

Kings County Workforce Development Board

2023 Modification to the Program Year 2021 – 2024 Local Plan



America's **JobCenter**
of California™

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I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and guidance published by California Workforce Development Board and Employment Development Department, the Kings County Workforce Development Board (WDB) developed a four-year Local Plan covering program years 2021-24. Upon its approval by state officials representing the Governor, the plan became effective for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025. This update to the PY 21-24 Local Plan constitutes its WIOA-required biennial modification. Following the approval of this modification by state representatives, it will become the official, active version of the Plan beginning on July 1, 2023 and remaining in effect through June 30, 2025.

For reference, it should be noted that Kings County WDB, the Kings County Job Training Office (JTO), and America's Job Center of California (AJCC) are used interchangeably throughout this Plan to describe the entity operating workforce development services under Title I of WIOA.

Vision for the PY 21-24 Local Plan

During the process of developing the original version of the Plan, JTO leadership invited system stakeholders to participate in discussions regarding workforce and labor market priorities. As a result of these discussions, the WDB committed to pursue four bold initiatives over the four-year period covered by its PY 2021-24 Local Plan. These initiatives address the following critical workforce development issues in Kings County. This version of the Plan includes a progress update for each of the four priorities.

Address The Digital Divide: The partners will develop a plan that commits the WDB and local workforce system stakeholders to addressing the digital divide in Kings County. Far too many job seekers in the County have limited access to the internet, technology devices, and digital skills, all of which limits their access to education and workforce development services that can increase their labor market opportunities. The partners will engage state agencies, county government, municipalities, businesses, philanthropy, and community-based agencies in developing and executing the plan.

Progress Update: Finalization of a plan is still pending. Internally, Kings County WDB and JTO will address digital access issues by ensuring the organization continues to keep pace with technology enhancements, including equipment and system upgrades, to ensure information can be relayed and communicated in the fastest way possible. Plans include use of the internet based Unite Us referral system. JTO is part of the Unite Us network and, therefore, can provide and receive referrals through the system. JTO continues to promote the system to partner agencies, highlighting its benefits with regard to communication and tracking of referrals and services. JTO has also become a champion of “*Get Connected! California*” to support the California Broadband Council's “call to action” to get 90% of all eligible low-income households connected to high-speed Internet by 2024. To reach this goal, JTO has been sharing information on the benefits of

the Affordable Connectivity Program with partners and the community. JTO's goal is to become a host site to assist County residents in applying for free internet. Larger issues affecting digital access will continue to be a priority for JTO and for Kings County.

Build a Fully Functioning Virtual Equivalent to the Brick and Mortar AJCC: JTO will develop a blueprint for the expansion of virtual service delivery, rather than leaving development of future online services to random or reactive circumstances. The ultimate goal of this effort will be the availability of a virtual and/or online equivalent to every in-person service that is offered by the AJCC. Services will include those provided to both job seekers and businesses.

Progress Update: As stated, JTO continues to promote the use of the Unite Us referral system. Also, a planned update to the JTO website will enable customers to utilize the site for orientation and to request services. Concurrent with these efforts, JTO is researching online service delivery "best practices" of other local boards and system partners. Additional planning regarding expansion of JTO's virtual service delivery capacity is on-going.

Meet the Workforce Needs of Underserved Populations: The WDB and system partners will develop a comprehensive plan to more effectively recruit underserved and vulnerable populations. Such a plan will recognize the barriers and capabilities of groups that have been traditionally underserved by the workforce system and identify services strategies that align with the unique characteristics of each target group.

Progress Update: While completion of a formal plan is pending, JTO continues to collaborate with organizations serving underserved and vulnerable populations. A group with which significant strides have been made is justice-involved individuals, including adults and youth who are incarcerated or have been incarcerated. JTO has established a specialized unit to address the service needs of this population. Three staff are stationed at the Kings County Probation Department assisting adults and youth with employment services, including resume writing, job search, interviewing skills, use of the Microsoft Office suite of products, earning typing certificates, applying for a California Driver's License, and more. As JTO leadership and partners work toward development of a plan to improve service delivery for various groups within the county, the focus will be on the identification, development and implementation of strategies to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment.

Identify Resources to Enable Job Seekers to Participate in Career Services and Training: The WDB and system partners will develop a plan for leveraging non-core program resources to address the most common supportive services needs of Kings County job seekers, including, at a minimum, childcare and transportation. Lack of access to transportation, childcare, and other essential services affects not only the ability of Kings County residents to participate in training and other workforce services, but the likelihood of their success on the job and their opportunities to pursue a career path that will lead to self-sufficiency.

Progress Update: The finalization of this plan is pending. However, through the engagement of core, required, and other partners, JTO will lead efforts to capture and summarize the many forms of support that are available through partner programs. This information will help to reveal where the greatest gaps exist and will enable the partners to concentrate their efforts on areas of greatest need.

Section V of this plan summarizes these and other issues, strategies, and approaches, along with key considerations that Kings County WDB and the system partners originally committed to examine over the course of this plan. In addition, Section V includes recommendations secured through a community and stakeholder engagement process that was conducted during the development of the Plan's 2023 biennial modification.

Developing Kings County WDB's PY 2021-24 Four-Year Plan

JTO management held a series of community and stakeholder forums to secure input on key issues concerning the content and focus of the original Local Plan. These sessions are described in Appendix 1 to this Plan. Plan development also entailed a review of partnerships, services, and systems along with an assessment of where improvements can be made. Completing the original plan took approximately four months, after which it was made available for public review and comment, prior to being forwarded to the California Workforce Development Board for review. The process of updating the plan was similar to that used to develop the original PY 21-24 Plan, and incorporated additional community input. Information regarding stakeholder engagement conducted in support of the 2023 Biennial Modification to the PY 21-24 Local Plan is summarized in Attachment 1.

Impact of COVID-19 on The PY 2021-24 Plan

Every aspect of developing the PY 2021-24 Kings County WDB Local Plan was influenced by the onset on COVID-19, the ensuing public health crisis, and the myriad effects of the pandemic on businesses, schools, government operations, and the local workforce development delivery system. While the stakeholders met, discussions were held, priorities were identified, and a new four-year plan was developed, the influence of the pandemic on the planning process is undeniable, as its shaped stakeholders' views about the economy, the workforce, training, and virtually every aspect of the workforce system.

This 2023 update to the Local Plan reflects recovery from the pandemic's impacts on the economy and communities that has occurred to date and anticipates additional forward movement over the remaining period of the PY 21-24 Local Plan.

II. WIOA CORE AND REQUIRED PARTNER COORDINATION

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

Coordination with AJCC Partners and WIOA Memorandum of Understanding

Kings County WDB has built strong and effective relationships with state and local agencies that represent the one-stop partner programs. Over the next four years, the WDB looks forward to further enhancing coordination with each of the workforce system partners.

Overview of Local One-Stop System Partners

Following is a summary of the local/regional organizations representing the federal one-stop partner programs with which the Kings County WDB has developed MOUs.

Federal Partner Programs	MOU Partner
WIOA Title I Adult WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker WIOA Title I Youth	Kings County Workforce Development Board
WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy	Kings County Office of Education Sequoias Adult Education Consortium West Hills College Adult Education Consortium Learn4Life
WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser	Employment Development Department (EDD)
WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
Carl Perkins Career Technical Education	College of Sequoias West Hills College Lemoore Kings County Office of Education
Older Americans Act Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Community Service Employment and Training (CSET)
Job Corps	Job Corps (San Jose Center)
Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)	California Indian Manpower Consortium

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)	Proteus, Inc.
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	Employment Development Department
Youth Build	<i>Not applicable. There is no Youth Build program in the county.</i>
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Employment Development Department
Community Services Block Grant	Kings Community Action Organization
Housing and Urban Development E&T	Kings County Housing Authority
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Employment Development Department
Second Chance Act	<i>Not applicable. There is no Second Chance program in the county.</i>
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CalWORKs	Kings County Human Services Agency

Memoranda of Understanding with System Partners

The MOU between the Kings County WDB and the WIOA-mandated partners contains the following key provisions.

