

# Southern Alleghenies Program Years 2021-2024 Regional Plan

Region Workforce Development Area Name: Southern Alleghenies

Effective Date: July 1, 2023

## ***1.1. Identification of the region.***

The Southern Alleghenies Planning Region includes the counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset. The Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Area and Planning Region are one in the same and only includes the Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Area.

The Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Board (SAWDB) has a long and solid history of developing solid, strategic regional and local plans. Formation of a planning region committee was not applicable to the Southern Alleghenies. The SAWDB utilized its established planning process and sought input from the following stakeholders:

- The local elected officials from the six-member counties;
- The SAWDB and its committees;
- The Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) members;
- The region's employer community;
- Institutions of higher education;
- The Southern Alleghenies PA CareerLink® partners;
- The Local Management Committee;
- The users of the public workforce system including jobseekers.

Communication with these key stakeholders took place throughout the planning process. Meetings, including those publicly advertised, where the plan was discussed prior to posting, were held on November 10, 18, December 8, 17, 2020 and January 12, 20, and February 9, 2021. The plans effective date is July 1, 2021.

During the 2022/2023 Local and Regional Plan modification process, the SAWDB followed its effective and recognized planning process which is illustrated above. It sought input from stakeholders and partners and incorporated this input directly into the documents that were submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry for review. Public meetings where the plan was discussed were held on the following dates: September 13, 16, 21, 28, October 6, 11, November 8, 16, January 10, 2022.

Following receipt of comments from state reviewers, revisions have been incorporated, and the plans have been resubmitted for Commonwealth review. The plan will be released for the thirty-day public comment period and relevant comments will be incorporated into the Plans.

The Plan's effective date is July 1, 2023.

## **1.2 Based on the analysis of the regional labor market and economic conditions, describe the region's workforce and economic development-oriented vision and goals.**

The Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Board (SAWDB) will lead initiatives designed to enhance the skills of the workforce to meet the needs of the region's employers to compete in a world economy. To accomplish this, the SAWDB is committed to supporting a data-driven, goal-oriented public workforce system that:

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- Is flexible and responsive to the changing needs of jobseekers and employers;
- Embraces innovation as espoused in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA);
- Is committed to serving all those who are seeking employment or employees;
- Is integrated into a larger, coordinated network that includes other entities with a similar mission;
- Recognizes the importance of career pathways and invests in training opportunities that are tied to employer demand and result in jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage for the employee;
- Is committed to excellence and accountable to its funding agents, its customers, and its partners.

The SAWDB will help to advance its vision and support attainment of the performance accountability measures through the following:

**Increased resources directed to support industry-driven training.** The SAWDB will direct its WIOA Title I resources, Rapid Response funding, special grant awards and other competitively secured resources to support training that results in industry-recognized credentials. On-the-Job Training (OJT) will continue to be heavily promoted; all positions supported through OJT will provide a wage that moves participants toward self-sufficiency and away from a reliance on public assistance. The Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) has been prioritized by the OSO and Business Services Strategy Team (BSST) with development of PA CareerLink® team member training focused on promoting the development of Registered Apprenticeships for employers. This training will incorporate materials from the Apprenticeship Training Office (ATO) to enable Business Service Team (BST) members to effectively educate employers on the benefits of RAP, allowing the program to sell itself. Because labor market data indicate and local employers confirm that trained employees are difficult to find, BSTs strategy is to educate employers on the benefits of registered apprenticeships. (Detailed strategy can be found at R1.4). The SAWDB has targeted the following industry sectors for support and assistance:

- Diversified Manufacturing
- Transportation and Logistics
- Healthcare
- Business Services
- Building and Construction

The SAWDB, Business Services Teams, and local stakeholders and partners including career and technology centers are working together to develop and expand apprenticeships in these targeted sectors. Business Service Teams will continue to use labor market information, including the Regional Data Analysis Tool, provided by CWIA, to identify specific companies within the targeted sectors.

Current labor market conditions, impacted by the pandemic, notably the struggle to hire and retain workers, continues. These challenges have resulted in a workforce paradigm that has created the ideal time for employers to investigate RAPs. For those looking to change their corporate culture post-pandemic, RAPs position these employers to hire and retain a skilled workforce. The region's PA CareerLink® sites will continue to sponsor apprenticeship fairs, in conjunction with employers and organized labor, and the SAWDB will utilize its WIOA Title I funds to support training costs associated with apprenticeships. The SAWDB will continue to seek flexible funding and leverage and align partner

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support to help raise the educational attainment level of our residents and support jobseeker and incumbent worker training needs. Efforts will be closely coordinated with the Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners and WEDnet PA service providers to ensure that employer needs are identified, addressed and services are not duplicated. As a member of PREP, the SAWDB will utilize the partnership opportunities with the region's economic developers to coordinate services that support business recruitment and retention, and incumbent worker skill advancement. During many **ENGAGE** visits, joint business calls made by economic developers and PA CareerLink® Business Service Team member staff will have the opportunity to hear directly from employers. Invaluable information related to business challenges and current and future workforce needs is communicated directly to those in a position to help address the issues. The one-stop figures prominently in the resulting business action plans and in many cases, positions the workforce system at the center of providing targeted business assistance.

The SAWDB and its PA CareerLink® offices will promote SkillUp® Southern Alleghenies to employers and jobseekers. Powered by Metrix, the thousands of on-line courses will be offered to our one-stop customers to increase their skills and marketability. In promoting SkillUp® Southern Alleghenies to employers, it affords them the opportunity to identify appropriate courses for their incumbent workforce.

**Increased alignment with WIOA Title II (Adult Education) and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to support greater career pathway development.** Both entities figure prominently in the region's PA CareerLink® sites and have strong connections to the SAWDB and its staff. The SAWDB staff participate in the meetings of the Adult Education Coalition and coalition members provide an annual report to the SAWDB and its stakeholders that track outcomes including the industry-recognized credential obtained by their students. This close partnership has helped to ensure frequent and substantive communication, which will lead to greater program alignment.

**Support for the industry sector initiatives.** Traditional industry-driven consortia had been in place in the region for more than 20 years. Efforts were made by the SAWDB, in collaboration with its economic development partners, to move its existing Ips to the Next Gen model. A health care partnership had operated, without state funding support, but changes in company leadership led to the loss of the region's champions and the dissolution of the partnership. Efforts will be made to reestablish these partnerships and the data derived from the **ENGAGE** visits can be used to identify potential participants.

