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# WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

**draft LOCAL PLAN:**  
**July 2020-June 2024**

## NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD



Open for review and comment May 15 – June 15, 2020. Email comments at [info@ncwdb.org](mailto:info@ncwdb.org)

A special one day public hearing by telephone will be held on June 3, 2020 from 9:00am to 3:00pm at (715) 204-1640

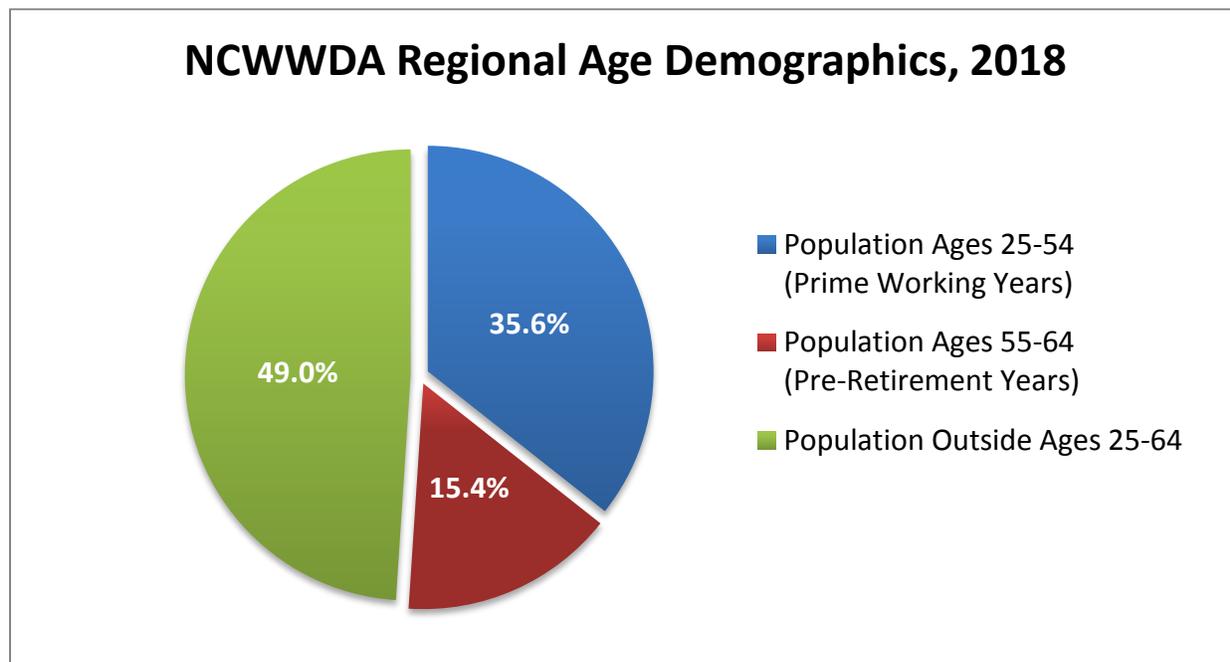
1. **Provide an analysis of regional labor and economic conditions in the local area including:**
  - a. Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and
  - b. The employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations
2. **Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs of in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**
3. **Provide an analysis of the workforce in the local area, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the local area, including individuals with barriers to employment.**

### ***Regional Profile***

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The following Regional Profile of North Central Wisconsin’s Workforce Development Area (NCWWDA) consists of background information on the region, including population and age distribution. The NCWWDA consists of nine counties, including; Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, and Wood Counties. The Regional Profile serves as a starting point for developing the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board’s updated WIOA Report. Additionally, the Regional Profile is meant to act as a source of reference information to be used for supplementing key information within the report.

In 2018, there were an estimated 412,178 people living within the NCWWDA. Approximately 36 percent (146,912 persons) of the Region’s population is considered to be in their prime working years (between the ages of 25 and 54). An additional 15 percent (63,474 persons) of the Region’s population is between the ages of 55 and 64, which is the time when many people begin to contemplate and ultimately retire.



Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (WIDOA) develops the state's official population projections. According to these projections, the NCWDA Region will have a projected population of 442,320 persons in 2025. Approximately 144,620 persons, or 33 percent of the projected population, will be between the ages of 25 and 54 (prime working years) in 2025, while an additional 61,850 persons, or 14 percent of the projected population, will be between the ages of 55 and 64, meaning that 14 percent of the Region's population will be close to retirement.

### ***Analysis of Regional Economic Conditions***

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According to Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI) software, over the next 10 years, 17 of the 20 NAICS industries project annual job growth. The region's largest industry, Manufacturing, had 34,820 jobs in 2019 and is projected to increase by 384 jobs by 2024. The increase in job opportunities will ensure that the Manufacturing Industry remains the top employer in the region in 2024, followed by Healthcare and Social Assistance. The Healthcare and Social Assistance industry is projected to increase the number of jobs by 1,275 jobs to 30,329 in 2024. The top 3 industries in the region will continue to be Manufacturing, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Government accounting for over 42 percent of all jobs in the Region in 2024. (See Appendix A)

- Total job growth is projected to increase by over 4,426 jobs or 2 percent through 2024.
- The top industry, Manufacturing, is well diversified with a high number of jobs in Food Manufacturing, Wood Product Manufacturing, Paper Manufacturing, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing, and Machinery Manufacturing.
- Administrative Support is projected to increase by 631 jobs or 10 percent through 2024.
- Manufacturing (\$64,644) has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest total earnings and is projected to add the fifth most jobs through 2024.
- Utilities (\$129,825), Mining (\$80,268) and Finance and Insurance (\$78,995) have the top three total earnings and are all projected to experience at least a 4 percent job growth through 2024.
- Natural Resource and Mining (-14 jobs) Retail Trade (-534 jobs), and Other Services (-38 jobs) are the only three industries projected to lose employment through 2024.
- Overall, the Regional economy is diversified ensuring economic resiliency in the future. Not one industry accounts for more than 20 percent of all employment.

The fastest growing industries are Mining; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, however nearly all industries are advertising for help. Employers are all complaining about the difficulty of finding applicants, the skills in the available applicants, and job turnover.

Existing and Emerging Industry Sectors and Occupations are difficult to address because of the lack of established codification and assignment of codes to existing codes can be problematic. For example, the state of Wisconsin and the North Central Region has a burgeoning information technology (IT) sector that is difficult to capture in the present North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) coding structure. Occupationally, an information technology specialist can work in healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, professional, scientific, and technical services, etc. In addition, there is not an informational technology SOC Code. As employment

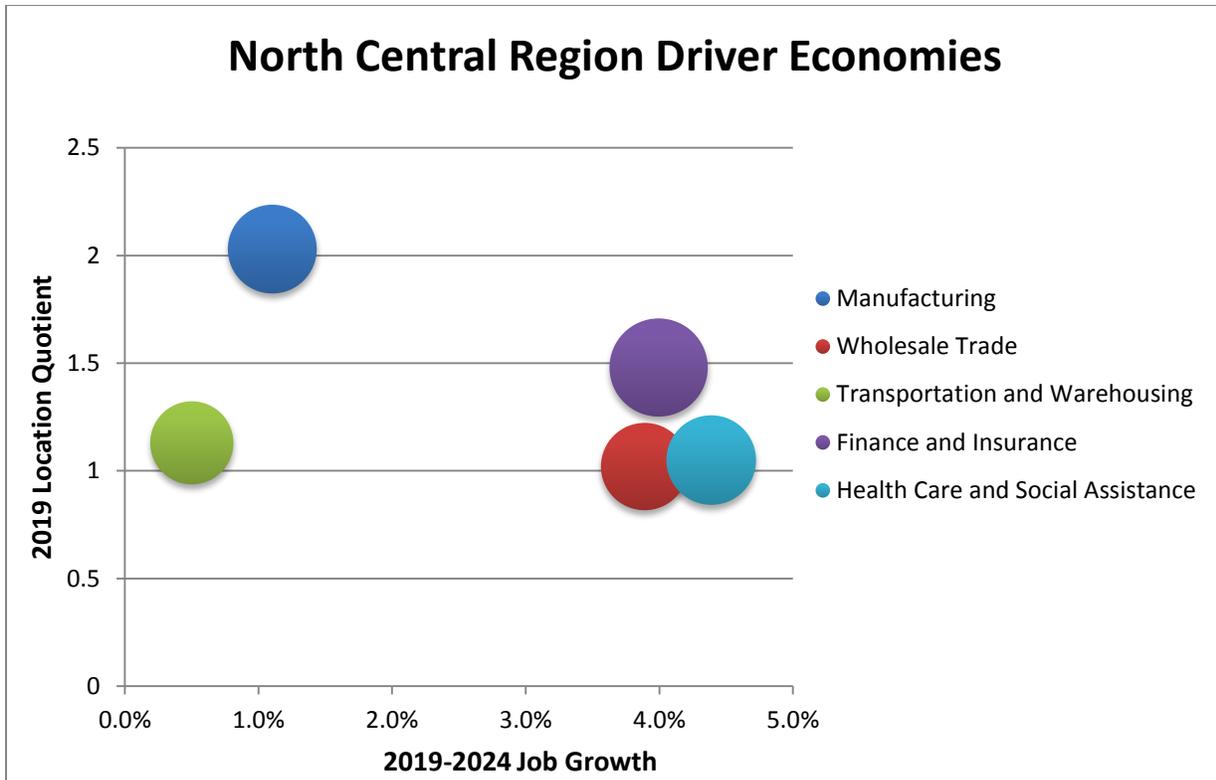
opportunities have evolved with technology, almost all positions include some form of IT. While employers identify that one of the largest employment needs is in IT, there is insufficient data to support that claim due to a lack of classification.