Responsibility of AJCC Partners: AJCC/One-Stop Partners agree that the following reflect foundational tenets. The AJCC partners agree to:

- Participate in joint planning, plan development, and modification of activities offered by the partner to facilitate continuous partnership building; continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements; responsiveness to local and regional economic conditions, including employer needs; and participation in and adherence to common data collection and reporting needs, as required by law.
- Make agreed upon services available to customers through the one-stop delivery system.
- Participate in the design and operation of the one-stop system, consistent with the terms of the MOU and requirements of applicable law.
- Participate in capacity building and staff development activities to ensure all partners and staff are adequately cross trained on system services.

Funding of Services and Operating Costs: The partners agree to participate in the development of a cost-sharing agreement that identifies shared AJCC system costs. Such shared costs can be provided either in cash or through in-kind services. Actual costs of the system will be driven by the system designed by the partners. These costs could range from items such as rent and utilities for agencies with a physical presence at the AJCC, to a proportionate cost of developing and maintaining common informational portals for job seekers and employers.

Coordination with AJCC Partner Programs

The following information summarizes the ways in which Kings County WDB and the local workforce system collaborate with organizations managing the federally mandated one-stop partner programs.

WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs: The three formula-funded programs are administered by the Kings County WDB. Services are delivered at the comprehensive AJCC, which is housed within the County’s Job Training Office.

WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy: Kings County Office of Education, Sequoias Adult Education Consortium, and West Hills College Adult Education Consortium are WIOA Title II adult education and literacy grant recipients. Learn4Life is also a Title II grantee. Referrals are regularly made between the Title I and Title II programs and many participants are co-enrolled. When the California Department of Education requests applications for Adult Education Title II Education and Literacy Activities, Kings County WDB staff reviews applications to determine how they complement the Local Workforce Development Plan.

WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser: Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located in the AJCC. JTO staff works with EDD to coordinate marketing and outreach to UI claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services, and JTO participates in EDD’s RESEA workshops. EDD collaborates with JTO through its representatives’ participation on its Job Fair Committee and by referring businesses to EDD to post their job orders. EDD and JTO staff also collaborate on Rapid Response orientations for laid off workers.

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation: WIOA and DOR staff are cross-trained in the eligibility requirements for services that each offers in order to ensure appropriate referrals. Regular meetings are held to discuss and enhance the referral process and co-enrollments. DOR staff is available to provide technical assistance and training to AJCC and partner staff in disability awareness and use of competitive integrated employment. DOR and JTO are preparing to collaborate on the expansion of competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DOR staff are co-located at JTO.

Carl Perkins Career Technical Education: The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is a principal source of federal funding to states and discretionary grantees for the improvement of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs across the nation. The purpose of the Act is to develop more fully the academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs. The community colleges and the Office of Education are recipients of Perkins funding in Kings County.

Title V Older Americans Act: CSET operates the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) that serves Kings County residents. The program offers short-term pre-vocational services to eligible seniors who are 55+, low income, and have barriers to employment; and provides part-time, temporary on the job training through community service assignments at local nonprofits and government agencies. CSET representatives participate in the workforce system partner meetings led by JTO and have provided training on its program to JTO and partner staff.

Job Corps: Programs representatives conduct eligibility determination for Job Corps services. Their principal activity at the AJCC is to promote the Job Corps program to potential applicants, who are youth and young adults ages 16 to 24.

Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166): Kings County WDB collaborates with California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC) to provide referrals and co-enrollment opportunities for Indian and Native American job seekers, along with access to all WIOA and partner services available through the AJCC.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program (WIOA Section 167): JTO works closely with Proteus, Inc. which administers and operates the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) program in Kings County to ensure MSFW programs services are available for eligible agricultural workers and their families. Proteus staff visit the AJCC to provide assistance to their clients in using the resource area and to refer clients to WIOA Title I and other partner programs.

Jobs for Veterans State Grants: EDD administers this program and designated Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) Specialists support the AJCC to providing assistance to veterans seeking employment.

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

Community Services Block Grant: Kings Community Action Organization is a key partner in providing a wide range of support services to workforce system customers. The organization provides early childhood education programs, food and nutrition services, utilities assistance, housing support and more. JTO and the Kings Community Action Organization regularly refer customers to each other.

Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training Program: Kings County Housing Authority is a critical partner in providing both work experience and leveraged opportunities.

Unemployment Compensation: The Unemployment Insurance program is accessible to JTO customers by phone or via EDD's website. AJCC staff works with EDD to coordinate marketing and outreach to UI claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs: Kings County Human Services Agency assists individuals and families with welfare services. These services include but are not limited to Cash Assistance, Diversion Assistance, Medi-Cal Coverage, CalFresh, and Employment Services.

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

WIOA's emphasis on system partnerships, leveraging of resources, and customer-centered design have all contributed to an environment in which workforce development stakeholders are focused on identifying a broad range of resources to assist job seekers in meeting their education, training, employment, and career goals.

Participant Co-Enrollment and Co-Case Management with System Partners

For many years, JTO and other local system partners has been co-enrolling participants. Most frequently, the event driving co-enrollment across two or more programs is the identification of a participant having multiple barriers to employment and, therefore, demonstrating needs for multiple interventions. Some of the most common partners for co-enrollment across systems include local providers of TANF, Wagner-Peyser, Probation, and Child Support Services. DOR, local education agencies, migrant and seasonal farmworker programs are also strong candidates for having participants co-enrolled in WIOA or other programs. Due to the lack of a shared case management system among all workforce partners, communication between organizations serving common customers relies, after client approval, on verbal and written communication between staff from two or more organizations. Co-case management is most often seen among the workforce system partner programs that utilize the state CalJOBS system. These include the WIOA Title I programs, Wagner-Peyser, veterans' employment services, the TAA program, and the section 167 Farmworker Program. JTO anticipates that adoption of the Unite Us system by the partners will increase organizations' capacity in co-managing clients.

Technology Support for Co-Enrollment

WIOA and various other fund sources strongly encourage co-enrollment of customers to provide as many partner services as possible without duplication. As customers are co-enrolled, frequent communication and case management occur between partners. The local system partners have strong relationships and some staff have regularly scheduled hours at the AJCC. Referrals and co-enrollments between the two partners is documented in each agency's case management system. For WIOA, this occurs in CalJOBS and updates regarding cases are commonly shared, with an Authorization of Exchange of Information consent completed by the participant. As situations arise regarding a common customer, partners ensure all details are communicated and questions are addressed on a timely basis. When participants are co-enrolled in programs for which the partners use CalJOBS (e.g., TAA), co-case management is much easier and information sharing is facilitated by the system.

Improving Co-Enrollment Strategies

Co-enrollment and co-case management strategies are facilitated when staff from various programs are informed about the content and requirements of other workforce system programs. Kings County WDB has sponsored various cross-training sessions for partner staff to increase their understanding about all partner programs and to share expertise about the needs of various populations. JTO is committed to coordination of additional cross-training among the partners, to promote learning for new partners and new staff and to reinforce information among all organizations within the local workforce development delivery system. The more frontline staff know about partner programs, the greater the likelihood that they can make appropriate referrals that will lead to co-enrollment.

