



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](mailto:cgrillicla@pa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deske".

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

This WIOA regional plan outlines the strategies and actions to develop, coordinate, align and integrate workforce development programs and services across the South Central Workforce Development Planning Region.

WIOA Multi-Year Regional Plan  
(PY2025-2028) | South Central  
Workforce Development  
Planning Region

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## Section 1.1

### 1.1. Identification of the region. *[Reviewed by PPCS and Grants]*

This regional plan serves as a multi-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies to support the Commonwealth's vision, strategic and operational goals within the local workforce development areas, and regional goals and strategies. The effective date of this plan is July 1, 2025.

The South Central Workforce Development Planning Region (SCWDPR) is comprised of the South Central Workforce Investment Board, D.B.A. SCPa Works hereinafter referred to as such in this plan, and the Lancaster County Workforce Development Board, hereinafter referenced as LCWDB throughout this plan. The SCWDPR is comprised of the counties of Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lebanon, Lancaster, Perry, Juniata, and York.

Key Regional Committee Members:

- Jesse McCree (SCPa Works)
- Katie Lentz (SCPa Works)
- Saranne Miller (SCPa Works)
- Anna Ramos (LCWDB)
- Carrie McCullough (LCWDB)

The committee members communicated throughout January 2025.

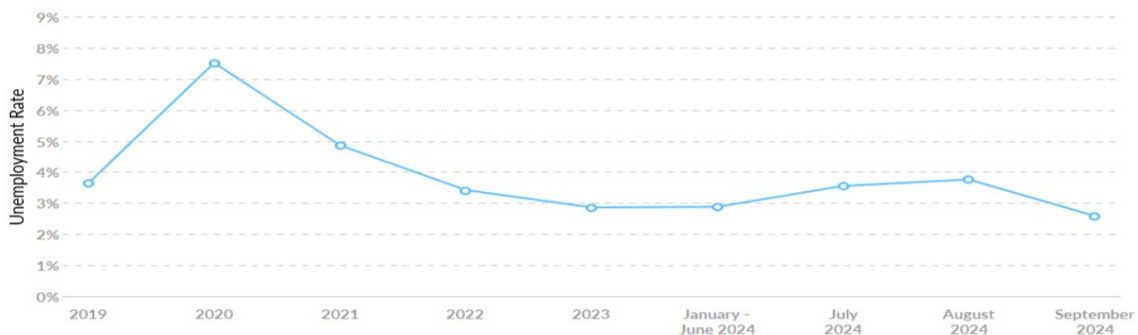
## Section 1.2

1.2. Regional Analysis. -Based on the analysis of the regional labor market and economic conditions, describe the region’s workforce and economic development-oriented vision and goals. Describe the collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the Commonwealth). [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(D); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(iv); 20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(i) and (ii). Reviewed by CWIA]

The SCWDPR is committed to developing, collaborating, and implementing strategies that result in labor market growth and improved economic conditions while improving the quality of life for the region’s residents throughout the vibrant communities in which they live. The SCWDPR takes pride in creating effective training and employment advancement programs that reduce unemployment throughout the region. Results-driven strategies have produced an increase in labor force participation rate, contributing to job-seekers achieving financial stability through workforce development program completion. Through leading a multitude of collaborative training programs and executing exemplary service delivery initiatives, the SCWDPR consistently accelerates workforce growth potential, matching employers with skilled workers. The following graphs are a display of the planning region’s unemployment and employment trends, as well as the planning region’s population characteristics:

### Unemployment Rate Trends

Your areas had a September 2024 unemployment rate of 2.59%, decreasing from 3.64% 5 years before.



[©2024 Lightcast]

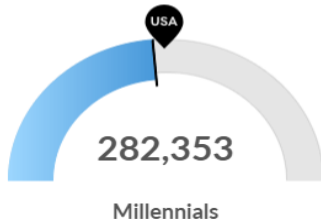
By working cohesively on outreach and employer engagement projects, the SCWDPR ensures the opportunity for long-term, sustainable employment for job seekers and a qualified pipeline of regional talent for employers.

### Labor Force Participation Rate Trends

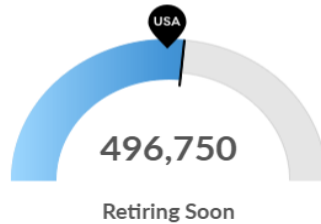


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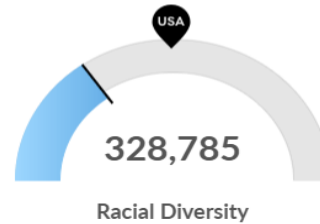
Based on market research data, economic trends throughout the SCWDPR are anticipated to improve and flourish with the growth of small businesses contributing to the region’s infrastructure. Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of the region’s demographic trends through data collection and analysis enables regional workforce development system leaders to identify and address systemic barriers within regional communities.



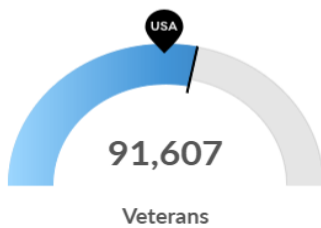
Your area has 282,353 millennials (ages 25-39). The national average for an area this size is 305,342.



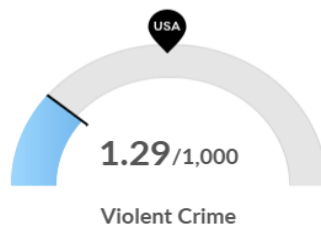
Retirement risk is about average in your area. The national average for an area this size is 453,657 people 55 or older, while there are 496,750 here.



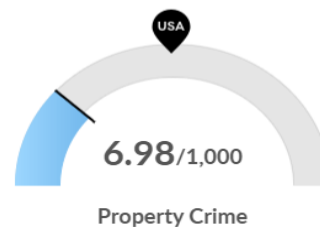
Racial diversity is low in your area. The national average for an area this size is 625,869 racially diverse people, while there are 328,785 here.



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.

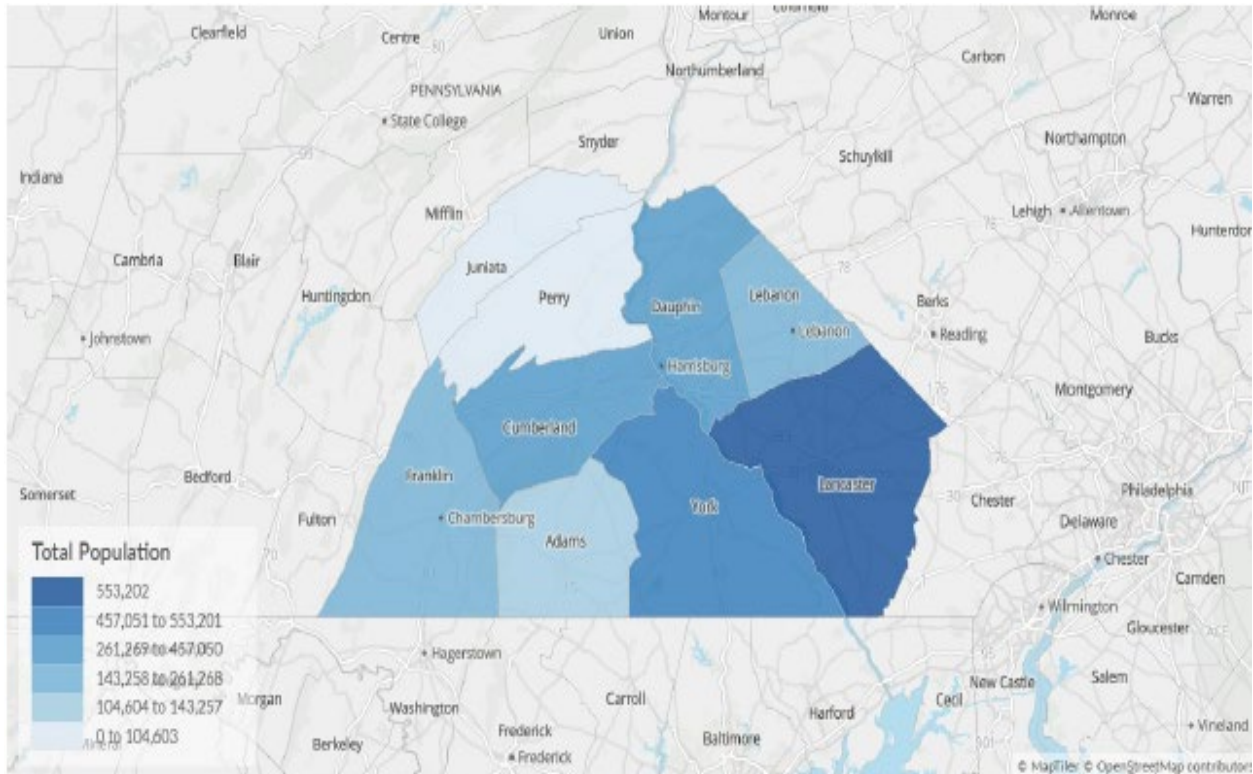
[©2024 Lightcast]

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.

