence to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Priority of Service Workforce System Policy (WSP). The SCPa Works Priority of Service Policy honors the Fifth Priority of Service as a tool to provide services to underemployed individuals or included within the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) population. ALICE population individuals are assessed under this policy for eligibility for basic and individualized career services that lead to long-term, self-sustaining household income. The priority of service policy focuses on increasing individuals' job placement in targeted populations, including veterans, persons with disabilities, the ALICE population, and those impacted by the criminal justice system.

SCPa Works provides priority service to veterans who enter the PA CareerLink® and need assistance. Upon identifying a veteran in a PA CareerLink® center, all partners within the PA CareerLink® begin communication with the Veteran Rep, who is also housed within the PA CareerLink®. Communication transpires with the necessary parties to ensure the participant is best assisted, barriers are met, and issues are resolved.

ALICE Population

A significant population of job-seekers in the region qualify for WIOA but do not fall into one of the categories of having a priority service barrier to employment. In particular, the ALICE (asset-limited,

income-constrained, and employed) population is a target population to be served at PA CareerLink® centers. SCPa Works has added the Alice Population to focus on when recruiting enrollment participants. By adding this population to be served under the 5th priority of service, SCPa Works has encouraged a focus on ensuring our services' utilization to provide economic mobility. In addition to this option, SCPa Works has sought to add alternative hours of operation to serve working individuals. SCPa Works will develop opportunities for these individuals to upskill and create higher household incomes. While individuals may not qualify under traditional funding streams, working with and supporting the individuals representing 39% of our community is a priority. This unseen and hard-working group goes to work daily and struggles to stabilize its ever-decreasing financial security due to income constraints. SCPa Works is committed to finding a solution for our community.

SCPa Works continuously brainstorms on the development and implementation of new ways to address the challenges faced by the ALICE population. Since the ALICE population does not receive self-sustaining wages to thrive and support a household, SCPa Works is dedicated to providing support and services to these individuals to ensure socioeconomic mobility.

In 2024, SCPa Works embarked on its first Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) contract and services to five workers assessed as part of the ALICE population and necessary upskilling to earn a sustainable living. SCPa Works IWT funds are uniquely available to individuals who may not be WIOA-eligible due to household income but are considered a part of the ALICE population in need of services. SCPa Works will report the progress and outcomes of this IWT experience upon completion at the end of 2025.

Community Access Points (CAP)

In 2024, SCPa Works launched a mixed-methods research study through the partnership with Knovva Academy, resulting in the provision of a granular level of data analysis, data mapping, alignment of data and Community Access Point (CAP) model, systems connection, and best practices for serving Opportunity Youth in the South Central PA region. The study collected data across the South Central PA region, encompassing Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York counties. The study focused on Opportunity Youth, formerly Out-of-School Youth, and engagement with workforce development services through regional PA CareerLink® centers and Community Access Points (CAPs). The study revealed that Opportunity Youth are largely disconnected from school and work, often facing significant personal, economic, and social challenges. These factors highlight the importance of prioritizing Opportunity Youth within the service area and underscore the need to deepen Opportunity Youth engagement. The disconnection of Opportunity Youth also illustrates service providers' challenges in locating and effectively engaging disconnected youth as long-term employees. SCPa Works stepped back from the day-to-day cycles of delivering workforce development services and answered to the research and analysis results with the implementation of four main Opportunity Youth initiatives:

1. Digital and Social Media Outreach Campaign
2. CAP Outreach, Business Services Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion
3. Youth Reentry Grant Acquisition
4. Summer Youth Programming

All four initiatives targeted Opportunity Youth, increased overall program participation, increased employer engagement, and broadened Paid Work Experience opportunities.

CAP Outreach, Business Services Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion

Increasing Work Experience Opportunities through Community Access Points (CAP)

In 2024, having applied the Knovva research project results to resolve workforce development system gaps, SCPa Works identified a need to meet Opportunity Youth within the communities in which they

lived. This insight launched an initiative to expand access to and the effectiveness of Community Access Points, referred to as CAPs, as strategic hubs to reach Opportunity Youth within home-based communities. Opportunity Youth are disconnected from the opportunity to explore and engage in traditional educational or workforce development programs. CAPs provide a flexible and accessible entry point for youth who face barriers to employment, whether it's transportation, lack of engagement with formal institutions, a need for childcare, hunger, primary education needs, addiction, reentry, and other challenges. CAPs establish services that are more visible and accessible than traditional workforce development service sites, increasing the likelihood of Opportunity Youth seeking out and receiving the support they need.

Community Access Points (CAP) emerged from the idea that everyone should be within 15 minutes walking distance of the opportunity to improve their lives. As a place-based workforce development strategy, CAPs meet individuals where they are, build trust through community relationships, and eliminate common barriers to accessing the traditional brick-and-mortar workforce system. The SCPa Works CAP strategy tackles the challenges of accessibility head-on and directs resources to those most in need of services.

To roll out the CAP program from concept to implementation, SCPa Works maintained a positive and flexible approach to a theory of change that allowed for growth through trial and error. Using the data-driven outreach strategy to connect with Opportunity Youth and demographic and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, SCPa Works engaged the CAP Outreach Team to drive the establishment of CAPs across the South Central PA region. The geographical diversity of the eight-county service region of SCPa Works and the region's demographic diversity and economic inequality increased the potential of CAPs to expand access and direct resources more efficiently.

Using GIS mapping to pinpoint effective CAP sites and measure each site's 15-minute walkable distance footprint, SCPa Works dissected the eight-county service region, narrowing areas of the region where access to workforce development services was limited.

Upon the initial launch of the CAP program, 16 sites were identified within the region, established, and equipped with access to workforce development services. York County served as one of the pilot areas within the region, reflecting more than 50,000 residents per square mile and 16 bus routes to enable residents access to services. Before the CAP program roll-out, SCPa Works ensured that CAP sites were established throughout the county. SCPa Works Strategic Development Department combined GIS data and public transportation data to ensure that all access points were relevant and could provide services to residents within a 15-minute walk to a center, agency, or organization. The Strategic Development Department gathered demographic data to include Black county residents, Indigenous residents, and residents who identified as people of color. The data concluded that up to 20,000 minority residents lived within a one-mile radius in some parts of the county. The study included youth populations who were more apt to seek workforce development services within a 15-minute walk from a home base. GIS mapping revealed that upwards of 9,000 youth lived within a one-mile radius in areas throughout York County. This included those youth living in poverty, without a high school diploma, residents identifying as people of color, and those living with a disability. The same research points were applied to Adams County, the second area where SCPa Works piloted CAP programming. Adams County is considered a rural area within South Central PA, and it also recorded areas of the county reflecting more than 9,000 youth residents within a one-mile radius.

The data launched a full CAP Outreach investment into forging relationships with organizations and agencies throughout the South Central PA region. This was a first in history for SCPa Works to evaluate

and advance a program based on data-driven research that promoted and impacted the region's workforce development system. SCPa Works has trailblazed programming that will continue to define and improve the value of the workforce system as a whole.

In 2024, in partnership with Crispus Attucks, the SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team engaged 70 Opportunity Youth participants in a PA CareerLink® overview, resulting in 13 internal referrals to PA CareerLink® partners, including the WIOA Youth Program, BWPO, and OVR to address the needs of workforce development participants with disabilities. This has laid the groundwork for a program exhibiting exponential growth potential, and SCPa Works seeks to continue to increase the number of CAP locations per county through 2025.

Community Outreach:

The One-Stop Operator's robust outreach efforts connected with many participants across the region, showcasing the vital role of place-based workforce development. By establishing and implementing more than 70 local CAPs and Referral Partner Organizations, PA CareerLink® site services have expanded to reach Opportunity Youth in all eight counties of the SCPa Works service region.

Expanding collaboration between partners beyond those located within the facility is essential to ensure a seamless service experience for participants. Inevitably, services and resources extend far beyond the walls of a single location. By fostering partnerships with external organizations, experts, and support systems, SCPa Works will connect with a broader range of resources, knowledge, and services that are critical to meeting participants' needs.

This growth allows for the exchange of information, expertise, and resources, which can help address challenges that may not be fully covered by the immediate team at the facility. Whether it's bringing in specialized knowledge, handling overflow needs, or offering remote support, working with external partners broadens the capacity to serve participants with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The SCPa Works Business Services Department has been a driving force in reaching Opportunity Youth across the South Central region. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of reaching and engaging Opportunity Youth.

In 2024, the Business Services Department engaged with 1,923 new businesses, broadening the network of job placement sites for Opportunity Youth. Through direct business owner outreach, Business Services established 65 Paid Work Experience (PWE) sites, providing an expanded opportunity for hands-on job experience to Opportunity Youth in the region.

Veterans:

Enhancing workforce development and employment services for veterans is a priority of Federal leaders and is recognized as an important means of expanding economic opportunities for individual veterans and communities. To support this priority, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) maintains two important one-stop system partners: Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). These partners help to strengthen and further integrate workforce and employment services for veterans. One of the purposes of the Federal Veterans Opportunity to Work and Hire Heroes Act (VOW Act) is to connect service members to jobs more effectively by providing employment workshops and linking these service members to the workforce development system and local labor market.

SCPa Works has sponsored several roundtables focusing on connecting veterans to jobs. These roundtables have repeatedly identified veterans' employment needs and the current services and support that are being provided:

- Veterans' Employment Needs
- Employment Information
- Employment Assistance
- Support Services
- Accepting Assistance
- Socialization
- Convenience
- Employers

Current Services and Support:

- Assistance with job placement and workforce connections, resume writing, and interviewing skills
- Military Share food assistance for veterans and active duty service families
- Case Management and employment readiness services
- Homeless and housing crisis assistance and referral
- Financial Assistance
- Classroom Training connected to High-Priority Occupations

Persons with Disabilities:

OVR provides services to help OVR-eligible persons discover their abilities by offering the tools and opportunities to pursue a meaningful career. SCPa Works also encourages all Pennsylvanians with disabilities to achieve employment goals leading to a better quality of life.

OVR provides a wide range of services to OVR-eligible persons with disabilities, including:

Vocational Evaluation: Aptitude, interest, general ability, academic exams, work tolerance, and "hands-on" job experience to understand participants' vocational potential.

Counseling:

Vocational counseling helps participants better understand their potential, rely on their abilities, set realistic vocational goals, and change them when necessary.

Training:

Education, including but not limited to necessary academic, vocational/technical instruction, college, on-the-job training, independent living skills training, and personal/work adjustment training, is necessary to prepare participants for a job.

SCPa Works invests in efforts to defer "silos" of program staff and/or other partners. Helping and assisting the participants just as they are or come into the PA CareerLink® with no focus on program association. This includes monthly meetings with all partners within the PA CareerLink® to open lines of communication for all partners who may have or know of participants who have additional needs, questions, and barriers to employment. Another path is that referrals can be sent and processed within the CWDS/PA CareerLink® system to the necessary partner to assist the participant with a particular necessity or barrier. The referral is tracked in the system, and the progress of the participant and the partner activities attached to the referral.