**Greater analysis of the High Priority Occupation (HPO) and Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Lists to include data analysis of training investments and the effectiveness at preparing participants for employment in their fields of study.** While a cornerstone of the public workforce system is informed customer choice, when it comes to selecting training providers, the SAWDB does not believe that having a large number of available providers should supersede having a list of fewer but higher quality providers. SAWDB staff spend considerable time assisting potential providers with their applications and walking them through the ETP process. As of September 2022, the region has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of programs in the Commonwealth; nine providers offer 120 programs that support training in high priority occupations. The SAWDB dedicates considerable resources in support of classroom training, and it tracks student success, in terms of their ability to graduate and secure employment in

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their field of study at a self-sufficient wage. Based on the SAWDB's most recent analysis, from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, 88% of training participants completed their training program and 87% were employed in their field of study, following graduation, at an average wage of \$41,009. During the pandemic, the region saw a decrease in training requests by over 30%, compared to pre-pandemic levels. Despite the availability of funding, and the promotion of the need for advanced skills, the demand for training services has not returned to pre-Covid levels. The SAWDB, its PA CareerLink® sites and workforce partners will continue to analyze training availability, funding caps, and employers' training needs.

In addition to utilization of the ETP for classroom training, the SAWDB will support and promote training opportunities through registered apprenticeships included on the state's list. Currently the region hosts four registered apprenticeships on the ETP. The Board has dedicated significant financial resources to support apprentices, especially with the Regional Council of Carpenters.

**Enhanced partner integration specifically with OVR, the Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN), and Department of Corrections with a goal of greater inclusion and seamless referral between programs.** The SAWDB's Special Populations Committee will continue to focus on service to target populations with significant barriers to employment. This standing committee will act as the conduit for information between agencies that serve WIOA target populations and the SAWDB and its PA CareerLink® sites and service providers. With available funding, the SAWDB will support Transitional Work Experience opportunities for those individuals with multiple barriers to employment. Successful participants have secured and retained employment, in most cases, at their initial worksite.

**Expanded and enhanced work-based opportunities for youth.** The SAWDB will continue to support and promote summer and year-round paid work experience, internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship opportunities. The SAWDB's emphasis on OJT opportunities for youth has resulted in this service gaining greater traction and momentum. Contracts written to date far exceed the \$11.00 per hour minimum established for youth OJT participants. The WIOA Title I providers have also incorporated 'pre-apprenticeships' into their service mix to educate youth on the benefits of this career path.

**Support for special initiatives such as YouthBuild, and other services that address the special challenges of Out-of-School Youth with significant barriers to employment.** These initiatives will provide youth with the opportunity to receive industry-recognized credentials and paid work experience aligned to the credentials. Roughly 9% of youth currently receiving WIOA Title I services have engaged with the juvenile justice system. The SAWDB will support services especially aligned to the needs of this population, including mentoring and access to financial support for training, work experience and supportive services.

Each year, the PA CareerLink® Management Teams, with assistance from the One-Stop Operator Consortium (OSO), develop their own measurable goals, objectives and action steps to support the SAWDB's vision and strategic objectives. The OSO, site administrators, and SAWDB staff are currently revamping the PA CareerLink® Scorecard so that it better meets the needs of employers and job seekers and also provides service-related data for use by the SAWDB. The information it will contain, by county, includes:

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- Unemployment Compensation data including rate, labor force, and new claims by industry
- PA CareerLink® foot traffic
- Number of job seekers served and number of services provided
- Number of recruitment events held
- Number of job postings and number of applications
- Number of employers serviced and number of services provided

This information will be provided to customers, including employers, and stakeholders each quarter.

The Board will continue to work closely with the PREP partners to coordinate efforts. Through the **ENGAGE** initiative, county economic developers and PA CareerLink® Business Service Team leads call on targeted company leaders to learn about their challenges and projected needs, including those workforce related ones. The close collaboration, and with it, stronger relationships built between the workforce and economic development partners, has resulted in more effective communication with employers and improved service delivery to the region's companies. In recognition of this collaboration, the Bedford County Development Association presented the PA CareerLink® Bedford County its 2020 Economic Development Award. The Board, through its staff, will continue to participate in PREP and Startup Alleghenies, the region's entrepreneurship ecosystem, meetings to ensure that the lines of communication remain strong and opportunities for partnership are identified and acted upon.

### *1.3 Describe the collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the commonwealth).*

The SAWDB utilizes information from multiple sources including federal census data, state level resources, a regional data consortium, and local data gathered from PA CareerLink® partners, industry partnerships and economic developers.

#### **Key Economic Conditions**

The civilian labor force across the six county Southern Alleghenies region has continued a downward trend since 2007, declining from 197,400 in June 2021 to 195,600 according to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) August 2022 **Southern Alleghenies WDA Profile** report. It is critical to note that the Southern Alleghenies (SA) region decline has slowed considerably from 28,600 less in November 2020 compared to just 1,000 from June 2021 to June 2022. Pennsylvania as a whole experienced a growing civilian labor force, rising an additional 20,000 during that same period. Still, other key economic conditions continue to plague the SA region, notably declining demand for less skilled workers, an aging workforce and the terminally unemployed.

The SAWDB will continue to work to understand and address the many intricate causes of these labor force trends, along with their associated demographic and labor market factors as they likely will continue to exert downward pressure on the labor force.

The Southern Alleghenies regional economy has continued to operate below its norm by the broadest measures punctuated by consistent annual average job losses for the past nine years. According to the CWIA Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-30), there were 173,100 jobs in the six

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counties in the region as of 2020. These long-term projections reflect a 2.8% increase in employment by 2030, with employment estimated at 177,870.

The region performs consistently worse than both the state and national figures. Based on the **Advance Central PA Labor Market Status Report June 2022**, regional economic conditions include:

- Unemployment rates consistently higher than state average
- Declining labor force figures
- Aging population
- Challenge to retain and attract younger workers to the region
- Business community vitality that creates employment opportunities through a diversified business base

The pandemic period, at its peak in April 2020, produced new unemployment claims totaling 37,100 in the Southern Alleghenies region, a 303% change from April 2019, according to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, April 2020. The associated regional unemployment rate stood at 18%, while statewide unemployment totaled 976,000 claims, with an accompanying rate of 15.1 percent. As we progressed through 2022, CWIA reported the Southern Alleghenies regional unemployment rate had returned to the pre-pandemic levels, a reported 4.7% in July 2022.

Job postings have diminished post-pandemic, as illustrated by the statistics shown on monthly Online Job Postings Analysis sourced by EMSI 2022.1 and prepared by Advance Central PA. October 2020 analysis showed that if every SA jobseeker filled an online job posting, the unemployment rate would drop to zero. February 2022 analysis brings this figure to 3.3%, adding that 6,300 additional regional postings would be needed for the remaining jobseekers. This statistic, based on the assumption that all online job postings are real, that they can be filled, and that only unemployed residents of the region fill those jobs, underscores a regional opportunity to respond to this growing need for a higher educated available workforce. The jobs in our region increasingly necessitate specific technical skills from an institution of higher learning. The CWIA reported in the March 2022 **Economic Outlook** report that the regional unemployment rate decreases from 4% to 2% when high school graduates attain a bachelor's degree or higher. Through the SAWDB, partnerships with additional EPL choices are flourishing.