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

With our 1,392 square miles and population of just over 150,000 residents, Kings County is arguably, the smallest of the local workforce areas in the Central Valley. While more than a third of the population lives in Hanford, where JTO is located, outlying areas include Lemoore, Corcoran, Avenal, Armona, Stratford, and Kettleman City. Ensuring access for all county residents to workforce system services is a priority for the Kings County WDB. Both brick and mortar and virtual operations are key to meeting this objective.

Job Training Office/Comprehensive AJCC and Other Physical Locations

Although it is not large, the public transit system in Kings County is effective in moving people in and out of Hanford. JTO is located a short walking distance from the transit center. It is, therefore, not inconceivable for residents throughout the county to seek services at JTO, which functions as the comprehensive one-stop and the only AJCC in the county. The center is well equipped, offering a fully outfitted resource room with computers, internet access, and a wide range of resources that job seekers need to support their career planning and employment goals. JTO staff are also co-located at justice and probation facilities. For job seekers in remote communities, other options for in-person services are available. On a scheduled basis, JTO staff can travel to designated locations, such as West Hills College in Lemoore and Avenal Adult School, to conduct orientations or meet with prospective candidates. In addition, other partner locations throughout the county can serve as onramps to workforce programs. Applicants may be able to use computers, internet, phones, and other equipment at these sites to make contact with JTO and begin their process of learning about and receiving workforce services.

Delivering Services through Virtual Platforms and Web-Based Information

As stated above, Kings County WDB and JTO leadership have made significant developments in recent years in launching our e-file system, which enables remote communications, exchange of information, and participation in services. Effects of the pandemic on the ability to provide in-person services accelerated further development of

this system and the migration of many services (e.g., job readiness workshops and skills training) to web-based platforms. A byproduct of services being available on the web is that they are, at least in theory, more readily accessible to individuals living in remote corners of the county or blocks away from JTO. The WDB recognizes, however, that there is a profound digital divide in Kings County with many individuals lacking internet access, hardware, and technology skills to gain access to and effectively utilize virtual services.

Practices and procedures have been put in place so that customers can be provided all WIOA services remotely. These include career and training services, orientation, eligibility, assessment, enrollment, and case management. Services are provided through email, phone, and video communications with no in-person appointments. In addition to these services, necessary forms can be provided, discussed, and signed by customers and staff remotely by utilizing free software and apps on a client's personal cell phone.

Improving Service Delivery to Remote Communities

Addressing technology gaps experienced by many residents of Kings County will be a top priority for Kings County WDB and JTO leadership over the four-year period of this Local Plan. Improving access to web-based services is critical to every organization that is part of the local workforce system and many more agencies and programs that provide a host of services to county residents. The WDB will engage with state officials and work with county government to identify strategies to increase access. At the same time, developing a structured plan for making more in-person services available throughout the county is also essential. Such a plan will likely include designation of sites countywide as workforce system on ramps, where staff have sufficient training and information about WIOA and other programs to assist job seekers in accessing initial services.

Coordination of Workforce Activities and Support Services

The local board provides supportive services to customers enrolled in WIOA training to enable their participation in services, training activities, and employment. Supportive services are coordinated for individuals with demonstrated financial need. The provision of supportive services is based on an individual's assessment results, budget, and the availability of funds. Supportive services are identified to address barriers to employment such as limited English proficiency, limited exposure to work, insufficient skills development, lack of credentialing, and other employer-valued skills, experience and educational attainment. During the onboarding process, customers complete a career profile assessment, inquiring as to the need for training and supportive services required to successfully achieve employment goals. This assessment is discussed in detail with case management staff to ensure need and, subsequently, referrals to appropriate agencies. Prior to accessing WIOA funds for supportive services, staff ensures that there is no duplication of services with other programs or benefits that an individual may be receiving. As indicated, WIOA supportive services are only provided if need is determined and funds are available. In all cases, WIOA funds are expended only after it is determined other services and sources of support are not available.

Types of WIOA Supportive Services

Such services include items to meet a variety of needs, such as food, shelter, child care, counseling, utility payment assistance, tax preparation assistance, legal assistance and referrals to other services. Support services provided to WIOA-enrolled customers may also include a transportation allowance while in training, bus passes, extended unemployment insurance benefits for those enrolled in approved training, tools and equipment required for training, tools and clothing required for work, and other services, as appropriate and allowed through local policies. Such additional services may include funds for licensing fees; drug screening and background clearance applications; health, dental and vision needs; and moving expenses for dislocated workers with a bona fide job offer. Long-term and costly forms of support, such as childcare, are typically identified through referrals to local partner agencies.

Support Services Partners and Resources

JTO staff has established working relationships with Kings Area Rural Transit (KART), the Kings County Housing Authority, Kings Community Action Organization, the Kings County Human Services Agency, Champions Recovery Alternative Programs, the Department of Rehabilitation, and many other organizations that support persons in need of services to overcome barriers to participation in employment and training. There is an electronic community resource listing at 211, by phone, and 211Inteliful, online. These resources are updated by the Kings County United Way, with funding by service agencies in the area. Workforce system partners are cross-trained on various forms and sources of supportive services that are available throughout the community, including services from government and non-profit, faith-based, and other community providers.

Physical and Programmatic Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

Kings County WDB has implemented various strategies to ensure compliance with WIOA Section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition, JTO makes available technology, programs, and services that support job seekers with disabilities' effective use of the AJCC.

Compliance with WIOA Section 188 and ADA

All partners within the workforce development delivery system, including the OSO and partners co-located at the AJCC, fully comply with WIOA Section 188 (non-discrimination and equal opportunity) and applicable provisions of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. References to this requirement are included in all contracts and the MOU with all local workforce system partners. All enrolled participants sign a Grievance and Complaint Procedures form that informs them of steps they can take in the event they wish to file a complaint. Notices regarding non-discrimination and equal opportunity are also prominently displayed in the AJCC lobby for non-enrolled customers. Training on WIOA Section 188 is provided to all AJCC staff, include prohibiting discrimination against people

who apply to, participate in, work for, or come into contact with programs and activities of the workforce development system. Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act includes the definition of an individual with a disability, reasonable accommodations, undue hardship, retaliation against an individual, and medical inquiries.

JTO is aware of the difficulties individuals with disabilities may encounter when accessing one-stop services and staff is committed to ensuring individuals with disabilities have physical and programmatic access to all one-stop systems and services. DOR, which administers California's Vocational Rehabilitation program, is represented on the WDB and is a significant resource for the AJCC and the local workforce system in developing strategies to effectively serve individuals with disabilities. DOR staff also maintains scheduled office hours at the AJCC and assists in training AJCC staff regarding accessibility and accommodations needed for job seekers with disabilities. AJCC facilities are certified compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and offer TTY and other adaptive equipment. JTO's facility is located near major bus transportation routes, which allow for easy access. Staff is bilingual in English and Spanish and can translate as needed, while services in other languages are available when requested.

Resources for Job Seekers with Disabilities

As indicated, the AJCC complies with all mandates and notifications with regard to providing services and materials to individuals with disabilities. Technology which has been obtained and is available to individuals with disabilities includes TTY, ZOOM screen enhancement software (assists individuals who are visually impaired); Ubi Duo (deaf/hearing impaired communication device); and Dragon Natural Speaking Software (speech recognition technology). In addition, one-on-one assistance is provided to customers to support the use of the AJCC. Reasonable accommodations are available upon request.

Training to Increase System Effectiveness in Serving Individuals with Disabilities

As indicated, training on WIOA Section 188 is provided to all AJCC staff. Training occurs annually, documentation is provided, and signatures/verification are obtained to ensure validation of training provided for county employees. This information is housed with JTO's EO Officer. Moving forward, JTO intends to arrange for more training on topics such as best practices for serving individuals with disabilities. JTO leadership will collaborate with DOR to identify and secure such training.