The Title I Businesses Services Team (BST) meets regularly with partners to best assist participants and employers who come to the PA CareerLink® for workforce development services. The BST provides information on job openings to individuals in need of employment. If a participant is assessed or evaluated and exhibits Limited English Proficiency (LEP) upon intake or during the first point of contact with a PA CareerLink®, the participant is connected with a PA CareerLink® bilingual team member to assist the participant best. If a center requires a language that a staff member within the PA CareerLink® cannot speak, translating phone service is utilized to serve the participant best. Suppose an LEP participant needs to learn English for continued education, training, or employment. In that case, a referral is made to the local Literacy Council or an alternative Title II provider so the participant can be enrolled in English Language Learner (ELL) classes.

In 2025, SCPa Works will purchase and pilot TranslateLive for the EARN Program. TranslateLive will be used for one-to-one translation with customers, workshops, and community outreach.

Individuals with Criminal Justice System Involvement

SCPa Works strives to address the ever-increasing schism of employment with reentrants, focusing on direct intervention within this population of participants in the workforce development system of services. Youth and Adult staff are trained to work with individuals in the criminal justice system. A local workforce system collaboration co-leveraging available resources will ensure an ongoing process to identify, recruit, train, and assist with the reentry of those previously or currently involved with the criminal justice system for high-priority occupations. Participants can increase individual skills with in-demand certifications and credentials validated by local employers and receive mentorship throughout their reentry journey.

The South Central PA Fair Chance Hiring and Reentry Program mission is to work with individuals pre- and post-release as they transition into the community and help them achieve their short- and long-term education and career goals. A dedicated reentry team engages individuals at multiple points in the criminal justice system and serves as a resource for county and State agencies to reduce recidivism. The reentry team does this by leveraging PA CareerLink® partners and community organizations to create a cohesive network of service providers. The reentry team focuses on each participant's individualized services and bases all interactions on a trauma-informed approach through the following process:

The SCPa Works Fair Chance Hiring and Reentry Programming has been widely embraced by criminal justice system partners in the incorporation of a cognitive behavioral curriculum specifically designed for individuals with criminal justice system involvement who are searching for employment. While traditional workforce services address the various needs of individuals searching for employment, they often place too little focus on addressing the internal beliefs and perceptions that lead to a lack of job retention and continued recidivism. Through cognitive behavioral interventions, service providers are able to adequately address work, conflict, and relationship building. By incorporating this programming into existing workforce services, reentrants are better prepared to obtain and maintain employment. University of Cincinnati's Correctional Institute's Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions for Employment curriculum will be used for group sessions.

The five program modules focus on motivational enhancement, cognitive restructuring, social skills/emotional regulation skills, problem-solving, and success planning. The CBI-EMP contains 30 sessions for about 45 dosage hours. This curriculum can be expanded for higher-risk/needy offenders by adding advanced practice sessions to any modules. Each session is intended to be delivered in approximately 90 minutes.

Competency-Based Interviewing (CBI) and the RENEW Program:

Rebuilding, Empowering, Nurturing, and Excelling Women

For the 2024-2025 program year, SCPa Works received more than \$1.6 million in competitive and discretionary grants, including reentry program dollars provided by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), through which SCPa Works launched the RENEW program. The program focuses on providing women impacted by the criminal justice system with supportive services and employment assistance. A highlight of the program is the Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Employment Classes. This evidence-based curriculum emphasizes approaches to managing risky behavior and thoughts within the workplace. By integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions with traditional employment approaches, workforce development programs reach all aspects of personal and professional growth within an individual who would otherwise have barriers to employment.

SCPa Works, in partnership with the EARN partner, integrated virtual reality at York County Prison and the York Reentry Opportunity Center (ROC) and accelerated the growth of the women's reentry CBI workshops at PA CareerLink® one-stop centers. At the start of the program in the spring of 2024, EARN had provided outreach to potential participants. By April, participants were enrolled in the program and attending in-person three days a week. The program was open to reentry residents in all eight South Central PA counties. The program, dedicated to reducing recidivism, uniquely targets individuals touched by the criminal justice system and provides workforce system services that address the cognitive behaviors of a reentry individual.

The RENEW program provides holistic support for women who have been involved in the criminal justice system. In addition to the cognitive behavioral services, program participants receive one-on-one job placement services, education and training opportunities, and reentry support. RENEW participants are also screened for WIOA eligibility to ensure that every participant is empowered and equipped with the necessary tools to rebuild their lives and foster lasting positive changes within themselves, their homes, and, ultimately, the South Central PA workforce. In 2024, the RENEW Program reached 121 women in reentry, provided 148 collective supportive services, and achieved 30 job placements.

RENEW PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Metric	Outcome
Women Enrolled	121
Employment Placements	30
Successfully completed CBI Workshops	16
Supportive Services Provided	148
Served Pre-Release	29

[SCPa Works Annual Report]

SCPa Works remains committed to continuously measuring program success through key metrics such as employment outcomes and participant feedback to ensure the effectiveness and relevancy of the programs provided to residents of South Central PA.

Virtual Reality (VR) Integration in Pre-release Services:

Eligible pre-release participants who are completing a term of incarceration engage in SCPa Works Virtual Reality Program utilizing Transfr VR equipment and curriculum for career exploration and hands-on 'virtual' training in over 20 different in-demand occupations. The virtual reality experience is broken into two primary categories: career exploration and the virtual training facility. Through career exploration modules provided prior to a return to the workforce, participants have the opportunity to explore the following careers:

- o Health Sciences (Registered nurse, EMT, Surgical Technologist)
- o Architecture and Construction (Broadband Utility Construction, Electricians, etc.)
- o Information Technology (Network Technician)
- o Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security (Emergency Medical Technician)
- o Manufacturing (Welders, Semiconductor Manufacturing Technician)

Once a participant determines which career field they are most interested in, they are able to move on to the virtual training facility component. In the facility, participants take part in multiple real-life simulations, guided by a virtual coach. Participant progress is tracked through the virtual classroom allowing for assessment of learning and skill gains. The following are examples of career modules in the training facility:

- Healthcare Clinic and Health Sciences Field (the clinic simulates what happens in a real-life healthcare facility, and the Health Sciences Field covers the fundamentals of healthcare careers with modules on patient care foundations, technical skills, safety, etc.)
- Manufacturing and Construction: The Skilled Trades (plant safety, construction safety, blueprint reading, precision measurement, mechatronics, etc.)
- Hospitality and Tourism (Culinary, Hospitality soft skills)
- Automotive (Auto body/collision repair, plant safety, precision measurement, etc.)
- Diesel Technology (Diesel vehicle maintenance, engine overhaul, electrical fundamentals, etc.)
- Aviation Maintenance (General skills, airframe skills, powerplant skills, etc.)
- Electrical Construction (Plant safety, fundamentals, etc.)

Affirmative Outreach

Our affirmative outreach for the South Central region includes the following efforts to ensure SCPa Works services are accessible:

- Identifying agencies, organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other community-based organizations that serve specific populations and build key partnerships with those entities;
- Providing outreach material, information, and programmatic access through these partnerships to ensure that SCPa Works are better reaching various populations; and
- Ensuring that customers at each PA CareerLink® site have opportunities to share their experiences about ways SCPa Works can improve our services.

In adherence to 29 CFR §38.40, SCPa Works takes all appropriate steps to ensure the access and provision of services meet standards across inclusion, diversity, and equity. SCPa Works acts through the creation of collateral that specifically targets various populations that are protected by these regulations. These groups include, but are not limited to persons of different sexes, various racial and ethnic/national origin groups, various religions, and individuals with LEP. We also cater to individuals with disabilities, and those in different age groups. The SCPa Works' commitment to affirmative outreach ensures that all individuals

are granted equal access to WIOA programs and activities by guaranteeing that action-based efforts are established and implemented to include all members of the diverse populations within our communities.

Section 4.9

4.9. Nondiscrimination - How will entities within the one-stop service delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, comply with WIOA Sec. 188 (as applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101, et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(iii), 29 CFR § 38.40. Reviewed by OS, BWPO, and OEO]

EO and ADA Awareness and Best Practices

SCPa Works has strategies/approaches to provide service for individuals with disabilities, including identifying significant barriers encountered and offering the means to address them. Equal Opportunity (EO) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance reviews, in adherence with 29 CFR 38, for the PA CareerLink® centers are performed annually. SCPa Works employs an EO Officer and a monitoring and compliance team that collaborates with the One-Stop Operator and partners within the PA CareerLink® system to ensure that all comprehensive, affiliate and specialized PA CareerLink® centers are EO and ADA compliant. In addition, these staff members have trained annually on policy updates and EO/ADA compliance changes.

The SCPa Works Policy Manager created the SCPa Works Equal Opportunity & Discrimination Policy #P-13-2.22 in September 2022. The policy was most recently updated in July 2024 in accordance with SCPa Works reviewing policies annually for updates and revisions. The policy was board-approved on November 11, 2022. The policy includes agreements and signature pages for every employee within the SCPa Works service area to sign and submit to the Policy Manager upon accepting employment with a vendor or under the LWDB.

All PA CareerLink® locations are ADA accessible and abide by OEO regulatory compliance under detailed monitoring executed by the SCPa Works Compliance Department. In addition, access to TYY devices, auxiliary devices, and LEP support is made available to all employees, participants, and community members.

The SCPa Works Policy Manager provided detailed Equal Opportunity and Discrimination training to all vendors within the SCPa Works service area. Members of the BWPO and the PA DLI staff were included as attendees in the training. SCPa Works schedules annual region-wide EO and Discrimination training sessions as a best practice. The SCPa Works EO Officer receives technical assistance training provided by Commonwealth EEO Specialist II who provides a PowerPoint complemented by additional training materials related to the role of performing duties as an LWDB EO Officer. Additional materials are received by the EO Officer via email when updates are issued on federal and state policies, and WIOA Final Rule. When the SCPa Works EO Officer receives EO updates, those materials are issued to the OSO with the direct intent of distribution throughout the eight-county service region. The SCPa Works EO Officer also ensures that all SCPa Works team members receive up-to-date EO notices, advisement on best practices, and regular EO training sessions presented during monthly staff meetings.

EO training materials such as articles, links to websites, and access to training videos are provided to SCPa Work staff members, Title I vendors, PA CareerLink® partner staff for self-paced training. SCPa Works EO training materials are available to all workforce development staff members in the South Central PA region through the SCPa Works vendor portal. These materials include videos, links, policies, recordings of EO/ADA policy training sessions, and recordings of EO training sessions. SCPa Works is available to

engage in cross-training at PA CareerLink® staff across programs and services to ensure compliance on these items. PA CareerLink® facilities provide monthly meetings for all staff members and community partner organizations. A variance of EO topics is on the agenda for most of these meetings.

Language Accessibility

SCPa Works One-Stop-Operator and Site Administrators provide a language accessibility sheet to all patrons who enter PA CareerLink® career centers and who do not speak English as a native language. The sheet provides a statement of assistance in 25 different languages, ensuring that all who enter a PA CareerLink® job center receive access to the necessary services. The language notice includes a TTY number in each distinct language that can be called for translation services when a translator is not available.