### **State of the Regional Economy**

According to the Lightcast Populations Demographics Report, the overall population in the SCWDPR was 2,061,381 in 2023. In 2023, the region had a civilian labor force of 1,055,974 with a participation rate of 64.7%.

Between the years 2018 and 2023, the overall number of jobs in the SCWD planning region increased by 1% to 1,019,201. In comparison, the number of jobs statewide was 6,615,637. The median household income in the SCWD planning region is \$75,097, and the median house value is \$223,489. The following graphs highlight the region’s population, broken down by county. Median household income, poverty level and median house value are also displayed:



County	County Name	Total Population	Median Household Income	% Poverty Level	Median House Value
42071	Lancaster County, PA	553,202	\$81,458	8.2%	\$263,600
42133	York County, PA	457,051	\$79,183	8.6%	\$220,700
42043	Dauphin County, PA	286,108	\$71,046	12.2%	\$208,200
42041	Cumberland County, PA	261,269	\$82,849	7.7%	\$246,200
42055	Franklin County, PA	156,084	\$71,808	9.0%	\$222,000
42075	Lebanon County, PA	143,258	\$72,532	10.9%	\$211,400
42001	Adams County, PA	104,604	\$78,975	7.9%	\$242,800
42099	Perry County, PA	45,941	\$76,103	8.2%	\$210,600
42067	Juniata County, PA	23,535	\$61,915	9.0%	\$185,900

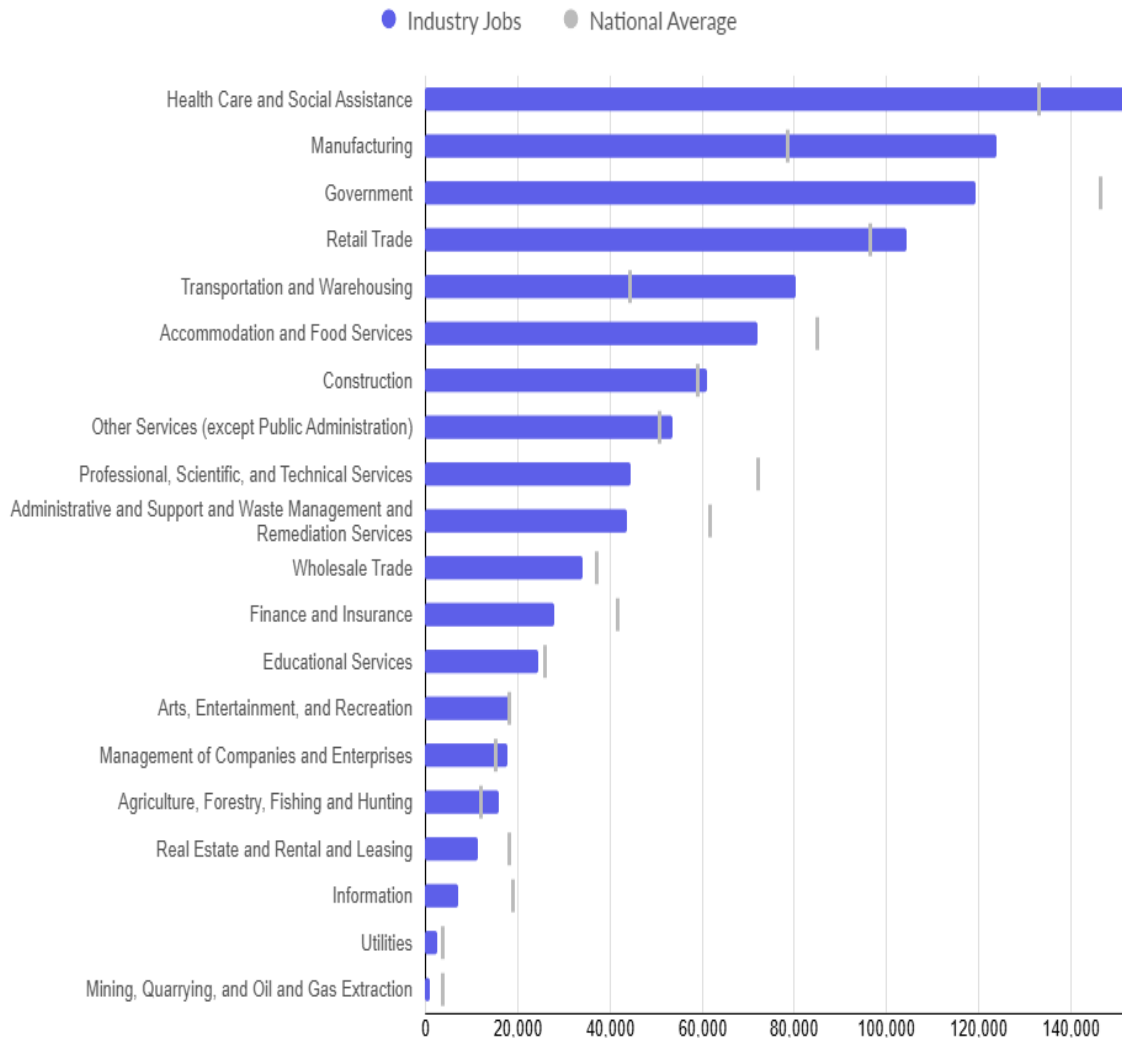
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## Industry Overview

The following graphs provide a breakdown of the planning region’s industries, broken down by size, growth potential, and employment concentration:

The top five largest industries in the SCWDPR include Home Care and Social Assistance, Government, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Transportation and Warehousing. 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

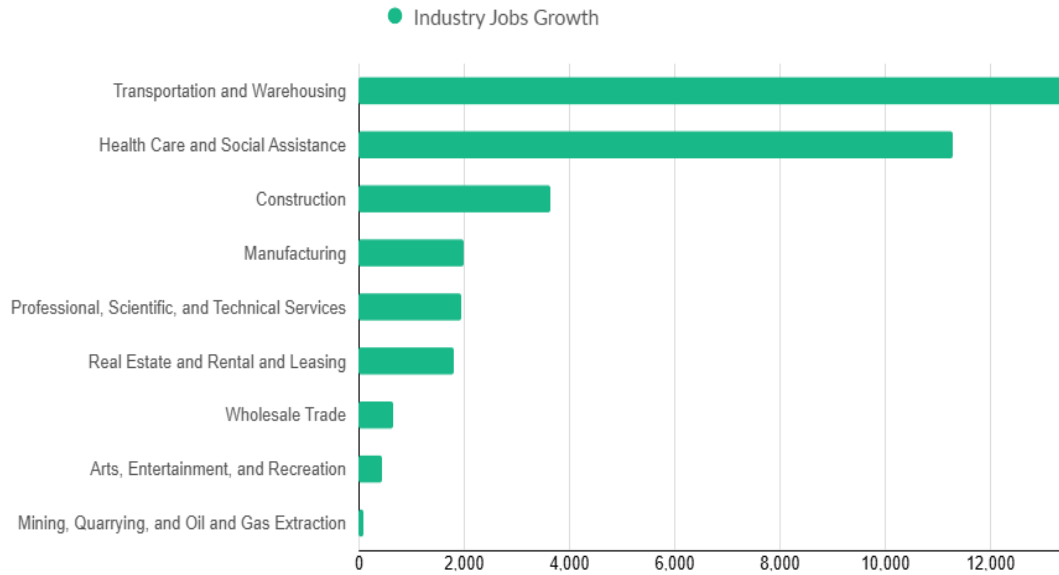


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The top-five growing/emerging industries in the SCWDPR are reflected in the graph below as Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Construction, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing.

The top-growing industry in the SCWDPR, 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