III. STATE STRATEGIC PARTNER COORDINATION

In 2018, the State completed and published a biennial modification to California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan for Program Years 2016-19. Within this modification, the California Workforce Development Board identified several new strategic partnerships with state-level agencies and initiatives. Guidance issued by the State Board in 2018 to Local Boards regarding two-year modifications to their PY 17-20 Plans required that WDBs pursue these partnerships within their jurisdictions. In our 2019 modification to the Local Plan, Kings County WDB described these local level relationships, some of which were in an early stage of development. Following is a summary of the evolution of these strategic partnerships as well as approaches under consideration to further strengthen collaboration with local providers and programs.

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

In Kings County WDB's 2019 Biennial Modification to our PY 2017-20 Local Plan, we reported that Kings County's Human Services Agency (KCHSA) had not yet implemented a CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) Program. However, we were able to report that plans were under development at that time to launch a program.

Given the strong relationship between JTO and KCHSA, our Local Plan Modification expressed optimism that an effective partnership could be developed between WIOA Title I programs and a locally implemented CalFresh E & T program. Much of this confidence stems from our experience with KCHSA in offering paid work experience through the HSA-funded Subsidized Transitional Employment Program (STEP). As an earn and learn program, local residents receiving cash public assistance are matched with employment consistent with their experience and career goals and are paid an hourly wage while engaged at a worksite. JTO coordinates this program for HSA, providing additional resources to serve hundreds of County residents, who have significant barriers to employment. STEP has evolved into a program providing intensive co-case management between Human Services and the WIOA Title I program. JTO will examine opportunities to bring the strategy to our collaboration with the CalFresh E&T program

Implementing a CalFresh E&T Program using the California Bridge Academy Model

Under a third-party provider model, KCHSA contracted the Cal-Fresh Employment and Training Program to Reading and Beyond, a Fresno-based non-profit organization with extensive experience in operating CalFresh E&T programs using its California Bridge Academy model.

The goal of Reading and Beyond under the Bridge Academy model is to permanently lift families out of poverty. Bridge Academies are helping thousands of families exit poverty every year and are doing so while generating a positive return for taxpayers. The major innovation of the Bridge Academy comes from understanding that moving people out of poverty requires a holistic "family-up" approach, that incorporates integrated delivery of

the services needed to address the unique set of challenges faced by each family. Education and training are indispensable to the model, but additional support is necessary. Individualized family plans identify all interventions required to remove obstacles in the way of upward mobility. While it is families that must do the hard work of lifting themselves up, Reading and Beyond uses Career and Family Navigators to develop effective pathways and help build the self-confidence of participants to stay on course until they succeed. Reading and Beyond considers these pathways as bridges to self-reliance.

The use of the Bridge Academy model for CalFresh E & T programs has its roots in a national SNAP Employment and Training pilot program under which the Bridge Academy served 1,500 families over a three-year period at nine sites in Fresno County. The goals of the pilot program were to: enable at least 75% of participating families to increase income levels; enable at least 45% of participating families to achieve sustainable self-reliance; and produce a minimum return to taxpayers of \$3.75 for every taxpayer dollar invested. The Bridge Academy is now operating from several community-based sites in the San Joaquin Valley and elsewhere in California. Early outcomes for the program included:

- More than 80% of the primary wage-earners in enrolled families gain employment or attain material wage growth;
- More than 80% of them retain employment one year later; and
- About 30% achieve full self-reliance within just 18 months following their enrollment.

According to Reading and Beyond, these outcomes are obtained while generating a return of more than 5 to 1 for every taxpayer dollar expended on the program. The Bridge Academies' "ROI Calculator" was the first cost-benefit model in use in the nation that monetizes the social benefits of the interventions provided. The model uses standard economic discount rate techniques; cohort comparison analysis; publicly available data on the benefits of certain interventions; and reasoned assumptions about the causal effects of improved outcomes and how long impacts are expected to persist ("reasoned assumptions" are arrived at in consultation with program funders and program evaluators).

Moving Forward on CalFresh Employment and Training Program Collaboration

At the time the original PY 21-24 Local Plan was developed, representatives from Reading and Beyond and JTO staff had entered into initial discussions about opportunities to coordinate services. Early discourse centered on co-enrollment and providing services to common customers. Following the implementation of the Plan, JTO has received referrals from Reading and Beyond of CalFresh recipients needing vocational training or work-based learning opportunities.

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

In our 2019 Local Plan Modification, Kings County WDB described our long-standing relationship with Kings County Department of Child Support Services (KCDCSS). For more than 30 years, the two departments have worked together. The California Workforce Development Board's focus on local workforce systems strengthening relationships with Child Support Services to meet the employment needs of non-custodial parents (NCPs) has been a key driver for the WDB and DCSS to work toward building a stronger collaboration in Kings County.

Developing Coordinated Service Strategies with Child Support Services

Following initial planning, there has been significant progress in the workforce and child support systems working together to identify and serve qualifying non-custodial parents who are under court orders due to non-compliance with child support obligations. While a structured referral process has not yet been formalized, referrals are taking place. JTO staff encounter NCPs with enforcement orders and often become aware of their status due to their having had their drivers' licenses revoked. JTO staff contacts DCSS representatives to inform them of the NCPs participation in workforce services and requests that the individual's case be reevaluated based on participation in workforce services and plans to secure employment. Similarly, DCSS staff will refer NCPs to JTO that they believe are good candidates for skills training and job placement assistance.

The Job Training Office also collaborates with Kings Community Action Organization (KCAO). KCAO offers many supportive services, including assistance with utilities, childcare and food distribution to Kings County residents. This resource can provide valuable support to NCPs until they are working toward securing and becoming stable in employment.

Moving Forward on Child Support Services Collaboration

As indicated, JTO's partnership with Child Support Services is evolving. As of the development of the modification to the Local Plan, courts ordered referrals of payment delinquent non-custodial parents have been made to the WIOA Title I program. JTO and DCSS leadership are confident that this partnership will continue to make strides in coordinating training and employment services that will enable participants to gain well-paid employment, meet their child support obligations, and remain self-sufficient.

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

As Kings County WDB convened local stakeholders to support the development of the 2019 Modification to our Local Plan, JTO leadership and staff first became aware of the state-level blueprint for competitive integrated employment (CIE) that was crafted by and led to the formalization of a partnership among DOR, the California Department of Development Services (DDS) and the California Department of Education (CDE). An

agreement among the partners makes employment in an integrated setting at a competitive wage for individuals with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) its highest priority. We also learned at that time of the requirement that local agencies representing the state level partners develop agreements to meet CIE goals. State Workforce Board guidance indicated that local boards must connect to these partnerships to support CIE objectives.

Kings County WDB reported in our 2019 Modification that a Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) has not yet been executed, but that JTO was well prepared to work with the CIE partners based on our extensive experience collaborating with various local organizations that are part of the disability services community in Kings County.

Establishment of the Local Partnership Agreement

By May 2020, all required parties to the agreement had signed off on and executed the Local Partnership Agreement. The Tulare-Kings LPA represents the following core partners:

Local Education Agency Partners: Delano Joint Union High School District, Exeter Unified School District, Kings County Office of Education, Porterville Unified School District, Tulare County Office of Education, Tulare Joint Union High School District, Visalia Unified School District, and Woodlake Unified School District.

Department of Rehabilitation: DOR Visalia Branch Office

Regional Center: Central Valley Regional Center.

While state guidance calls for WDBs to coordinate with the core partners, the plan (unlike others throughout the state) does not specifically identify the local boards in either Tulare or Kings counties as community partners, nor does it define a specific role for the local boards or the workforce development delivery systems that they lead. Such details are emerging through ongoing dialog among core and community partners.