The PA CareerLink® system ADA services are available to assist the special needs of the population protected by the ADA. Throughout the PA CareerLink® PA system, all individuals, regardless of barriers, including persons of limited English-speaking ability and persons with limited basic skills, are provided equal access to all program services, and appropriate steps will be taken to eliminate any barriers to employment. Bilingual access is available through the State language system at each site to assist LEP customers.

PA CareerLink® centers update the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan as needed and submit it to the OEO annually for compliance review. The LEP Plan demonstrates that customers of PA CareerLink® are being provided meaningful access to program information, benefits, and services, even though the customers may be limited in English language proficiency. One-stop partner staff receive training to familiarize team members with the programs and services provided through the one-stop delivery system. Staff also receives annual training on the Auxiliary Aides and Services (Universal Access) Policy and Procedures, LEP Plan, and Disability Etiquette.

The SCPa Works Title I vendor deputy directors to gather vital documentation to include WIOA applications, consent forms, important information regarding participation in the program/activity, information on the right to file complaints of discrimination, and additional vital programmatic content requiring the signatures of participants prior to receiving grant benefits. Through application data analysis, the One-Stop-Operator determined the top written and spoken languages in addition to English within the South Central PA region. Fifty percent or more of the population collectively speaks and writes in a language other than English. SCPa Works collaborated with translation companies to recreate the vital Title I enrollment documents translated into various languages. The result was the translation of vital Title I documentation into Spanish, Arabic, Dark & Pashto to better serve those people when they come into the PA CareerLink® career centers.

Throughout the SCPa Works service area, flyers, brochures, and forms are provided to participants in various languages. The SCPa Works Policy Department houses a Babel Notice on the SCPa Works Vendor Portal where all vendors have access to the form for reference and usage with participants. The SCPa Works Babel Notice contains statements of importance in 13 different languages.

In 2025, SCPa Works will purchase and pilot TranslateLive for the EARN Program. TranslateLive will be used for one-to-one translation with customers, workshops, and community outreach.

All brochures, pamphlets, and flyers detailing services specific to PA CareerLink® locations include the TTY number. This includes job seeker flyers, weekly workshop and class flyers, a monthly events calendar, job seeker and employer satisfaction surveys, etc. The TTY number is also included on fax sheets and all staff

business cards.

SCPa Works provides equitable access to services to various groups protected by Federal law and regulations including, but not limited to persons of different sexes, various racial and ethnic groups, religion, age, individuals with disabilities, and limited English language proficiency. This affirmative outreach for the South Central region includes the following efforts to ensure SCPa Works services are accessible:

- Identifying agencies, organizations, non-profits, and other community-based organizations that serve specific populations and building key partnerships with those entities.
- Through these partnerships, SCPa Works provides outreach material, information, and programmatic access to various populations through braille, large print, audio assist, and TTY.
- Ensuring that customers at each PA CareerLink® site have opportunities to share their experiences about ways SCPa Works can improve service delivery.

At each comprehensive location, representatives of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) are available to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals eligible for WIOA Title IV services, which in Pennsylvania means those with significant disabilities. Services of all partners are available to all persons with barriers to employment. All PA CareerLink® sites have TTY-TTD phones, and the staff has been trained on the system. To ensure accessibility to all customers, all delivery of all services complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Staff at most sites have received sensitivity training; at all sites, additional training is planned.

It is unlawful for any WIOA Title I recipient, grant subrecipient, or employee to be discriminated against. SCPa Works requires non-discrimination practices and protocol at all times across all programming administered by SCPa Works, including delivery of all federally-funded services through the PA CareerLink® system.

SCPa Works operates within regulatory compliance of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Department of Labor and Industry, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the following references to workforce development, equal employment opportunity, and workplace discrimination:

- Section 188 of WIOA
- 29 CFR Part 38
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,
- Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
- Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Americans with Disabilities Act and all other regulations that seek to ensure nondiscrimination.

SCPa Works maintains a collaborative relationship with the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) and remains in compliance with all OEO requirements, regulations, and policies.

Under the guidance provided in the SCPa Works Equal Opportunity and Discrimination Policy #P-13-2.22, all vendors within the SCPa Works service area, including LWDB staff and the members of the full Board of Directors, are in day-to-day compliance with EO and discrimination expectations and standards. All staff members under all entities within the South Central Region are provided these expectations and standards to include the SCPa Works Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy #P-29.11.22 which includes specific guidance on the SCPa Works code of conduct that is expected.

The SCPa Works Program Participant Grievance Policy #P-32-1.23 and the SCPa Works Training Provider Grievance Policy #P-10-6.22 provide the opportunity for individuals to file complaints. The SCPa Works Equal Opportunity Officer meets with complainants or their authorized representative within ten (10) business days from the date of receipt of the written allegations to begin the conflict resolution process. Under the SCPa Works Risk Assessment and Corrective Action Policy #P-24.4.22, retaliation against an individual who makes a complaint, participates in an investigation, or provides information related to any complaint, is prohibited. SCPa Works employees and the employees of SCPa Works contracted vendors and service providers ensure that all programmatic participants are fully aware of this policy including the Complaint Procedures that are in place and implemented as a part of this policy. The SCPa Works Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure is provided to all individuals throughout the SCPa Works service area.

Physical Accessibility to Technology

The PA CareerLink® centers are equipped with computer labs for customer use, including ADA-accessible computer stations throughout the region. The ADA computer stations are equipped with a 21-inch monitor, adjustable height table, flexible monitor arm, standard keyboard, standard mouse, Kensington Ball Mouse, internal speakers, headset, and large-print low-vision. In addition, mini keyboards are available along with standard keyboards, standard pointer navigation mice, ergonomic chairs, and access to Windows accessibility features in all computers. PA CareerLink® centers all have ADA TTY devices and foam wrist rests with the digital option of ZoomText, JAWS, and Fusion, which combines ZoomText and JAWS, and provides access to all Windows accessibility features.

In addition, South Central PA CareerLink® centers house bilingual staff members and offer access to a multitude of language accessibility services to enable non-English-speaking customers to navigate the PA CareerLink® system to career pathway services.

Furthermore, SCPa Works has instituted a laptop-lending service for EARN participants who have barriers to transportation and childcare, hindering their ability to complete goal-oriented tasks in a brick-and-mortar facility. SCPa Works has also authored directives to support internet connectivity through supportive services and has expanded internet WIFI capabilities at every PA CareerLink® center parking lot.

Recovery in the Workplace

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) addresses addiction to alcohol, illegal drugs, and the unlawful use of legal drugs in each stage of employment:

1. Application and interview
2. After a job offer, but before starting work
3. On the job

The ADA ensures that people with disabilities, including people with addiction to alcohol have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. These protections also apply to people who experience prescription drug use disorder and opioid use disorder.

The ADA prohibits discrimination against a “qualified person with a disability” in all stages of employment. A qualified person with a disability is a person who possesses the skills, experience, and education that will facilitate the successful performance of the “essential functions” of the job with or without reasonable accommodation including a schedule change, leave to attend AA/NA meetings or treatment at a rehabilitation program.

In 2024, the SCPa Works Human Resources/Office Manager and Policy Manager completed the Recovery Ready Workplace-Implementing Policies and Practices training sessions provided by Envoy. The sessions covered the practice of implementing policies and procedures to better serve ADA-protected staff members, vendor team members, and participants who are employed by local businesses and organizations. Following the Envoy training sessions, the SCPa Works Policy Manager engaged in the ECHO Project Shatter the Stigma, Supporting Recovery in the Workplace. The training program, promoted by the PA Department of Labor, provided content relevant to supporting workers in recovery, directly aligning with the SCPa Works Youth Reentry grant initiatives as well as future plans to further develop reentry programming incorporating recovery-friendly workplaces for all staff and participants within the South Central PA workforce development system.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation(OVR)

PA CareerLink® OVR staff are trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, comprehension, or education level. All requests for accommodations must be addressed, and reasonable accommodations will be made available to customers as necessary to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility to all customers within the PA CareerLink®. Such accommodations will include but are not limited to an interpreter provided in real-time or, if not available, within a reasonable timeframe to any customer with a language barrier, assistive devices, such as screen-reading software programs (e.g., JAWS and DRAGON), and assistive listening devices.

5. COMPLIANCE

Section 5.1

5.1. MOU assessment(s) - Describe the cooperative agreements that define how all local area service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local area one-stop delivery system. [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(13). Reviewed by OS]

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is reaffirmed annually between SCPa Works and the PA CareerLink® system partners. This MOU outlines the cooperative working relationship and confirms the parties' understanding regarding the operation and management of the two (2) Comprehensive PA CareerLink® Centers, four (4) affiliate sites, and one (1) specialized center in the SCPa Works Local Workforce Investment Area. The accompanying operating budget outlines the costs and funding sources required to operate the facilities.

The parties to the MOU work closely together to ensure that all SCPa Works PA CareerLink® centers are high-performing workplaces with staff who ensure exemplary service.

All parties to this agreement comply with the following:

- Section 188 of the WIOA Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Regulations (29 CFR Part 38; Final Rule, published December 2, 2016),
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352),
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended,
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336),
- The Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288) pertaining to priority of service in programs funded by the
- U.S. Department of Labor,
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 37-14, Update on Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Discrimination Based on Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Stereotyping Are Prohibited Forms of Sex Discrimination in the Workforce Development System and other guidance related to implementing WIOA sec. 188,
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR part 99),
- Confidentiality requirements governing the protection and use of personal information held by the VR agency (34 CFR 361.38),
- The confidentiality requirements governing the use of confidential information held by the State UI agency (20 CFR part 603),
- All amendments to each, and
- All requirements imposed by the regulations issued under these acts. The above provisions require, in part, that no persons in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, disability, political beliefs, or religion, be excluded from participation in, or denied, any aid, care, services or other benefits provided by Federal and State funding, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination.

Additionally, all parties:

- Collaborate and reasonably assist each other in the development of necessary service delivery protocols for the services outlined in the Partner Services section above,

- Agree that the provisions contained herein are made subject to all applicable Federal and State laws, implementing regulations, and guidelines imposed on either or all Parties relating to the privacy rights of customers, maintenance of records, and other confidential information relating to customers, and
- Agree that all equipment and furniture purchased by any party for purposes described herein shall remain the property of the purchaser after the termination of this agreement.

Chief Elected Official:

The CEO for the SCPa Works Local Workforce Development Area is Robert G. Ziobrowski, SCPa Works Local Elected Officials, appointed chairperson. The CEO will, at a minimum:

- In Partnership with the SCPa Works LWDB and other applicable Partners within the planning region, develop and submit a single regional plan that includes a description of the activities that all LWDBs and their Partners shall undertake and that incorporates plans for each of the Local areas in the planning region,
- Approve the SCPa Works LWDB budget and workforce center cost allocation plan,
- Approve the selection of the one-stop operator following the competitive procurement process and
- Coordinate with the SCPa Works LWDB to oversee the operations of the SCPa Works LWDA PA CareerLink® system.