### **Regional Clusters**

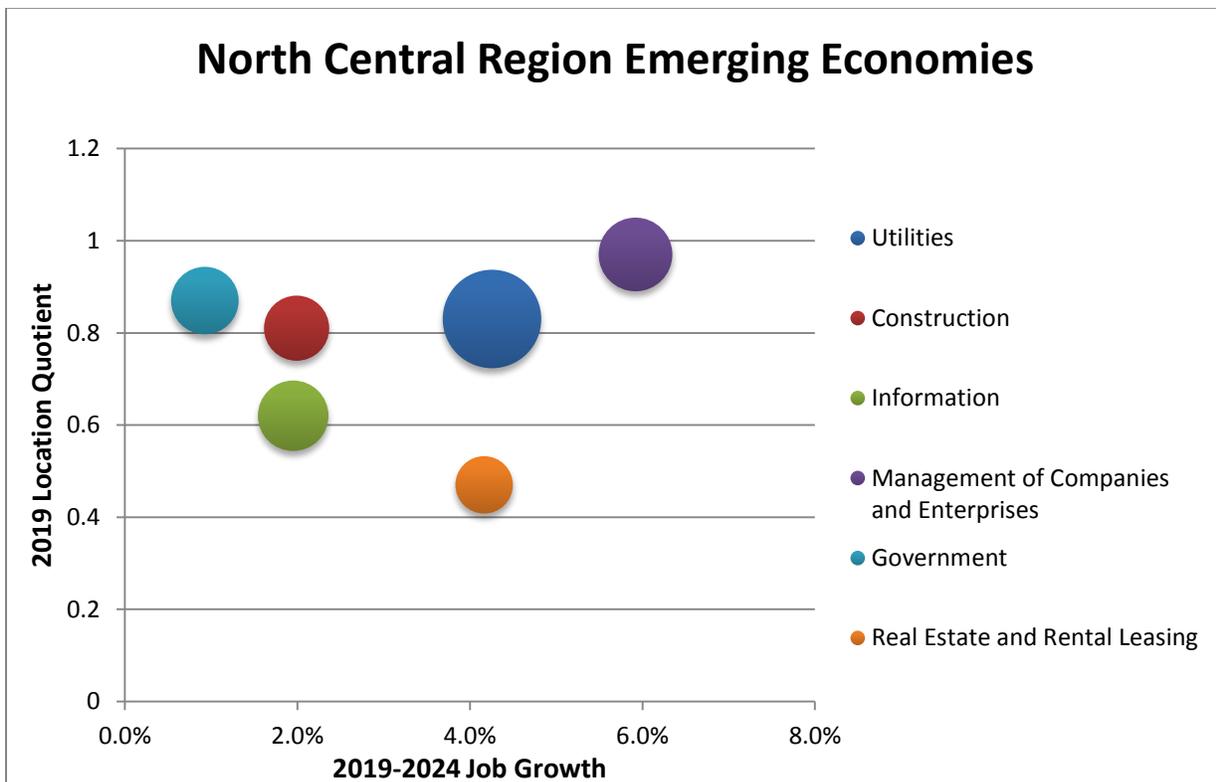
Utilizing Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI) software to analyze key indicators such as earnings, growth, regional competitiveness, regional specialization, and gross regional product, the North Central Region has a total of 60 industry clusters as defined according to the methodology of Harvard Business School's U.S. Cluster Mapping Project. Each cluster is made up of several industries. The software breaks the clusters in the region into three categories; Top Clusters, Average Clusters, and Bottom Clusters. Overall, the region has 10 top clusters, 37 average clusters, and 13 bottom clusters. Top clusters receive a score ranging from 95 (Insurance Services) to 38 (Distribution and Electronic Commerce) out of 100 possible. The 10 top clusters include the region's stronger industries like paper and packaging, insurance services, production technology and heavy machinery, and information technology and analytical instruments. Average clusters receive a score ranging from 59 (Wood Products) to 48 (Local Commercial Services) out of 100 possible. The 37 average clusters include industries that have experienced recent growth like food processing and manufacturing and medical devices and industries in the agricultural sector like livestock processing and wood products. A majority of the top clusters and average clusters have a long history of growth in the region. Bottom clusters receive a score ranging from 48 (Forestry) to 38 (Distribution and Electronic Commerce) out of 100 possible. The bottom 13 clusters include several industries focused around retail and hospitality like textile manufacturing, local household goods and services, and hospitality. (See Appendix B)

### **Driver and Emerging Industries**

Driver and emerging industries in the North Central Region are identified by a combination of location quotient, projected job growth, and total earnings data. A driver industry is an industry that has a location quotient greater than 1.00, is expected to experience job growth over the next five years, and offers employees a good potential earning. An emerging industry is an industry that has a location quotient below 1.00, but is projected to increase employment over the next five years offering high potential earnings for employees. The driver economies in the North Central Region are Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, Finance and Insurance, and Health Care and Social Assistance. The emerging economies in the North Central Region are Utilities, Construction, Information, Management of Companies, Government, and Real Estate. The Food Accommodations and Services; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Other Services industries have the necessary concentration of employment and growth requirements to be an emerging industry, but these industries offer the lowest annual salaries (each below \$30,000) in the region. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services projects to increase jobs over the next ten years and has a high annual salary, but the concentration of employment (LQ 0.38) is too low to be considered an emerging economy. Many of the industries that are included in the five driver economies and six emerging economies are also included in the top and average clusters as identified by the EDA Cluster Mapping Tool.



Source: Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI) 2019.4 Class of Worker



Source: Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI) 2019.4 Class of Worker

## **Job Projections**

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD) Office of Advisors projects a job growth of 4,426 new jobs or 2.0 percent more, in the region between 2019 and 2024. The region also projects a high number of replacement/ retirements over the five-year period due to an aging workforce.

Demographic projections by the Wisconsin Department of Administration indicate that the region will experience a large increase in the percentage of population over 65 years of age between 2019 and 2024. As a result of the region's aging population, the WDWD projects that there will be 25,129 job openings as a result of retirements/replacements by 2026. Therefore, the region will need to fill roughly 30,000 jobs between now and 2026.

The top three occupational categories in the region in 2018 were Office and Administrative Support Occupations, Production Occupations, and Sales and Related Occupations. Those three occupations accounted for 37 percent of all jobs in the region. While those three occupational categories are not projected to experience the highest increase in job growth, they are still projected to remain the top three occupations in the region. In 2024, the top three occupational categories will account for 36 percent of all jobs, a one percent decrease. (See Appendix C)

- Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (1,275), Office and Administrative Support (631), and Finance and Insurance (515) occupations are projected to have the highest total job growth during the 5-year period.
- Mining (16%); Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (14%); and Administrative Support (10%) occupations are projected to experience the highest percent increase in job growth over the 5-year period.
- Office and Administrative Support (711), Food Preparation and Serving Related (576), Sales and Related (592) and Production (421) Occupations are projected to have the highest annual openings due to replacements.
- Retail Trade and Other Services are the only occupations to project a decrease in jobs over the 5-year period, decreasing by 534 jobs and 38 jobs respectively.

## ***Employment Needs of Employers***

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The employment needs of employers identified in the WIOA Combined State Plan are nearly identical to the needs of employers in the North Central Region. Employers' employment needs include healthcare, manufacturing production, transportation, education, insurance and finance, and IT systems design and programming. Employers have concerns about their inability to find and keep skilled and unskilled workers in the region. The inability to attract and retain a skilled workforce will force businesses to either relocate, or will impede their ability to grow and increase their profits and capacity. While manufacturing growth is limited, the shift in occupations and skills is more toward automation and the programming of sophisticated machines. The common element in the growing employment fields is IT knowledge and application, whether it be medical records, CNC programming, accounting software, or logistical operations.

Specifically, businesses are demanding workers skills in three general areas:

1. Technical Skills
2. Soft Skills
3. Employability Skills

Technical skills include the use of computers, the ability to read blue prints, the proficient knowledge of computer programs like AutoCAD and QuickBooks, and basic math and language skills. These are skills that companies can offer training for and can help employees grow in their careers.

Soft Skills are a different set of skills that are typically taught in K-12. These skills include listening, conflict resolution, and teamwork. The development of social media and other computer technology encourages less physical interaction and more virtual interaction leading to a decrease in these soft skills in younger workers.

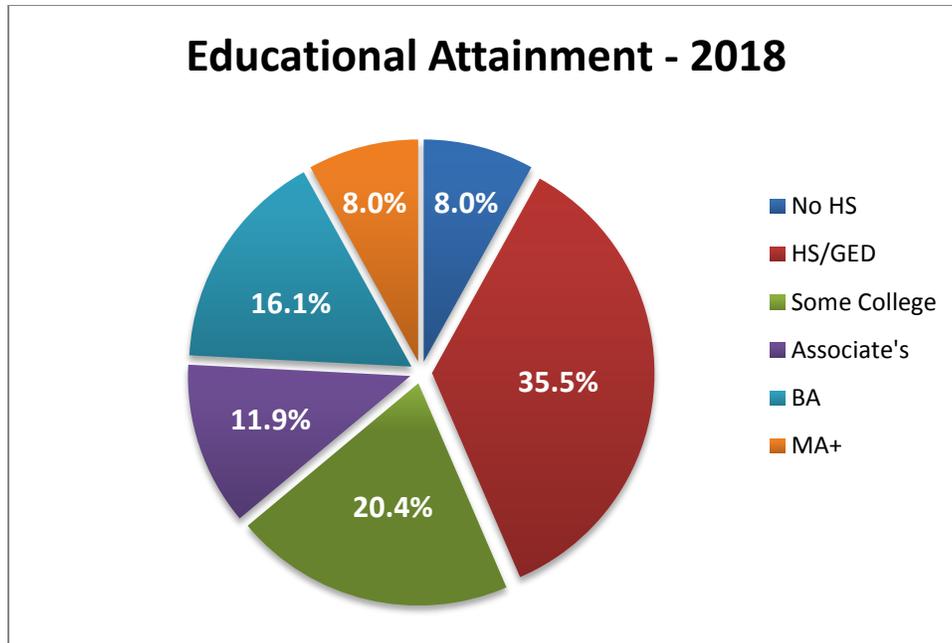
Employability Skills are basic skills that include showing up on time, daily attendance, safety, passing a drug test, and discretion. Many regional employers have identified the lack of employable skills and soft skills as the most frustrating skills gap. Employers are willing to invest time and money into employees to teach technical skills, but are less willing if they lack employability or soft skills.

### ***Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet the Employment Needs of the Employers in the Region***

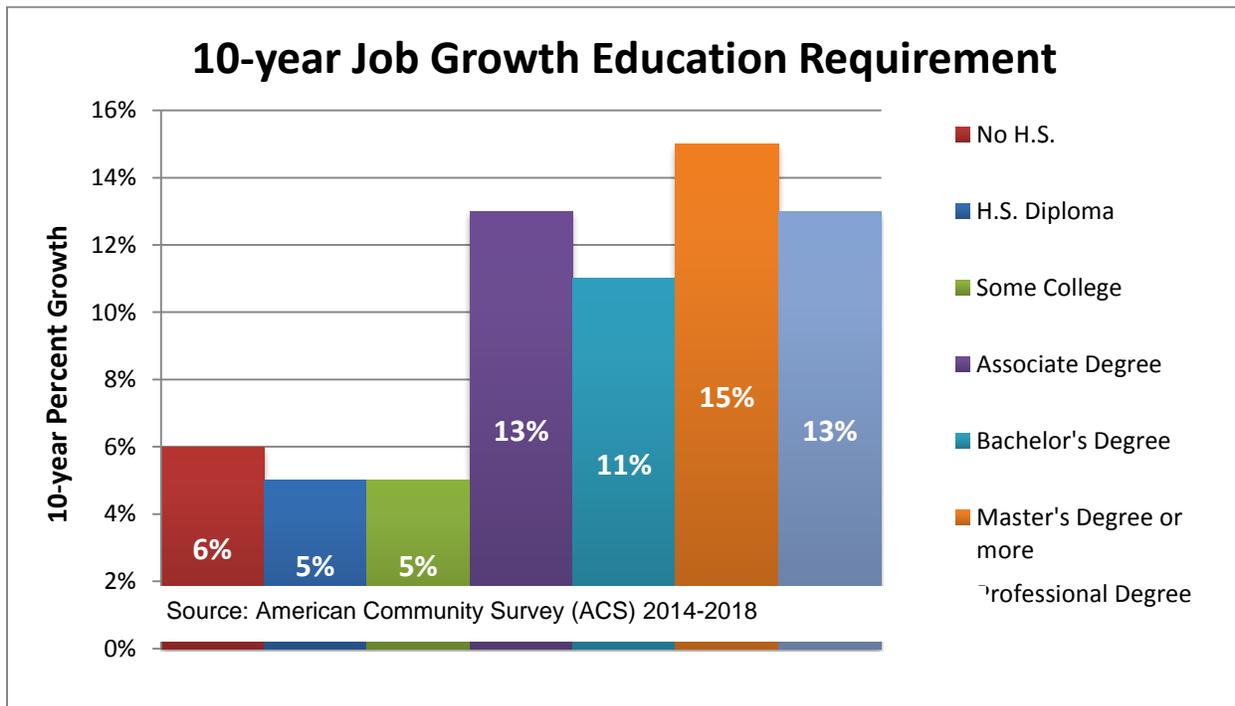
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#### **Educational Attainment**