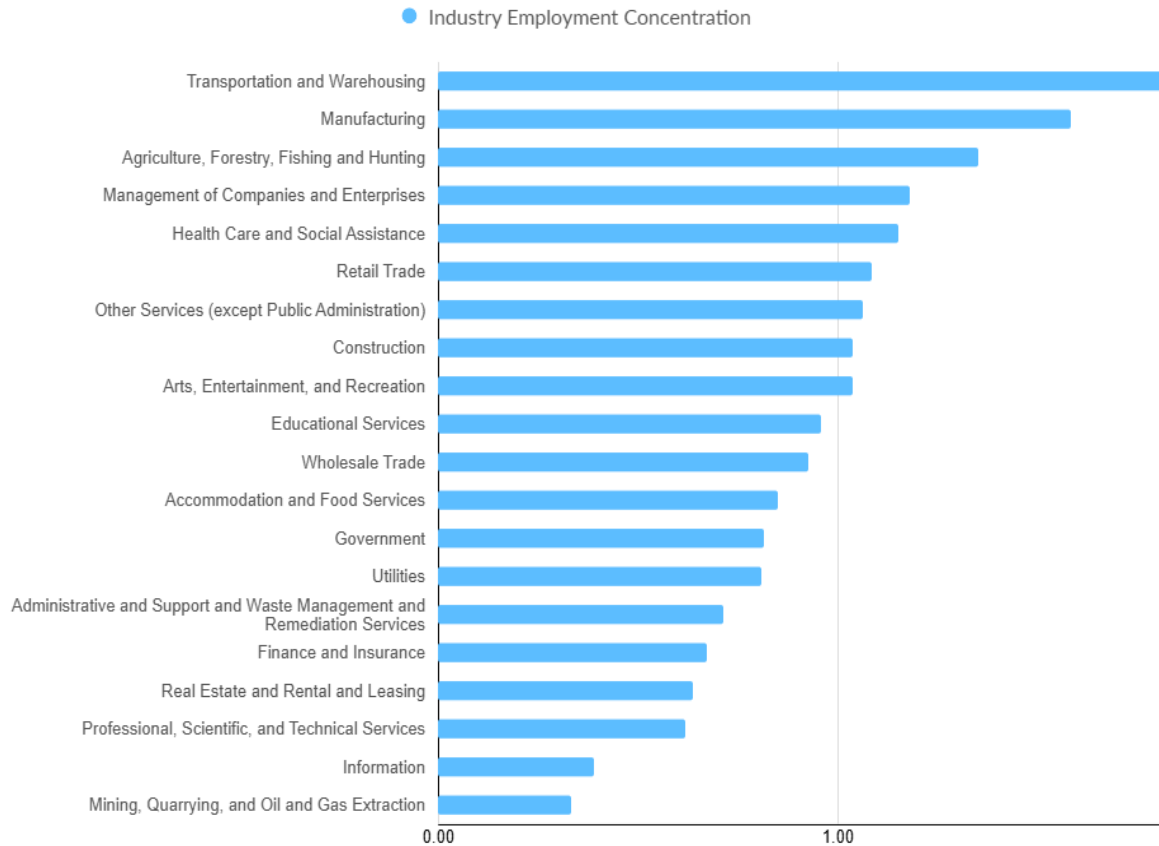


Industry	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2023 Employment Concentration	2023 Earnings Per Worker	2023 GRP
Transportation and Warehousing	66,880	80,368	13,488	+20%	1.82	\$67,008	\$7.62B
Health Care and Social Assistance	141,841	153,136	11,295	+8%	1.15	\$78,407	\$13.95B
Construction	57,493	61,142	3,649	+6%	1.04	\$79,909	\$7.18B
Manufacturing	122,032	124,040	2,008	+2%	1.59	\$83,713	\$20.02B
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	42,718	44,660	1,942	+5%	0.62	\$98,924	\$7.09B
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	9,632	11,434	1,802	+19%	0.64	\$74,106	\$5.23B
Wholesale Trade	33,530	34,198	668	+2%	0.93	\$84,710	\$7.10B
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	18,311	18,755	444	+2%	1.04	\$32,080	\$1.09B
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,097	1,186	89	+8%	0.34	\$90,410	\$352.75M

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The following data indicates industry location quotients. The SCWDPR top five industries, defined by location quotients and employment concentration, reflect that Management of Companies has the third-highest location quotient in the local area and Agriculture has the third-highest location quotient in the regional area.

### Top Industry Employment Concentration

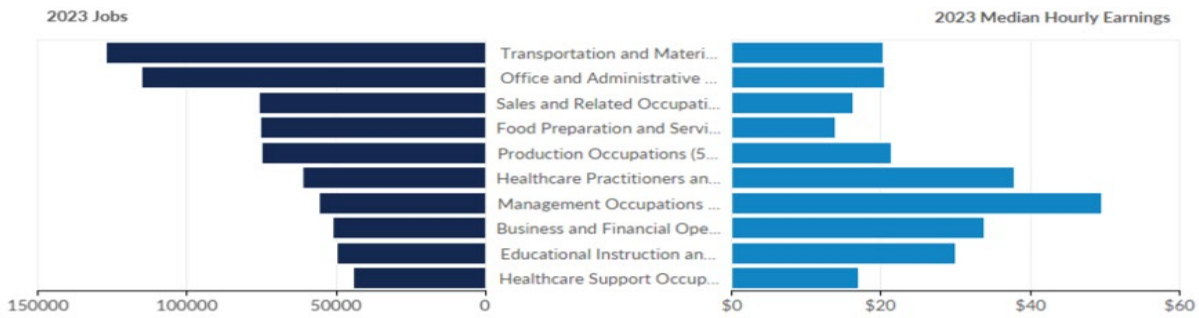


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### **Occupational Overview**

The following graphs provide a three-year overview (2023-2026) of the planning region’s top 10 occupations, broken down by size, unique job postings, and growth potential. A breakdown of occupational demographics is also provided. The contrast between Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, listed as the largest occupation, and Management Occupations exhibiting the highest median hourly earnings prompts the SCWDPR to address wages and job openings across the region.

Largest Occupations



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Throughout the SCDWPR, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations increased in number of jobs by 3% while Office and Administrative Support Occupations reduced in size by 2%. The latter data is due in part to a number of industries transitioning from brick-and-mortar work spaces to staff members working remotely. This transition has resulted in the reduced need for administrative positions.

Occupation	2023 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2023-2026)	% Change	2023 Median Hourly Earnings
📦 Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	127,204	131,533	4,329	3%	\$20.23
📁 Office and Administrative Support Occupations	115,086	112,804	-2,282	-2%	\$20.47
👤 Sales and Related Occupations	76,061	75,909	-152	0%	\$16.19
🍴 Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	75,469	76,402	933	1%	\$13.93
🏭 Production Occupations	74,914	74,693	-221	0%	\$21.31
👩 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	61,133	63,522	2,389	4%	\$37.93
👔 Management Occupations	55,718	57,056	1,338	2%	\$49.59
💼 Business and Financial Operations Occupations	51,011	51,413	402	1%	\$33.81
📚 Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	49,985	50,041	56	0%	\$29.97
👩 Healthcare Support Occupations	44,497	48,569	4,072	9%	\$16.97

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Based on data pulled from Lightcast reflecting job postings versus hires between January 2023 and October 2024 in the SCWDPR, Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers rank as the top industry reflecting monthly hires, while Registered Nurses reflect the occupation with the highest average monthly postings.

Occupation	Avg Monthly Postings (Jan 2023 - Oct 2024)	Avg Monthly Hires (Jan 2023 - Oct 2024)
Registered Nurses	1,016	445
Retail Salespersons	400	1,654
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	333	884
Unclassified Occupation	312	0
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	262	2,788
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	257	183
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	214	339
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	212	1,658
Production Workers, All Other	192	102
Customer Service Representatives	180	899

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The fastest growing occupation in the SCDWPR continues to be Transportation and Material Moving as reflective of the state’s historical workforce largely comprised of laborers. Overall, the SCDWPR indicates growth or sustainability across all occupations in the region.

Fastest Growing Occupations



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South Central PA is predominantly White, Non-Hispanic; White, Hispanic; and Blank, 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.

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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### Section 1.3

1.3. Regional Strategy. -Based on the analysis of regional labor market and economic conditions, describe the regional service delivery strategies for addressing the identified conditions through the coordination of appropriate services in the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(D); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(vii). Reviewed by PA WDB, CWIA, DCED, and ATO]

Workforce systems support diverse industries in the SCWDPR 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 and LCWDB provide strategies to identify sustainable jobs with the promise of economic security.

The following strategies serve as vital touchpoints to the achievement of WIOA negotiated performance levels within the SCWDPR:

- BST employer engagement and industry partnership work;
- Ensuring that 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.

#### **Stakeholder Engagement**

As an Economic Development Corporation (EDC), CREDC has worked to cultivate SCWDPR 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, the SCWDPR LWDBs have continued to utilize the PREP group as a communication platform, keeping partners informed of 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.

### **Regional Strategy and Collaboration**

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.

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 and LCWDB align with the Alliance and work closely with all partners to fully immerse the Business Services teams and Program teams into collaborative innovation to overcome the challenges unique to resolving the skill gaps in the SCWDPR.

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.

### **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. By providing strategic and administrative assistance, CREDC helps strengthen connections between businesses and available resources, ultimately boosting the region's economic vitality.

### **Engage! Business Calling Program:**

Local workforce development and planning in the SCDWPR has been instrumental in representing the Engage! program in the community by providing profound expertise in significantly enhancing community partners' understanding of the fundamental needs within target industry sectors. In 2024, 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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 and LCWDB have coordinated 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.

### **Employer Engagement**

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. Within the planning region, one-on-one employer engagement with Business Services team members, site visits, and interviews are conducted 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.

### **Registered Apprenticeship**

In alignment with Pennsylvania's workforce and economic development strategy focus on creating family-sustaining jobs and meaningful careers, the SCWDPR supports programming that connects students, graduates, and workers with in-state job opportunities through internships, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, and experiential learning.

PA CareerLink® staff throughout the region are well-informed of 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.

### **Community Partnerships**

The SCWDPR keeps abreast of labor market employer demands 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)

## Section 1.4

1.4. Describe the regional service strategies aimed at achieving the vision and goals established for the region. *[WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(B); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(ii). Reviewed by PA WDB and ATO]*

### **Improving Training Opportunities**

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.

### **Registered Apprenticeship**

The SCPa Works Business Services Team prioritizes forging partner employer relationships with Registered Apprenticeship employers, 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.

New and registered apprentices in the SCWDPR who are WIOA/TANF eligible receive comprehensive services, including 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.

PA CareerLink® staff ensure that 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.