SCPa Works Local Workforce Development Board:

The LWDB ensures the workforce-related needs of employers, workers, and job seekers in the LWDA and the region are met to the maximum extent possible with available resources. The LWDB will, at a minimum:

- In Partnership with the CEO and other applicable Partners within the LWDA, develop and submit an LWDA plan that includes a description of the activities that the LWDB and its Partners shall undertake and that aligns its strategic vision, goals, objectives, and workforce-related policies to the regional plan and economy,
- In Partnership with the CEO and other applicable Partners within the planning region, develop and submit a single regional plan that includes a description of the activities that all LWDBs and their Partners shall undertake and that incorporates plans for each of the Local areas in the planning region,
- In collaboration and Partnership with the CEO and other applicable Partners within the planning region, develop the strategic regional vision, goals, objectives, and workforce-related policies,
- In cooperation with the local CEO and the other LWDBs within the regional area, the PA CareerLink® system structure will be designed and approved.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Adequate, sufficient, and accessible one-stop center locations and facilities;
- Sufficient numbers and types of providers of career and training services (including eligible providers with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and eligible providers with expertise in assisting adults in need of adult education and literacy activities);
- A holistic system of supporting services and
- One or more competitively procured one-stop operators.

In collaboration with the CEO:

- Designate through a competitive process, oversee, monitor, implement corrective action, and, if applicable, terminate the one-stop operator(s),
- Determine the role and day-to-day duties of the one-stop operator,

- Approve annual budget allocations for the operation of the PA CareerLink® system,
- Help the one-stop operator recruit operational Partners and negotiate MOUs with new Partners,
- Leverage additional funding for the PA CareerLink® system to operate and expand one-stop customer activities and resources, and
- Review and evaluate the performance of the SCPa Works LWDB and one-stop operator.

LWDB Staff responsibilities include, at a minimum:

- Assist the CEO and the LWDB with the development and submission of a single regional plan,
- Support the LWDB with the implementation and execution of the regional vision, goals, objectives, and workforce-related policies, including all duties outlined above,
- Provide operational and grant-specific guidance to the one-stop operator,
- Investigate and resolve elevated customer complaints and grievance issues,
- Prepare regular reports and recommendations to the LWDB and
- Oversee negotiations and maintenance of MOUs with one-stop Partners.

Operator:

- Equus, the designated service provider, employs five (5) Site Administrators to act as “functional leaders.” As such, they will have the authority to organize Partner staff to optimize and streamline service delivery efforts. The one-stop operator, through the Site Administrators, will, at a minimum:
 - Manage daily operations, including but not limited to:
 - Employ receptionists, data entry staff, and customer service representatives.
 - Provide formal leadership, supervision, and performance responsibilities.
 - Manage and coordinate Partner responsibilities, as defined in this MOU,
 - Manage hours of operation, including the once weekly extended hours of operation within applicable contract terms,
 - Coordinate daily work schedules within applicable contract terms and workflow based on operational needs,
 - Coordinate staff vacations/unscheduled absences within applicable contract terms with the formal director to ensure service coverage by center staff.
 - Assist the LWDB in establishing and maintaining the PA CareerLink® system structure.

This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Ensuring that State requirements for center certification are met and maintained,
- Ensuring that career services such as the ones outlined in WIOA sec. 134(c)(2) are available and accessible,
- Ensuring that SCPa Works LWDB policies are implemented and adhered to,
- Adhering to the provisions outlined in the contract with the SCPa Works LWDB and the SCPa Works LWDB Business Plan,
- Reinforcing strategic objectives of the SCPa Works LWDB to Partners and
- Ensuring staff are properly trained by their formal leadership organizations and provided technical assistance, as needed.
- Integrate systems and coordinate services for the center and its Partners, prioritizing customer service.
- Integrated Workforce Service Delivery, as defined by WIOA, means organizing and implementing services by function (rather than by program) when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and as appropriate and by coordinating policies, staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts.
- Functional alignment includes having one-stop center staff who perform similar tasks and serve

on relevant functional teams, e.g., Skills Development Team or Business Services Team.

- Service integration focuses on serving all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with each program's purpose, scope, and requirements within applicable contract terms.
- The services are seamless to the customer, meaning the services are free of cumbersome transitions or duplicative registrations from one program service to another. There is a smooth customer flow to access the array of services available in the workforce center within applicable contract terms.
- Oversee and coordinate partner, program, and PA CareerLink® system performance within applicable contract terms.
- Providing and contributing to reports of center activities, as requested by the SCPa Works LWDB,
- Providing input to the formal leader (partner program manager) on the work performance of staff under their purview within applicable contract terms,
- Application of process with Partner supervisors for notification of any staff leave requests or unexcused absences, disciplinary needs, or changes in employee status as it relates to necessary and appropriate communication with all Partners and within applicable contract terms,
- Identifying and facilitating the timely resolution of complaints, problems, and other issues,
- Collaborating with the LWDB on efforts designed to ensure the meeting of program performance measures, including data sharing procedures to ensure effective data matching, timely data entry into the case management systems, and coordinated data batch downloads (while ensuring the confidentiality requirements of FERPA 34 CFR 361.38, and 20 CFR part 603),
- Ensuring open communication with program managers to facilitate efficient and effective center operations,
- Evaluating customer satisfaction data and proposing service strategy changes to the SCPa Works LWDB based on findings.
- Manage fiscal responsibilities and records for the center. This includes assisting the LWDB with cost allocations and maintaining and reconciling.
- Coordinate meetings twice a year to update partners on operational concerns, problems, anticipated changes, or enhancements to service integration. In cases where 'significant' changes or enhancements will impact commonwealth programs, staff, or resources, the One-stop Operator will communicate such plans to District Administrators and the Assistant Regional Director at least 60 days before implementation to ensure the continuity and stability of Commonwealth programs and services.
- Manage Outreach Staff/Programming and Community Access Points

The Operator will not assist in the development, preparation, and submission of Local plans. They cannot manage or assist in future competitive processes for selecting operators or selecting or terminating one-stop operators, career services providers, or youth providers. The operator cannot negotiate local performance accountability measures or develop and submit budgets for the LWDB's activities. SCPa Works LWDB is responsible for the negotiated performance measures, strategic planning, budgets, and one-stop operator oversight (including monitoring).

Partners:

- Each partner commits to cross-training staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous quality improvement.
- Partners will further promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through the following:
 - Effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration with the one-stop operator,

- o Joint planning, policy development, and system design processes,
- o Commitment to the joint mission, vision, goals, strategies, and performance measures,
- o The design and use of common intake, assessment, referral, and case management processes,
- o The use of common and linked data management systems and data sharing methods, as appropriate,
- o Leveraging resources, including other public agency and non-profit organization services,
- o Participation in a continuous improvement process designed to boost outcomes and increase customer satisfaction and
- o Participation in regularly scheduled Partner meetings to exchange information in support of the above and encourage program and staff integration.

SCPa Works partners with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to further enhance the services provided to individuals with disabilities. This relationship has been formalized through partnership agreements that allow OVR to operate effectively in the local workforce development area. Through a signed partnership agreement, OVR is represented on the SCPa Works Board of Directors and is a key partner in PA CareerLink® in the South Central region. Through training and technical assistance, OVR serves the employment needs of individuals with disabilities with one-stop center staff. One-stop center staff has received training on ADA compliance laws, TTY, benefits counseling, and disability awareness and sensitivity. Strong partners in the PA CareerLink® system, including Adult Basic Education and OVR, have also collaborated with SCPa Works to design and implement an innovative service delivery model aligned with WIOA regulations and our strategic goals.

Section 5.2

5.2. Fiscal responsibility - What is the process the local board uses to ensure the collection of the debts of lower-tier sub-recipients, because of audits? [Reviewed by Fiscal]

All grant sub-recipients are subject to an annual on-site monitoring visit. Sub-recipients that fall within the OMB criteria for independent audit must submit their OMB audit within 120 days after year-end. Compliance team members review all sub-recipient monitoring reports and annual audits. Any funded disallowed cost will be recaptured through a credit of outstanding funds due to the sub-recipient. The Director of Finance will determine the best recourse in counsel with the Board Admin Finance Committee.

SCPa Works has the authority to make the Final Determination on a debt-related scenario with the sub-recipients of federal or non-federal grants.

- SCPa Works' decision to allow or disallow questioned costs and the resolution of any non-monetary findings concerning Federal or non-federal determinations is at the discretion of SCPa Works.
- SCPa Works shall determine the final debt, defined as the amount owed based on the awarding agency's final determination before any appeal process or the decision issued in response to an appeal.
 - Included in final debts are funds due from, but not limited to, incidents of fraud, malfeasance, misapplication of funds, or other serious violations or illegal acts.
- SCPa Works adheres to the required controls specified in 20 CFR 683.420 (a)(i) as its process for collecting debts through the development and maintenance of debt collection procedures that include:
 - A process for notifying subrecipients of the establishment of debt;
 - An appeal policy and process;
 - The establishment of a final notice that provides notification that payment is officially delinquent;
 - Sanctions that occur if a debt and any applicable interest charged is not repaid;
 - A process through which three payment demand letters are sent to the sub-recipient at no less than 30 calendar day intervals;
 - Establishment of an outstanding debt line item within SCPa Works financial statement;
 - Standards and specifications for terminating, compromising, and litigating debts; and
 - A process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases and current statuses.
- The SCPa Works Risk Management and Corrective Action Policy # P-24-4.22 overviews disallowed cost infractions and a detailed outline of corrective action procedures.
- SCPa Works remains responsible for all WIOA-funded sub-recipient audit resolution proceedings and debt action by maintaining records documenting the actions taken concerning debt collection, restoration, and other debt resolution activities.
- SCPa Works documents debt details and supporting documentation for all debt-related corrective action procedures.
- SCPa Works acts against debt within six (6) months of a finding through the issuance of a management decision that details the nature of the debt, the reasons for the decision, and the subrecipients expected corrective actions to include a designated timeline in which corrective actions must be accomplished.
- Sanctions could include but are not limited to debarment, litigation, or referral to a collection agency.

- In adherence to documentation standards, SCPa Works establishes an outstanding debt line item in the financial statement when debt occurs.
- Documentation related to debt collection will be maintained in the sub-recipient contract file.
- Appeal Rights
- Sub-recipients wishing to appeal SCPa Works' debt determination must request a hearing within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the first repayment letter to avoid sanctions or penalties.
 - Appeals must be in writing and emailed to the SCPa Works CEO.
- If debts result from fraud, malfeasance, serious violations, or illegal acts, repayment must be in cash from non-federal resources.

Section 5.3

5.3. High-performing board attainment - What action(s) is the local board taking (or will take) towards becoming or remaining a high-performing board? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(17). Reviewed by PA WDB]

SCPa Works commits to achieving maximum regional growth potential in workforce development initiatives over the next four years. The all-encompassing goal is to maintain the status of a high-performing LWDB from the forthcoming guidance of the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. A primary focus continues to pivot on WIOA performance measures. SCPa Works committees develop targets to address performance measures negotiated with the Governor. They are responsible for compiling and providing this data to all committee members and vendors about program monitoring and compliance reviews.

