

Kern, Inyo and Mono
Workforce Development Board

Local Plan
Program Years 2021 – 2024



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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 Kern, Inyo and Mono Workforce Development Board (WDB) has developed a four-year Local Plan covering program years 2021-24. Upon approval by state officials representing the Governor, the plan will be effective from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025. This plan replaces the WDB's PY 2017-20 Local Plan and its 2019 modification. While this plan carries forward some of the strategies that have made local services effective and programs successful, it expresses the intention of the WDB to examine and embrace opportunities for improvement over the life of the plan.

The Kern, Inyo and Mono (KIM) Counties Consortium was established by a joint powers agreement among the three jurisdictions. Workforce development activities of the Consortium are administered by Employers' Training Resource (ETR) of Kern County. In accordance with WIOA, ETR's workforce development activities are overseen by the WDB, as outlined in its agreement with the Chief Local Elected Official, the Kern County Board of Supervisors.

For ease of review, this plan generally uses the abbreviation "ETR" when describing the agent leading the workforce system and providing WIOA services. The abbreviation "WDB" is used only where technical distinctions between ETR and the WDB are required. The abbreviation "KIM" is also used in reference to the local workforce development area.

The Local Board's Vision for the PY 21-24 Local Plan

The Kern, Inyo, and Mono WDB will lead the continuous improvement of a local workforce development system that meets the myriad needs of job seekers, workers and businesses. These efforts will be business-led, market-driven, and results-oriented. Through the involvement of community leaders from business, government, education, economic development, and social services, workforce development activities will prepare talent (the workforce) for the labor market (business) demand. Training and other talent development activities will focus on:

- Pre-employment strategies: helping unemployed persons prepare for jobs.
- Employment strategies: helping job seekers secure jobs.
- Post-employment strategies: providing workers will skills to retain employment, pursue advanced skills development and move farther on their chosen career paths.

The activities for businesses will focus on:

- Strengthening partnerships with employers through work-based learning strategies, including on-the-job training, training for incumbent workers, and other customized training models that will help businesses meet their workforce needs.
- Hosting recruitment events, conducting job fairs, and other services to match talent to demand.
- Increased business awareness of the workforce system through various forms of marketing.

The local board has identified the following as some of its strengths: board engagement; diverse funding; staff capacity and competency; community partnerships; and availability of a variety of training programs linked to business needs. Challenges include: a limited number of local providers for some services; limits on youth spending; lengths of some training programs; lack of awareness about workforce programs by some in community; and geographic size of region.

The local board believes that it has the capacity to utilize its strengths over the course of this Local Plan to increase training and education opportunities to reduce skill, wage, and education gap for members of the community with barriers to employment.

Linking Workforce to a Larger Regional Agenda

The local Board has made a significant investment in B3K, a regional economic prosperity project that has been coordinated by the Brookings Institute. The Better Bakersfield Boundless Kern (B3K) Regional Action for Economic Prosperity initiative is unique in that it creates a common agenda to identify opportunities for regional prosperity, simultaneously aligning diverse efforts, including workforce development. Rather than focusing economic development solely on traditional metrics, B3K Prosperity prioritizes job quality and access to ensure inclusive economic development and regional prosperity.

The Premise: Despite years of steady job creation based on energy, agriculture, and population growth, the Bakersfield-Kern region lags the nation and peers on productivity, wages, new businesses, and other measures of competitiveness and faces serious challenges to its future vitality, which include:

- Extreme pressure from regulators and market forces on the industries that historically drive the region's economy.
- A lack of quality jobs, and access to them, that enable residents to be self-sufficient and reach the middle class.
- The absence of regional unity, as well as fragmented public-private efforts and investment undermining the region's economic competitiveness.
- Strategies are needed to respond to economic disruptions and regional competitiveness challenges; improve job quality and access for broader prosperity; and organize efforts to attract investments and maximize return.

Key Components: The B3K Prosperity initiative includes:

- New shared principles and objectives for economic development in Kern County.
- Enhanced collaboration among diverse, cross-sectoral stakeholders so the region can collaborate to compete.
- A framework for joint problem-solving, sustained beyond publishing a strategy.
- Tactics, governance, and operational commitments to hold partners accountable.
- Enduring local capacity-building and external network-solving conversations.