The SCWDPR workforce development strategy addresses the region's current economic strengths while anticipating future growth industries. The region has unique economic characteristics, including a blend of traditional industries, including manufacturing, agriculture, and healthcare, as well as emerging sectors such as information technology (IT), logistics, and cybersecurity, all of which are represented with the SCWDPR as registered apprenticeship opportunities. This regional strategy focuses on high-priority occupations in these key sectors, supported by a comprehensive registered apprenticeship and registered pre-apprenticeship framework that nurtures skill development, creates clear career pathways, and supports long-term economic resilience.

Manufacturing remains a cornerstone of South Central Pennsylvania's economy, with the region housing diverse sub-sectors like food processing, electronics, automotive parts, and fabricated metals. Advancing manufacturing technologies, such as automation, robotics, and additive manufacturing, demand a new, highly skilled workforce. In 2025, through the SCPa Works Industry Partnership program and registered apprenticeship grant opportunities, a new Help Desk registered apprenticeship can be offered to eligible participants as a pathway to long-term employment.

Healthcare is one of the fastest-growing sectors in South Central Pennsylvania, driven by the demand for services for an aging population and medical innovations. Among the Healthcare industry jobs, cyber security and IT specialist are two highly sought positions. SCPa Works recently confirmed a Cyber Security registered apprenticeship in the region in response to this IT demand. IT and cybersecurity are critical for the region's economic growth, especially as the demand for skilled IT professionals grows across various sectors like government, finance, and healthcare. With several federal agencies and defense contractors in the region, there is a strong push for cybersecurity talent.

Apprenticeships play a vital role in bridging the skills gap in key sectors by providing individuals with hands-on training and a clear pathway to long-term, well-compensated careers. The strategy should include a seamless transition from registered pre-apprenticeship to registered apprenticeship, targeting high-demand sectors and building an ecosystem that supports employers, educators, and workers.

Strong supporters of registered apprenticeship, both local boards in the SCWDPR partner with local businesses to provide internships and summer work experiences in high-demand fields that are directly connected to registered apprenticeship programs in Pennsylvania. To ensure this pipeline of talent in connection with registered apprenticeships, contracted service providers in the SCWDPR actively recruit individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, women in non-traditional sectors (e.g., manufacturing and IT), veterans, individuals with barriers to employment, and people with disabilities, providing access to registered pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

Throughout the region, PA CareerLink® 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.

#### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

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

#### *Increasing Work Experience Opportunities through Community Access Points (CAP)*

In 2024, having applied the Knowva 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.

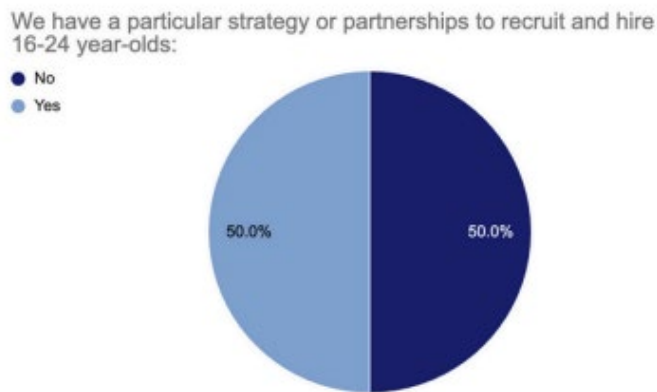
In the Fall of 2024, SCPa Works contracted with Envoy to conduct research on employer engagement. The result was the creation of a WIOA Out-of-School Toolkit for Employer Engagement, matching labor market demands and concerns with a target population enrolled in credential-earning workforce development 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.

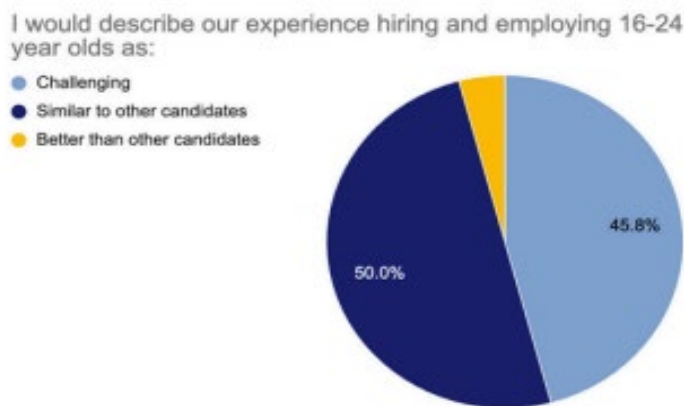
*[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]*

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.

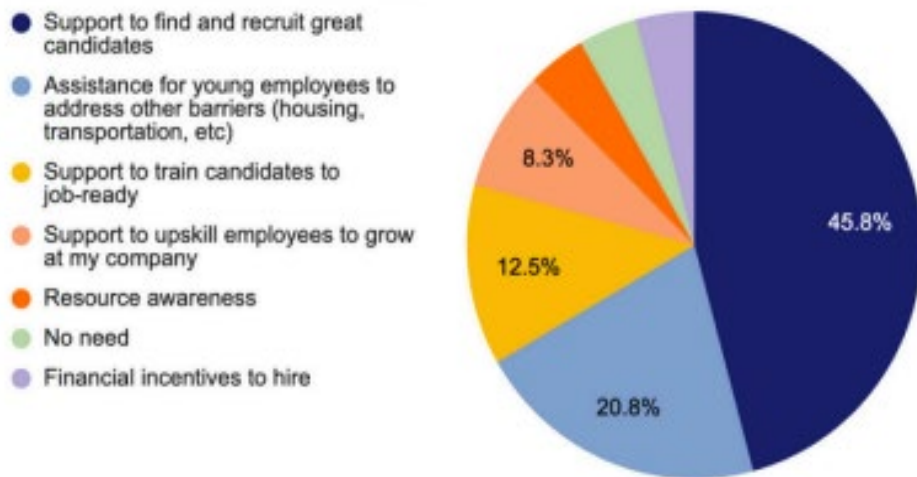


*[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]*

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. 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.

*[Envoy Employer Engagement Survey, 2024]*

If SCPa Works were to support my hiring of young employees, the best resources would be:



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.

### **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® career 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 and LCWDB aim to create a comprehensive and effective workforce development system, fostering alignment between education, economic development, and workforce systems. In terms of regional service strategies. This involves a variety of initiatives and partnerships aimed at meeting the needs of businesses, individuals, and communities, particularly those in barrier populations and youth. Simply put, the SCWDPR supports strategies that are structured, coordinated, and evaluated for long-term effectiveness.

Sector initiatives focus on aligning workforce development efforts with high-demand industries in the region. This includes healthcare, manufacturing, technology, and construction which are critical to the regional economy. These initiatives are developed in partnership with employers, labor organizations, and education providers to create tailored training programs and career pathways. The South Central PA regional boards maintain strategic partnership by working closely with industry stakeholders to identify workforce needs and develop sector-based strategies. This includes creating career pathways that lead to sustainable, high-wage employment opportunities. Employers are involved in the design of training programs to ensure they meet real-world job requirements through on-the-job training, internships, registered apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities. These programs are designed to lead to industry-recognized credentials, certifications, or licensure, ensuring that participants have tangible qualifications that are valued by employers.

A key goal of the SCWDPR is to serve youth and individuals facing barriers to employment, including youth with disabilities, veterans, ex-offenders, individuals in poverty, and others who fall under the WIOA priority of service. The SCWDPR promotes youth services that include career exploration, work experience, academic support, and leadership development. There are specific programs aimed at helping youth develop the skills needed to transition from education to employment. Internships and paid work experiences are prioritized, offering youth hands-on exposure to the workforce. Youth programs are also designed to re-engage youth who are not in school and provide them with educational and vocational skills.

For SCWDPR strategies to be effective, alignment with local educational institutions and economic development organizations is critical. This ensures a seamless transition from education to employment for workforce system participants, and supports regional economic goals.

The SCWDPR coordinates with local schools, community colleges, and universities to develop training and education programs aligned with industry needs. This includes ensuring that adult education, technical training, and higher education institutions are responsive to market demands. Title I programs, which allow for dual enrollment in registered pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities for high school students to enroll in postsecondary courses and earn both high school and college credit, are particularly effective. Skill-based registered apprenticeship curricula are designed to teach the skills most demanded by employers in the region, including both soft skills and technical expertise. Overall, regional service strategies align workforce development with regional economic development plans. This ensures that workforce initiatives are in sync with economic goals, such as attracting new industries, supporting small businesses, and enhancing the region's competitive advantage. Economic development

partners are involved in creating the physical and digital infrastructure required to support emerging industries.

Long-term coordination between SCPa Works and LCWDB a regional workforce development system is essential to maximizing resources and ensuring that services are accessible to all. This is achieved through the following strategies:

- **Integrated Service Delivery:** Services are provided through a network of one-stop centers and CAP service delivery points where individuals access a full range of services in a seamless delivery platform. These centers offer career counseling, job search assistance, training, and placement services, all in one location.
- **Case Management:** Each participant is assigned a case manager, career advisor, or employment specialist who helps navigate available services across the two local areas and ensures that the individual receives the right support, from career exploration to training to employment.
- **Shared Resources:** Regional collaboration allows for the pooling of resources, such as funding, data, and expertise, to ensure equitable access to services and reduce redundancy.
- **Technology Integration:** The use of shared data in CWDS allows for real-time information sharing across local areas, ensuring that workforce needs and services are aligned from one career center to the next.
- **Inter-Regional Collaboration:** Regular coordination meetings between local workforce boards, educational institutions, and economic development partners ensure that regional goals and objectives are being met.