SCPa Works has embedded the main goals of the Commonwealth's workforce development plan into five strategic pillars. To that end, SCPa Works has demonstrated success in implementing strategies that support the following:

- Employer Engagement - sector strategies;
- Individual Investment - Opportunity Youth and apprenticeship programming;
- Systems Connection - service integration and expanding partnerships; and
- Thought-leadership - promoting and improving the workforce system by sharing best practices and key data, SCPa Works performs at a high level.

Meeting and Exceeding all WIOA Negotiated Performance Measures:

SCPa Works boasts a proven track record of meeting and exceeding local performance negotiated goals in WIOA programs through a stringent framework for tracking, reporting, and implementing continuous program improvement methodologies. Quarterly WIOA, TANF, and EARN performance measures are carefully documented, tracked, and reported to the Board. The program Committee receives feedback regarding the achievement of negotiated levels, recommendations and actions are commissioned on program enhancements, and follow-up is requested at subsequent meetings.

In addition to maintaining a focus on program performance, regulatory compliance with WIOA, TANF, and EARN local, state, and federal guidance, and adherence to ETA and Workforce System Policy guidelines, SCPa Works makes the promise of continual growth through the innovative and compelling practices outlined in the following examples of workforce development excellence.

CAP Outreach, Business Services, Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion

Increasing Workforce Development Opportunities through Community Access Points (CAP)

Community Access Points (CAP) emerged from the idea that everyone should be within 15 minutes walking distance of the opportunity to improve their lives. As a place-based workforce development strategy, CAPs meet individuals where they are, build trust through community relationships, and eliminate common barriers to accessing the traditional brick-and-mortar workforce system. The SCPa Works CAP strategy tackles the challenges of accessibility head-on and directs resources to those most in need of services.

In 2024, having applied the Knovva research project results to resolve workforce development system gaps, SCPa Works identified a need to meet Opportunity Youth within the communities in which they lived. This insight launched an initiative to expand access to and the effectiveness of Community Access

Points, referred to as CAPs, as strategic hubs to reach Opportunity Youth within home-based communities. Opportunity Youth are disconnected from the opportunity to explore and engage in traditional educational or workforce development programs. CAPs provide a flexible and accessible entry point for youth who face barriers to employment, whether it's transportation, lack of engagement with formal institutions, a need for childcare, hunger, primary education needs, addiction, reentry, and other challenges. CAPs establish services that are more visible and accessible than traditional workforce development service sites, increasing the likelihood of Opportunity Youth seeking out and receiving the support they need.

In partnership with Crispus Attucks, the SCPa Works CAP Outreach Team engaged 70 Opportunity Youth participants in a PA CareerLink® overview, resulting in 13 internal referrals to PA CareerLink® partners, including the WIOA Youth Program, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to address the needs of Opportunity Youth with disabilities. This has been the groundwork for a program exhibiting exponential growth potential, and SCPa Works seeks to continue to increase the number of CAPs per county throughout the region.

To roll out the CAP program from concept to implementation, SCPa Works maintained a positive and flexible approach to a theory of change that allowed for growth through trial and error. Using the data-driven outreach strategy to connect with Opportunity Youth and demographic and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, SCPa Works engaged the CAP Outreach Team to drive the establishment of CAPs across the South Central PA region. The geographical diversity of the eight-county service region of SCPa Works and the region's demographic diversity and economic inequality increased the potential of CAPs to expand access and direct resources more efficiently.

Using GIS mapping to pinpoint effective CAP sites and measure each site's 15-minute walkable distance footprint, SCPa Works dissected the eight-county service region, narrowing areas of the region where access to workforce development services was limited.

The data launched a full CAP Outreach investment into forging relationships with organizations and agencies throughout the South Central PA region. This was a first in history for SCPa Works to evaluate and advance a program based on data-driven research that promoted and impacted the region's workforce development system. SCPa Works has trailblazed programming that will continue to define and improve the value of the workforce system as a whole.

One of the most successful CAP locations in South Central PA has been the relationship with domestic relations in Adams County. Title I staff is at the courthouse twice weekly to meet with individuals before and after judicial hearings. This initiative has enabled Title I staff to meet individuals impacted by the judicial system where they are and provide a sense of hope during difficult times. During Program Year '23-24, Adams County Domestic Relations had 5,960 PA CareerLink® orders entered, 62 terminations due to obtaining employment or possible case closures, and the average number of days until new employment is added to the system was 97.25 days. Of the non-compliant defendants, 59 were scheduled for contempt of court. Ninety-seven individuals obtained employment and made regular payments. Reflecting on the CAP within the judicial system, the Adams County Domestic Relations staff stated: "The program has significantly changed the perception of the Domestic Relations Section mission of serving clients and families and increased child support collections."

Community Outreach:

The One-Stop Operator's robust outreach efforts connected with many participants across the region, showcasing the vital role of place-based workforce development. By establishing and implementing more

than 70 local CAPs and Referral Partner Organizations, PA CareerLink® site services have expanded to reach Opportunity Youth in all eight SCPa Works service region counties.

Expanding collaboration between partners beyond those located within the facility is essential to ensure a seamless service experience for participants. Inevitably, services and resources extend far beyond the walls of a single location. By fostering partnerships with external organizations, experts, and support systems, SCPa Works will connect with a broader range of resources, knowledge, and services that are critical to meeting participants' needs.

This growth allows for the exchange of information, expertise, and resources, which can help address challenges that may not be fully covered by the immediate team at the facility. Whether it's bringing in specialized knowledge, handling overflow needs, or offering remote support, working with external partners broadens the capacity to serve participants with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The SCPa Works Business Services Department has been a driving force in reaching Opportunity Youth across the South Central region. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of reaching and engaging Opportunity Youth.

In 2024, the Business Services Department engaged with 1,923 new businesses, broadening the network of job placement sites for Opportunity Youth. Through direct business owner outreach, Business Services established 65 Paid Work Experience (PWE) sites, providing an expanded opportunity for hands-on job experience to Opportunity Youth in the region.

Veterans:

Enhancing workforce development and employment services for veterans is a priority of Federal leaders and is recognized as an important means of expanding economic opportunities for individual veterans and communities. To support this priority, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) maintains two important one-stop system partners: Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). These partners help to strengthen and further integrate workforce and employment services for veterans. One of the purposes of the Federal Veterans Opportunity to Work and Hire Heroes Act (VOW Act) is to connect service members to jobs more effectively by providing employment workshops and linking these service members to the workforce development system and local labor market.

SCPa Works has sponsored several roundtables focusing on connecting veterans to jobs. These roundtables have repeatedly identified veterans' employment needs and the current services and support that are being provided:

- Veterans' Employment Needs
- Employment Information
- Employment Assistance
- Support Services
- Accepting Assistance
- Socialization
- Convenience
- Employers

Current Services and Support:

- Assistance with job placement and workforce connections, resume writing, and interviewing skills

- Military Share food assistance for veterans and active duty service families
- Case Management and employment readiness services
- Homeless and housing crisis assistance and referral
- Financial Assistance
- Classroom Training connected to High-Priority Occupations

Persons with Disabilities:

OVR provides services to help OVR-eligible persons discover their abilities by offering the tools and opportunities to pursue a meaningful career. SCPa Works also encourages all Pennsylvanians with disabilities to achieve employment goals leading to a better quality of life.

OVR provides a wide range of services to OVR-eligible persons with disabilities, including:

Vocational Evaluation: Aptitude, interest, general ability, academic exams, work tolerance, and "hands-on" job experience to understand participants' vocational potential.

Counseling:

Vocational counseling helps participants better understand their potential, rely on their abilities, set realistic vocational goals, and change them when necessary.

Training:

Education, including but not limited to necessary academic, vocational/technical instruction, college, on-the-job training, independent living skills training, and personal/work adjustment training, is necessary to prepare participants for a job.

SCPa Works invests in efforts to defer "silos" of program staff and/or other partners. Helping and assisting the participants just as they are or come into the PA CareerLink® with no focus on program association. This includes monthly meetings with all partners within the PA CareerLink® to open lines of communication for all partners who may have or know of participants who have additional needs, questions, and barriers to employment. Another path is that referrals can be sent and processed within the CWDS/PA CareerLink® system to the necessary partner to assist the participant with a particular necessity or barrier. The referral is tracked in the system, and the progress of the participant and the partner activities attached to the referral.

The Title I Businesses Services Team (BST) meets regularly with partners to best assist participants and employers who come to the PA CareerLink® for workforce development services. The BST provides information on job openings to individuals in need of employment. If a participant is assessed or evaluated and exhibits Limited English Proficiency (LEP) upon intake or during the first point of contact with a PA CareerLink®, the participant is connected with a PA CareerLink® bilingual team member to assist the participant best. If a center requires a language that a staff member within the PA CareerLink® cannot speak, translating phone service is utilized to serve the participant best. Suppose an LEP participant needs to learn English for continued education, training, or employment. In that case, a referral is made to the local Literacy Council or an alternative Title II provider so the participant can be enrolled in English Language Learner (ELL) classes.

In 2025, SCPa Works will purchase and pilot TranslateLive for the EARN Program. TranslateLive will be used for one-to-one translation with customers, workshops, and community outreach.

Individuals with Criminal Justice System Involvement

SCPa Works strives to address the ever-increasing schism of employment with reentrants, focusing on direct intervention within this population of participants in the workforce development system of services. Youth and Adult staff are trained to work with individuals in the criminal justice system. A local workforce system collaboration co-leveraging available resources will ensure an ongoing process to identify, recruit, train, and assist with the reentry of those previously or currently involved with the criminal justice system for high-priority occupations. Participants can increase individual skills with in-demand certifications and credentials validated by local employers and receive mentorship throughout their reentry journey.

The South Central PA Fair Chance Hiring and Reentry Program's mission is to work with individuals pre- and post-release as they transition into the community and help them achieve their short- and long-term education and career goals. A dedicated reentry team engages individuals at multiple points in the criminal justice system and serves as a resource for county and State agencies to reduce recidivism. The reentry team does this by leveraging PA CareerLink® partners and community organizations to create a cohesive network of service providers. The reentry team focuses on each participant's individualized services and bases all interactions on a trauma-informed approach through the following process:

1. Meet with potential participants through referrals from the judicial system, work release, county jail pre-release, prison post-release programs, self-identified referral or walk-in, and probation or parole officers and programs;
2. Discuss the participant's interests, goals, challenges, criminal system involvement, etc.;
3. Explain the program to the participant and enroll or refer to the appropriate service;
4. Document supportive service needs and remediation plans;
5. Enroll the participants appropriately and determine eligibility for all possible funding streams;
6. Plan for each of the following barrier assessments and resolve: Transportation, Child Care, Housing, Living Expenses, etc.;
7. Deliver pre-release workforce services in York, Adams, and Cumberland Counties that include Workforce 101 (Equus curriculum) and Competency-Based Interviewing (CBI) workshops;
8. Leverage outside funding sources to enhance existing workforce funding such as WIOA training, education, and supportive services;
9. Provide community outreach and forge partnerships as we collaborate effectively with parole, probation, PACCT, Reentry Coalitions, etc.;
10. Integrate Youth Reentry services through JusticeWorks in all eight counties through a community-based model.
11. Enforce the SCPa Works Fourth Priority is a direct reflection of the region's Re-Entry program delivery through which SCPa Works has been the subrecipient of both the Youth Re-Entry Grant (2024) and the Women's Re-Entry Grant (2023). The inclusion of this Fourth Priority ensures that contracted service providers are prioritizing the need to serve individuals whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system;
12. Ensure that the Dauphin County PA CareerLink® participates in the Harrisburg Group Violence Intervention Group as a service provider;
13. Connect reentry participants with Reentry Correctional Reception Centers to ensure that participants have the services they need to transition back to communities and
14. Cultivate the CAP partnership with the International Service Center for serving refugees.