### Unemployment

According to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, the region has the seventeenth highest unemployment rate among the 22 workforce development areas in the state. The unemployment rate in three of the six counties in the region is higher than the state rate. These three counties are also among the 20 counties having the highest unemployment rates in the state.

### Labor Force

Based on the CWIA August 2022 Southern Alleghenies WDA Profile with estimated population 16 years and over, the regional labor force stands at 195,600, down nearly 3,000 from October 2020. The region loses nearly 18,000 workers net to other workforce regions every day and five of the six counties experience an overall net loss of workers daily. The overall population continues to age, based on the U.S Census Bureau median age of 45.37 in 2020 with 24% more people aged 55-64 at 64,008 compared to the 35,295 ages 15-24. The population density of younger individuals in the region continues to be a concern. The population of the 55-64-year-old age group exceeds that of the 18-24-year-old group by more than 31,000, potentially leading to a labor shortage as older workers retire.

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## Technological and Demographic Factors

Additional conditions affecting the region that require consideration include the lack of reliable internet service, not to mention any high-speed internet, that the pandemic brought to the forefront. Drug abuse in the workforce has forced employers to reconsider pre-employment drug screening, according to the **Pennsylvania Department of Education September 2020**. Since 2015 the number of high school graduates in the region consistently declined nearly 2% each year. Conversely, according to the CWIA August 2022 Southern Alleghenies WDA Profile, the total number of college graduates with a bachelor's degree shows a slight .03% increase compared to 2020. This is a promising reversal given that the number of jobs requiring post-secondary education is also on the rise.

Positive economic trends include industries that continue to do well, providing career opportunities for job seekers. Based on the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry statistics, the average annual wages for all industries have risen by \$3,560 from 2019 to 2022. Additionally, the average wage paid for On-the-Job Training in the region has risen although occupational wages remain well below the state averages. There have been recent plant expansions in manufacturing that provided new opportunities and while small initially, there is an expectation of growth that will add even more jobs.

The SAWDB will target Manufacturing, Construction, Business Services, Healthcare, and Transportation because of the high numbers of individuals employed, high wages, or a combination of these factors. The regional High Priority Occupation (HPO) List supports this strategy with numerous occupations covering all the targeted clusters. The pandemic placed Healthcare employment in the spotlight, as worker shortages place both healthcare workers and residents in a life-threatening situation. The Board initiated short-term solutions that reach across international boundaries, working with Pennsylvania and Danish leadership to explore tools for healthcare staff recruitment. The pandemic also accelerated the demand for transportation expertise.

Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors include:

- Healthcare continues as the top existing in-demand industry employing 21.4% of the labor force. In the region, 33,889 healthcare workers have an average earning of \$50,008. Center for Workforce Information and Analysis project a 9.9% growth from 2020-30.
- Accommodation & Food Services ranks fourth with 8.4% of the labor force. Though this industry employs a significant number of individuals, it pays a wage far below the local self-sufficiency level, with average wages less than \$17,400.
- Business Services Industry Cluster is a broad category that covers many services provided to businesses in the region. Here we show both Professional and Technical Services coupled with Administrative and Waste Services. Combined, they contribute 6.4% of the workforce, commanding \$47,213 average annual earnings.
- Retail trade remained steady, and while the sector has significant employment numbers, wages and career opportunities exclude it from Board focus.

(Southern Alleghenies WDA Profile, August 2022)

Existing and emerging in-demand industry sector(s) occupations include:

Healthcare positions including phlebotomists, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants are in high demand across the region, numbering in the thousands. Additional health related occupations include medical and clinical technologist/technicians, radiologic technologists, and both physical and occupational therapy assistants. The region has a significant concentration of healthcare-related employers as demonstrated by its location quotient of 1.16. Given that the industry projects

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continued growth, this high concentration is not overly concerning.

Manufacturing occupations comprise a variety of jobs in the regional workforce with CNC machine tool operators, machinists, structural metal fabricators, maintenance and repair technicians, and welders, cutters, solderers and brazers being the top jobs. There is a significant concentration of manufacturers in the region, as illustrated by the industry's location quotient of 1.20. For the region's economy to remain strong, it will be essential that the manufacturers remain competitive. A significant downturn in the manufacturing sector will have an even larger negative impact in this region given the industry's high concentration.

Transportation and Warehousing related occupations have been a critical need in the region for several years, led primarily by both heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, light truck drivers, while laborers and freight, stock and material movers are also in demand. The region's highway system, coupled with the location of its business parks, supports the continued growth of this sector, with its location quotient of 1.07.

Southern Alleghenies Targeted Industry Location Quotients:

<u>Industry Cluster</u>	<u>Location Quotient</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>Employment %</u>
Healthcare	1.16	33,889	21.4%
Retail Trade	1.24	20,752	13.1%
Manufacturing	1.20-7	18,365	11.6%
Accommodation/Food Svc.	1.19	13,232	8.4%
Trans/Warehousing	1.07	9,803	5.8%
Construction	1.039	7,552	4.8%
Admin/Waste Services	0.63	5,270	3.3%
Professional/Tech Services	0.46	4,837	3.2%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, Southern Alleghenies WDA Profile, August 2022

The region's employers require technically competent workers, capable of solving problems and capable of daily commitment to being on time every scheduled workday for the business to meet performance goals and payroll. The **Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation Top Jobs Report September 2020** indicates skill sets that employers seek include communications and interpersonal interaction, understanding and using technology, critical thinking and analysis, physical work, quality assurance and standards enforcement. The SAWDB has allocated significant resources to supporting training for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. The Board and its staff have also worked with a variety of partners to communicate the need for higher education beyond high school, including short-term technical degrees, registered apprenticeships, and four or more years at academic institutions of higher learning. Technical skills in high demand include nurses and HVAC technicians. Registered apprenticeship opportunities have expanded beyond traditional unionized jobs to business services and IT, while bachelor and master's degree programs in human resources and civil engineers are on the top jobs list as high priority occupations.