Historically, a high school diploma was sufficient for a majority of employment opportunities in the region. With a base education obtained in the K-12 system the workforce had the basic knowledge, skills, and ability necessary to work in a variety of occupations. However, as technology has advanced and the key industry sectors in the region have evolved a high school education is becoming insufficient for a majority of jobs, especially higher paying jobs. In 2018, the region had roughly 291,000 people over the age of 25. While roughly 92 percent had graduated high school (or had a GED), only 57 percent had gone on to higher education. With driver industries in manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and finance and insurance, many of those jobs now require more than a high school education. The region will need to increase the percentage of population with technical or associate degrees to meet employer's needs. For example, many manufacturing jobs are now automated and require specific knowledge of an expensive, highly advanced machine. Between 2018 and 2026, the highest percent growth in employment opportunities will be in occupations that require higher education. Employment opportunities that require at least an associate's degree are projected to increase 12 percent. Jobs requiring a professional degree (Ph.D./ MD) are projected to increase 13 percent and jobs requiring a master's degree are projected to increase 15 percent. Jobs requiring a high school diploma or no high school diploma are projected to increase the least, 5 percent and 6 percent respectively. While jobs that require a higher education are projected to grow the fastest, jobs requiring a high school education or less will still account for the largest percentage of jobs in the region in 2026.



Source: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, December 2019



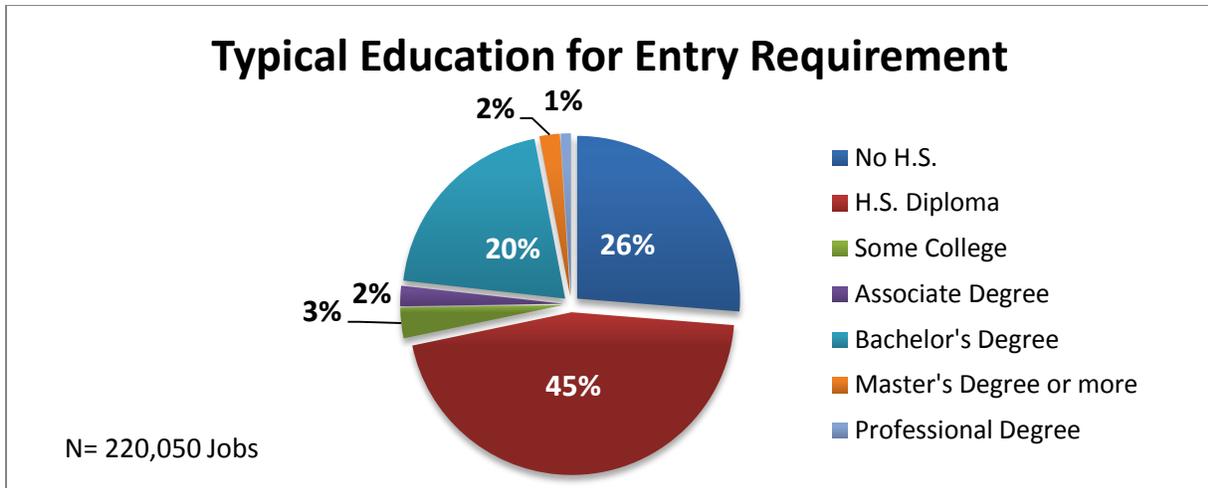
## Wages

Among the Region's counties, median annual wage in 2018 ranged from \$18,214 in Vilas County to \$27,351 in Lincoln County. Just over 71 percent of the jobs in the region required no more than a high

school diploma, 26 percent of which requires less than a high school diploma. While the workforce has the education, the region does not offer employment opportunities that require higher education. Over 36 percent of the population has an associate degree or higher, but only 23 percent of the jobs require such education. In short, the higher educated population is underemployed greatly affecting the income in the region and the attraction of a more educated workforce. The attraction of jobs that utilize the education the region has will not only attract a more educated workforce, but will increase the region's median annual wage as occupations that require higher education levels typically pay higher annual salaries. Ideally, the typical education for job entry requirement percentages should match the population's education attainment percentages.

Adams County		Lincoln County		Portage County	
Education Level	Annual Earning	Education Level	Annual Earning	Education Level	Annual Earning
Less than HS	\$20,027	Less than HS	\$27,351	Less than HS	\$23,070
High School	\$23,520	High School	\$31,227	High School	\$33,992
Associate Degree	\$30,451	Associate Degree	\$36,517	Associate Degree	\$35,977
Bachelor's Degree	\$39,250	Bachelor's Degree	\$47,902	Bachelor's Degree	\$44,192
Graduate or Professional Degree	\$44,875	Graduate or Professional Degree	\$63,021	Graduate or Professional Degree	\$59,972
Total	\$26,932	Total	\$36,624	Total	\$38,881
Forest County		Marathon County		Vilas County	
Education Level	Annual Earning	Education Level	Annual Earning	Education Level	Annual Earning
Less than HS	\$20,217	Less than HS	\$26,059	Less than HS	\$18,214
High School	\$27,021	High School	\$32,798	High School	\$26,943
Associate Degree	\$30,295	Associate Degree	\$37,498	Associate Degree	\$26,881
Bachelor's Degree	\$41,029	Bachelor's Degree	\$49,261	Bachelor's Degree	\$40,962
Graduate or Professional Degree	\$49,063	Graduate or Professional Degree	\$66,822	Graduate or Professional Degree	\$54,459
Total	\$30,340	Total	\$39,282	Total	\$28,805
Langlade County		Oneida County		Wood County	
Education Level	Annual Earning	Education Level	Annual Earning	Education Level	Annual Earning
Less than HS	\$20,350	Less than HS	\$23,500	Less than HS	\$22,361
High School	\$28,720	High School	\$26,337	High School	\$31,411
Associate Degree	\$32,197	Associate Degree	\$32,223	Associate Degree	\$35,890
Bachelor's Degree	\$38,856	Bachelor's Degree	\$43,351	Bachelor's Degree	\$48,802
Graduate or Professional Degree	\$54,028	Graduate or Professional Degree	\$62,684	Graduate or Professional Degree	\$67,326
Total	\$31,320	Total	\$33,018	Total	\$37,382

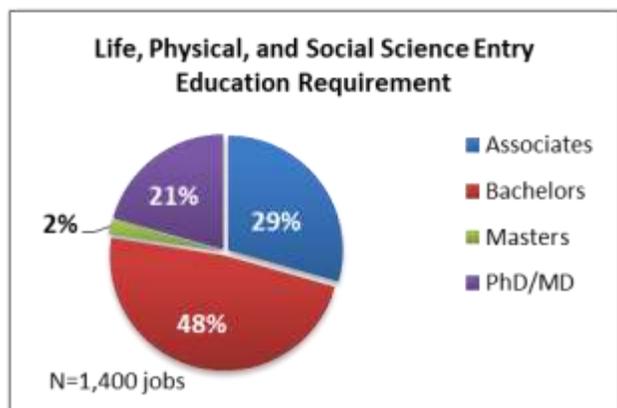
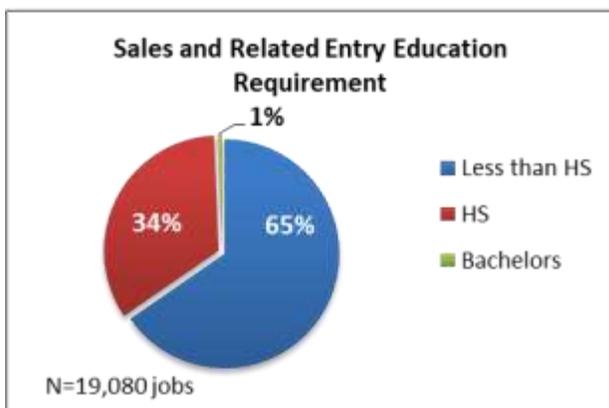
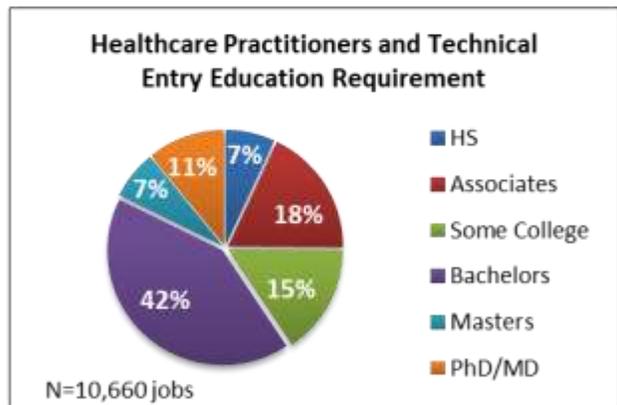
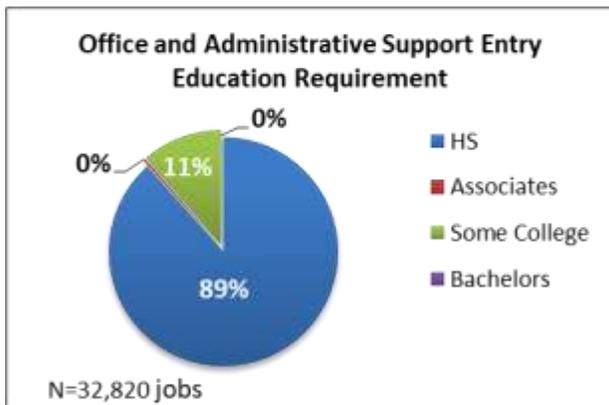
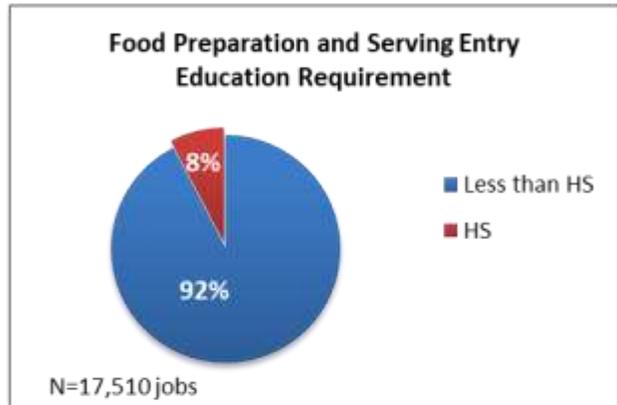
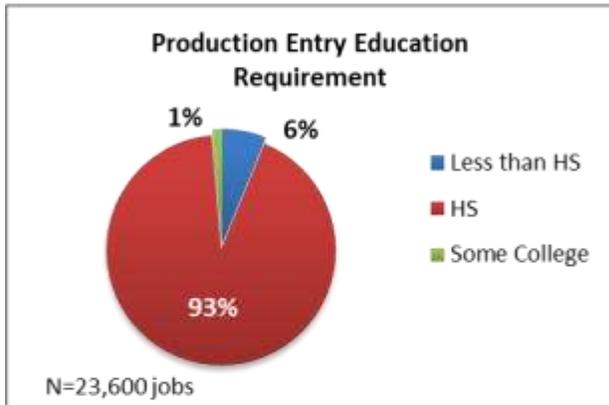
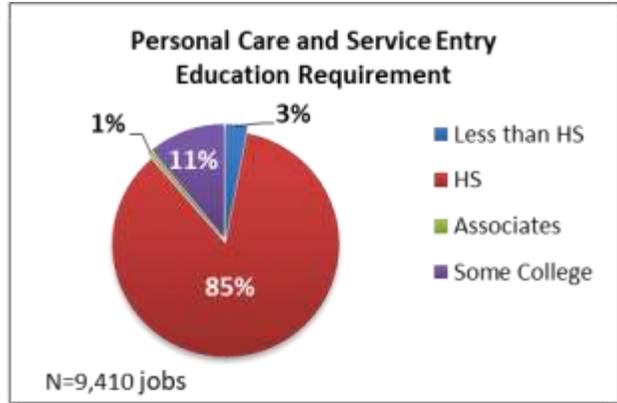
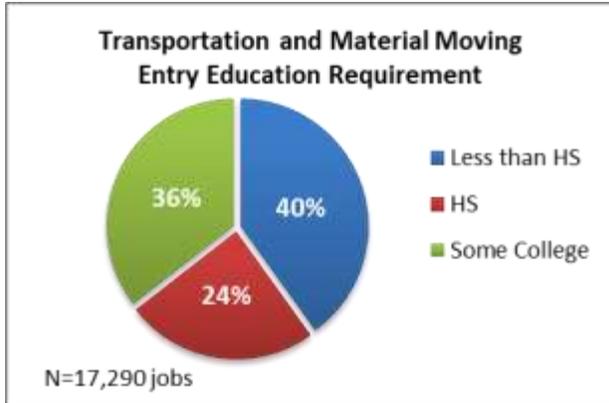
Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018