Current Collaboration

To date, one of the most positive results from the development of the local LPA has been the establishment of a workgroup, which has met virtually since the onset of the pandemic. While efforts are still underway to organize and structure the CIE initiative across the two counties represented by the LPA, there is agreement that the workforce development system, including the local boards, should play a central role in outreaching to businesses and communicating the features and benefits of CIE toward the goals of creating better employment opportunities for individuals with ID/DD.

Moving the Partners Forward to Achieve CIE Goals

Within Kings County, JTO collaborates with many local partners on efforts to increase and improve employment for persons with disabilities. These agencies include, but are not limited to Hanford Adult School, Kings County Economic Development Corporation, Kings Partnership for Prevention, Goodwill, and DOR. The Partnership for Prevention is a formidable partner, as it represents nearly a dozen organizations that together provide whole person care. As the LPA partners and JTO define our precise role in the CIE initiative, we envision leveraging the full capacity of our local disability services network to promote CIE within Kings County and develop a unified message regarding the unique value that individuals with ID/DD can bring to workplaces of all types and sizes.

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

Nearly twenty percent of Kings County residents are foreign-born and more than 55% are Hispanic or Latino. Through JTO's forty-year history of providing workforce development services to Kings County residents, English language learners (ELLs), immigrants and refugees have comprised a sizable portion of our customer base and we are sensitive to the unique needs of the community.

Address English Language Skills Training Needs

Limited English-speaking customers of the AJCC are assisted by staff that is bilingual in English and Spanish and help to ensure equal access to services. AJCC staff refers limited English customers to local English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) programs, including those provided by adult schools and ones offered by the WIOA 167 grantee (Proteus, Inc.) and Kings Community Action Organization, as appropriate. Due to AJCC staffs' knowledge of local employers, these customers are also referred to businesses known to hire persons with limited English proficiency when the career goals of the applicant match opportunities represented by the business. In all cases, limited English proficient applicants are encouraged to enroll in ESL classes to expand their employment options. Adult Schools continue to explore strategies to integrate ESL into Career Technical courses, as opposed to holding these classes separately. Kings County WDB staff will support efforts to develop and provide contextualized English language instruction.

Collaboration with the WIOA Section 167 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program

JTO has a long history of working cooperatively with Proteus, Inc., the WIOA Section 167 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program grantee serving Kings County. Proteus and Job Training Office staff have worked together to serve eligible Kings County residents since the mid-1970s. Proteus is a principal provider of employment and training for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The organization brings a wealth of other resources to the workforce system. Families and individuals in a multi-county area receive career services, ESL training, workforce development, youth services, community service

programs, energy services, foster care, and other services, particularly in the rural farm communities of the Central Valley. Proteus leadership has long served as members of the Kings County Workforce Development Board, helping to ensure program integration.

The Kings County AJCC provides universal access to all WIOA services and has a specific focus on the farmworker population through EDD's Migrant and Seasonal Worker outreach program staff, who are co-located at the center. AJCC services are provided to limited-English speaking individuals by bilingual staff.

Ongoing Efforts to Improve Services for ELLs and Immigrants

Since the publication of the 2019 Modification, JTO continues to review services and consider opportunities for improvement of referrals for English language learners. This has involved discussions at quarterly partner meetings, Workforce Development Board meetings, and with AJCC partner agencies including EDD, Proteus, adult education, the community colleges, CBOs, and private businesses. Since the implementation of the Local Plan, JTO has affiliated with and adopted the use of the web based UNITE US referral system, which improves the referral and information sharing process between JTO and other agencies which utilize the system. Additional information on the UNITE US system is provided in Section V of the modified PY 21-24 Local Plan.

IV. WIOA TITLE I COORDINATION

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

Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Digital Technology Skills

The Local Board and system partners, as expressed in our MOU, are committed to promoting effective use of technology to enhance service delivery, cross-training of staff, and competency development. Over the last several years, JTO has led efforts to increase staff's effectiveness in the use of workplace technology on several fronts. Accomplishments and future plans for training are highlighted below.

Training on JTO's Electronic Filing System

As described in previous sections, in 2019, JTO adopted an electronic filing (e-file) system and updates and improvements have occurred since implementation. All AJCC and many partner staff members have been trained in procedures for using the system, which addresses electronic delivery of various WIOA services, including, but not limited to orientation, eligibility, assessment, enrollment, and case management. This process has included extensive training in the use of CalJOBS.

Other Digital Skills Training

With the strict social distancing requirements that resulted from the pandemic, there was a critical need for digital technology skills that enable staff to participate in distance learning and virtual meetings. When it is determined that staff need additional training to update their technical skills and digital literacy, JTO management identifies resources which may include platforms such as LinkedIn Learning or courses offered by local education agencies, including West Hills College and Hanford Adult School. Training may also be provided in-house by experienced managers and staff.

As we implemented the new four-year plan, JTO has continued to work to identify established digital literacy and distance learning training to ensure staff develops competency in the use of software and online platforms necessary to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions. JTO periodically assesses the digital skills of all staff to ensure that every employee is keeping up to date with workplace skill requirements. After the Regional Organizer for the San Joaquin Valley RPU surveyed all local boards, including Kings County WDB, regarding staff training needs, JTO engaged staff and workforce system partner agencies in digital skills training, including training on the use of the UNITE US system.

Frontline Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Cultural Competency and Effectiveness in Working with Individuals and Groups that Have Been Exposed to Trauma
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Instruction touching on cultural competency and trauma are part of annual training provided to AJCC staff by the Kings County Job Training Office Equal Opportunity Officer. We recognize, however, that additional training is needed. The effects of the pandemic made clear the extreme vulnerability of many individuals served by the local workforce system. Training on cultural competency and on working with individuals affected by trauma is likely to improve staff's capacity to serve customers more effectively and address a broader range of participant and community needs.

Cultural Competence and Its Importance to the Workforce System

As we consider opportunities to expand training in this area, JTO management has developed a clearer understanding of cultural competency skills. Cultural competency is the ability of a person to effectively interact, work, and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds. Cultural background can include the beliefs, customs, and behaviors of people from various groups. Gaining cultural competence is a lifelong process of increasing self-awareness, developing social skills and behaviors around diversity, and gaining the ability to advocate for others. It goes beyond tolerance, which implies that one is simply willing to overlook differences. Instead, it includes recognizing and respecting diversity through our words and actions in all contexts. Learning more about other cultures and being aware of current events is often key in learning about various cultural groups' points of view. When working with people from different cultural backgrounds, it can be useful to learn about their culture's practices, values, and beliefs. For example, learning about the languages spoken in their communities, child-rearing practices, or religious traditions can help us understand and interact with individuals and groups of various backgrounds.

Given the importance of cultural competency and the complexity of topics associated with these skills, Kings County WDB leadership has worked with regional partners to identify training that will help all staff develop and put to use this knowledge to better serve customers. Since the implementation of the PY 21-24 Local Plan, JTO staff has participated in training on effectively serving vulnerable populations with an understanding of cultural identity and sensitivity.

Training for Staff on Working with Individuals Having Experienced Trauma

The experience of trauma has widespread impact on the lives of those we serve. Trauma can lead to or exacerbate mental illness, substance use, and physical health conditions. Even without fully realizing it, workforce system staff work every day with individuals that have experienced significant trauma. The impact of trauma is far reaching and affects every aspect of health. The pandemic has significantly increased the impact of trauma on job seekers. By implementing a trauma-informed approach to service delivery, staff can improve the effectiveness of services and the quality of participant

outcomes. Some JTO staff has participated in training on the effects of traumatic stress and these staff have brought this training back to other JTO team members.