Long-term effectiveness is measured using a variety of metrics, as established by WIOA and tracked through SCWDPR, state, and federal systems:

- **Performance Indicators:** WIOA outlines specific performance metrics that regional boards use to track success, including:
  - **Employment Rate:** The percentage of individuals who obtain employment after completing training or receiving services.
  - **Earnings Gains:** The increase in wages for individuals who obtain employment compared to pre-training earnings.
  - **Credential Attainment:** The percentage of participants who earn recognized credentials, certifications, or degrees.
  - **Youth Outcomes:** For youth programs, success is measured by high school graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment, and employment outcomes.
- **Data Analysis:** SCWDPR tracks data across local areas to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. Data is used to inform decisions and adjust service delivery as needed in support of long-term goals and growth across the region.
- **Client Feedback:** Surveys and feedback from service recipients help gauge satisfaction with programs and services, providing valuable insight into areas that may need further development or adjustments.
- **Employer Feedback:** Employer, participant, and contracted vendor satisfaction with the quality of the workforce and the training programs is a critical measure of the effectiveness of sector initiatives and workforce development strategies.

Through the combination of sector initiatives, targeted outreach for youth and barrier populations, alignment with education and regional economic development partners, and long-term coordination across local areas, the SCWDPR aims to build a workforce that meets the long-term needs of both

businesses and individuals. The success of these strategies is continuously measured through established performance indicators and refined through ongoing collaboration and feedback to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

**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.

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.

## Section 1.5

1.5. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. *[WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(C); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(iii). Reviewed by CWIA, PA WDB, and ATO]*

The SCWDPR workforce development strategy is rooted in collaboration and data-driven decision-making. The region maintains a strong focus on connecting individuals, particularly Opportunity Youth, and individuals with barriers to employment, with high-quality careers and training opportunities. The region currently supports three industry partnerships: Technology, Manufacturing, and Construction, providing job seekers with hands-on training, registered apprenticeship positions, and technical instruction. In 2025, the region anticipates adding Agriculture and Healthcare partnerships to broaden the scope of available occupation-based training in the region.

The primary goal for the region 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.

Technology and manufacturing jobs throughout the South Central region support high-paying, family-sustaining wages with optimal career pathways for advancement. The Construction industry data indicates a high demand for workers. The region answers to the labor market demands through educating workforce development staff on labor market trends, registered apprenticeship opportunities, and place-based services through CAP sites in the South Central region.

The SCWDPR supports expansive rural areas where agricultural careers are in high demand. Healthcare is among one of the largest industries in the region with data supporting continued growth through 2030. *[@2024 Lightcast]*. The SCWDPR supports entry-level positions with multiple career paths leading to high paying wages within the Healthcare industry.

By aligning sector-based strategies, coordinating regional economic development services, and ensuring strong partnerships with educational institutions, SCPa Works and LCWDB create a sustainable workforce pipeline that meets the needs of both employers and workers. The focus on apprenticeships, business service strategies, and the engagement of targeted populations ensures that the region's workforce is prepared to meet the challenges of the future economy.

### **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.)

### **PA CareerLink® One-Stop Centers**

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.

### **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.

### **Registered Apprenticeship and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship through Industry Sector Partnerships**

The SCWDPR strategizes a broad-based, overarching registered apprenticeship strategy for South Central Pennsylvania as being comprehensive, adaptable, and driven by a collaborative workforce ecosystem. By focusing on high-priority industries such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, IT, logistics, and agriculture, the SCWDPR maintains a sustainable, skilled workforce that addresses both current and future workforce needs. The regional strategy integrates registered pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeship pathways, ensuring that apprentices receive the skills necessary to thrive in today's economy and fostering long-term economic growth in the region. This ensures a seamless approach to a Title I participant's journey from a registered pre-apprenticeship into a registered apprenticeship, ultimately leading to a lifetime sustainable career within a thriving industry. The Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) plays a vital role in ensuring that employers meet all registered apprenticeship requirements. Apprenticeship and Training Representatives (ATRs) are housed within PA CareerLink® career centers to provide guidance on the practices, processes, procedures, and forms to Title I contracted service providers. This ensures that the ATO Navigator Coordination Checklist is complete, among additional requirements that are incorporated into registered apprenticeship within the region.

York County Alliance for Learning (YCAL), a regional partner in workforce development, 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.

The SCPa Works Industry Partnership program, led by the in-house SCPa Works Apprenticeship Navigator in coordination with the ATO, has been a catalyst in the ATO approval of an IT Help Desk registered apprenticeship, an IT Cyber Security registered apprenticeship, and, in the works, a construction-based registered apprenticeship, all within key industry sectors that are growing within the SCWDPR.

Apprenticeship Navigators within the SCWDPR communicate regularly with ATO professionals and ATRs while following all the ATO policies and requirements. The SCWDPR local workforce development boards adhere to all practices and procedures of the ATO and commit to working closely with ATRs as industry sector partnerships continue to expand across the region. SCPa Works recently mandated that all Title I vendors complete the ATO general training provided by the ATO and easily accessible by contracted Title I vendors in the SCWDPR.

This commitment to registered apprenticeship has also prompted SCPa Works to create a registered apprenticeship policy for employers, vendors, and active registered apprenticeship programs to utilize as a living document equipped with direct linkage to all ATO website guidance, documents, desk aids, manuals, and technical assistance tools found in CWDS. This new approach to local policy and procedures

integrates ATO practices into the day-to-day practices of PA CareerLink® staff and serves as a one-stop tool for all entities, organizations, committees, board members, and individuals who administer or house register apprenticeship as a workforce development career pathway.

The SCPa Works Industry Partnership program is led by the in-house SCPa Works Apprenticeship Navigator. It is the goal of the regional local workforce boards to incorporate and integrate registered apprenticeship programming into all facets of workforce development across the region. SCPa Works tracks metrics such as the number of apprentices who transition from Pre-RA to RA programs, apprenticeship completion rates, post-apprenticeship employment rates, quarterly wages, and employer satisfaction. It is through the Industry Partnership program that SCPa Works collects feedback from employers regarding the skills and qualifications of registered apprentices and the effectiveness of registered apprenticeship programs in meeting workforce needs. SCPa Works also gathers insight on data-driven improvements through direct and effective industry sector partnerships with employers and organizations. This data is used to continuously assess the effectiveness of the registered apprenticeship system in relation to Title I programming and service delivery, identify barriers to success, and make necessary adjustments to improve the integration between registered apprenticeship programming throughout the SCWDPR and Title I program delivery and outcomes requirements.

#### **Long-Term Outcomes through Industry Partnerships and Registered Apprenticeships**

The SCWDPR invests in continuing education and upskilling through the creation of career pathways for registered apprentices to continue training and skills development beyond the completion of the registered apprenticeship, ensuring advancement in their careers. This could include offering opportunities for further certifications or degrees.

Through mentoring and education, Title I workforce professionals, ATRs, and Industry Partnership representatives convene and identify robust mentorship programs that connect WIOA recipients with registered apprenticeship programs and experienced professionals within key sectors, offering career guidance, technical support, supportive services, and networking opportunities for future endeavors.

Apprenticeship Navigators and ATRs forge solid employer partnerships that lend to long-term employment opportunities through registered apprenticeship programming. Title I business services representatives, ATRs, and Apprenticeship Navigators convene to work with employers, ensuring that registered apprenticeship programs lead to full-time employment and that employers are committed to hiring successful apprentices into permanent roles once programming is complete.

#### **Industry Sector Outcomes**

The SCWDPR tracks, documents, and reports on the individual progress, measurable skill gains, outcomes, and performance indicators of Title I participants using CWDS.

The SCWDPR continues to support three industry partnerships: construction, manufacturing, and technology, as continual growth occurs in the agriculture community. These industry partnerships align with the Governors' Strategic Action Plan and complement many SCWDPR programs through the PA CareerLink® Workforce system. The SCWDPR organized the Next Gen model through SCPa Works the Industry Partnership program, where action committees are created to address the challenges and goals of the industry partnerships, and outcomes are measured through quantified success metrics.

The SCWDPR incorporates the Engage! Business Outreach Program for industry sector round tables to understand industry opportunities, challenges, and needs, and to provide resources through industry partnerships.

**Engage! Measurable Outcomes:**

March 2024- Agriculture Focus Group – Perry & Juniata Counties

March 2024 - Construction Focus Group – Lebanon County

June 2024- Employee Recovery Friendly Workplaces' in York County Focus Group

June 2024 Ag Business Walk – Lebanon County

Work in Progress:

- February 2025 Construction – Lancaster County Focus Group

The SCWDPR promotes technology careers in K-12, builds curriculum with employers and higher education to fill high-demand jobs, and has created a group registered apprenticeship program.