Looking forward, the impact of remote workers and their working families potentially moving to the region, now that many employers are giving workers that option permanently, will require consideration. With the lower cost of living in the Southern Alleghenies region than larger metropolitan



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areas in the Northeast, workers relocating here is a reasonable expectation. The region's Recovery and Resiliency Plan targets the need for improved housing in order to attract workers. SAWDB staff will work with planners to support strategy development and implementation with a focus on available housing. Pew Research Center and Harris Poll both conducted surveys in 2020 to study this trend. Results from both studies are summarized in a Hybrid Workforce Feasibility Study conducted by **Headlight Data** of Austin, Texas for SAP&DC. Pew Research found that 3% of the more than 9,000 adults surveyed moved temporarily or permanently due directly to COVID-19. Of more interest to this study are the 9% of those movers who made a permanent change of address. These two factors combined indicate that roughly 0.27% of those surveyed permanently relocated. As another indicator of this trend, the Harris Poll conducted a survey in April 2020 which found that 38% of respondents living in urban areas considered themselves likely to "move out of densely populated areas and toward rural areas." Proportions were higher among both younger and more affluent households. It is important to note that these extrapolations are based on survey data gathered over short periods of time. The actual impact could be larger or smaller than these estimates. This could bring a fresh vitality for small business while providing a positive demographic shift of younger workers. Necessary technological changes, specifically reliable internet access, are already underway in the most underserved areas of the region.

### 1.4 Describe the regional service strategies aimed at achieving the vision and goals established for the region.

The SAWDB will utilize the following strategies to achieve the vision and goals established for the region. They are classified on two levels: Administrative (SAWDB) and Programmatic (PA CareerLink® and Workforce Development Partners and stakeholders).

#### **Administrative**

- The SAWDB will regularly review its policies to ensure, where legally possible, they are employer and jobseeker customer friendly and do not create barriers to effective service provision. Agility is key to success and the public workforce system and its administrators must strive for the same.
- The SAWDB will continue to support and look for opportunities to expand Industry Partnership participation in targeted sectors. Included in this is a promotion of registered apprenticeships to those companies/industries that are well-positioned to benefit from this model and through the promotion of pre-apprenticeship activities for youth.
- Enhancement and expansion of relationships with and between the region's WIOA Title II Adult Basic Education providers, career and technology centers, and post-secondary education institutions. As an example, the SAWDB will continue to facilitate meetings between the Title II providers and the region's community college, Pennsylvania Highlands. Also, through their positions on the region's Career and Technology Centers' Perkins Participatory Planning Committee, the SAWDB and its staff, and PA CareerLink® partner staff can assist with the completion of their required Comprehensive Needs Assessments to help ensure alignment between schools, their students, and the region's employers.
- The SAWDB has a strong OSO group that oversees the Business Services Strategy Team (BSST). The BSST has placed training PA CareerLink® staff to effectively educate employers on the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) opportunities that exist as a priority. The goal is to promote a regional strategy that connects job seekers with RAPs. Promoting Apprenticeships/Pre-Apprenticeships includes the following:
  - Utilizing ATO materials to develop "RAP 101" program. This training was conducted

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- November 2021, for all current PA CareerLink® staff and was recorded for future use.
- PowerPoint format training program including the ATO PowerPoint for Zoom platform as well as 24/7 viewing availability to offer flexibility of training schedules.
- Utilize ATO Guide “Registering an Apprenticeship Program.”
- Labor Market Report usage to determine the industry with the biggest need.
- ATO one-pagers and flow diagram will be included in training materials.
- ATO staff contact information and brief Zoom icebreaker meetings with ATO staff as they are added could be helpful for putting a face with the name.
- PA CareerLink® staff outreach/education to potential RAP employers.
- Pre-Apprenticeship strategy closely mirrors the RAP strategy and tactics. Partnering with WIOA Title I providers, PA CareerLink® and community-based education committees to promote the pre-apprenticeship at the middle and high school levels will bring this program into the forefront of training options. Pre-Apprenticeships will be promoted as part of the Business-Education Partnership Grant initiative and also build in pre-apprenticeship activities as part of the WIOA Title I Youth service mix.
- The SAWDB will continue to support staff involvement in and engagement with the PREP partners to ensure alignment of workforce and economic development strategies and resources. These include participation in **ENGAGE** joint business calls.
- The SAWDB and OSO will annually review the PA CareerLink® employer service mix to determine any gaps, based on local need and WIOA direction.
- SAWDB and PA CareerLink® Business Service Teams have formed a regional Strategy Team, dedicated to improving business services and outreach to employers. Their recommendations to the OSO include:
  - Enhancing the marketing message to reach employers and effectively relate the PA CareerLink® to business services and employment;
  - Place great focus on targeted industry sectors;
  - Recruit employers who offer work from home opportunities;
  - Promote and help secure registered apprenticeships in collaboration with employer and apprenticeship sponsors.
- The SAWDB and OSO will annually review employer services outreach materials and enhance and professionalize the materials utilizing the expertise of the SAP&DC Marketing and Communication Specialist.
- The SAWDB, with input from the PREP partners and IP participants, will review the High Priority Occupation List to ensure it reflects employer hiring needs.
- The SAWDB will encourage quality education providers to submit relevant programs for inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List to ensure customers can access training that meets employer demands. As of September 2022, the region has 120 programs on the list, the 2nd highest in the Commonwealth.
- The SAWDB and OSO will annually review PA CareerLink® employer-centric goals to ensure alignment with the governor’s and the SAWDB’s strategic vision and confirm that the benchmarks are sufficiently ambitious and promote continuous improvement.

### Programmatic

- The OSO, PA CareerLink® Site Administrators and PA CareerLink® management teams will review their policies and procedures to identify and mitigate any barriers to service provision.
- The SAWDB, OSO and PA CareerLink® site administrators will work with the SAWDB’s Special Populations Committee to identify and address service gaps and ensure that the public

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workforce system provides services to meet the workforce needs of the target populations. As referenced in Section 1.2, the SAWDB, OSO, and PA CareerLink® partners will promote engagement in special initiatives for youth such as YouthBuild (offered in Cambria County, specifically the city of Johnstown), and continue to provide out-of-region referrals to Job Corps, Americorps, and other targeted youth programs. The SAWDB and its partners recognize the importance of these programs, which provide youth with the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials and receive paid work experience aligned to the credentials. Through September 2022, 9% of youth receiving WIOA Title I services have a history of engagement with the juvenile justice system. Other barriers to employment for these youth participants include Low Income at 86%, Low Level of Literacy at 74%, Disability at 51%, Single Parent at 18%, and Homelessness at 3%. (CWDS WIOA Title I Eligibility, voluntarily disclosed at intake). Helping to reintegrate these young people back into the community, with marketable skills, will not only enable them to see a future for themselves, but it will also help to address the talent shortage experienced by many of the region's employers.