Coordination of Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities

Kings County JTO has been providing Rapid Response services to displaced workers for more than 30 years. Working with state and local partners, JTO provides the following Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion services.

Layoff Aversion Activities

Since being introduced in the late 1980s as part of federal workforce initiatives designed to minimize the effects of layoffs on workers, Rapid Response services have grown to include services to prevent layoffs. The intent of layoff aversion, which is now considered by the WDB to be an integral part of Rapid Response, is to avert or reduce the duration of unemployment. JTO proactively addresses potential layoffs by fostering business relationships to understand industry trends and concerns. JTO identifies businesses deemed at-risk through one-on-one engagement with companies and information shared by partners, such as Kings County Economic Development Corporation and the Small Business Development Center. In addition, layoff aversion efforts rely on data from EDD's Labor Market information Division, Jobs EQ, and EconoVue, a commercial database that provides predictive indicators of potential downturn in economic activity. The intelligence gained from these interactions and data sources is used to collaborate with businesses to identify options to mitigate or eliminate the loss of jobs. Such strategies include referrals to resources able to support financing, incumbent worker training, and UI Work Sharing activities.

Rapid Response Services

The AJCC utilizes WARN notices, media sources, direct communications from businesses, and even word of mouth to identify when layoffs have occurred or are imminent. Upon formal notification or other news of a worker dislocation event, including a substantial number of layoffs or complete closure of a business, Kings County JTO's Rapid Response Team contacts company representatives to arrange Rapid Response workshops for affected workers. The Rapid Response Team, which is led by JTO and EDD staff, may provide these workshops in the workplace or at another agreed upon location. The workshops address Unemployment Insurance Benefits, Trade Readjustment Assistance, WIOA training and job services, and other resources and programs. Organizations such as training providers and consumer credit counselors are also be invited to present at the workshops, as appropriate. In cases where Layoff Aversion and Rapid Response will have a regional impact, JTO coordinates with other local workforce boards to assist workers who reside in communities they serve. In the spirit of WARN and WIOA, Rapid Response services may be provided regardless of the number of affected workers. Rapid Response services are currently delivered both in-person and online.

All Rapid Response activities are reported to EDD as they occur through JTO's completion of state reports. In addition, JTO managers and staff attend regional meetings to discuss Rapid Response events, updates, and practices with representatives of other WDBs. Meetings are attended not only by Rapid Response staff, but by Local Board administrative staff and/or Directors to share and report information. On a regional level, JTO collaborates on layoff aversion and worker displacement issues with local workforce development boards throughout the San Joaquin Valley as part the Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable.

Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
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Adults and Dislocated Workers can access a full array of services through the Kings County Job Training Office which functions as the comprehensive AJCC for the local workforce development area.

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

The range of services available to job seekers served by the AJCC include the following:

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

- Determinations of eligibility;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation;
- Initial assessment;
- Labor exchange services;
- Referrals;
- Workforce and labor market employment information;
- Performance information and program cost information;
- Information on performance accountability measures;
- Information on the availability of supportive services or assistance;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- Information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs.

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

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments;
- Development of an individual employment plan;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning (e.g., case management);

- Short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Training Services: The AJCC offers “classroom” training (which may take place in-person or online) for eligible job seekers through individual training accounts (ITAs), along with a variety of work-based training programs. Training Services may be provided if AJCC staff determine, after an interview, assessment, and career planning, that an individual is:

- Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency with career services alone;
- Is in need of training to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency; and
- Demonstrates the capacity to successfully participate in the selected training.

After assessment and consultation with a career counselor, customers seeking training services may select a program or course from the list of eligible providers of training services. The AJCC will coordinate funding for the ITA with funding from other federal, state, local and private job training programs and sources to assist the customer in obtaining training. Work-based learning strategies including, but not limited to, transitional jobs, on-the-job training, and customized training are developed on a participant-by-participant basis and are secured through individual contracts with businesses or providers that are providing work-based instruction.

Training is offered in demand occupations that meet the needs of local and regional employers. Programs offering industry-recognized credentials, career ladders and work-based learning in the targeted industries receive the highest priority. Kings County WDB staff monitors all programs for WIOA compliance. Local performance goals are negotiated with the state through the RPU. Efforts at integrating performance reporting with AJCC partners will be pursued over the course of the Plan.

The Workforce Development Board coordinates closely with adult education and community colleges to identify and provide basic education preparation as well as advanced skills training. Private schools, non-profit organizations, charter schools, and others provide training and education resources needed by adults and dislocated workers. Support services are provided when not they are available through other providers.

Key Target Groups for Career Services and Training

Kings County WDB and workforce system partners strive to make the full range of employment and training services accessible to individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA. These populations represent those traditionally underserved in the

workforce system, including: displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; individuals with disabilities; ethnic minorities and groups with limited English proficiency; recipients of public assistance, including youth aging out of the foster care system; ex-offenders; mature workers; homeless individuals; long-term unemployed individuals; migrant and seasonal farmworkers; single parents; and veterans. Priority of service guidelines are discussed below.

These groups are not represented in the workplace in parity with their representation in the overall population. WIOA now emphasizes services to these groups, thereby increasing their access to programs and services.

Priority of Service

Kings County WDB has established a policy and procedures concerning priority of service for the WIOA Adult program. Priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service among all eligible individuals. However, they must meet the WIOA adult program eligibility criteria and meet the criteria under WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E). When programs are statutorily required to provide priority, such as the WIOA adult program, then priority must be provided in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
2. Individuals who are the recipient of public assistance, other low income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
3. Veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. Other individuals not included in WIOA's priority groups.

While the WDB policy cited above refers specifically to the WIOA Title I Adult Program, it should be noted that veterans receive priority across federal programs.

Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Youth Program

Under our WIOA Youth Program, Kings County WDB provides an array of services for in-school and out-of-school youth and young adults ages 16 to 24 who need services such as: assistance attaining a high school diploma or equivalency certificate; learning workplace skills: conducting career exploration: training for in-demand occupations; developing job readiness skills; and job placement assistance.

WIOA Youth Programs and Providers

JTO is the direct provider of comprehensive, year-round WIOA Youth Services aligned to the following 14 elements that are required under WIOA:

Tutoring, Study Skills Training, and Instruction Leading to Secondary School Completion: Education and educational support activities support completion of a high school diploma or recognized equivalent.

Alternative Education: These services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education or who have dropped out of school.

Paid Work Experience: This structured work-based learning experience provides opportunities for career exploration and skills development.

Occupational Skills Training: This organized program of study provides specific skills and leads to proficiency in an occupational field. Training may be delivered through didactic instruction in a classroom or online setting, or through work-based learning options including pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training programs.

Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation: This integrated education and training model combines workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills

Leadership Development Opportunities: These services encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors.

Supportive Services enable a youth or young adult to participate in WIOA activities.

Adult Mentoring: This formal relationship between a youth and an adult mentor focuses on structured activities through which the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement.

Follow-Up Services: These services are provided following program exit, and ensure youth succeed in employment or education

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling: Individualized counseling is provided to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling.

Financial Literacy Education: Youth participating in these services gain knowledge and skills they need to achieve long-term financial stability.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training: Youth learn the basics of starting and operating a small business and develop entrepreneurial skills.

Services that Provide Labor Market Information: These services offer employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities: Services assist youth in preparing for and transitioning to postsecondary education and training.

Those enrolled in the WIOA Youth Program attend workshops featuring guest speakers; participate in field trips; gain exposure to careers through online exploration; develop soft skills through training and hands-on work; receive mentoring and coaching; perform community service; expand their knowledge of the labor market; and increase awareness of high demand jobs. Together, these activities prepare youth for future education, training, jobs, and careers. Since JTO also functions the Career Services Provider for Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, youth have access to a wide range of career resources at the AJCC.