Project Outcomes: Anticipated results of the initiative include, but are not limited to:

- An evidence-based market assessment to guide informed decisions and foster problem-solving conversations.
- A detailed roadmap with goals and tactics created by community stakeholders in response to data, filling gaps and aligning individual efforts.
- An operational and investment plan with local commitments to implementation, and near-term priorities to jointly pursue investment from a variety of federal, state and private sources.
- A strengthened community infrastructure and capacity to track progress and proactively address an evolving economic environment.

Role for the Kern, Inyo and Mono WDB: A central feature of B3K are the broad based contributions of many economic stakeholders. The WDB's role in promoting the economic competitiveness envisioned by B3K, like those of many others, is significant and includes:

- Continuing to tie the local board's jobs agenda to larger economic priorities.
- Focus training and skills preparation on demand and emerging sectors that create a pathway to jobs paying middle class wages.
- Develop and promote career pathways for growth industries.
- Collaborate with business to develop innovation training programs, including work-based training models.
- Expand the partnership with education and other system partners to increase foundational skills, work readiness skills, digital literacy skills, and job-specific skills of all worker through region.

Developing the WDB's PY 2021-24 Four-Year Plan

Development of the Local Plan was the result of ETR's significant engagement with organizations and individuals throughout Kern, Inyo and Mono counties who guide, contribute to, and benefit from workforce system services. A series of community and stakeholders forums were held, as were several "agency-to-agency" discussions with local partners. Developing the plan also involved a process of reviewing and evaluating existing partnerships, services, and systems and identifying areas that can be strengthened. ETR's executive leadership led the planning process on behalf of the local board.

ETR secured support from independent consultants with substantial experiencing guiding local and regional planning efforts. These individuals supported the stakeholder

engagement process and assisted in crafting the content of the plan. Completing the plan took nearly five months, after which it was made available for public review and comment, prior to being forwarded to the California Workforce Development Board for review.

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

Development of the PY 2021-24 Four-Year Local Plan was affected on several levels by the onset of the pandemic. In preparing preceding plans, ETR representatives, board members, system partners, and other stakeholders have previously gathered in person to discuss and share ideas. These gatherings were replaced by virtual sessions, which, over time, became a familiar means of meeting for all involved. The planning process, which requires extensive dialogue and information, became a bit more arduous given restrictions brought about by the pandemic. Still, all parties met the challenges and contributed to the development of a plan that will guide the KIM workforce system from mid-2021 through mid-2025.

While the content of this plan frequently references the pandemic, most descriptions of activities and services, are described in a “non-pandemic” context. The WDB and ETR recognize that effects of COVID-19 will likely shape our work over the next several years, particularly during the first half of the four-year period. However, describing services as they are typically delivered represents the operational environment that the local workforce system envisions for the next four years as the coronavirus is contained and the economy fully reopens.

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 Kern, Inyo and Mono 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 Memoranda of Understanding

Over the last five decades, ETR (under various names) has built strong and effective relationships with state and local agencies that represent the one-stop partner programs. Over the next four years, ETR 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 nineteen (19) federal one-stop partner programs, with which the Kern, Inyo and Mono WDB has developed MOUs.

Federal Partner Programs	MOU Partner
Title I Adult Title I Dislocated Worker Title I Youth	Employer’s Training Resource Inyo County Department of Health and Human Services Mono County Social Services Department
Title II Adult Education and Literacy	Farmworker Institute for Education and Leadership Development Kern High Scholl District Delano Joint Union High School District
Title III Wagner-Peyser Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Employment Development Department (EDD)
Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
Carl Perkins Career Technical Education	Bakersfield College, Cerro Coso Community College , Kern Community College District
Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	SER – Jobs for Progress, Inc.
Job Corps	Inland Empire Job Corps Center
Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)	California Indian Manpower, Inc.
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)	Employer’s Training Resource
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	Employment Development Department (EDD)

Youth Build	Not Applicable. There is no Youth Build Program in the LWDA.
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Employment Development Department (EDD)
Community Services Block Grant	Community Action Partnership of Kern
Housing and Urban Development E&T	Housing Authority of Kern County
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Employment Development Department (EDD)
Second Chance	Latino Coalition Community Leadership
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CalWORKs	Kern County Department of Human Services

Memoranda of Understanding with System Partners

The most recent MOU between the one-stop partners serving the Kern, Inyo, and Mono Counties Workforce Development Area and the Kern, Inyo, and Mono Counties Workforce Development Board was signed in 2019. The purpose of the MOU is described as:

The AJCC is the local One-Stop Center within the KIM WDA which serves as the recruitment center and training access for local employers and job seekers. The AJCC is the cornerstone of Kern, Inyo and Mono counties workforce development system, and its partners are jointly responsible for the workforce and economic development, education, and other resource service programs.