- The OSO and PA CareerLink® site administrators will ensure that each PA CareerLink® has an active Business Services Team made up of the 'right' representatives from partner agencies.
- The PA CareerLink® staff will gather business intelligence through employer outreach and utilization of Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) data to ensure alignment of job seeker services with employer hiring needs.
- The PA CareerLink® site administrators and the OSO will review Business Service Team communication plans to ensure that employer outreach is coordinated among all partners.
- The PA CareerLink® staff will strengthen relationships with employer-driven organizations and associations (SHRM, Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, etc.) and use these as vehicles to educate members on available services and resources.
- The PA CareerLink® staff will work with the PREP partners to provide leveraged resources in support of business recruitment, retention, and expansion efforts.
- The PA CareerLink® staff will help to identify and support employer-driven incumbent worker training opportunities.
- The PA CareerLink®, OSO and the SAWDB will promote the importance of digital literacy to all jobseekers and will utilize the Northstar® assessment as a vehicle to assess and credential one-stop customers. The COVID-19 pandemic served to further highlight the importance of digital literacy.
- The OSO and PA CareerLink® staff's Operational Intelligence Team will continue its focus on 'business' intelligence to improve and communicate partner performance to the system's stakeholders.

Ensuring business and jobseeker engagement in the workforce system comes down to three things: determining customer needs, informing the customer that the system is able, willing and ready to meet their needs, and having the ability to meet those needs in a timely and effective manner. The utilization of the aforementioned strategies will ensure that our customers are engaged in a meaningful way and that the one-stops are well-positioned to meet the needs of their business jobseeker customers.

### 1.5 Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

Developing and implementing successful sector initiatives requires an understanding of the sectors and their relationship to the labor force. The board recognizes the important role up-to-date Labor Market

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Information plays in building the foundation and consequently takes special steps to ensure that current and accurate information guides the decision-making process. As a result, the SAWDB is well-informed and armed with accurate and current information that is used to guide the board in making strategic decisions related to training, and the identification of high priority occupations aligned to employer needs.

The SAWDB and its economic development partners will continue to explore opportunities to take the region's industry partnerships to a new level through the next-generation partnership initiative. A Health Care Next Gen Partnership had begun to gain momentum but then its three key champions accepted employment outside of the region and as a result the partnership collapsed.

With joint **ENGAGE** business calls, economic and workforce development professionals joined forces and combined resources to gain a higher level of industry intelligence to better understand the current and projected needs of employers. The importance of this link with economic development and other stakeholders cannot be overstated given the changes in business cycles where one business or industry sector declines and others open or expand. The pandemic created significant instability, and while many industries have returned to pre-Covid levels, others such as retail trade have not.

Within the region pre-apprenticeship opportunities are in the very early stages of development. The region's career and technology centers along with select high schools who have a vocational component to their curriculum, have been working to develop pre-apprenticeship opportunities within their schools. The SAWDB will actively support the development and registration of pre-apprenticeship programs and their connection to existing registered apprenticeships. The promotion of pre-apprenticeships, especially when targeting youth and individuals with barriers to employment, can serve to enhance the importance of apprenticeships and also help to create a pathway and pipeline for employers.

The manufacturing, construction and trade/ transportation sectors have all been especially hit hard, with each posting the highest numbers of initial unemployment compensation claims from May 2020 through September 2020, 12,470, 3,039, and 5,554 respectively, according to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis.

For over a decade, the SAWDB has identified targeted industry clusters to further define and refine its strategic focus. Accordingly, the SAWDB targets resources in the region in support of its five clusters that represent a significant portion of the region's overall employment and provide jobs that pay family sustaining wages. A summary of each cluster is included below along with special initiatives designed to enhance the workforce in the targeted clusters. The clusters include:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Building and Construction
- Business Services
- Healthcare
- Logistics and Transportation

### **Advanced Manufacturing**

The advanced manufacturing cluster currently represents approximately 13,452 jobs in the region, with a national location quotient of 1.17, and while it was expected to decline slightly by 3.29% according to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis 2020-30 ***Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages***, at this time it is uncertain how much and how quickly the sector can rebound

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from the impact of the pandemic. When the order came to shutter operations for non-essential businesses, 76% of the region's manufacturers were forced to close their doors. Still, manufacturing occupations continue to be in demand and are listed on the region's High Priority Occupation List (HPOL). ***CWIA Occupational Employment 2020-30 Long-Term Projections*** illustrate a continued need for industrial machinery mechanics, machinists, structural metal fabricators, and welders, cutters, solderers and brazers. Electronic instrument and Furniture manufacturing both show double digit employment increases from 2020 to 2030. Even though the industry is projected to be smaller in the future, employers continue to struggle to fill welding and machining positions and several local employers have developed apprenticeship models around these occupations. In response to that need the SAWDB has supported programs utilizing Business-Education Partnership grants to introduce youth to career opportunities in manufacturing. Manufacturing Days, an additional sector initiative, has included special events highlighting the industry. With the return of in-person job fairs and industry tours, the SAWDB is positioned to support increased interaction between jobseekers, youth and employers. Efforts moving forward will focus on supporting the registration of Pre-Apprenticeships via partner CTCs and others appropriate to that portion of the future SA apprenticeship ecosystem.

### **Building and Construction**

Based on the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis ***2020-30 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages***, employment in the Building and Construction industry in the Southern Alleghenies region was projected to grow from 6,790 in 2020 to 7,210 in 2030, with a 2021 national location quotient of 1.19. This represents a positive change of 6.2%. CWIA Industry Employment 2020-30 Long-Term Projections growth was anticipated to be driven by residential building construction, building foundation/exterior contractors and building equipment contractors. As with manufacturing, construction was negatively impacted by the pandemic and the associated orders to cease operations.

***CWIA Occupational Employment 2020-30 Long-Term Projections*** include a continued demand for carpenters, electricians and painters. . The recognition of registered apprenticeships as a viable model for employee recruitment and retention has grown over the past several years. The SAWDB, its PA CareerLink® sites, and WIOA Title I providers have supported apprenticeship fairs, in partnership with local employers and organized labor, especially the Regional Council of Carpenters. These events have served to educate the community, especially the youth, to the value of apprenticeships. The SAWDB and Goodwill of the Southern Alleghenies is also supporting the construction industry through the YouthBuild initiative that targets young adults who have significant barriers to employment such as low education levels, homelessness, low income, and criminal records. Program participants receive classroom education, workforce preparedness training and hands-on construction experience through actual building projects.

The SAWDB is working closely with the Regional Council of Carpenters to support its registered apprenticeship for carpenters, in an effort to support the construction sector. The Board will continue to direct training dollars in support of the classroom portion of registered apprenticeships.