Source: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, December

#### **In-Demand Occupation Requirements**

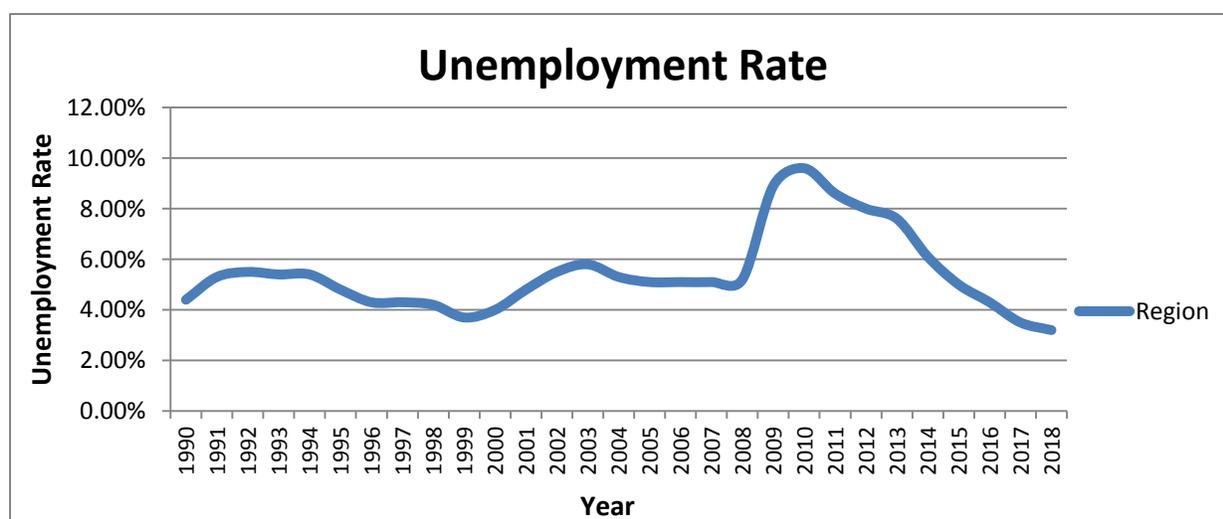
According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD), the in-demand occupation categories in the North Central Region are: Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (15.9% 10-year job growth); Office and Administrative Support (33,530 jobs in 2026); Transportation and Material Moving (18,690 jobs in 2026); Life, Physical, and Social Science (12.9% 10-year job growth); Personal Care and Service (17% 10-year job growth); Food Preparation and Service Related (18,630 jobs in 2026); Sales and Related (19,880 jobs in 2026); and Production occupations (23,200 jobs in 2026). Based on the typical education for entry for the in-demand occupations a large majority of the in-demand occupations are low earning occupations requiring no more than an associate degree, and in many cases no more than a high school diploma. Of the top 10 in-demand occupations, 7 require no more than a high school diploma and only General and Operation Managers requires a bachelor's degree.



### ***Analysis of the Workforce in the Region***

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The region’s labor force peaked at 232,261 people in 2007, but has decreased to 214,357 in 2018. Employment in North Central Wisconsin hit record numbers in 2007 as well (220,336), before a low point of 200,228 during the great recession in 2012, a decline of 9.1 percent. Since 2012’s low point, employment within the region has increased to 207,477 people, which represents a 3.6 percent increase in employment. As a result of a smaller labor force and a slight increase in employment, the region’s unemployment rate has dropped during the economic recovery (2009-2018) to 3.2 percent in 2018. Historically, the median unemployment rate over the past 24 years has been 5.3 percent. While the unemployment rate in the region is decreasing, the reduction is mainly due to a high percentage of population over 65 entering retirement and an increase in discouraged workers no longer participating in the labor force.



Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, LAUS December 2019

### **Individuals with Barriers to Employment**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act identifies a number of populations which may experience significant barriers to employment. The North Central Region is no different than any other state or region in recognizing that many of its residents may experience difficulty gaining and maintaining employment. The North Central Region WIOA plan will develop a strategy to assist these individuals.

Among the individuals with significant barriers to employment, the following are most notable:

People with Disabilities: There are an estimated 26,411 people with disabilities in the North Central Wisconsin labor force. Roughly 57 percent of disabled people did not work. (2013-2017 American Community Survey)

Veterans: The Region has 9,949 veterans in the labor force. The unemployment rate for veterans is 5.0 percent. (2013-2017 American Community Survey)

American Indian and Asian: There are 5,307 American Indians or Alaska Natives in the region and an additional 11,667 Asians (Hmong). American Indians or Alaska Natives account for 1.3 percent of the region’s population and Asians account for 2.8 percent of the population. (2013-2017 American Community Survey)

Institutionalized: Roughly 5,128 people or 1.2 percent of the region’s population is institutionalized.

Low Income: There are an additional 63,199 individuals (15.7% of the population) that are considered low-income, as defined by earning less than 125 percent of the federal poverty level wage (2013-2017 American Community Survey)

Language Barrier: There are 21,611 people, or 5.2 percent of the region’s population that speak a language other than English at home, which may indicate limited English proficiency.

**Labor Force Status of Notable Subgroups**

There are three groups within the region’s larger population who have significant barriers to employment and therefore require special services such as those provided under WIOA. Among these groups are Youth Workers (ages 16 to 24), Individuals with Disabilities, and Veterans. Each of these groups experience unemployment rates that are significantly higher than that of the general population. They also represent vital resources that the region will need to utilize in order to help counteract the workforce quantity challenges.

Youth Workers

There were 46,486 eligible youth workers (ages 16 to 24) in 2018, according to the 2014-2018 American Community Survey. Of those, only 71.9 percent participated in the workforce, the highest labor force participation rate (LFPR) in the past 5 years for youth workers. The 33,434 participating youth workers accounted for roughly 16 percent of the region’s workforce in 2018. While the LFPR has increased over the 5 year period, the unemployment rate for the cohort has decreased from 14.1 percent in 2014 to 8.1 percent in 2018. In comparison, the unemployment rate for the region’s workforce in 2018 was 3.2 percent. Roughly 71 percent of the jobs in the region require no more than a high school diploma. However, 56 percent of the population has an education level higher than a high school diploma. Many well educated members of the labor force are working in jobs below their education level that are typically filled by youth workers. As a result, the lower level jobs are not available leading to high youth worker unemployment rates. Many employers also indicate that youth workers lack the soft and employable skills necessary for employment, which contributes to the higher unemployment rate for youth workers.

Youth Unemployment			
Year	Pop. Aged 16 to 24	LFPR	Unemployment Rate
2014	47,834	68.3%	14.1%
2015	47,632	69.1%	13.7%
2016	47,351	70.1%	11.5%
2017	46,982	71.3%	9.1%
2018	46,486	71.9%	8.1%

2014-2018 American Community Survey

### Individuals with Disabilities

There are 26,411 individuals in the North Central Region that self-identify as having a significant disability, according to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. The population with a disability accounts for 12 percent of the region's workforce, of which more than half did not work in 2017. In comparison, only 13 percent of all people without a disability in the region did not work. Furthermore, of the 43 percent of the disabled population that did work, 29 percent of them worked less than full time. Identifying employment opportunities that can be filled by disabled workers can significantly help the region's worker quantity challenge. While some people with disabilities are incapable of working, many have a specific skill set that can be utilized and developed strengthening the region's workforce.

### Veterans

The North Central Region's veteran population is recognized as a priority in the provision of workforce development services. The state of Wisconsin has a proud tradition of effectively transitioning its returning military professionals to civilian employment. In 2011, Governor Walker signed Wisconsin Act 211, which expanded the number of state positions that could be filled on a non-competitive basis to include qualified veterans with a service-connected disability rating of at least 30 percent. In 2014, Governor Walker signed Executive Order 137, which advises and assists the state in ongoing efforts to hire veterans and promote job openings to veterans seeking employment and also sets state government hiring goals for veterans and veterans with a service-connected disability rating.