The SCPa Works Fair Chance Hiring and Reentry Programming has been widely embraced by criminal justice system partners in the incorporation of a cognitive behavioral curriculum specifically designed for individuals with criminal justice system involvement who are searching for employment. While traditional workforce services address the various needs of individuals searching for employment, they often place

too little focus on addressing the internal beliefs and perceptions that lead to a lack of job retention and continued recidivism. Through cognitive behavioral interventions, service providers are able to adequately address work, conflict, and relationship building. By incorporating this programming into existing workforce services, reentrants are better prepared to obtain and maintain employment. University of Cincinnati Correctional Institute's Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions for Employment curriculum will be used for group sessions.

"Designed for criminal and juvenile involved individuals in moderate to high need in employment. The curriculum integrates cognitive-behavioral interventions with more traditional employment approaches. The program teaches individuals how to identify and manage high-risk situations related to obtaining and maintaining employment. Heavy emphasis is placed on skill-building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skill development for the work environment. Using a modified closed group format with multiple entry points, the curriculum is designed to allow for flexibility across various service settings and intervention lengths. This curriculum was developed in partnership with MDRC." - *University of Cincinnati Correctional Institute*.

The five program modules focus on motivational enhancement, cognitive restructuring, social skills/emotional regulation skills, problem-solving, and success planning. The CBI-EMP contains 30 sessions for about 45 dosage hours. This curriculum can be expanded for higher-risk/needed offenders by adding advanced practice sessions to any modules. Each session is intended to be delivered in approximately 90 minutes.

Digital and Social Media Outreach Campaign: *Meeting a Critical Regional Need*

South Central PA houses businesses and employers that face a significant need for skilled workers. Industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and construction are seeing an increase in job openings, but many employers struggle to find qualified candidates to fill positions. At the same time, Opportunity Youth—youth who are not currently enrolled in school and who are not working—represent a significant untapped resource for these employers. Many of these youth face barriers to employment, such as lack of work experience, limited skills, lack of access to resources, and disengagement from traditional educational pathways.

Research conducted by Knovva Academy during Program Year 2024 provided SCPa Works with quantified data on the targeted Opportunity Youth demographic. The Knovva report supplied SCPa Works with insight on building keyword gaps into SCPa Works digital content to ensure search engine optimization (SEO). This method enabled SCPa Works to create specific online content related to specific keywords, prompting a higher rank on search engines. Top-ranking keyword searches included "youth employment near me," "youth job services," "youth employment opportunity program," and youth job programs near me." The study compared SEO between SCPa Works and three out-of-state local workforce development boards (LWDB). For example, SCPa Works identified that the search phrase, "youth employment program near me," was an online hit for a New York-based LWDB at a rate of 81 while SCPa Works could not produce data on the search term hit at the time of the study, meaning, SCPa works had zero hits on the search engine phrase or terms. This study prompted a substantial leap into the realm of SEO, online content development, digital material creation, and social media branding to establish a high number of content opportunities via online workforce development searches throughout the SCPa Works service area.

The Knovva report revealed that 33% of Opportunity Youth in South Central PA are under the age of 20, while a staggering 50% of Opportunity Youth are between the ages of 20 and 24. According to Knovva's

research, exposure to employment and training opportunities occurs at a high rate through social media users between the ages of 18 and 24 years. This age demographic, coupled with the market analysis provided by Knovva, prompted the SCPa Works team to launch a digital and social media campaign to grab the attention of Opportunity Youth.

SCPa Works utilized the metrics produced by the Knovva research initiative and launched digital campaigns through collaboration with the OSO, PA CareerLink® communications teams, digital marketing, development technicians, and digital and social media site management.

Digital and social media campaigns made a significant impact on regional data, reaching approximately 18,000 accounts through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, with a high engagement rate of 20% interaction. These strategic efforts raised awareness of workforce development opportunities and activities increased a drive in participation, and expanded community and participant interest in crucial workforce programs that led to employment placement in high-demand industry sectors.

Branding became a priority for SCPa Works as a key element in digital and social media strategy. According to Knovva, it takes 50 milliseconds for social media content to impact a consumer. SCPa Works identified an aesthetically appealing media color palette to complement existing logos and designs. Messaging and content creation were established through a cohesive and communicative team process to ensure consistency in the branding and public messaging.

The communications and outreach teams engage with Opportunity Youth through YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook comment section interaction to ensure that connections are established. Opportunity Youth seeking workforce development services. In addition, SCPa Works gathered additional data on Opportunity Youth stakeholders through the Knovva research project. Opportunity Youth stakeholders are individuals who come in contact with potential Opportunity Youth participants on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis and who want to see Opportunity Youth individuals succeed in education, training, and employment scenarios. Opportunity Youth stakeholders include teachers, athletic coaches, extracurricular activity leaders, school administrators, advocates, community organization or agency leaders, and family members. These individuals want to see the Opportunity Youth individuals in their lives find employment, establish independence, and improve their overall quality of life. This data prompted SCPa Works to reach Opportunity Youth stakeholders through LinkedIn and Facebook.

With targeted audiences identified, data collected and implemented, content created, and the branding design complete, SCPa Works launched a social media campaign to broaden the foundation of the workforce development system reach and increase the level of engagement in workforce development system activities in South Central PA. The strong branding and content strategy attracted more than 80 Opportunity Youth in 2024, which contributed to a surge in South Central PA CareerLink® sites documenting 18,754 new job seeker accounts, a testament to the public positioning of all six PA CareerLink® sites in the region.

Artificial Intelligence Application for EARN

In 2023, SCPa Works piloted SkyHive as an artificial intelligence application that creates a profile for individual EARN participants. The application comprises the development of personalized career pathway maps based on participant assessments, interests, and goals. SkyHive enables career advisors to manage EARN cases through meaningful communication with participants while providing relevant and effective assistance with services that lead to education and employment goals. SkyHive maintains an up-to-date database containing Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) job postings, Pennsylvania's Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) postings, and additional employment

opportunities that match a participant's interests and aptitudes. SkyHive data is updated daily to ensure that a participant's career pathway map illustrates an accurate customer profile, skill set, and steps necessary to achieve employment goals. Using SkyHive, participants can also access Job Scan and workshops available through the PA CareerLink® system. Overall, SkyHive expands participant access to job opportunities and postings. The Title I Business Services Team focuses on participant progress, relevant career pathway connects, and the ultimate goal of attaining long-term, sustainable employment that is meaningful to the participant.

Paid Work Experience Expansion through Virtual Reality (VR)

PWE is a required element of Opportunity Youth within the SCPa Works service area. PWE ensures that Opportunity Youth participants receive applicable workforce assessments, including CareerScope, O*NET, and additional assessments, to identify feasible work experiences for each youth participant. Assessment results are individualized so that career advisors can easily pinpoint an Opportunity Youth participant's industry aptitude and career interests. The assessment results serve as the key source of data entered into the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) where career advisors create Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for Opportunity Youth participants. The ISS is utilized to track goal attainment, training outcomes, and employment placement while actively encouraging Opportunity Youth participant accountability as they professionally evolve through the workforce development system. This journey begins with applicable PWE.

SCPa Works has implemented an innovative Virtual Reality (VR) paid work experience program, enabling participants to explore various careers virtually and complete in-depth modules on specific fields of interest. Working individually with career advisors or within cohort groups, Opportunity Youth participants gain hands-on skills and real-world insights through VR simulations, complemented by presentations from employers and training providers. This approach offers a comprehensive experience that empowers participants to make informed career choices, assess long-term fit, and evaluate the potential value of further training or education.

SCPa Works supports sustained engagement by providing a bi-weekly stipend to eligible participants while completing VR modules. This incentive, along with financial support, encourages participant commitment while enabling participants to build essential skills for future careers, mirroring traditional, face-to-face PWE practices and stipend processes.

Virtual Reality (VR) Integration in Pre-release Services:

Eligible pre-release participants who are completing a term of incarceration engage in SCPa Works Virtual Reality Program utilizing Transfr VR equipment and curriculum for career exploration and hands-on 'virtual' training in over 20 different in-demand occupations. The virtual reality experience is broken into two primary categories: career exploration and the virtual training facility. Through career exploration modules provided prior to a return to the workforce, participants have the opportunity to explore the following careers:

- o Health Sciences (Registered nurse, EMT, Surgical Technologist)
- o Architecture and Construction (Broadband Utility Construction, Electricians, etc.)
- o Information Technology (Network Technician)
- o Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security (Emergency Medical Technician)
- o Manufacturing (Welders, Semiconductor Manufacturing Technician)

Once a participant determines which career field they are most interested in, they are able to move on to the virtual training facility component. In the facility, participants take part in multiple real-life simulations guided by a virtual coach. Participant progress is tracked through the virtual classroom,

allowing for assessment of learning and skill gains. The following are examples of career modules in the training facility:

- Healthcare Clinic and Health Sciences Field (the clinic simulates what happens in a real-life healthcare facility, and the Health Sciences Field covers the fundamentals of healthcare careers with modules on patient care foundations, technical skills, safety, etc.)
- Manufacturing and Construction: The Skilled Trades (plant safety, construction safety, blueprint reading, precision measurement, mechatronics, etc.)
- Hospitality and Tourism (Culinary, Hospitality soft skills)
- Automotive (Auto body/collision repair, plant safety, precision measurement, etc.)
- Diesel Technology (Diesel vehicle maintenance, engine overhaul, electrical fundamentals, etc.)
- Aviation Maintenance (General skills, airframe skills, powerplant skills, etc.)
- Electrical Construction (Plant safety, fundamentals, etc.)

Cognitive-Behavioral Intervention Employment Adult (CBI-EA) Curriculum

In 2025, SCPa Works has taken a vested interest in the Cognitive-Behavioral Intervention – Employment Adult (CBI-EA) curriculum designed for criminal and juvenile-involved individuals who are in moderate to high need of career pathway training and employment. The curriculum integrates cognitive-behavioral interventions with more traditional employment approaches. The program teaches individuals how to identify and manage high-risk situations related to obtaining and maintaining employment. Heavy emphasis is placed on skill-building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skills development in the work environment. Using a modified closed group format with multiple entry points, the curriculum is designed to allow for flexibility across various service settings and intervention lengths. This curriculum was developed in partnership with MDRC. The University of Cincinnati (UC) serves as the sole owner and proprietor of the copyright in the CBI-EA manual and training program.