**IT Measurable Outcomes:**

- Junior Achievement Virtual Career Exploration 2024 (5,486 students registered)
- Milton Hershey School Design Thinking for 400 Students August 2024
- Juneteenth Outreach 2023 and 2024
- Cyber Security Boot Camp at Whitaker Center 2023
- Supported IU12 IT Career Forum in November 2024 Promoted TechConnect.jobs website with video loop, Keynote speaker for Readocracy Program HU and Interviews by Deloitte
- Pilot Internship Program with Harrisburg University
- Launch of Readocracy, a micro-credential pilot program for HS Students in Franklin and Dauphin Counties
- TCCP Collaboration
- Creation of a community website showcasing videos for the top five technology jobs in our region, career pathways, education opportunities, and job openings from the Tech Connect website: <https://www.techconnect.jobs/>

**IT Work in Progress**

- Junior Achievement Biztown Fall 2025
  - Create GameTown Shop for Cyber Security
  - Technology position and BizTown presence
  - Includes Virtual Career Exploration Booth March 2025
- Building Readocracy Pilot for Juniors and Seniors in Harrisburg School District, CCA, and IU12
- Create a Customized Cyber Security Curriculum to fill high-demand jobs by collaboration with TCCP and Higher-Ed
- Group Registered Apprenticeship Program

The Industry Partnership Innovation Action Committee's strategic goals focus on ideas to spur innovation and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship in the region, provide entrepreneurs with opportunities through Keystone Merge monthly meetings, and provide an ecosystem map for regional entrepreneur resources.

By the end of 2024, the SCWDPR had made the top 20 list for tech hubs across the Northeast. Harrisburg placed 8th among the 20 best Northeastern metro areas for tech development, with a total of 44.05 points. The following includes the metro's standout metrics:

- Harrisburg landed 1st on the ranking in terms of percentage growth of tech establishments (16.6%).
- The metro came 4<sup>th</sup> for tech employment density, ahead of Philadelphia. Professionals looking for tech jobs can expect to find a good match for their skill set, given Harrisburg's share of 46 out of every 1,000 jobs in the tech industry.
- Harrisburg landed 10th place for its tech establishment density – with 22 of every 1,000 firms registered within the metropolitan area falling under the tech category.; <https://www.commercialcafe.com/blog/top-best-metros-tech-northeast/>

The goals of the Construction Industry Partnership include strategies to increase workforce, promote diversity, and improve hiring processes.

**Construction Measurable Outcomes:**

- Employer Learning Series Spring 2024 - Fair Chance Justice-impacted HR Program
- Provided tuition for three pre-apprentices with PA Connection Program 2024
- PA CareerLink VR Youth Program – collaborating with the PA CareerLink Youth Manager for construction careers
- Employee Mental Health Program with Employers Pilot Launched in York County 2024
- Youth Trade Tour at the Carpenters' Union
- Professional Construction Career Youth Tour
- Women in Construction Panel Event
- Bridging Language Barriers Supervisor Training for ESL employees

**Construction Work in Progress:**

Create a high school resource flip book to promote construction careers in local school districts and use advertising for sustainability funds.

The SCPa Works Manufacturing Industry Partnership boasts a number of measurable outcomes to include the following touchpoints.

**Manufacturing Measurable Outcomes:**

- Barriers to Retention Study completed
- Established T.I.D.E. (Talent Innovation Defense Ecosystem) initiative to train 400 underserved, unemployed, or underemployed individuals for careers in manufacturing for Defense Manufacturing Employers with a focus on Welding, Machinist, and Maintenance Mechanics occupations
- Cultural Awareness and Bridging Language Barriers Classes 2024
- Manufacturer's Expo Fall 2024 – hosted 220 students

**Manufacturing Work in Progress:**

- Wake Up to Manufacturing Breakfast Events

## Section 1.6

1.6. Describe the regional service strategies aimed at achieving the vision and goals established for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(B); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(ii). Reviewed by PA WDB and ATO]

The South Central Workforce Development Planning Region (SCWDPR) identifies that an essential component of workforce development is the seamless connection of job seekers with employers. Through the extensive PA CareerLink® system, SCPa Works and LCWDB offer a job-matching system that provides information about job seekers, increases job postings' quality and quantity, and increases employer screening and recruitment capabilities. Both WDBs are committed to enhancing workforce development services provided at the PA CareerLink® and beyond facility walls, meeting individuals where they are with the addition of services at customer access points. The WDBs maintain a focus on coordinated efforts to increase the job placement of individuals in targeted populations, including veterans, persons with disabilities, and individuals impacted by the criminal justice system.

SCPa Works and LCWDB remain keenly aware of the challenges faced by our community, especially those with the highest barriers to employment. Therefore, SCPa Works and LCWDB will continue to align our local and regional plans around strategies designed to serve our job-seeker populations with these barriers to employment.

SCPa Works is committed to advancing equitable access to high-quality career pathways by connecting employers to multiple targeted populations

SCPa Works has cultivated strong industry partnerships in manufacturing, information technology (IT), and construction, which serve as key drivers in creating and sustaining inclusive apprenticeship pipelines:

- Manufacturing and IT sectors currently offer Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAs) in collaboration with local employers. These programs provide structured earn-and-learn opportunities that combine on-the-job training with related technical instruction, leading to industry-recognized credentials and long-term career advancement.
- All three sectors—manufacturing, IT, and construction—are deeply involved in K-12 outreach efforts designed to introduce students to high-demand career pathways through pre-apprenticeship programs. These programs serve as critical onramps, preparing youth for successful transitions into RAs.
- The IT industry partnership began conversations with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) teams, with a special focus on supporting neurodiverse individuals. Many of these individuals possess the technical aptitude and attention to detail well-suited for IT roles, and employers in this sector are increasingly creating inclusive environments to foster success.
- To increase access for justice-impacted individuals, SCPa Works teams are working directly with justice-impacted organizations and employers to build tailored pipelines that offer second-chance hiring opportunities. These efforts include employer education and wraparound support services that promote long-term retention and success.
- Veterans are also a priority population, and SCPa Works actively connects these individuals to apprenticeship opportunities where their leadership, discipline, and transferable skills are highly valued by employers.

SCPa Works board-level support for apprenticeships ensures that these efforts are aligned with regional workforce strategies and prioritized in funding and programming decisions. Additionally, the PA

CareerLink® contractor, Equus Workforce Solutions, has staff who have successfully completed the Apprenticeship Navigator program, enhancing the region’s capacity to promote and scale apprenticeship programs. These trained navigators serve as key connectors between job seekers, employers, and training providers, and are instrumental in building a regional apprenticeship network.

To further grow employer engagement, SCPa Works leverages the Engage Business Outreach Program to proactively recruit new employers into apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship initiatives. This includes technical assistance on program development and guidance on how to make apprenticeship models more inclusive and accessible to underrepresented populations.

Through these coordinated efforts—spanning board leadership, contracted partners, industry coalitions, and community organizations—we are expanding high-quality, inclusive apprenticeship opportunities that meet employer demand while supporting diverse populations in achieving long-term career success.

### **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.

### **Serving Individuals with Disabilities**

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides services to individuals with disabilities in the South Central Region to help them secure and maintain employment and independence. These services are designed to ensure individuals with disabilities become qualified, trained members of the workforce, increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to businesses in the region. Additionally, OVR provides multiple services and technical assistance to the business community designed to assist them with hiring and retaining employees with disabilities, thus helping to satisfy occupational demand.

The 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.

### **Justice System Impacted Individuals**

Regionally, the engagement of individuals impacted by the criminal justice system and the education of employers in Fair Chance Hiring practices have been prioritized. Both SCPa Works and LCWDB Lancaster

serve this population through PA CareerLink® programs, county reentry coalitions, and engagement with criminal justice system partners.

SCPa Works' Fourth Priority of Service establishes priority for individuals who have been touched by the criminal justice system (not veterans or eligible spouses) to receive services and 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.

### **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.

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.

### **Collection of Employer Input to Support Post-COVID Workplaces**

SCPa Works and LCWDB conduct regular employer surveys and focus groups to ensure employer engagement in workforce development initiatives and to gather insights on in-demand skills and certifications, hiring challenges, and remote and hybrid workforce offerings.

The SCWDPR acknowledges that technological advancements impact roles within industry advisory councils, sector-specific employer advisory groups, real-time workforce system feedback, and the relevance of training curriculum. In addition, quarterly employer meetings provide industry insights, identify gaps in workforce readiness, and promote continued employer engagement. Within the SCWDPR region, both local boards designate staff to maintain ongoing relationships with local and regional employers to address workforce needs as communities and individuals transition from COVID work regulations to an in-person work place culture. Title I specialists are equipped with expertise on transportation and childcare needs of eligible workers returning to in-person working environments, while business services specialists work directly with employers in support of able-bodied workers returning to work following a stage of remote working conditions. Title I business services representatives take part in the follow set of employer engagement tasks:

- Ongoing relationships with local and regional employers
- Conduct one-on-one consultations

- Gather informal, on-the-ground intelligence through site visits
- Coordinate customized hiring and training initiatives
- Utilize labor market platforms to analyze job postings and emerging occupations, skill trends, and regional economic shifts post-COVID

In addition to identifying employer needs during a return-to-the-workplace stage in workforce development, Title I specialists also work on adaptive curriculum and training programs that are based on worker and employer feedback, as well as market trends. This ensures alignment with current and emerging job roles, the inclusion of remote work competencies, and digital fluency. Stackable credentials and modular learning components remain as pillars in workforce development training objectives.