Services to Increase the Digital Skills of Youth

In the current environment, digital literacy skills are more important than ever to education, training, and workplace success. While we find that youth tend to have strong technology aptitudes and skills, following a comprehensive assessment, we may learn that some youth are in need of training to improve their technology skills and digital literacy. Adult education providers and online resources such as LinkedIn Learning are often excellent providers of such training. Youth who lack technology resources, such as a laptop or tablet, may request assistance via WIOA Youth Program supportive services.

Serving Youth with Disabilities

All of the programs and services described above are available to youth with disabilities. When a young person with a disability seeks services from JTO, assessments are administered and an Individual Service Strategy is developed to identify past educational attainment, skills levels, interests, barriers, and unique or specialized needs. Depending on the results of the assessment and service planning process, staff may engage colleagues from the Department of Rehabilitation, special education or other partners to assist in securing services and, as necessary accommodations, to facilitate the youth/young adult's participation in the program.

JTO has a partnership with the State Department of Rehabilitation to help transition special needs students into programs leading to industry-recognized certificates. For decades, JTO also has operated Work Base Learning programs, providing education and employment services for youth with disabilities and special needs. JTO also coordinates services to youth with the Kings County Office of Education (KCOE). JTO works with many providers of career technical education, such as Kings County Office of Education, Hanford High School District, West Hills Community College, College of the Sequoias, Crossroads Charter Academy, Learn for Life Academy, and other private institutions. These providers and partners strive to integrate special needs students into traditional course offerings, including Automotive Shop, Retail Marketing, Certified Nurse's Assistant and the Business Technology Center. The vast majority of these programs have a work-based learning component.

Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds and the Competitive Process Used to Award Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities
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The Kings County workforce system has structured processes in place for competitive procurement and disbursing grant funds. Following are details concerning these processes.

Authority to Disburse Grant Funds

Kings County’s administrative entity and fiscal agent for WIOA is the Kings County Board of Supervisors. As a division of county government, the Kings County Job Training Office is directly responsible to the Board of Supervisors for the effective use of WIOA and other funding granted to the county for workforce and economic development. JTO personnel serve as staff to the WDB and the Kings County Economic Development Corporation, administering WIOA Title I formula funds, specialized workforce grants funded by WIOA and other sources, and a \$4 million Revolving Loan Fund, along with other funds. The Board of Supervisors, in partnership with the WDB, authorizes disbursements of WIOA funds in accordance with provisions of the agreement between the two boards. The agreement provides the County’s Director of Economic and Workforce Development approval authority for disbursements.

Competitive Award of Contracts

The contract executed for the AJCC/One-Stop Operator function is the result of an open and competitive process that Kings County uses to procure service providers. Procurement is conducted in accordance with Kings County policies and procedures, as well as the principles of competitive procurement expressed in the Uniform Guidance found at 2 CFR 200.318 through 200.326. Local policies dictate that the WDB utilize Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or sole source procurement processes to award sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities. Sole source procurement is allowable only when one of the following conditions occurs:

- An item or service is available only from a single source;
- A public emergency precludes delay;
- The awarding agency authorizes the specific non-competitive procurement; or
- After a solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

<p>How the Local Board Fulfills the Duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider or Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers</p>

The responsibilities of the AJCC/One-Stop Operator (OSO) are met by a competitively procured contractor, while JTO staff fulfills the role of the career services provider for the Title I WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

AJCC Operator

The selection of the OSO was the result of a competitive RFP representing several local boards. As part of regional efforts to streamline administrative functions among local

boards in the Central Valley, Madera County led a process to competitively procure an OSO for five boards: Kings County, Madera County, Merced County, San Joaquin County and Stanislaus County.

Madera County WDB holds the OSO contract. The current contract with Beaudette Consulting, Inc. covers the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023.

The OSO contract outlines three major roles and duties:

1. Facilitates collaboration and cooperation among the partners.
2. Validates and ensures partner organizations adhere to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) documents (Phase I and II) providing infrastructure and operations contributions as determined in the WIOA legislation.
3. Act as a liaison between the Workforce Development Board and the America's Job Centers of California partners.

In accordance with WIOA requirements, the One-Stop Operator agreement clearly stipulates that the OSO is prohibited from acting in the following capabilities:

- Convening system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan;
- Preparing and submitting the local plan (as required under sec. 107 of WIOA);
- Providing oversight of itself;
- Manage or significantly participate in the competitive selection process for one-stop operators;
- Select or terminate one-stop operators, career services, and youth program service providers;
- Negotiate local performance accountability measures; and
- Develop and submit budget for activities of the local board.

Career Services Provider

Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services are provided by the local board through Kings County JTO. Kings County has acted in the Adult and Dislocated Worker program service provider capacity under federal workforce programs dating back to the Job Training Partnership Act in the 1980s. Given the size of Kings County, the role that various county agencies play in providing workforce and education services, the placement of economic development agency function within county government, and the extensive experience of county workforce development staff, JTO remains the logical choice to serve as career services provider.

V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2021 - 24
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Based on discussions held throughout the process of developing the original PY 21-24 Local Plan, the following topics were identified as priorities for further exploration, development, and/or enhancement for the Kings County WDB and the partners over the four-year span of the Local Plan.

Major themes, including those with a broad scope, identified by the WDB and stakeholders include those that follow. As indicated in the introduction to the modified Local Plan, progress updates through early 2023 are provided.

1. Develop a plan that commits the WDB and the system stakeholders to addressing the digital divide in Kings County. Engage state agencies, county government, municipalities, business, philanthropy, and community-based agencies in developing and executing the plan.

Progress Update: Finalization of a plan is still pending. Kings County WDB and JTO will address digital access issues by ensuring the organization continues to keep pace with technology enhancements, including equipment and system upgrades, to ensure information can be relayed and communicated in the fastest way possible. Plans include use of the internet based Unite Us referral system. JTO is part of the Unite Us network and, therefore, can provide and receive referrals through the system. JTO continues to promote the system to partner agencies, highlighting its benefits with regard to communication and tracking of referrals and services. JTO has also become a champion of “*Get Connected! California*” to support the California Broadband Council’s “call to action” to get 90% of all eligible low-income households connected to high-speed Internet by 2024. To reach this goal, JTO has been sharing information on the benefits of the Affordable Connectivity Program with partners and the community. JTO’s goal is to become a host site to assist County residents in applying for free internet. Larger issues affecting digital access will continue to be a priority for JTO and for Kings County.

2. Plan for the expansion of virtual service delivery, rather than leaving development of online services to random or reactive circumstances.

Progress Update: As stated, JTO continues to promote the use of the Unite Us referral system. Also, a planned update to the JTO website will enable customers to utilize the site for orientation and to request services. Concurrent with these efforts, JTO is researching online service delivery “best practices” of other local boards and system partners. Additional planning regarding expansion of JTO’s virtual service delivery capacity is on-going.

3. Develop a plan to recruit underserved and vulnerable populations more effectively.

Progress Update: While completion of a formal plan is pending, JTO continues to collaborate with organizations serving underserved and vulnerable populations. A group with which significant strides have been made is justice-involved individuals, including adults and youth who are incarcerated or have been incarcerated. JTO has established a specialized unit to address the service needs of this population. Three staff are stationed at the Kings County Probation Department assisting adults and youth with employment services, including resume writing, job search, interviewing skills, use of the Microsoft Office suite of products, earning typing certificates, applying for a California Driver's License, and more. As JTO leadership and partners work toward development of a plan to improve service delivery for various groups within the county, the focus will be on the identification, development and implementation of strategies to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment.