WIOA emphasizes customer choice, job-driven training, provider performance, and continuous improvement. The quality and selection of providers and programs of training services is vital to achieving these core principles.

The parties to this agreement recognize the many benefits to our customers in the collaboration and integration of seamless service and have participated in the development and operation of a one-stop system doing business as the AJCC.

The administrators of the participating AJCC Partners have been granted general authority from their governing boards to work with other agencies in the community and to define their roles in the delivery of services as reflected herein.

It is understood that full implementation of the proposed system may require further approvals from governing boards and/or legal counsel for contracts, leases and/or sub-grant agreements.

With regard to a vision for the partnership, the MOU states:

The partners are committed to a locally-driven system which develops partnerships, and provides programs and services to achieve three main policy objectives established by the California Workforce Development Strategic Plan, which includes the following:

- *Foster demand-driven skills attainment;*
- *Enable upward mobility for all Californians; and*
- *Align, coordinate, and integrate programs and services.*

These objectives will be accomplished by ensuring access to high-quality AJCC that provide the full range of services available in the community for all customers seeking the following: Looking to find a job; building basic educational or occupational skills; earning a postsecondary certificate or degree; obtaining guidance on how to make career choices; and seeking to identify and hire skilled workers.

Coordination with AJCC Partner Programs

The following information summarizes the ways in which the ETR and the local workforce system collaborate with organizations managing the federally mandated one-stop partner programs. Opportunities for further enhancing the workforce system's collaboration with the partners are summarized in Section V of this plan.

WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs: The three formula-funded programs are administered by ETR and overseen by the WDB. Services are delivered through an extensive network of comprehensive, affiliate, and specialized America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs).

WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy: The Kern Adult Education Consortium operates WIOA Title II programs. The consortium includes: Kern Community College District, Kern County Office of Education (Superintendent of Schools), Kern High School District-Adult School, Porterville Adult School, Delano Adult School, Mojave Adult School, McFarland Adult School, Wasco Adult School, Tehachapi Adult School, Muroc Joint Unified School District, Sierra Sands Unified School District, Inyo County Office of Education, and Mono County Office of Education. ETR attends the monthly Adult Education Consortium meetings and provides regular WIOA program updates. Kern Community College District, Kern County Superintendent of Schools and the Kern High School District have representation on the WDB and provide input on coordination with workforce development activities. Title II programs focus on helping adults to increase their basic education skills; gain support in attaining a secondary school diploma or prepare for an equivalency exam; and, for English language learners, improving reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English.

WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser: The California Employment Development Department (EDD) administers and staffs the Wagner-Peyser Program, which is a key partner program, providing connections to jobs, support for AJCC operations and workshops for participants. EDD staff are co-located at the AJCCs providing a wide range of functions, including providing staffing for the Resource Room. EDD leads various a job club and workshops for AJCC customers including sessions providing instruction on developing resumes and preparing for interviews.

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation: The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) has staff co-located at the three comprehensive AJCCs. Coordination between Title I, Title IV, and other workforce system partners and programs includes: cross referrals of applicants and participants between ETR and DOR staff when an individual with a disability is determined to need the services of one of both organizations; co-enrollment and co-case management of participants; collaboration in efforts to increase the availability of competitive integrated employment (CIE) opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, as outlined in the CIE local partnership agreement in which the ETR's AJCCs are listed as a community partner; DOR advises the ETR on accommodation issues and assistive technology; DOR has provided various training sessions for ETR staff and system partners.

Carl Perkins Career Technical Education: receives Perkins funds to support development and delivery of career technical education programs, which includes Bakersfield College and Cerro Coso Community College, as represented by Kern Community College District and Taft College.

Title V Older Americans Act: The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is operated by SER – Jobs for Progress, AJCC staff and system partners refer individuals 55 years and older to the program when subsidized employment opportunities through SCSEP appear to be a good option for an individual's transition back into the labor market.