In addition to employer feedback, regional workforce development initiatives are co-created with employers through industry partnerships and employer engagement sessions. Training and upskilling programs are co-developed with employers to address specific skill shortages, build pipelines from training to employment, and to support sector-based partnerships and registered apprenticeships.

This approach ensures that employer input actively shapes workforce development services to remain responsive to evolving labor market conditions post-COVID.

### **Digital Literacy for the Justice-Impacted Population**

SCPa Works expanded its current reentry program with a digital literacy component focused on reaching individuals recently released from incarceration or impacted by the criminal justice system. While digital literacy is essential for all individuals, it is especially critical for individuals impacted by the criminal justice system. Justice Impacted residents are often cut off from technology resulting in a long-term digital divide. This program seeks to address this digital divide, resulting in increased digital equity and reduced recidivism. As the focus of this program is increasing digital literacy skills of justice-impacted individuals, regional workforce development initiatives heavily rely on the partnerships forged with reentry organizations, probation and parole departments, work release centers, and local county jails.

Northstar Digital Literacy Curriculum is a widely used curriculum that contains a robust curriculum designed to meet the needs of job seekers at all levels of digital literacy. Users are eligible to earn a Northstar Digital Literacy Certificate upon passing assessments. Certificates provide an important credential for employment, as even entry-level jobs increasingly require basic computer skills.

As a Northstar subscribing location, the PA CareerLink® digital literacy instructor in Dauphin and York counties have regional access to learner progress, time spent on work, detailed reporting, lesson plans, customizable digital literacy routines, remote teaching guides, and more.

**Section 1.7**

1.7. Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(F); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(vi) Reviewed by CWIA]

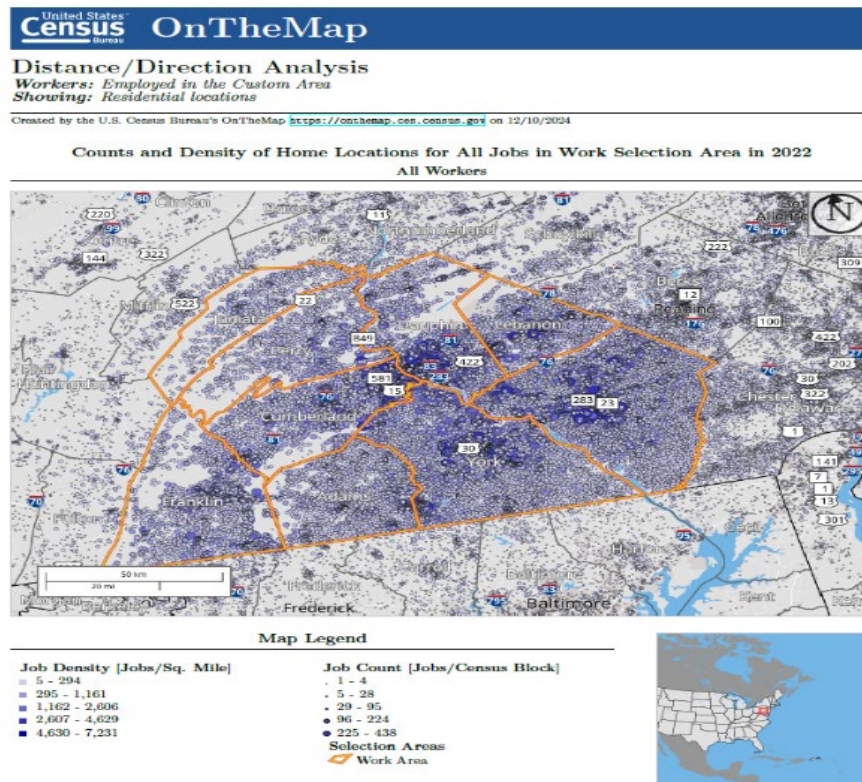
The South Central Workforce Development Planning Region (SCWDPR) is committed to leveraging and aligning workforce development activities to improve TANF, EARN, and WIOA-eligible individuals access to transportation. Working closely with the South Central Partners for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), 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.

“The third greatest regional weakness was identified as Transportation/ Infrastructure factors. These factors include lack of access to regional transportation (or mass transit), aging infrastructure, lack of broadband access, and lack of regional transportation planning.”

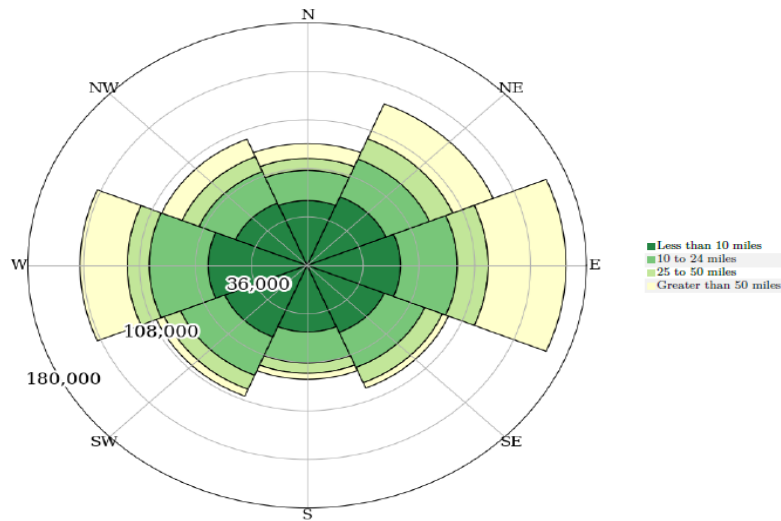
*-COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY South Central Pennsylvania Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), 2023*

Working closely with the South Central Partners for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), the region continues to explore strategies to enhance regional transportation opportunities.



<https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

**All Jobs for All Workers in 2022**  
**Distance and Direction from Work Census Block to Home Census Block, Employed in Selection Area**

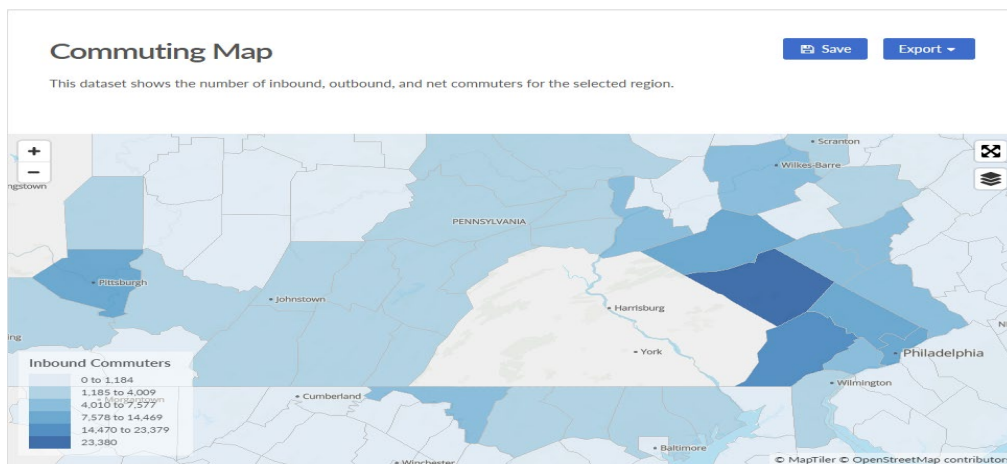


**All Jobs for All Workers in 2022**  
**Distance from Work Census Block to Home Census Block, Employed in Selection Area**

Distance	2022	
	Count	Share
<b>Total All Jobs</b>	922,716	100.0%
<b>Less than 10 miles</b>	437,545	47.4%
<b>10 to 24 miles</b>	235,032	25.5%
<b>25 to 50 miles</b>	102,044	11.1%
<b>Greater than 50 miles</b>	148,095	16.0%

<https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

The region has an extensive network of community-based organizations, partners, and government agencies that provide supportive services to customers. Transportation is one of the biggest challenges for the region in terms of 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, Red Rose Transit, Rabbit Transit, commuter services, and other local service providers to help workers travel and from work. Commuter Services is a viable option for job seekers who can use the service to help them carpool. However, there is no significant regional planning body that is coordinating all these disparate transportation providers.