4. Develop a plan for leveraging non-core program resources to address the most common supportive services needs of Kings County job seekers, including, at a minimum, childcare and transportation.

Progress Update: The finalization of this plan is pending. However, through the engagement of core, required, and other partners, JTO will lead efforts to capture and summarize the many forms of support that are available through partner programs. This information will help to reveal where the greatest gaps exist and will enable the partners to concentrate their efforts on areas of greatest need.

Other workforce strategies and issues that stakeholders originally suggested the WDB and partners examine and evaluate include the following:

5. Offer a greater number of short-term, non-credit courses that can serve as onramps to career pathways.

Progress Update: Courses currently offered by West Hills College and the College of Sequoias that provide skills necessary to enter jobs in sectors with high demand include Introduction to Industrial Automation, Manufacturing, Industrial Mechanics, Introduction to Hospitality, and Business Information Worker (administrative/clerical). JTO representatives serve on advisory committees to local education agencies and are, therefore, able to provide input on business needs for training. JTO will continue to secure input from businesses regarding their workforce needs and will communicate this information to training providers and groups such as the Tulare Kings Healthcare Partnership and the Industrial Engagement Workgroup, which are focused on supporting businesses in meeting their skills needs.

6. Create greater system accessibility by making available more service delivery options, including the AJCC, online services and community access points.

Progress Update: JTO will request that the OSO work with partners to identify opportunities to establish new community access points. These will be sites where staff have a general knowledge of WIOA and can refer clients to JTO for more

intensive services. JTO will explore the feasibility of creating workforce development service access points at the Kings Community Action Organization, Kings County Human Services, Owens Valley Tribal TANF, and other sites, particularly in rural areas of the county. JTO's collaboration with the County Probation Department is an example of the effectiveness of community access points in meeting the specialized service needs of priority populations.

7. Use customer-centered design in developing all services and processes.

Progress Update: JTO has successfully utilized customer-centered design to determine the optimal lay-out and service flow at its comprehensive AJCC. JTO will continue to use customer input to improve processes, services, and accessibility, not just at its career centers, but in the development of new virtual strategies and auxiliary locations, such as community access points. In addition, JTO will encourage system partners to take a customer-centered approach to the design and deployment of services.

8. Develop methods for instructing job seekers in financial planning and treat this subject matter as an essential part of career planning.

Progress Update: Currently, within Kings County, various workforce development and vocational training programs provide some type of financial literacy or related training to participants/students. Financial planning workshops are provided to JTO's justice-involved customers. This curriculum could potentially be provided to a broader range of workforce system customers. The OSO and the system partners will consider options and develop recommendations on financial planning/literacy instruction.

9. Develop a unified strategy among the workforce system partners to promote candidates with disabilities to businesses that are seeking talent.

Progress Update: A wide variety of workforce development and training programs and services are available to people with disabilities in Kings County, including services to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities through the CIE blueprint-focused partners. Again, the system's partner committee will be tasked with reviewing and summarizing all current strategies used by the partners to promote job candidates with disabilities to business. The committee will be asked to make recommendations for developing and implementing unified messaging and strategies.

10. Examine strategies to increase the visibility of workforce development system programs, services, and providers.

Progress Update: Through disparate efforts, JTO and the system partners promote their services to potential customers, including businesses and individuals seeking employment. The partners have suggested that all Kings County workforce-related programs could benefit from adoption of a unified messaging strategy. The partner committee that is led by JTO will examine and make recommendations on this priority.

11. Consider the use of a systemwide brand or moniker to create greater awareness of workforce services in Kings County.

Progress Update: JTO and the system partners will address this issue as part of their work on the previous item concerning visibility.

12. Build an online information hub, where workforce system partners could store and access details about programs and services throughout the county.

Progress Update: As described above, JTO has become part of the Unite Us network. This secured network meets HIPPA, FERP, and FIPS security requirements, and participants within the system review, sign, approve the sharing of their information in connection with requested services. JTO will continue to encourage the adoption of Unite Us by the system partners.

13. Evaluate the benefits of partners' physical co-location at one another's facilities, even on a limited basis, to attract potential shared customers.

Progress Update: This recommendation is being evaluated in concert with the preceding priority concerning the creation of community access points.

14. Evaluate the potential benefits of the Unite Us referral system.

Progress Update: This priority has been addressed through JTO's adoption of the Unite Us system and the on-going promotion of the platform to workforce system partners.

15. Identify opportunities to increase the use of internships, work experience, on-the-job training, and other forms of work-based learning.

Progress Update: Under the WIOA Title I program and special grant projects, JTO has increased the use of work-based training over the last several years. JTO regularly promotes the availability and value of work-based learning models at WDB meetings, partner meetings, and business focused events, such as industry luncheons.

16. Encourage partners' greater use of hyperlinks on their websites to promote the programs and services of other system partners.

Progress Update: Many workforce development system partners promote other programs through the placement of hyperlinks on their websites. The OSO will lead the partner committee in a process to promote universal cross-partner promotion using hyperlinks.

As part of the development of the 2023 Modification to the PY 21-24 Local Plan, Kings County WDB hosted a virtual Community and Stakeholder Forum. Based on input

received during this session, the following additional priorities for further exploration, development, and/or enhancement are being added to the Local Plan.

17. Given worker shortages in Kings County and neighboring parts of the San Joaquin Valley, develop strategies for promoting individuals from under-resourced groups (e.g., English language learners, justice-involved individuals, people with disabilities) to businesses seeking talent.
18. Develop materials and messaging to inform businesses about changing values and attitudes among newer generations of workers and provide guidance on who to effectively recruit and retain these workers.
19. In recognition that Kings and Tulare counties comprise a distinct sub-region of the Central Valley, leverage the full range of organizations, groups, programs, and services in the region on behalf of workforce development programs in Kings County.

VI.	APPENDICES
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The following Items are Included as part of the Local Plan.

Attachment 1: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

Attachment 2: Public Comments Received that Disagree with the Local Plan

Attachment 3: Signature Page

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

To facilitate the engagement of stakeholders in planning for the local workforce development delivery system and in the development of the PY 2021-24 Local Plan, the Kings County WDB hosted a series of three community and stakeholder forums focused on topics affecting strategies and services across the system. These forums included:

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

This forum was held via Zoom on December 17, 2020.

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

This forum was held via Zoom on January 13, 2021.

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

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

As Kings County WDB was developing the biennial modification to the PY 21-24 Local Plan, input was again sought from community members and workforce system stakeholders. A virtual forum on “The Role of the Workforce System in Economic Recovery” was held on December 8, 2022.

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email	Proteus	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Hanford Mall	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Southern Cal Ed	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Kings County Probation	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Kings United Way	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email	KCOE	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	COS Hanford	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Hanford Chamber of Commerce	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Greater Kings County Chamber of Commerce	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Kings Partnership for Prevention	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Kings County Human Services	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Champions Recovery	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	WestCare STOP Area 3	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Tribal TANF - Owens Valley Career Development Center	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Owens Valley Career Development Center Tribal TANF	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Title V - OAA-CSET (NCOA)	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Community Based Organization - Proteus	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THAT DISAGREE WITH THE LOCAL PLAN

1.	<i>From:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Comment:</i>		

2.	<i>From:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Comment:</i>		

SIGNATURE PAGE

The following signatures represent approval of the Local Plan by Kings County Workforce Development Board and the Chief Elected Official the Kings County Local Workforce Development Area.

For the **Kings County Workforce Development Board**:

Nancy Silva, Chair	Date

For the **King’s County Local Workforce Development Area**

Title	Date