There are more than 13,096 veterans of working age (between 18 and 64) in the North Central Region, representing another vital potential workforce resource. The region's veteran LFPR is on average 8.1 percentage points lower than the region's non-veteran LFPR. While the veterans LFPR is lower, their unemployment rate is considerably higher. The region's veteran unemployment rate is 5.0 percent, 1.8 percent higher than non-veterans in the region.

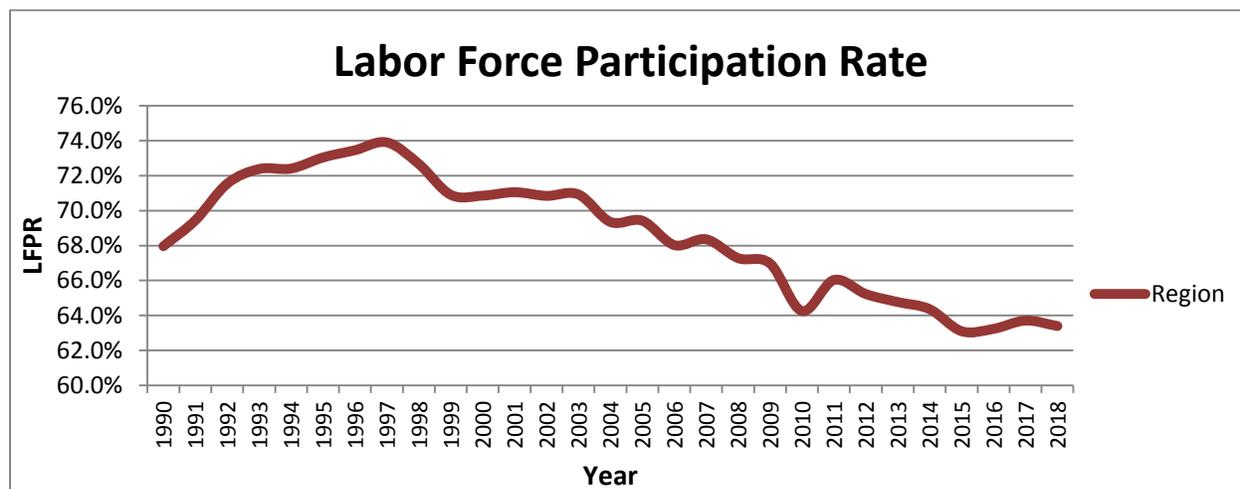
It is not uncommon for veterans to experience some type of disability. Therefore, their participation in the labor force is depressed due to barriers they face. Veterans are also significantly more likely to leave the labor force before the age of 55 compared to their non-veteran counterparts due either to a disability or retirement benefits.

### ***Information on Labor Market Trends***

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The key labor market trend in the North Central Region is workforce quantity. The top challenge for the region is finding enough workers to fill open positions in all industries; jobs due to turnover/ retirements and due to growth. The regional communities and businesses must improve their ability to attract new members of the workforce who have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet employer standards. The business community must work with local K-12, technical colleges, and universities to ensure that curriculums not only match business's needs, but enable the workforce to reach their fullest potential.

The North Central Region’s labor force participation rate (LFPR) has been in decline since peaking in 1997 at 73.9 percent and dropped significantly during the last recession, consistent with a state and national trend. The North Central Region’s LFPR continues to fall, to 63.4 percent in 2018. A decline in the LFPR combined with the region’s slower population growth, specifically the attraction of young professional, affects the region’s ability to provide the necessary workforce to fill open positions. Historically, the median LFPR in the North Central Region has been 70.9 percent.



Source: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, December 2019

## ***Skills Gap, Job Demand, and Job Supply***

### **Skills Gap**

The “skills gap” challenge is a two part problem for the region. Firstly, the region’s higher educated workforce is underemployed due to the low number of jobs that require at least an associate degree. The lack of opportunities for workers with at least an associate degree, let alone a bachelor’s degree, will ensure the region continues to struggle to attract the workforce with the education and skills needed to fill open positions in all industries. Secondly, a large percentage of the region’s population has attained no higher than a high school diploma (47.6%) resulting in a technical “skills gap”. Several in-demand sectors, like manufacturing, require specific technical training that a large percentage of the current workforce has not attained.

See section A. ii and section B. for additional analysis on the education and skill levels of the workforce in the region.

### **Quantity Challenge**

In line with the State of Wisconsin, there is existing demand for jobs in almost every industry and occupation in the North Central Region. However, it is the supply side of the equation that is holding back increased economic growth in the region. The number of jobs available is simply higher than the labor force available. The region is lacking the pure number of people regardless of their skills and ability

to fill the open positions. Employers are now faced with the difficulty of finding, attracting, and training candidates for their open positions (both due to job growth and turnover/retirements) while retaining their existing employees. Below is a more detailed description of the new supply/ demand workforce balance, which warns of labor and business challenges in the near future, if not, in fact, the present.

### **Demand v. Supply**

Model simulations based on department of workforce development job projections indicate a shortage of workers will directly affect the North Central Region's job growth over the next ten years. Running scenarios of job demand projections shows an estimated 6,874 worker supply gap in 2026. The base assumptions in the simulation are a projected 2025 population over the age of 19 of 338,810 (WIDOA), a 3.2 percent unemployment rate (2018 unemployment rate) and a labor participation rate of 63.4 percent. Historically, the median LFPR in the region is 69.4 percent. However, the percentage of the region's population over the age of 65 is projected to increase from 21 percent in 2020 to 25 percent in 2025. The increase in population over 65 will result in more people not in the labor force due to retirement. If the unemployment rate assumption is increased to 5.0 percent, there would be an expected 10,741 worker supply gap in the year 2026. Increasing the unemployment rate even further to 9.6 percent, the highest the rate has ever been in the region, there would be an expected 20,622 worker supply gap.

The potential workforce shortage is further impacted by workforce commutes. In 2018, the North Central Region experienced a net negative workforce commute. According to the U.S. Census, 45,656 workers commuted into the region for work while 55,081 workers commuted out of the region for work. This means that 9,425 more people leave the Region for work than enter. If that trend continues, the regions workforce shortage projections would increase by roughly 10,000 people.

### NCWWDB Workforce Inflow-Outflow



Source: U.S. Census on the Map the region.

### COVID-19 Pandemic

The labor market analysis for WDA #6 was created prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since mid-March 2020, the region's unemployment rate has skyrocketed with business closures due to COVID-19. At the time of this writing, the layoff notices received by NCWWDB have largely been temporary. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the economy and the regional workforce become clear, and if any changes in programming or operations are necessary, NCWWDB will submit a modification to this plan.

- 4. Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the local area, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the local area.**

The NCWWDB carries out many workforce activities by partnering locally through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to implement core and partner programs. The successful partnerships, collaboration, and programs that exist and can be leveraged are an area of strength in WDA 6. Under WIOA, workforce development activities are categorized within the following areas – Career Services, Training Services, and Business Services.

WIOA Title 1 programs have a variety of workforce activities available. The activities take place in the areas' job centers and typically involve other job center partners and programs. One exception being the on-site Rapid Response (RR) services for dislocated workers. The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs offer a variety of basic and individualized career services starting with informational workshops, small group and specialized one-on-one sessions.

NCWWDB has built strong relationships with the three regional technical colleges as well as the K-12 school districts throughout the WDA 6 region. The technical colleges have played a critical role in developing and delivering the training which has been identified by business and industry, developing and continuously refining pathways in high demand industries such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, and information technology, and exploring and expanding new training opportunities and tools (youth apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship, customized training, etc.). The NCWWDB staffs interface with technical college industry advisory groups and the North Central Wisconsin Business Solutions Team. A representative from a local technical college serves on North Central's Board. Technical college representatives are also advisory members of NCWWDB's industry alliances.

NCWWDB and its Business Services Team offer a variety of services to assist employers in meeting their workforce needs. In collaboration with DWD and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, NCWWDB provides employers with quality labor market data and wage analysis to assist in forecasting future needs, and when state and federal grant opportunities arise. NCWWDB works with its local technical colleges to create short-term training opportunities based on input from its sector partnerships.

The NCWWDB continues to strive to bring together all required WIOA partners in WDA 6 through the MOU process. However, a shared common language to communicate the variety of services available to jobseekers and employers across the workforce system continues to be an area of weakness.

**5. Describe the local WDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A) to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.**

The strategic plan adopted by NCWWDB in 2020 provides direction for the next four years. The mission, core values, and vision will guide its actions. The strategic themes and related strategic initiatives set the foundation for its key actions and guides allocation of resources. The key actions for each strategic initiative establish targets and benchmarks for success. While the strategic plan provides long-term direction, the planning process remains dynamic in order to respond to the needs of a changing environment.

Mission Statement: Lead, support, and sustain the development and retention of a skilled, competitive workforce which meets the changing needs of regional employers and promotes economic growth in a global economy.

Vision Statement: The NCWWDB will be recognized by its key stakeholders as the premier provider and driver of a partner-focused, integrated, and coordinated service delivery system that produces effective solutions for developing and sustaining a skilled workforce.

NCWWDB's strategic initiatives are designed to increase workforce participation in the region by:

1. Engaging the emerging, present and past workforce (including those with barriers to employment) in innovative ways
2. Through communication, collaboration and commitment, NCWWDB strives to be the link between individuals and businesses that drive workforce engagement
3. Cultivating and growing its current relationships with community partners to meet industry workforce demands
4. Exploring additional funding opportunities to support the mission and vision of the organization

As in the past, NCWWDB will continue to operate within the philosophy of helping participants reach a "living wage" to move participants along a path towards self-sufficiency without public assistance. All workforce activities will be planned with the goal of preparing the workforce for placements in living wage positions that are in high-demand. NCWWDB believes this philosophy is a better investment of tax dollars, and will also assist in meeting/exceeding median earnings indicators.

NCWWDB will incorporate business services strategies to meet the employer performance indicator.

*NCWWDB will update this local plan after negotiating performance measures for PY20-PY21 with DWD.*

- 6. Describe the strategies and services that will be utilized to facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs. Specifically:**
  - a. What outreach activities are planned to increase business engagement in the local area?**
  - b. How will the Business Services Team be utilized for this purpose?**
  - c. How will the members (particularly business members) of the local WDB and Youth Council/Committee support these efforts?**
  - d. How will sector partnerships be utilized for this purpose?**
  - e. What are the goals and objectives for these activities?**

The NCWWDB will utilize economic data to identify workforce trends in the region. The data will be used to conduct monthly employer contacts across all sectors to evaluate areas of need as it relates to workforce development. The NCWWDB business services outreach team will be business lead and data driven to provide information regarding opportunities for job seekers and future workforce activities. Additionally, NCWWDB will leverage and utilize information from the region's sector partners - CWIMMA, CWITA, and WATEA to plan innovative workforce activities for job seekers in North Central Wisconsin.