Investment in Research

Research conducted by Knovva Academy during Program Year 2024 provided SCPa Works with quantified data on the targeted Opportunity Youth demographic, providing SCPa Works with insight into building keyword gaps into SCPa Works' digital content to ensure search engine optimization (SEO). This study prompted a substantial leap into the realm of SEO, online content development, digital material creation, and social media branding to establish a high number of content opportunities via online workforce development searches throughout the SCPa Works service area. SCPa Works utilized the metrics produced by the Knovva research initiative and launched digital campaigns through collaboration with the OSO, PA CareerLink® communications teams, digital marketing, development technicians, and digital and social media site management.

The launch of a mixed-methods research study in partnership with Knovva Academy resulted in the provision of a granular level of data analysis, data mapping, alignment of data and Community Access Point (CAP) model, systems connection, and best practices for serving Opportunity Youth in the South Central PA region.

The Envoy Recovery Ready Workplace-Implementing Policies and Practices training sessions provided insight into implementing policies and procedures to better serve ADA-protected recovery staff members, vendor team members, and participants employed by local businesses and organizations.

The ECHO Project Shatter the Stigma, Supporting Recovery in the Workplace training program, promoted by the PA Department of Labor, provided content relevant to supporting workers in recovery, directly aligning with the SCPa Works Youth Reentry grant initiatives as well as future plans to further develop reentry programming incorporating recovery-friendly workplaces for all staff and participants within the South Central PA workforce development system.

Through research and collaboration with SCPa Work, Envoy produced an OSY Toolkit for Employer engagement to include labor market metrics and measurable employer survey results. The toolkit and data were coupled with research data pulled from the Knowva report to strategically align Opportunity Youth with labor gaps in the local workforce.

Opportunity Youth

In early 2023, SCPa Works issued a Request for Proposals Titled "Opportunity Youth in South Central PA Analysis and Needs Assessment." Knowva Academy answered the request with a proactive, results-oriented, data-driven proposal.

In 2024, SCPa Works launched the mixed-methods research study through the partnership with Knowva Academy, resulting in the provision of a granular level of data analysis, data mapping, alignment of data and Community Access Point (CAP) model, systems connection, and best practices for serving Opportunity Youth in the South Central PA region. The study collected data across the South Central PA region, encompassing Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York counties. The study focused on Opportunity Youth, previously referred to as Out-of-School Youth, and engagement with workforce development services through regional PA CareerLink® centers and Community Access Points (CAPs). The study revealed that Opportunity Youth are largely disconnected from both school and work, often facing significant personal, economic, and social challenges. These factors highlight the importance of prioritizing Opportunity Youth within the service area and underscore the need to deepen Opportunity Youth engagement. The disconnection of Opportunity Youth also illustrates the challenges service providers face in locating and effectively engaging disconnected youth as long-term employees.

Key Opportunity Youth Data

South Central Pennsylvania in the Context of State and National Comparators

	scPA	PA	US
Population density of youths aged 15–24	12.1%	12.3%	13.2%
Dropout rate	1.5%	1.1%	5.2%*
Population density of youths aged 18–24 without a high school diploma	16.7%	11.6%	11.7%
Unemployment rate	4.3%	3.4%	3.4%
BIPOC population density	15.3%	24.3%	39.9%
Poverty rate	9.2%	12%	12.8%
Households without vehicles	6.1%	10.7%	8.5%

Table 1 reproduced⁶

[Knowva, 2024]

SCPa Works answered the Knowva research and analysis results with the implementation of four main Opportunity Youth initiatives:

1. Digital and Social Media Outreach Campaign
2. CAP Outreach, Business Services, Employer Engagement, Paid Work Experience Expansion
3. Youth Reentry Grant Acquisition
4. Summer Youth Programming

All four initiatives targeted Opportunity Youth, increased overall program participation, increased employer engagement, and broadened Paid Work Experience opportunities.

Employer Engagement

The SCPa Works Business Services Department has been a driving force in reaching Opportunity Youth across the South Central region. By engaging employers to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored business solutions, and creating sustainable employment pathways, the department has significantly contributed to SCPa Works' mission of reaching and engaging Opportunity Youth.

In 2024, the Business Services Department engaged with 1,923 new businesses, broadening the network of job placement sites for Opportunity Youth. Through direct business owner outreach, Business Services established 65 Paid Work Experience (PWE) sites, providing an expanded opportunity for hands-on job experience to 34 Opportunity Youth in the region in July and August 2024 alone.

Throughout 2024, SCPa Works linked with the CREDC Economic Development and Workforce Integration Initiative. By actively fostering communication concerning employer-focused endeavors and initiatives spearheaded by PREP partners, it became clear that workforce initiatives needed to evolve toward meeting business demands within the South Central PA region. This entailed arranging frequent meetings and providing a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on prevailing needs and obstacles. For example, a sequence of task force dialogues was created, enabling SCPa Works representatives, local businesses, and PREP partners to exchange perspectives on workforce needs and industry trends.

In alignment with SCPa Works' employer engagement initiative, CREDC's collaboration with business assistance organizations evaluates the ongoing demand for information seminars in key sectors of business creation, including technology startups, healthcare innovation, and sustainable practices. Utilizing this data-driven approach, the SCPa Works refined and developed strategies that ensure regional business development initiatives are closely aligned with the evolving needs and priorities of local businesses.

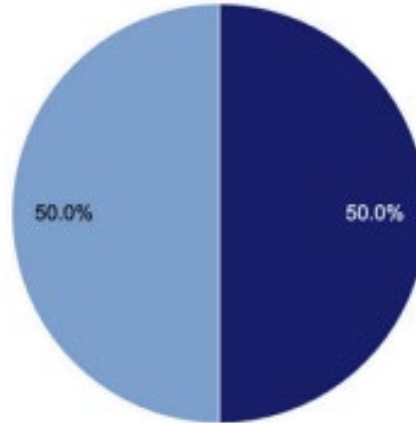
In the Fall of 2024, SCPa Works contracted with Envoy to conduct research on employer engagement. The result was the creation of a WIOA Out-of-School Toolkit for Employer Engagement, matching labor market demands and concerns with a target population enrolled in credential-earning workforce development programs. The study included data and research from Aspen Community Solutions, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation, Rite Aid Healthy Futures, and workforce development program focus points of reference from Partner4Work and Philly Works.

The Envoy study showed that South Central PA is comprised of employers looking for new, sustainable ways to build a strong workforce. Out-of-School Youth (OSY) represents an untapped labor pool that can help South Central PA companies meet staffing needs while driving community engagement. There are approximately 5 million OSY in the United States, defined as youth between the ages of 16-24 (*Aspen Community Solutions, 2024*) who are neither enrolled in school nor employed. This population represents individuals who possess valuable skills and talents that remain underutilized due to systemic barriers to employment, as well as undertraining, noncredentialed youth.

SCPa Works utilized the Envoy research and resolution data to acquire an understanding of how businesses can integrate OSY into the workforce, highlighting business opportunities and practical strategies for implementation and success. The findings underscore the importance of community partnerships in addressing local talent needs while offering young people meaningful employment opportunities and career pathways.

We have a particular strategy or partnerships to recruit and hire 16-24 year-olds:

- No
- Yes



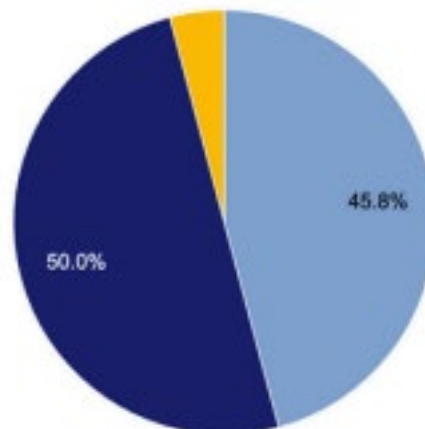
[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]

Based on an Envoy survey of South Central PA employers, only 50% of employers have systems and partnerships in place to recruit young talent. The data encouraged a need for employers to connect with workforce development systems to formalize hiring efforts, collaborate with program directors, partner with community-based organizations, and acquire new ways of approaching the existing job vacancy problem with employers across the region.

SCPa Works devised a proactive approach to addressing labor shortages by building an OSY talent pipeline through the implementation and success of CAP locations throughout the service area. In addition to the employer challenge of not having hiring systems in place, Envoy reported that nearly 50% of employers in South Central PA experience challenges in attracting and hiring workers between the ages of 16 and 24.

I would describe our experience hiring and employing 16-24 year olds as:

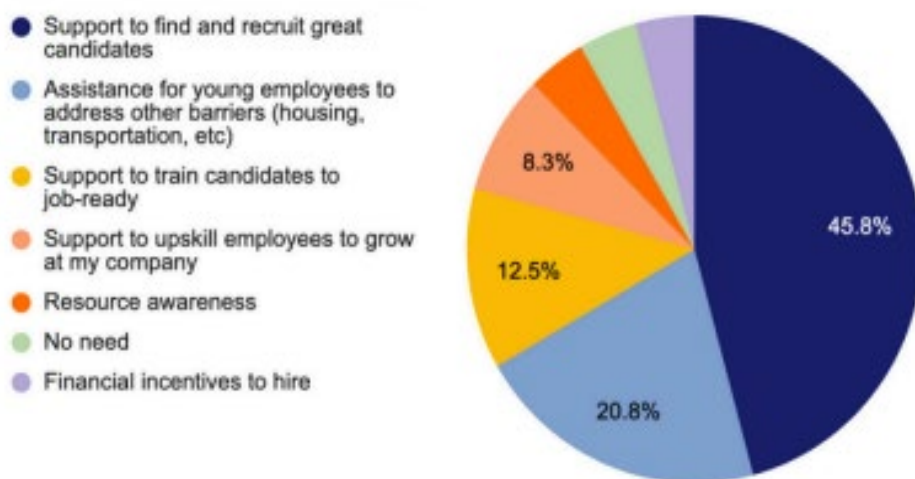
- Challenging
- Similar to other candidates
- Better than other candidates



[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]

The research report data positioned SCPa Works, South Central PA CareerLink® teams, and CAP site locations across the region to step in full force on the recruitment, training, and employment of OSY, referred to as Opportunity Youth. In alignment with the Opportunity Youth initiative, an astounding 45% of South Central PA employers agreed to connect with SCPa Works to identify and recruit “great candidates.” In addition, SCPa Works matched 21% of employers’ need for supportive services to remove Opportunity Youth barriers with WIOA OSY eligibility and enrollment. The Envoy data reinforced and validated a push for the SCPa Works Programs Team to elevate employer engagement initiatives through the Title I Business Services Team and the One-Stop teams. The SCPa Works Programs Team determined that in Program Year ‘24-25, 100% of WIOA OSY funding would be devoted to the Opportunity Youth initiative as expanded upon in Section 3.4 of this Plan.