[Lightcast®]

## Migration

Save

Export

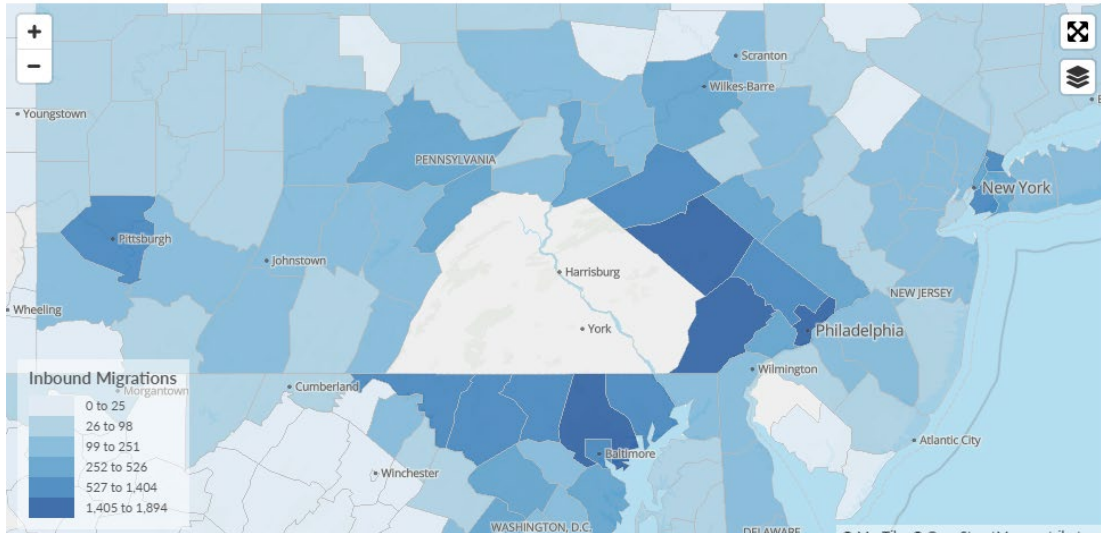
This dataset shows the amount of domestic taxpayer migration among all states, MSAs, and counties in the United States. The source and design of this taxpayer-based dataset *excludes certain groups* of people and thus does not represent the entire population, but rather is a good indicator of migrating workers within the labor force.

County

Keep

Hide

Jump To



[Lightcast®]

### **Overcoming the Transportation Dilemma in South Central Pennsylvania**

#### *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.

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.

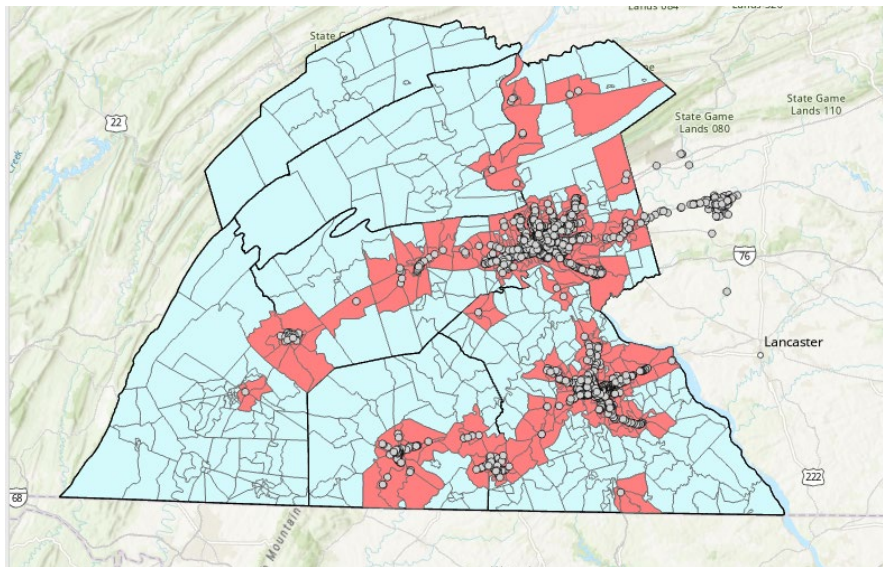
### **Implementing GIS Mapping Technology**

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.

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.

One of the most prevalent 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 who were within a 15-minute, three-quarters-of-a-mile radius of 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.



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.

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.

Each local area has its own process to encourage and support training providers to apply for ETPL certification. The Boards strive to use industry partnerships to peer review the training and give guidance as to the program's validity from the local industry's perspective.

**Section 1.8**  
**Proven Success**

1.8. Describe the region's strategy to increase engagement on the statewide eligible training provider list. *[Reviewed by PA WDB and BWPO]*

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.

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.

SCPa Works and LCWDB employ training specialists to work closely with eligible training providers who exhibit a clear understanding of the ever-changing needs of the regional labor market and the demands of registered apprenticeship programming throughout South Central PA. Through collaboration, close contact, surveys, and local board monitoring, eligible training providers are referred to the state for review based on underperformance. Title I Compliance teams execute site visits and participant surveys as a part of the overall training provider and ITA monitoring process. Title I participant surveys lend to the eligibility status of training providers as well as customer satisfaction. A participant's experience and documented training outcomes, as recorded and documented in case notes in CWDS, are both measurable components taken into consideration when determining the overall effectiveness of a training provider. In contrast to monitoring existing or underperforming training providers, the South Central PA local boards also refer

training providers to the state-approved ETPL application process for training providers to acquire eligibility status on the ETPL.

It is through the data entry, participant progress, measurable skill gains, and WIOA performance indicators as recorded in CWDS that a training provider aligns curriculum with WIOA standards and expectations. Furthermore, eligible training providers must present industry-specific training curriculum that aligns with the needs of market demands to include upskilling existing employees through incumbent worker training dollars and providing Related Technical Instruction (RTI) for registered apprentices whose training is funded through WIOA ITAs.

### **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
- § Goodwill Industries Registered Apprenticeship Program
- § 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.

## Section 1.9

1.9. Describe how the region established administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region.

The South Central Workforce Development Planning Region (SCWDPR) consists of two Local Planning areas with a long history of collaboration with both program delivery and administration. SCPa Works and Lancaster County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB) share expertise informally within the existing staffing structures whenever possible. Currently, there is an agreement in place for audit and accounting department support. When outside costs are identified, a cost-sharing agreement will be explored.

## Section 1.10

1.10. Describe the agreement between the local boards that describes how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with L&I on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in section 116(c), for each of the local areas within the planning region. *[WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(H); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(viii) Reviewed by CWIA] [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(E); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(v) Reviewed by Fiscal]*

Each local area (South Central and Lancaster) will negotiate individually with the Commonwealth. South Central and Lancaster may discuss strategies for negotiating at a regional level in the future.

The SCWDPR sets a high standard for achieving and exceeding state-negotiated WIOA program performance. Title I service providers communicate 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 SCWDPR 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 and LCWDB strive to meet and exceed the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth negotiated performance measures established for the region.

Both LWDBs maintain 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 serve as vital touchpoints to the achievement of WIOA-negotiated performance levels within the SCWDPR:

- 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.

The SCWDPR 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 regional 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 region’s broad goal of the pursuit of excellence in all services and programs.

**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.

## Section 1.11

1.11. Describe the region’s process to ensure the public (including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education) had 30 days to review and comment on the contents of the proposed Regional Plan, and subsequent modification, if applicable, prior to Commonwealth submission. *[20 CFR 679.510(b)(1),(2),(3) and (4). Reviewed by PPCS]*

The SCWDPR engages the public and key stakeholders in the evolution of this regional 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 SCWDPR service area. Overall, it is our goal to ensure that the SCWDPR Regional Plan provides the foundation from which job seekers and employers are served.

During the development of the SCWDPR Regional Plan, the SCWDPR boards and staff members met to discuss changes, modifications, and updates to the plan.

The process for the PY 2025-2028 WIOA regional plan development began with a presentation to the SCWDPR Board of Directors during their December 17, 2024 meeting. SCWDPR 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 2025-2029 regional plan review began with a presentation to the SCWDPR Board of Directors during the February 6, 2025 meeting. SCWDPR staff, including the Compliance Department, Fiscal Department, Programs Department, Strategic Initiatives Department, and Operations Department, reviewed and provided input on the regional plan as a team and completed edits to the content, making it a team effort from a collaborative approach.

The release of the SCWDPR regional plan for public comment is announced following the PPCS approval of this current draft. Upon PPCS approval, the SCWDPR posts the Regional Plan to the respective LWDB websites. PPCS approval of this 2025 draft of the Regional Plan is anticipated for June 2025, at which point, the Regional Plan will be posted on the respective LWDB websites for public comment. Electronic notification of the draft will be issued to all regional contacts, including employers, regional CBOs, WIOA service providers, and training providers, for public review and comment. A specified notice will be posted on the SCWDPR website.

The feedback that the SCWDPR receives during the public comment period is reviewed and considered, and then, if the content is accepted, changes are incorporated into the final Regional Plan. Comments that suggest changes, revisions, or edits to the plan will be cited and included with the Regional Plan as attachments on the final submission of the plan when submitted to the Commonwealth. The LWDBs will include actions taken based on public comments received.

Each LWDB posts a link to the South Central PA Regional Plan on each LWDB website, as well as a link to the respective Local Plans, 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 Regional Plan.

This year, the South Central Workforce Development Regional Plan was made available to the public for comment from June 23, 2025 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 Regional Plan. When public comments are received and changes are made to modify the Regional Plan, it is noted in this section of the Regional Plan.

After fulfilling the required 30-day public comment period, the LWDBs did not receive any public comments, and, therefore, no changes were made to the South Central Regional Plan.

This plan is effective July 1, 2025.