Lastly, the NCWWDB will lead collaborative business solutions and services through continued relationships with workforce partners within the region through the Business Solutions Team

and its outreach strategies. The team has a benchmark of 20-25 employer visits each month. Business members of the local WDB will be included. The information from each visit will be shared among the job center partners with specific hiring information shared with WIOA Career Planners at quarterly meetings and on an ongoing basis as opportunities arise.

**7. Discuss the implementation of initiatives designed to meet the needs of employers in the local area that support the local WDB's strategy, including:**

- **Work-Based Learning Programs: Explain how the local area will utilize and promote incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, internships, or other activities during the planning period.**

NCWWDB has three strong sector partnerships - CWIMMA (Central Wisconsin Metal Manufacturer's Alliance), CWITA (Central Wisconsin Information Technology Alliance) and WATEA (Wisconsin Automotive Truck Education Association). All three are designed to be employer-led alliances to specifically build and develop a skilled youth pipeline and strong adult workforce to meet their immediate and future workforce needs.

NCWWDB has two specific policies in place to maximize services for both business customers and individual customers: Customized Training and On-the-Job Training (OJT). The policy and procedure most utilized is the OJT policy and procedure. NCWWDB, its contracted service providers, and Business Solutions Team will continue to promote and cultivate these opportunities under WIOA. NCWWDB will utilize non-ITA training services for on-the-job training, customized training, and Registered Apprenticeship, when appropriate. When meeting the needs of area employers, NCWWDB will utilize contracted training following the guidelines in section 10 of TEGL 3-15.

- **Sector Partnerships Participation: Explain how the local area will utilize the relationships built by the Business Services Team to enhance or expand participation in Sector Partnerships and expand business services efforts. Indicate specific planned objectives and measurable outcomes for PY2020.**

The NCWWDB will provide oversight and collaborative leadership to the regional business solutions team. The NCWWDB team will work with the sector partners to explore new innovative training programs and share opportunities with job seekers in the region. The business solutions team, consisting of a variety of job center partners, will utilize the information gathered to facilitate placements or participants from NCWWDB or partner related programs. The expected outcomes for PY20 is to increase the number of participants in sector partnership- related employment by 10%.

- **Sector Partnerships - Status and Objectives: Identify what sector partnerships the local area is currently engaged in or plans to engage in during PY2020? Indicate the current status of those partnerships, (active, emerging, or exploring), plus PY2020 planned objectives and measurable outcomes.**

NCWWDB remains active with its three key sector partnerships – the Central Wisconsin Metal Manufacturers Alliance (CWIMMA), Central Wisconsin Information Technology Alliance (CWITA) and Wisconsin Automotive & Truck Education Association (WATEA).

NCWWDB's plan objectives is to continue to build the partnerships, leverage information from each to assist in building a workforce to meet their future needs and to explore innovative training opportunities as funding resources become available. NCWWDB will also partner with the three regional technical colleges when training opportunities arise. It will also be necessary to include the education community with building career pathways and work-based training opportunities.

- **Career Pathways: Explain how the local area will utilize information gathered through its Business Services Team to provide a baseline for consideration of new or enhanced Sector Partnerships, and how this information will be used to inform changes to or development of Career Pathways in the local area. Indicate specific PY2020 planned objectives and measurable outcomes.**

NCWWDB has a strong history of partnering with its three Technical Colleges and UW system to meet the needs of employers, and for the support of work-based learning opportunities. NCWWDB's Business Services Director and Workforce Services Director work closely with the three employer alliances in the region to collect current and future workforce information and the specific skill sets needed in the industries of transportation, manufacturing and information technology. NCWWDB serves as the link between those employer alliances and the technical college partners. The partnerships and the information obtained from the employer alliances is the basis for developing career pathways, including short term training opportunities, pre-Apprenticeships and other credentialed training options as pathways to family-sustaining jobs in the area.

8. **Describe how the local WDB, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the local board will:**
  - a. **Facilitate the development of career pathways;**
  - b. **Facilitate, as appropriate, co-enrollment in core programs; and**
  - c. **Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).**

Under WIOA, the public workforce development system's approach to training services places a greater emphasis on work-based learning, stackable credentials, and career pathways. NCWWDB's local employer alliances are closely aligned with the education system and are supportive of work-based learning, and other integrated education and training activities, which often assist with the development of flexible and responsive career pathways. This helps provide all levels of workers multiple entry and exit points along career pathways and cultivate the workforce pipeline for employers. WIOA Title 1 Career Planners will continue to make referrals to technical college Career Pathways programs and to adult and youth apprenticeship programs and coordinate services with other core partner programs, when appropriate.

NCWWDB encourages co-enrollment of Title I participants in WIOA core and partner programs when appropriate and beneficial to the jobseekers' needs. NCWWDB looks forward to using the new co-enrollment reports for Title I, III, IV, TAA, and JVSG that DWD has developed once they are released to increase our understanding of how co-enrollment looks in WDA 6. NCWWDB

also looks forward to the development of future enhanced co-enrollment reports as part of the Wisconsin Common Intake System. The ability to identify if a participant is already working with another partner, the ability to make and track electronic referrals between participating partners, and the ability to collect basic information from other systems to help streamline the customer experience for those customers who work with more than one partner agency will help greatly in the facilitation of co-enrollment.

**9. Describe the strategy employed to work with adult education providers funded under Title II of WIOA and vocational rehabilitation providers funded under Title IV of WIOA to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in question 5.**

Title I providers in the job centers have knowledgeable working relationships with Title II and Title IV staff, and consult when necessary. All three program areas of Title I make every effort to co-enroll participants when it is in the best interest of the individual. Through the eligibility and initial assessment, releases of information are obtained from participants who are involved with other services. Consultation and/or joint meetings are arranged to coordinate services. If additional service needs are identified, referrals are made on behalf of the participant. NCWWDB looks forward to the work DWD is currently doing to create a Wisconsin Common Intake System and co-enrollment reports for the core titles. NCWWDB believes this will assist in identifying those co-enrolled participants up front to ensure quality services without duplication.

Title I providers and other job center partners are invited to participate in Title II partnership meetings, which are typically held three times a year with each adult education provider in the region. These partnership meetings provide opportunities for Title II and job center partners to regularly communicate and align resources available to the local area. Title II Adult Education providers are also co-located at two of NC's job centers and hold regular office hours at a third job center allowing staff to be easily involved in implementation efforts.

NCWWDB also works closely with the DVR Director in planning youth programs and in creating a seamless referral system under the guidelines of WIOA. With a greater emphasis on serving out-of-school youth in Title I, creating a strong, seamless transition for DVR in-school youth is a win-win situation for youth with disabilities. The DVR and the local school districts will continue to be collaborative partners while providing services to young individuals with disabilities. NCWWDB worked closely with DVR as a service provider of a summer youth employment program, LifeWork\$. NCWWDB hopes to continue the LifeWork\$ program, which is a model to improve and expand upon to prepare youth with disabilities for the workforce and independent living.

**10. Describe the strategies and services that will be utilized to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.**

There are a variety of ways the WIOA-required partners are included in the One-Stop delivery system. The North Central Wisconsin One-Stop-Operator Consortium serves as an advisor to the Board and is comprised of partners including a representative from Unemployment Insurance

program. The North Central Board also includes a representative from Unemployment Insurance program.

The unemployment insurance certification trainings, offered through the DWD Learning Center, are used for Rapid Response practitioners and WIOA Title I Career Planners and primary front desk staff.

Unemployment insurance programs are important part of NC's local Rapid Response process. At the time NCWWDB receives knowledge of a WARN or layoff activity, the Rapid Response Policy and Process is put into action. The Rapid Response Team pulls together a worker informational meeting which generally includes an overview of unemployment compensation eligibility, benefits, and procedures.

**11. Describe how the local WDB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with economic development activities carried out in the planning region and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.**

The regional workforce system is tailored to meet the needs of regional economies. Therefore, it also must be and is aligned with primary and secondary education, higher education, and economic development entities. This alignment is achieved primarily through relationship building, networking, and collaborative programming and services. Centergy and Grow North are the two WEDC-recognized regional economic development entities in North Central Wisconsin. NCWWDB staff serves on the Grow North board and acts as the primary connection to the public workforce development system. There have been multiple collaborative initiatives between NCWWDB and the regional economic development entities, including entrepreneurial development, regional labor market analysis and dissemination, and a Rapid Community Response Team for major dislocation events. NCWWDB is an active partner in various initiatives of local chambers of commerce and county economic development corporations, primarily focusing on gathering of business intelligence, development of a talent pipeline, and retention of young adults. NCWWDB's ITA and Business Track policies are currently in place for participants who want to pursue entrepreneurial training.

**12. Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that:**

- **Identifies the programs that are included in that system; and**
- **Describe strategies used by the local WDB to engage with the required WIOA partners to provide core service alignment and to increase awareness of career pathways and the critical role that workforce development plays in ensuring that everyone has access to educational and career pathways that result in meaningful employment.**

The foundation of the regional workforce development system is the four core WIOA programs (Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Title II Adult Education and Literacy programs; Title III Wagner-Peyser program; and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program). Other required and optional partners contribute to the depth and breadth of available services. Of note, the TANF operator is co-located in the three primary job centers and one of the affiliate sites in the region. The Adult Basic Education partner is embedded at the three primary job centers as well. Partners develop job center policies and procedures, participate in regular staff and managers' meetings, collaborate in the development and implementation of partner training, and represent the primary foundation

of the one-stop system. Through the one-stop system, these partner programs and their service providers ensure that businesses and job seekers — a shared client base across the multiple programs identified above — have access to information and services that meets labor demands in the region.

In addition, NCWWDB engages the workforce partners through a variety of regularly scheduled meetings throughout the year. Whether it is with job center managers on a monthly basis, quarterly meetings with the technical college partners or various community committees, NCWWDB freely shares projects related to employment and training initiatives. The three employer-led alliances play an important role in resource alignment and the development of career pathways. NCWWDB-led business services team also plays a key role in sharing employment opportunities in all the core programs. Information that is gathered from employer visits is shared with job center partners so that all job seekers have access to employment opportunities.

**13. Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area, in particular:**

- a. Identify the locations of the comprehensive physical one-stop center(s) (at least one) within the local area, and list the location(s) of networked affiliate sites, both physical and electronically linked, such as libraries.**

Marathon County Job Center (Comprehensive)  
364 Grand Ave  
Wausau, WI 54403

Wisconsin Rapids Job Center (Comprehensive)  
320 W Grand Ave Ste 102  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

Northern Advantage Job Center (Comprehensive)  
51-A N Brown St  
Rhineland WI 54501

Adams County Job Center (Affiliate)  
401 N Main St  
Adams, WI 53910

Marshfield Job Center (Affiliate)  
211 East Second St, Suite 123  
Marshfield, WI 54449

- b. Identify key strategies for integrating the core programs, as well as all required partner programs (Title I, Job Corps, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker, Native American, YouthBuild, Title II, Title IV, Title V, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, Unemployment Compensation, Reentry Employment Opportunities, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education, Community Services Block Grant, Department of Housing and Urban Development employment and training programs FSET, and TANF), within the local one-stop system of comprehensive and affiliate offices.**

The monthly Job Center manager meetings are used as a vehicle to ensure quality services and address any issues that may arise. Managers of the WIOA core programs and other co-located Job Center partners are represented at the monthly meetings. The North Central Wisconsin One Stop Operator Consortium convene up to four meetings per year, which includes an annual meeting were all required partner programs are invited to attend.