If SCPa Works were to support my hiring of young employees, the best resources would be:



[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]

To benefit employer access to hiring quality workers, SCPa Works WIOA OSY programs offer a combination of academic, occupational, and life skills training, ensuring that Opportunity Youth are job-ready upon program completion. Employers stand to gain substantial benefits from hiring youth who have completed WIOA programs. These programs equip Opportunity Youth with industry-specific skills that align directly with labor market demands, ensuring that participants possess the technical expertise and certifications required for high-demand sectors in South Central PA, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. [Envoy, 2024]

In addition to technical training, Opportunity Youth receives practical work experience through internships, apprenticeships, and paid job experiences, providing hands-on exposure to professional environments before beginning full-time employment. Additionally, employers who partner with workforce programs gain access to a reliable pipeline of young, motivated workers who have completed rigorous training and certification programs. [Envoy, 2024]

Furthermore, according to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), employers who partner with organizations that administer WIOA grant funding have experienced proven success in filling roles

that are difficult to staff, benefiting from the motivated, well-trained youth that WIOA-based training and education produce into the workforce. *[Envoy, 2024]*

According to the Envoy study, economic and workforce development advantages exist in hiring Opportunity Youth as a means to enhance a company's community reputation. SHRM reports that more than 70% of consumers are comfortable supporting businesses that hire employees ages 16-24, and nearly 1 in 5 consumers would increase patronage of companies actively engaging in Opportunity Youth employment initiatives.

This growing social sentiment demonstrates the potential for companies to gain both economic and reputational benefits by embracing OSY hiring practices. In Pennsylvania, businesses like Giant Food Stores, a top five employer in South Central PA according to the Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) Bureau, have actively promoted efforts to hire and train OSY, strengthening community standing and customer loyalty.

By investing in Opportunity Youth, employers build stronger relationships within the community, foster goodwill, and position themselves as contributors to local economic development. These efforts have increased media attention, improved relationships with local governments, and increased workforce development visibility among consumers in the region.

The Opportunity Youth model enables employers to recognize the untapped potential in hiring youth and fosters partnerships between businesses and nonprofit organizations that work with Opportunity Youth. According to the Envoy report, 96% of employers who partner with community-based organizations and nonprofits to support employees document positive outcomes, including higher retention rates, increased employee engagement, and increased job performance. Walmart Associates, Inc., reported by PA CWIA as the number four top employer in South Central PA, embraced the Opportunity Youth model on a national level. Local employers and businesses benefit through partnerships with WIOA-funded organizations to provide paid internships, subsidized on-the-job learning, and skills-based training for potential hires. SCPa Works programming and strategic planning pave the way for Opportunity Youth to transition from training to permanent professional roles within the South Central PA workforce.

In addition to matching employers with workforce hiring systems, processes, and talent, SCPa Works continues to unite community businesses, agencies, and organizations through regular Local Management Committee (LMC) meetings where training and recruitment strategies and statistics are shared among partners.

TANF Youth Development Program Expansion

SCPa Works seeks to partner with organizations that deliver dynamic programs that address communities' hardest-to-solve challenges. An example of this type of partnership is found in partnership with Dauphin County's Neighboring Academy. The Neighboring Academy breaks cycles of poverty by creating pathways to homeownership that combine local neighborhood capital with 21st-century skills at Steelton-Highspire for high school students.

Through the partnership, 24 TANF students completed summer programs focusing on essential life and professional skills. Activities included conflict resolution, communication, and financial literacy. Participants also engaged in community beautification projects, fostering a sense of civic responsibility in preparation for the responsibilities that come with adulthood.

Implementing Quantitative Reports

SCPa Works provides a monthly labor market data report to the Title I Business Services Team (*Lightcast*) that provides the following content:

- Employer-unique job postings per month, segmented by county and posting frequency;
- Top Occupations posted per county, including the employer posting source;
- Top skills required by employers per job postings – leading to potential employer discussion surrounding the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and skill-matching through identifying industry-specific training programs;
- Board-led employer discussions focused on High Priority Occupations (HPOs) and occupations anticipated for the upcoming year’s HPO list through creating a letter of advocacy submitted by the Board;
- Elevated employer discussions presented to the Board by Title I Business Services Teams on topics encompassing industry partnerships, wage assessments, occupational outlook, pipeline development, fair chance hiring practices, and
- The board serves as a liaison for the needs of the Economic Development, Chamber, Post-Secondary, and Coalition-related employers.

Competency-Based Interviewing (CBI) and the RENEW Program; Rebuilding, Empowering, Nurturing, and Excelling Women

For the 2024-2025 program year, SCPa Works received more than \$1.6 million in competitive and discretionary grants, including reentry program dollars provided by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), through which SCPa Works launched the RENEW program. The program focuses on providing women impacted by the criminal justice system with supportive services and employment assistance.

A highlight of the program is the Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Employment Classes. This evidence-based curriculum emphasizes approaches to managing risky behavior and thoughts within the workplace. By integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions with traditional employment approaches, workforce development programs reach all aspects of personal and professional growth within an individual who would otherwise have barriers to employment.

SCPa Works, in partnership with the EARN partner, integrated virtual reality at York County Prison and the York Reentry Opportunity Center (ROC) and accelerated the growth of the women’s reentry CBI workshops at PA CareerLink® one-stop centers. At the start of the program in the spring of 2024, EARN had provided outreach to potential participants. By April, participants were enrolled in the program and attending in-person three days a week. The program was open to reentry residents in all eight South Central PA counties. The program, dedicated to reducing recidivism, uniquely targets individuals touched by the criminal justice system and provides workforce system services that address the cognitive behaviors of a reentry individual.

The RENEW program provides holistic support for women who have been involved in the criminal justice system. In addition to the cognitive behavioral services, program participants receive one-on-one job placement services, education and training opportunities, and reentry support.

RENEW participants are also screened for WIOA eligibility to ensure that every participant is empowered and equipped with the necessary tools to rebuild their lives and foster lasting positive changes within themselves, their homes, and, ultimately, the South Central PA workforce. In 2024, the RENEW Program

reached 121 women in reentry, provided 148 collective supportive services, and achieved 30 job placements.

RENEW PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Metric	Outcome
Women Enrolled	121
Employment Placements	30
Successfully completed CBI Workshops	16
Supportive Services Provided	148
Served Pre-Release	29

[SCPa Works Annual Report]

SCPa Works remains committed to continuously measuring program success through key metrics such as employment outcomes and participant feedback to ensure the effectiveness and relevancy of the programs provided to residents of South Central PA.

Section 5.4

5.4. Public Notice - What is the process the local board uses to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, and describe the opportunity for input into the development of the local area plan, particularly for representatives of business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies, and community stakeholders? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(19). Reviewed by PPCS]

SCPa Works engages the public and key stakeholders in the evolution of this local plan. Opening public comments on this plan lends to the development of a balanced and effective plan. This input is pivotal in the creation of comprehensive content and materials that serve as a relevant tool in understanding workforce development within the SCPa Works service area. Overall, it is our goal to ensure that the SCPa Works Local Plan provides the foundation from which job seekers and employers are served.

During the development of the SCPa Works Local Plan, the SCPa Works Board and staff members met to discuss changes, modifications, and updates to the plan. The process for the 2025-2028 local plan development began with a presentation to the SCPa Works Board of Directors during the December 17, 2024 meeting. SCPa Works solicited input through a series of stakeholder sessions, public forums, and an employer survey, including a Title II partner discussion on December 11, 2024, a Regional partner communication and discussion throughout January 2025, and an employer survey issued in Fall 2024.

The 2025-2028 local plan review began with a presentation to the SCPa Works Board of Directors during the February 6, 2025 meeting. SCPa Works staff, including the Compliance Department, Fiscal Department, Programs Department, Strategic Initiatives Department, and Operations Department, reviewed and provided input on the local plan as a team and completed edits to the content, making it a team effort from a collaborative approach.

The release of SCPa Works' local plan for public comment is announced following the PPCS approval of this current draft. Upon PPCS approval, SCPa Works posts the Local Plan to the LWDB website at scpaworks.org. SCPa Works anticipates PPCS approval of this current 2025 draft of the Local Plan in June 2025, at which point, the Local Plan will be posted on the SCPa Works website for public comment. Electronic notification of the draft will be issued to all SCPa Works contacts, including employers, regional CBOs, WIOA service providers, and training providers, for public review and comment. A specified notice will be posted on the SCPa Works website.

The feedback that SCPa Works receives during the public comment period is reviewed and considered, and then, if the content is accepted, changes are incorporated into the final SCPa Works Local Plan. Comments that suggest changes, revisions, or edits to the plan will be cited and included with the Local Plan as attachments on the final submission of the plan when submitted to the Commonwealth. SCPa Works will include actions taken based on public comments received.

SCPa Works posts a link to the South Central Local Plan on its website, www.scpaworks.org/plans, as well as a link to the South Central Regional Plan for a 30-day comment period. A legal notice announcing the 30-day public comment period is published in regional South Central Pennsylvania newspapers. This enables the general public and stakeholders to review and comment on the draft of the Local Plan.

This year, the South Central Local Plan was made available for public comment from June 23 to July 22, 2025. Public comments are welcome, noted, and addressed before submission to the Commonwealth.

This process constitutes action across all revisions of the South Central Local Plan. When public comments are received and changes are made to modify the Local Plan, it is noted in this section of the Local Plan.

After fulfilling the required 30-day public comment period, SCPa Works did not receive any public comments and, therefore, no changes were made to the Local Plan.

This plan defaults to a July 1, 2025, effective date.

ATTESTATIONS

By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components and documents listed are (or will be) in place and effective prior to June 30, 2025. In the rare circumstance that something is not applicable, the local board must write "N/A" next to adjacent line item.

The following components and documents, including local workforce system policies, must be reviewed and revised as to be aligned with WIOA for the current planning cycle unless it is established as a best practice. Each item must be available to L&I at any time during the planning process and monitoring or auditing processes. L&I is not requiring copies of such documents to be attached to regional or local area plans at this time.

- ☒ The South Central PA Local Workforce Development Area attests that each of the below-referenced policies contains any required language or content and were last revised, if necessary, by this plan's effective date.
- ☒ Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local and chief elected officials.
- ☒ Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated.
- ☒ Agreement between the local area elected official(s) and the LWDB.
- ☒ LWDB policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest.
- ☒ Financial management policy and process including cost allocation plan; internal controls; cash management; receipts of goods; cost reimbursement; inventory and equipment; program income; travel reimbursement; audit requirements and resolution; annual report; property management; debt collection; and allowable costs.
- ☒ Local area procurement policy that must describe formal procurement procedures.
- ☒ Local area MOU.
- ☒ Program management policies and processes must include equal opportunity for customers; complaints and grievances; supportive services; one-stop operator local firewall (if applicable); file management; eligibility determination and verification; self-sufficiency criteria; self-attestation and certification random sampling; priority of service; training verification/refunds; individual training accounts; contracts for training services; statewide training providers list and eligibility verification; local area training provider list and eligibility criteria and process; "additional assistance" definition; work-based training policies including incumbent worker training, OJT, CT, and apprenticeship.
- ☒ It is best practice to have a risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.
- ☒ It is best practice to have a human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
- ☒ It is best practice to have professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.