### **Business Services**

The Business Services cluster includes a broad range of support services to companies, to include but not limited to public relations services, direct marketing services, legal services, staffing services, security services, education and training services and telecommunications services. The sector employs roughly 6% of the region's workforce. Because of the nature of much of the work in this sector, when the pandemic necessitated the need to shutter operations, many employers were able to transition

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their employees to telework, thus reducing the need for massive layoffs. This factor has enabled the sector to 'bounce back' more readily than those industries that required face-to-face operations. According to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis **Industry Employment Long-Term 2020-30 Projections** key industry sectors within this group that are projected to grow within the Southern Alleghenies region include Management & Technical Consulting Service (8.7%) and Administrative and Waste Services (5.5%). **CWIA Occupational Employment 2020-30 Long-Term Projections** show a continued demand for computer user support specialists, personal financial advisors, training and development specialists, software developers, computer user support specialists, human resource specialists, and information security analysts.

### **Healthcare**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Healthcare industry was anticipating continued growth and was poised to remain the largest employer of all the targeted clusters in the region, employing over 21% of the labor force. The pandemic served to shine a light on the industry's demand for skilled professionals. An analysis of the pipeline clearly indicates that the number of those graduating from local training providers will fall far short of meeting the sector's immediate needs. Though largely behind us, the pandemic continues to impact staffing in many of the region's healthcare facilities and long-term care establishments. Many of the larger employers have offered significant hiring incentives and offers to underwrite over \$50,000 of student loans in order to attract workers, primarily registered nurses. The SAWDB and PA CareerLink® staff will continue to work with employers to identify potential new hires. Jobseekers will also be educated about the career opportunities available to them in this sector. The SAWDB, PA CareerLink® staff and human resource leadership from University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) will continue to build on their existing initiative to identify medical assistance recipients who may be interested in and suitable for a career in the medical field. In working with this population, we hope to move individuals off public assistance and connect them with careers in demand.

The demand for a ready skilled workforce is projected to continue as the region's population continues to age. Growth is expected to increase by the year 2028 to roughly 35,080 workers according to the **CWIA Industry Employment 2020-30 Long-Term Projections**. The 2022 location quotient for the sector sits at 1.35. The gains will be seen in home health care services, individual and family services, social assistance, and other ambulatory health care services. The occupations with the greatest demand include registered nurse, licensed and practical nurse, nursing assistant and home health aide, physical and occupational therapy assistants, emergency medical technician and paramedic, substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors. The previously referenced targeted youth initiatives also include components to support the healthcare industry sector. Individuals interested in pursuing careers in healthcare can receive basic education, workforce preparedness, and mentoring to better position them to pursue occupations that provide a solid wage and benefits.

### **Logistics and Transportation**

Moving goods is a lifeline for many businesses and the region's access to major highways is key to keeping that lifeline, represented by the Logistics and Transportation industry cluster, healthy. This sector was considered essential, wherefore the vast majority of those employed in this industry were not laid off due to the pandemic. On-line job postings for October 2020 continue to reflect the significant demand for heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, light truck drivers and laborers and freight, stock, and material movers. The Logistics cluster includes the analysis and coordination of an organization's supply chain. The Transportation industry can be broken down into three groups of companies: shipping, passenger transport, and equipment manufacturers. Fortunately, the Southern

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Alleghenies is well-positioned and served by two major east-west and two major north-south highways that provide strategic access to a significant portion of the east coast of the United States and its metropolitan centers. According to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis' industry cluster data, Logistics and Transportation accounts for approximately 4.89% of the total employment in the region with a location quotient of 1.12. Sub-sectors that employ the most logisticians are manufacturers, federal government, professional, scientific and technical services, management of companies, and wholesale trade. Occupational demand in transportation and warehousing is projected to increase 9.2% through the year 2030 according to the ***CWIA Occupational Employment 2020-30 Long-Term Projections***. Of the projected 2030 employment outlook of 18,880, motor vehicle operators also reflect a 9.2% increase in worker demand. In an interesting twist in these latest projections, passenger vehicle drivers will experience a 28% increase. Though not as impressive, in the SA region, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers continue to lead the list of high demand occupations. Each year, the SAWDB supports a significant number of individual training requests for the driving occupations associated with this industry to meet the heavy demand; we anticipate this demand to continue.

The clusters defined above represent a significant portion of the economy. However, other industry clusters also have a large number of workers, but the occupations do not typically pay a family sustaining wage. The two such best examples are the Retail Trade, and the Hospitality, Leisure and Entertainment clusters. Collectively they account for over 36,000 workers or roughly 22% of the workforce. In both cases, these sectors were heavily impacted by pandemic-forced business closures, and it is expected that the number of establishments will never fully rebound.

Though not representative of a specific sector, the SAWDB and its PA CareerLink® sites will continue to actively support the work of StartUp Alleghenies, the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. To date 294 new businesses have been started and 484 jobs have been created. The SAWDB staff and PA CareerLink® site administrators will work with the entrepreneurial coaches and new businesses to assist them with their workforce needs.

### 1.6 Describe how the region will connect employer labor force requirements and occupational demands with the region's labor force, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Labor force connections will occur at multiple levels throughout the entire workforce system and include a wide variety of system partners and stakeholders. As referenced above, the SAWDB supports numerous programs and special initiatives designed to first identify employer labor force requirements and then communicate those needs to the region's labor force, especially those who are targeted for special assistance and have multiple barriers to employment.

While vehicles like the next generation sector partnerships will help to further identify industry needs, the SAWDB recognizes that the workforce system may not be well-positioned to help those with barriers to employment prepare to compete for those job openings. The SAWDB has reinforced its commitment to providing meaningful services to target populations and has set the direction and tone for service delivery through the efforts of its Special Populations Committee. This committee includes representatives from the private sector, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Corrections, Health and Human Services, Adult Education providers, and others with a commitment to assist those who face some of the most significant barriers to employment. This committee is tasked with identifying service gaps and recommending enhancements to the public workforce system that will increase the marketability of those with barriers to employment and better connect these individuals with demand occupations. With significant input from this committee, the public workforce system will

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continue to develop and deploy unique strategies designed to address employer hiring demands and provide employment opportunities to those with barriers. These will include but are not limited to:

- Promotion of Apprenticeship Fairs – these events have fostered closer working relationships with companies that support apprenticeships and improved partnerships with those labor councils that provide apprenticeships. The fairs will continue to be aggressively marketed to dislocated workers, especially the long-term unemployed and those with readily transferable skills, individuals on public assistance including EARN program participants, and young adults in hopes of addressing pipeline issues. The SAWDB and its partners will support the development of pre-apprenticeship programs and integration into those services that are provided to EARN participants, reentrants, and others with significant barriers to employment. To initiate development SAWDB staff will reach out to their partners in the EARN program as well as any county and state-based reentry initiatives, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other offices that focus on service provision to those with significant barriers. The SAWDB will utilize its Special Population Committee as a springboard to bring appropriate voices to the table so that the coordination of pre-apprenticeships targeting these populations can begin to materialize.
- Career Fairs for Target Populations – building on a successful recruitment tool, the SAWDB and its PA CareerLink® sites will support events designed to enhance employment opportunities for special, target populations including individuals with disabilities, senior workers, low-income residents, and young adults. A highly successful career/resource fair was held at a site operated by the Johnstown Housing Authority. It served to connect residents with the PA CareerLink® and its workforce-related resources including opportunities to receive support with post-secondary education including registered apprenticeships. Based on the tremendous success of this event, future fairs will be planned and expanded throughout the region.
- Enhanced Business Service Team Membership – membership has expanded to include representatives from the EARN program, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Senior Employment Service, and Corrections. Coordination between partner staff engaged in employer outreach has been enhanced and with it, increased collaboration and greater market penetration has been realized. The state-wide business services staff can also serve as a resource to help the Committee identify strategies to promote workforce diversification and inclusion.
- YouthBuild – an initiative designed to transform the lives of young adults through education and employment. This program targets young people who have made poor choices in their past and who now face serious barriers to employment. Those targeted for assistance include high school dropouts, the homeless and/or transitioning out of foster care, and those with criminal records. Participants will earn their GED and industry-recognized credentials in healthcare and manufacturing occupations, participate in paid work experience and receive adult mentoring.
- STEPS (Steps Toward Employment-Progress-Success) – this innovative program developed by the Community Action Partnership for Somerset County, the WIOA Title I provider in Somerset County, helps participants address three specific barriers to employment – criminal backgrounds, mental health issues and substance abuse. During weekly sessions, participants tackle the issues, receive support and additional referrals to relevant agencies, and ultimately graduate to a Job Club and mainstream job search services.
- Support for expungement of court records – workforce partners in Cambria County continue to support a pilot program that brings together the county court system and individuals with criminal records but without convictions. For those determined eligible, their criminal, non-



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conviction court records are expunged at no cost. This has significantly increased their marketability.

- Further implantation of the PA CareerLink® Stabilization Phase- A growing number of customers are entering the one-stop with significant barriers to employment, issues that must be first addressed before an effective job search can be initiated. These individuals are immediately connected, through a face-to-face referral or using technology i.e., Zoom or Skype, with the local community action agency. Inherent in the mission of these partner agencies, these staff are best positioned to assist with barrier remediation. Once the barrier/s has been effectively addressed, the individual will be referred back to the one-stop and the job search work can begin.
- Increased/Enhanced Re-integration Efforts- While many employers are desperate for workers, annually some 4,900 individuals are released from the region's county and state correctional institutions. Ongoing efforts will continue to be made to provide intensive case management and workforce development services to ex-offenders and provide each with a plan that supports the highest level of success. Supportive services and transitional paid work experience opportunities will be available as will close coordination with partners in the justice system, and outreach to employers willing to provide a 'second chance' to these individuals.

As a core partner, OVR provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screen qualified employees with disabilities. OVR on-boarding supports for a qualified new hire can include reasonable accommodation consultation, initial probationary period wage reimbursement (On-the-Job Training OJT), referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards and helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

Through this multi-pronged approach, the public workforce system will be well-positioned to assist jobseekers, especially those with barriers to employment, gain the necessary soft skills and occupational credentials necessary to meet employer-identified workforce needs.

### *1.7 Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services for the region.*

The Southern Alleghenies region encompasses more than 4,600 square miles, 60% of which is still forested. Consequently, much of the region is rural and public transportation is limited. Fixed route public transportation is only available in Cambria and Blair Counties, with the cities of Johnstown and Altoona as the respective hubs; 89% of the region's jobs are also found in these two counties. Van service is available on a limited basis in the four rural counties; this system is primarily utilized by senior citizens to access healthcare. This lack of public transportation, especially in the region's more rural areas, can create significant challenges for those seeking employment but without access to an automobile.

Despite the limited access to transportation resources, there are coordinated efforts underway to identify and address transportation issues. With guidance from the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC) and leadership from local elected officials, multiple partners have come together to address the challenges created from this lack of public transit. The Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning Organization (RPO) has developed its 2018-2042 Long-Range Transportation

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Plan (LRTP) that outlines a vision for the region's transportation system over a minimum 25-year horizon. The plan identifies the region's transportation assets, highlights current and future transportation needs, and outlines a series of goals and objectives designed to address these needs. The plan was developed in coordination with PennDOT and with significant input from key stakeholders, including representatives from the public workforce system.

The Alleghenies RPO has adopted its Coordinated Transit-Human Service Plan (CTP). This document provides direction for the region to improve public transportation options and promote the mobility of those who are dependent on transit. Furthermore, this plan seeks to close transportation gaps in service availability, quality, and communication. The CTP has been developed with considerable input from a variety of community stakeholders including the SAWDB and PA CareerLink® sites.

Both plans are required to secure public funding, most notably support available through the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. This act includes provisions to increase transportation options, assist in redeveloping communities, and expand employment opportunities especially for low-income residents, minorities and individuals with disabilities. The Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC), the PA Department of Transportation designee to provide rural transportation planning for the region, will work to secure funding to address the issues identified within the transportation plans. As an arm of the SAP&DC and active participant in both planning initiatives, the SAWDB, and with it the public workforce system, will have input on projects that serve to connect jobseekers with employment opportunities.

To facilitate access to workforce services, the SAWDB and its workforce partners have supported the establishment of multiple PA CareerLink® affiliate sites across the region. Public libraries and community centers serve as remote locations where workforce and volunteer facility staff can provide basic services to customers who do not have personal access to the internet or in some cases, the resources to travel to one of the region's five comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites. In 2018 and 2019, the region's two largest comprehensive one-stops (Blair and Cambria counties) relocated their operations into the Cambria County and Altoona Area Public Libraries. These locations, situated downtown in Johnstown and Altoona, were selected after developing a 'heat map', a resource that geographically illustrated our customers' residences. It quickly became evident that our two largest sites were not conveniently located and not readily accessible by public transportation. The move to the libraries has resulted in increased accessibility, and with it, customer foot-traffic, innovative programming, accomplished in partnership with the libraries, and a cost savings that has allowed for the development of additional affiliate sites in Cambria County. Under OSO guidance, the one-stops have expanded the use of technology to help serve those who reside some distance from the nearest PA CareerLink®. As a result of this forward thinking, the Southern Alleghenies one-stops were able to transition to virtual service provision when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of the 'bricks and mortar' facilities. Virtual service delivery will continue and expand, using technology like Zoom, Skype, SignNow, and other platforms in order to 'meet customers where they are.'