**c. Describe the roles and resource contributions of each of the one-stop partners.**

The roles and resource contributions of each one-stop partner is defined in the local MOU, which is updated annually. The local MOU information can be accessed by the public on the NCWWDB website.

**d. Describe how the local WDB will facilitate meaningful access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means, and other innovative strategies and initiatives to streamline and enhance services, as well as increase access.**

WDA 6 has two affiliate job center access sites located in more remote areas of the region. These access sites include Adams and Marshfield. The two sites offer services to employers and job seekers. These affiliate sites provide access to basic career services such as referrals to one-stop partners, online registrations and job search through JCW, and access to online UI information. One-stop system partners also provide itinerant services at these locations.

As part of an overall effort to improve the computer literacy of job seekers, NCWWDB provided computer labs in three of the Job Centers. These computers are available to job seekers and program participants for partner-led computer skills workshops and Northstar assessments, and as additional capacity for JCW job searches. As the services in the job centers evolve, and with the relocation of the Marathon County Job Center, computer labs and technology upgrades are being considered.

NCWWDB also participated in the LAWDS Grant that was designed to improve local and regional economic vitality by increasing access to workforce resources through a collaborative library and workforce system model. The project educates librarians across the state through training delivered by local workforce professionals, connects librarians with workforce expertise through deeper partnerships, and implements a shared online portal to disseminate a common workforce services curriculum. The WDA 6 region overlaps with three Wisconsin library Systems: Northern Waters library Service, Wisconsin Valley Library Service, and South Central Library System. NCWWDB staff have actively participated in the Project Advisory Council (PAC) and worked to build stronger relationships and communication with the three library systems in our region.

**e. Identify the types of assessments and assessment tools that will be utilized within the one-stop delivery system and how these assessments will be coordinated across participating programs to avoid duplication of effort and multiple assessments of customers being served by more than one partner program.**

NCWWDB's contracted provider will use a variety of tools to assess all areas including the WIOA application, ASSET assessment screens, WisCareers, Career Cruising, Career Locker, Interest Profiler, or Skills Explorer. NCWWDB's contracted provider for the Youth Program will continue to utilize TABE as the main tool. In some instances, Accuplacer may supplement the assessment phase. TABE will continue to be the preferred assessment in the Youth Program. However, in extraordinary circumstances other assessment tools, such as the AAB, may be used for the youth objective assessment.

All three program areas of Title I make every effort to co-enroll participants when it is in the best interest of the individual. When co-enrollment occurs every effort is made to coordinate services across participating programs to avoid duplication of effort.

**f. Describe strategies that will be utilized in the one-stop system to improve accessibility and services for limited English proficient individuals/English Language Learners.**

Based on NCWWDB's four-factor analysis, it has determined that WDA 6 region does not meet the threshold to require translation into any other languages. However, NCWWDB does post notices in multiple languages when received. Further, NCWWDB conspicuously post the "I Speak" poster in order to assist non-English speakers in communicating their preferred language so that translation services may be obtained to facilitate adequate service to the non-English speaker.

**g. Provide a description of how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with Section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities**

NCWWDB, the One Stop Operator, and job center partners will continue to comply with the physical and programmatic accessibility requirements of Section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Job center basic services are available to all populations. There are dedicated resource room staff and cross-trained reception staff in the resource rooms. All programs provide equal access to any interested job seeker. Through the partners housed in the job center, information and services are provided to people with disabilities, older workers, offenders, minorities, etc. Job Service currently has staffs that speak Hmong and is available with reasonable notice. Other languages are provided through community contacts or vendors. The job center managers will use the monthly meeting structure facilitated by NCWWDB staff to incorporate all relevant feedback from job seekers, service providers, and community-based organizations. Annual staff training events will include additional opportunities to ensure compliance.

The WIOA Participant Grievance Procedure is used for any grievance related to WIOA programs and the American's with Disabilities Act Title II and Section 504. The WIOA procedure identifies the Complaint Coordinator as the staff person at each job center location where complaints can be filed with. The Complaint Coordinator then refers the

complaint to the current agency and person in charge of that specific program. The WIOA Participant Grievance Procedure states that complaints must be filed in writing within one year after the alleged act and outlines the timeline or such review and response. The WIOA Participant Grievance Procedure also identifies the NCWWDB Executive Director as an individual that a complaint can be filed with if the first process fails to resolve the matter to the participant's satisfaction. The Job Center Complaint Procedure is used for job seekers who are dissatisfied with the services or information provided by the job center staff. The procedure identifies the Complaint Coordinator contact at each Job Center location. The Job Center Complaint Procedure also outlines a timeline that the Complaint Coordinator must follow up with the individual making the complaint.

- h. Provide a description of how the local WDB will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers.**

NCWWDB conducts ongoing monitoring of its contracted providers through several methods. NCWWDB's Workforce Services Director organizes quarterly meetings and participant file reviews throughout the program year. The Business Services Director reviews provider involvement in employer activities and attendance at monthly meetings. The Fiscal Director closely monitors expenditure requirements and monthly invoices. Together, the Workforce Services Director, Business Services Director and Fiscal Director conduct a coordinated mid-year review utilizing DWD's current file review guides, NCWWDB's Program Expectation and Grant Agreement documents. NCWWDB's Fiscal Director also conducts an onsite sampling of fiscal practices. The team then develops a mid-year review report that is shared with the Executive Committee. The review process is used to determine if a contract renewal is warranted. In addition, the team also reviews WIOA performance measures to determine technical assistance and program compliance.

- i. Provide a description of how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G), including, if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided. Include any ITA limitations established by local WDB policies and how they are implemented in a manner that does not undermine WIOA's requirement that training services are provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of an ETP. Also describe any exceptions to ITA limitations that are provided for individual cases if included in WDB local policy.**

For WIOA-enrolled participants who have been determined eligible for training services, the primary method of providing training services will be through the establishment of an Individual Training Account utilizing the state-maintained Eligible Training Provider List. The ETPL provides eligible participants with a market-like choice of training programs. NCWWDB's ITA policies set a training cap of \$10,000 per individual, and limit the training options to "in-demand" occupations determined by labor market information provided by the Department of Workforce Development. Applicants/Participants are strongly advised

to complete training within the shortest time period possible. Technical Colleges, Proprietary Schools, and 4-Year Colleges and Universities: Participants are expected to complete within 104 training weeks. For programs that run longer or a participants' circumstances warrant a longer duration are allowable upon a two tiered review. NCWWDB's policies fall within the policies set forth by DWD.

- j. Describe how the local area will conduct outreach to individuals with barriers to employment. Include strategies for engagement with the local WDB and Youth Council/committee to increase the awareness of the services offered to returning veterans, out-of-school youth, individuals with disabilities, long-term unemployed, and other targeted groups. What additional strategies will be utilized to reach out to these groups? What are the objectives and goals for this effort?**

As part of the WIOA recruitment plan and efforts, NCWWDB's staff and contracted providers reach out to the community entities that serve those with barriers to employment. For example, outreach has been made to the ABE departments of the three technical colleges in the WDA. In addition, outreach and collaboration is made to local Community Action agencies, literacy councils, and TANF/W-2 providers.

NCWWDB is entering its eleventh year of contracting with the Department of Corrections for the Windows to Work Reentry Program. NCWWDB's Reentry Program is focused in two county jails, as well as accepting transfers from State Prisons back into the region. The Windows to Work Reentry Coach also serves as a regional expert in working with the offender population. The Reentry Coach is included in the Business Services Team, and facilitates the Job Center Offender Workgroup. Both workgroups are made up of members from the core WIOA programs and other job center partners. When appropriate, participants are co-enrolled to take full advantage of Title I services.

NCWWDB and its Title I contracted providers are also committed to serving Veterans and their families with quality workforce services. Every effort is made to reach out to this population for WIOA recruitment, training opportunities, and job center events. In addition, Veteran staff is involved in team meetings, manager meetings, and the Business Solutions Team. Every effort is made to coordinate services and funding, when warranted. When opportunities and/or events are planned, outreach is also made to the nine County Veteran Officers (CVOs).

NCWWDB's strategic vision and goals are designed to meet employers' workforce needs in the region by engaging the emerging, present and past workforce (including those with barriers to employment) in innovative ways. The strategic plan adopted by NCWWDB in 2020 provides direction to the Board for the next four years. The mission, core values, and vision will guide its actions. The strategic themes and related strategic initiatives set the foundation for its key actions and guides allocation of resources. The key actions for each strategic initiative establish targets and benchmarks for success. While the strategic plan provides long-term direction, the planning process remains dynamic in order to respond to the needs of a changing environment.

**14. Provide a description of how the local WDB will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary**

**education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.**

NCWWDB has a strong relationship with its three technical colleges. NCWWDB staffs facilitate meetings, typically held three times a year, with technical college staff, its contracted providers and other job center partners to discuss services and programs. During these meetings, local programming is discussed.

In addition, representatives from secondary and postsecondary education programs serve on the WDB. This representation allows for coordination of strategies and enhanced services.

**15. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. In particular, identify how the local area will expand services to dislocated workers utilizing all sources of formula and discretionary funds targeted to the dislocated worker population.**

NCWWDB's Adult and Dislocated Worker programs have a variety of employment and training activities available. The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs offer a variety of basic and individualized career services starting with informational workshops, small group and specialized one-on-one sessions. Typically, career services are provided in the area job centers. On occasion some services may be provided in a local community library or virtually, when warranted. Under Title I, the provision of career services is built into the Adult and Dislocated Worker contracts of the sub grantees. However, career services are also provided by other one stop partners, and many times co-facilitated. Career Planners can also provide participants with quality labor market data and wage analysis to assist in employment and/or training decisions.

In addition to the traditional training options available through the technical college system, NCWWDB works with its local technical colleges to create short-term training opportunities based on input from its sector partnerships. Some of these short-term training opportunities have been designated as pre-apprenticeship programs. Pre-apprenticeship programs bridge a gap, helping to give participants the hard and soft skills needed to gain admission into Registered Apprenticeship or related occupational advancement. These pre-apprenticeship options will provide exposure to a wide variety of high skill, high wage careers, and enabling participants to understand the workforce demands in a myriad of industries, learn the educational and vocational skills needed for entry, and address any deficits that may hinder employment success.