The SAWDB has a long history of providing financial support for a variety of supportive services. These include transportation assistance, childcare, and support for work-related clothing, tools, and other essentials to increase an individual's marketability or their participation in a work-based training opportunity. Transportation assistance is by far the most sought-after service, not surprisingly given the region's geography and general lack of public transportation. Financial assistance is provided to adults, dislocated workers, and youth, to offset commuting costs while an individual is pursuing post-

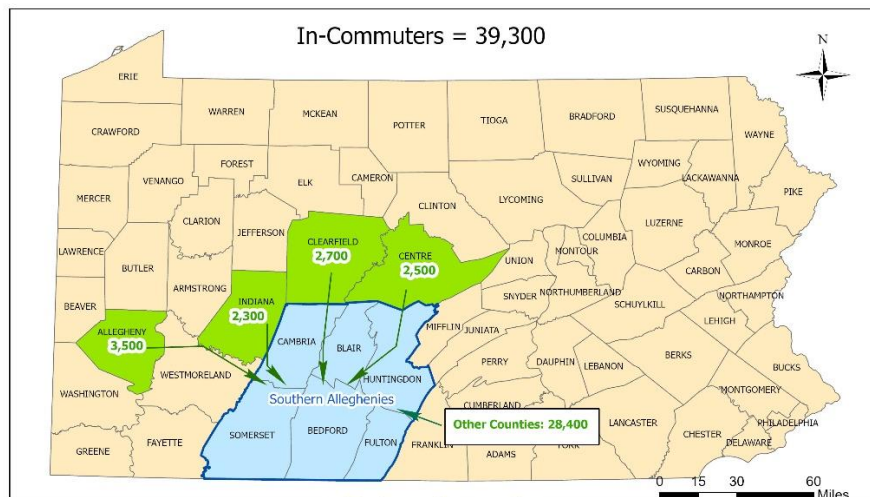
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secondary education, engaged in On-the-Job Training (OJT), or in a paid work experience opportunity. As is the case with OJT, this financial support is provided until the individual receives their first paycheck.

### Commuting Patterns:

Of the 155,800 jobs in the region, 75% are held by residents of the six counties. The other 25% are filled by individuals who commute into the Southern Alleghenies region for employment. Conversely, roughly 56,900 residents leave the region for employment. Only in Blair County do the 'in-commuters' outnumber the 'out-commuters'; roughly 56% of those coming into the county for employment reside elsewhere in the Southern Alleghenies region. Blair is also the only county where the number of jobs exceeds the available labor force. This is no doubt a direct reflection of Blair County's strong local economy, with 35% of all jobs in the region, and a July 2022 unemployment rate of 4.3. By comparison, 56% of the resident labor force in Somerset leave the county for employment; there are roughly 7,700 more workers than jobs. In the case of Huntingdon, where there are 4,000 more workers than jobs, 62% of the resident labor force leave the county for employment. The SAWDB and its workforce partners, will be watching these numbers closely as new business development increases, especially in rural Huntingdon and Somerset counties. An examination of commuting patterns may help to identify geographic areas and industries where skill gaps exist and therefore require more 'in-commuters' to meet industry workforce needs. Using *U.S. Census Bureau. 2020. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/> based on the average number of primary jobs between 2017-2019*; the maps below illustrate the region's commuting patterns.

### Southern Alleghenies In-Commuting Patterns

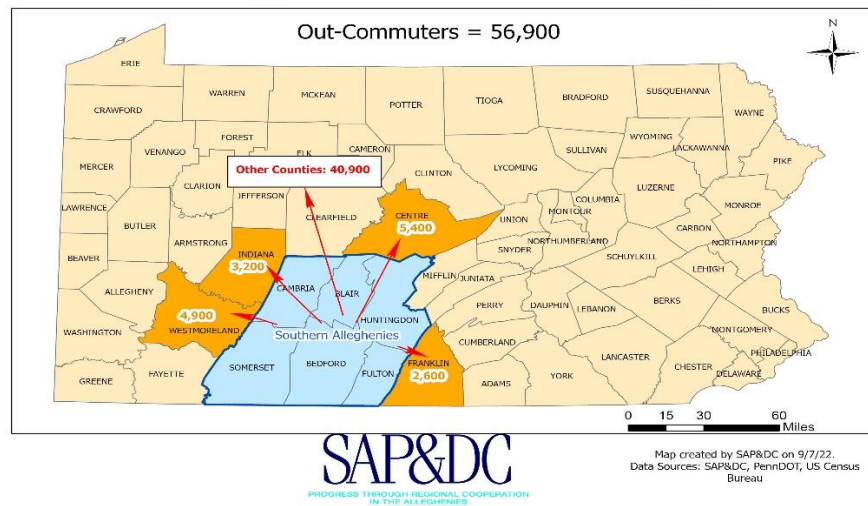


**SAP&DC**  
PROGRESS THROUGH REGIONAL COOPERATION  
IN THE ALLEGHENIES

Map created by SAP&DC on 9/7/22.  
Data Sources: SAP&DC, PennDOT, US  
Census Bureau

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### Southern Alleghenies Out-Commuting Patterns



#### 1.8 Describe the region's strategy to increase participation on the statewide eligible training provider list.

The SAWDB continues to place great importance on raising the educational attainment level of its residents. In addition to the SAWDB's significant investments of its WIOA Title I allocations, the Board also works to secure competitive grants to support training. Key to the realization of its strategy to increase the skills of its labor force is the development and maintenance of a robust Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Key SAWDB staff dedicate significant time in outreach to the region's post-secondary education providers. Staff provide one-on-one assistance to help educators navigate the process of completing applications for program placement on the ETPL and they are available for consult and assistance throughout the process. As a result of this personal attention, the Southern Alleghenies region boasts the second highest number of courses/programs on the ETPL. Currently nine schools, ranging from career and technology centers to private proprietary schools and a state-sponsored community college and member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) make up the ETPL for the region and offer 120 different programs in support of high priority occupations. Increased emphasis on registered apprenticeships has resulted in additional support for apprentices. Currently four locally sponsored registered apprenticeships are included on the ETPL.

In addition to institutions of higher education, local apprenticeships are also included on the ETPL. Through SAWDB and PA CareerLink® support and recognition, the value of apprenticeships is highlighted. Technical assistance is provided to interested employers as they work through the process of apprenticeship development and ultimately recognition by the Pennsylvania Office of Apprenticeship. This assistance has resulted in the placement of new apprenticeship programs on the ETPL. In either case, whether apprenticeship or post-secondary education, the key to this region's strategy is personalized attention, knowledgeable technical assistance, and regular communication between the SAWDB and PA CareerLink® staff and the region's employers and educators.

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

Not applicable to the Southern Alleghenies Region, as the region is made up of a single workforce development area.

*1.10 Describe the agreement between the local boards that describes how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with L&I on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in section 116(c), for each of the local areas within the planning region.*

Not applicable to the Southern Alleghenies Region, as the region is made up of a single workforce development area.