NCWWDB has two specific policies in place to maximize services for both business customers and individual customers: Customized Training and On-the-Job Training (OJT). The policy and procedure most utilized is the OJT policy and procedure. NCWWDB, its contracted service providers, and Business Solutions Team will continue to promote and cultivate these opportunities under WIOA.

NCWWDB has a strong history of utilizing formula funds for dislocated workers in the region. With dislocations of 25 or more, NCWWDB, and its contracted provider, work together to request Rapid Response Grants from DWD. As the dislocation activities progress, NCWWDB also requests Additional Assistance grants from DWD to provide training services to reemploy

participants. NCWWDB also has a strong history of working with DWD in pursuing National Dislocated Worker Grants from the Department of Labor.

**16. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities. In addition, indicate how services to out-of-school youth will be expanded and enhanced to incorporate additional work-based learning opportunities.**

WIOA Career Planners work closely with the area high schools, alternative schools, technical colleges, and ABE agencies to assist youth in the attainment of education. Per the Individual Service Strategy, support services and incentives are used to assist and motivate youth. The basic and individualized career services will be made available to young adults, as appropriate and according to the Individualized Service Strategy (ISS). NCWWDB, its contracted providers, and WIOA partners will implement activities to meet the 14 required program elements. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the local school districts will continue to be collaborative partners while providing services to young individuals with disabilities. NCWWDB continues to work closely with DVR as a service provider of a summer youth employment program, called LifeWork\$. The LifeWork\$ program will be a model to improve and expand upon to prepare youth with disabilities for the workforce and independent living. NCWWDB also works closely with the DVR in creating a seamless referral system. With a greater emphasis on serving out-of-school youth in Title I, creating a strong, seamless transition for DVR in-school youth is a win-win situation for youth with disabilities.

NCWWDB has adopted strategies to develop and retain a pipeline of talent. Those strategies include a stronger connection of the Business Solutions Team, the employer alliances, and economic development partners to the 33 public school districts in WDA#6. NCWWDB has two strong sector partnerships - CWIMMA (Central Wisconsin Metal Manufacturer's Alliance) and CWITA (Central Wisconsin Information Technology Alliance). Both are designed to be employer-led alliances and are supportive of work-based learning opportunities.

The Board has also been assisting DWD in developing effective linkages between existing youth apprenticeship opportunities and current and new adult apprenticeship opportunities. NCWWDB will continue to build upon its relationship with the four providers of youth apprenticeships in the region.

**17. Provide the local area's definitions of the "requires additional assistance" eligibility criterion for:**

- a. **An in-school youth who requires additional assistance to complete and educational program or to secure or hold employment demonstrates one of the following criteria:**
  - Has a parent or guardian who has not graduated from high school
  - Demonstrates "at risk" traits based on a qualified, professional assessment or referral
  - Immediate family member with a mental health diagnosis
  - Faces transportation barriers
  - Refugee/immigrant or has a parent who has immigrant or refugee status

- One or more grade levels behind
- Suspended from school in the past 3 months
- Fired from a job in the last six calendar months
- Being raised by someone other than biological parent
- Child of a parent offender
- Gang affiliation
- Substance abuse, current or past
- Family history of chronic\* unemployment
- Victim/witness of domestic violence or other abuse

**b. An out of school youth who requires additional assistance to complete and educational program or to secure or hold employment demonstrates one of the following criteria:**

- Demonstrates “at risk” traits based on a qualified, professional assessment, referral or self-referral
- Faces transportation barriers
- Refugee/immigrant or has a parent who has immigrant or refugee status
- Is the primary caretaker of or provider for member of his/her immediately family (i.e. sibling, parent, grandparent, etc.)
- Has not worked for the same employer for longer than 6 months in the two years prior to eligibility determination
- Has not successfully completed occupational skills training or has not received a credential in occupational skills training
- Fired from a job in the last six calendar months
- Raised by someone other than biological parent
- Child of a parent offender
- Expulsion from school
- Gang affiliation
- Substance abuse, current or past
- Family history of chronic\* unemployment
- Victim/witness of domestic violence or other abuse
- First generation high school graduate

\*Chronic is defined as unemployed for 27 weeks (approx. 6 months) or longer

**18. Provide a description of how the local WDB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under title II in the local area, including a description of how the local WDB will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of Section 107(d)(11) and Section 232, the review of local applications submitted under Title II.**

NCWWDB has a strong relationship with its three technical colleges. NCWWDB staffs have facilitated meetings, typically held three times a year, with technical college staff, its contracted providers and other job center partners to discuss services and programs for many years. Two of the area technical colleges are co-located in the job centers and the third holds regular office hours at their local job center. ABE staff is onsite for ABE referrals and services, and involved in the digital literacy services provided in the job center. The ABE front line staffs are active

member of the job center work teams and are assisting in Title I recruitment. NCWWDB also has a working relationship with two area Literacy Councils. Title I providers are informed about services and events through direct contacts, advisory councils, and newsletters.

Through the eligibility and initial assessment, releases of information are obtained from participants who are involved with other services. Consultation and/or joint meetings are arranged to coordinate services. If additional service needs are identified, referrals are made on behalf of the participant. NCWWDB looks forward to the work DWD is currently doing to create a shared MIS system for the core titles. NCWWDB believes this will assist in identifying those co-enrolled participants up front to ensure quality services without duplication.

- 19. Describe how executed cooperative agreements and MOU(s) define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local One-Stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (WIOA section 107(d)(11)] between the local Workforce Development Board (WDB) or other local entities (WIOA section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 721(a)(11)(B)) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, or other relevant entities (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 720 et seq.)), with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.**

The NCWWDB carries out workforce activities for both job seekers and employers by partnering locally through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to implement core and partner programs. The MOU describes the operation of the one-stop delivery system, sharing and allocation of costs among one-stop partners in accordance with WIOA law, WIOA regulations and the Federal Cost Principles contained in the Uniform Administrative Requirements and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. The MOU include specific logistical agreements for processing interagency referrals, coordinating services and expenditures, cross training, and resolving disputes.

- 20. Provide a description of how the local WDB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.**

WIOA Title 1 Career Planners refer participants, when appropriate, to emergency funds and other community resources that assist with transportation challenges, housing insecurity, food insecurity, daycare needs, and assist in navigating community and employer supports to ensure that they achieve their educational and employment goals. Career Planners use the local policy to guide their provision of appropriate supportive services. At the Marathon County Job Center, Wheels to Work Program is co-located, which is a private-public transportation assistance program.

- 21. Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.**

For co-located partners there are monthly manager meetings held to contribute to the planning and implementation efforts for the WDA 6 region. Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, Migrant/Seasonal, Vets, and TANF/W-2 programs are co-located at some of the job centers within the WDA 6 region. Job Center managers meet monthly to discuss programming and services in each area. Information is then shared with front line staff who also meets as a team to carry out services. Team meetings, business services meetings, and shared workshop calendars improve planning and reduce duplication of services.

**22. Identify the administrative entity and/or fiscal agent responsible for the disbursement of Title I funds in the local area, as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor.**

NCWWDB is the administrative entity and fiscal agent responsible for the disbursement of Title I funds. The funds are approved and disbursed under the guidance of the CEO Consortium, along with ongoing monitoring by the Executive Committee of NCWWDB.

**23. Describe the competitive process used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for the WIOA Title I activities.**

Competitive proposals, via a defined Request for Proposal (RFP) process, are NCWWDB's established method of procuring services in the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker funding streams under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). Three-year awards (one competitive year followed by two years of non-competitive renewal) are the common practice of the Board contingent upon satisfactory performance, both program and fiscal, during the prior year. A mid-year review and assessment of contracted provider performance will be conducted by the NCWWDB staff. Based on that assessment, the Executive Director will make a recommendation to the Executive Committee for any non-competitive (renewal) RFPs.

**24. Provide a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to section 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area.**

NCWWDB and the CEO Consortium will work together with DWD to negotiate performance measures for the coming program years. Negotiations will be based on the four primary measures within the Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, as well as employer services. The negotiations will be based on current performance, plus a review of current economic conditions and participant characteristics. In addition, continuous improvement will be considered.

The four primary measures include:

- Unsubsidized employment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters after program exit
- Median Earnings
- Credential Attainment
- Measureable Skills Gain

Employer Services

Eligible providers under subtitle B are monitored on an ongoing basis using the information obtained from the ETPL. NCWWDB will utilize information from the state-maintained ETPL, state-initiated report card, as well as information from participants and employment outcomes.

The One-Stop Operator (OSO) has oversight and supports the continuous improvement of the one-stop delivery system. NCWWDB monitors the performance of the OSO on an annual basis.

**25. Provide a description of the actions the local WDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, including but not limited to:**

- **Local WDB Roles: Identify the role of the Local WDB and Youth Council/Committee in supporting Business Services, Sector Partnerships, Career Pathways, and Work Based Learning. What actions will be taken to ensure that these areas are a priority for the local area? What actions and commitments will be made of the local WDB or Youth Council/Committee members (in particular those representing business) to support these initiatives?**

Business Services and other workforce development activities are reported to the Board during the quarterly meetings. Members of the WDB and any workgroups created have the opportunity to provide feedback, support and suggestions for the initiatives as adopted in the strategic plan. When necessary, the local WDB has the authority to create ad hoc workgroups for the strategic goals. A Youth workgroup will be created to guide and support the WIOA Youth initiatives.

- **Local WDB Participation: Describe how the local WDB will make businesses in the local area aware of opportunities to participate on the local WDB to ensure representation of industry sectors with the greatest labor force demand. Describe how the local WDB will maintain a minimum of at least 51% of businesses as active members and participants on the local WDB.**

The NCWWDB membership roster is available for all to review. Board membership is also included as an agenda item at the quarterly meetings. New members are encouraged to provide information about themselves and their industry, while other members introduce themselves and their industries. In past meetings, members have presented on their business and/or innovative approaches to workforce development issues.

The CEO Consortium is notified when a vacancy occurs. The CEOs discuss possible replacements based on the driver industries in the region. They make recommendations on possible members for the Executive Director to follow up on. The WDB chart is used to maintain the 51% business representation requirement.

**26. Describe the process used by the local WDB to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the local plan, prior to submission of the plan.**

There was a review of the guidelines, followed by a review of the current plan. NCWWDB previously worked with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to provide an in-depth analysis of the local labor market information. NCWWDB worked with NCWRPC

again for this plan. After discussion with the CEOs and Board members, NCWWDB staff started drafting the plan. Incorporated into the local plan was NCWWDB's newly adopted strategic plan and goals.

Once it was available for public comment, the Plan is posted on NCWWDB's website with instructions on how to submit comments. All Board members and CEOs were notified by email. Public notice was also posted in area newspapers with instructions to the website. During the 30 day review and comment period, NCWWDB staff is available by telephone for a one day "public hearing" where members of the public could call regarding the plan. All comments made through the NCWWDB's website and/or calls are recorded. Any comments expressing disagreement with the plan will be included with the Local Plan when submitted to DWD.