Job Corps: Job Corps is the largest nationwide residential career training program in the country. The program helps eligible young people ages 16 through 24 complete their high school education, trains them for meaningful careers, and assists them with obtaining employment. ETR collaborates directly with the Inland Empire Job Corps Center.

Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166): ETR has a long history of working with California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC) to assist Indians and Native Americans in accessing workforce development services and employment opportunities. CIMC offers job search, OJT, classroom training programs, work experience, career planning, supportive services, occupational and literacy skills, and entrepreneurial skills training. Native American customers seeking services through the AJCCs may be referred to CIMC for additional assistance.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program (WIOA Section 167): ETR is the WIOA Section 167 grantee for the local area and, in 2020, successfully competed for the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grant for another four years. The NFJP grant is well-integrated into the One-Stop delivery system in Kern County. Additionally, due to ETR's unique position as the recipient of WIOA Title I funding expanded services, leveraged funding, and increased opportunities are available for farmworkers. ETR has bilingual staff, including many with farmworker backgrounds, that work on this program and assist clients.

Veterans: EDD administers this program and designated Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) Specialists are stationed at the comprehensive AJCC in Bakersfield to assist veterans seeking employment.

Youth Build: There is no Youth Build Program in the local workforce development area.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Act: EDD administers TAA, which 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: CSBG programs are administered by the Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK). The organization provides an integrated network of services as the official anti-poverty agency for Kern County.

Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training Program: ETR collaborates with the Housing Authority of the County of Kern to provide its customers with access to workforce development services. The Housing Authority is an independent, local government agency providing safe, affordable housing to thousands of Kern County residents through special programs serving families, individuals, senior citizens, Veterans, the disabled, homeless persons, farm workers and emancipated foster youth.

Unemployment Compensation: Many unemployed customers visit the centers to file unemployment insurance (UI) claims using the Resource Room. ETR and other partners support EDD staff in sharing information with customers about applying for UI. AJCC customers are currently referred to a phone number or online unemployment insurance (UI) assistance. ETR is working with EDD to expand services for UI customers at the AJCC. EDD intends to provide a UI Navigator at the comprehensive center in Bakersfield.

Second Chance: Latino Coalition for Community Leadership operates a Reentry Employment Opportunities program that is authorized under the Second Chance Act.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs: ETR and the Kern County Department of Human Services work closely together in providing workforce development and employment services for CalWORKs recipients. Collaboration on the CalFresh Employment and Training Program is described in Section II.A of this Plan.

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

WIOA and state guidance encourage delivery of services across multiple partner programs. Co-enrollment enables local workforce systems to leverage resources from various fund streams to address the needs of participants. ETR works with one-stop

system partners and other local stakeholders to identify resources best suited to participants needs. Job seekers may receive assistance from various providers to achieve their training, employment and career goals.

Co-Enrollment of Job Seekers Across Programs

ETR and one-stop system partners, including those co-located at the AJCCs, often co-enroll customers in two or more programs. While WIOA participants have been co-enrolled with virtually all partners, programs with which job seekers are most frequently co-enrolled include:

WIOA Title II AEFLA: Participants in WIOA Title I programs who need basic skills training and other forms of educational support are referred to local education agencies operating Title II programs.

WIOA Title IV Rehabilitation Act: For many individuals co-enrolled under the WIOA Title I and Rehabilitation programs, WIOA supports career services and training while DOR addresses needs for support services and accommodations.

Trade Adjustment Assistance: Many individuals receiving training funded by TAA are co-enrolled in WIOA for case management and job placement assistance.

Carl Perkins: WIOA participants may receive Perkins-funded training from community college partners.

Unemployment Insurance: Individuals connecting with the AJCCs to register for UI often become aware of and enroll in WIOA services.

Co-Case Managing Co-Enrolled Customers

Case management is integral to participant success and that of the overall one-stop system. When participants are co-enrolled, partners ensure that their component of service delivery and case management are coordinated with the those of other partners and that a process for effective communication has been established. All partners serving a single participant must work to ensure that services being provided are non-duplicative and that appropriate progress against the participant's goals are being met.

Cross Training

Over the last four years, ETR has devoted significant time and resources to organizing and facilitating cross training among all local one-stop system partners, including frontline staff who work directly with clients. Knowledge of services, funding, eligibility criteria, and other features of partner programs makes ETR staff better able to identify where co-enrollment with other programs may provide crucial benefits to clients.

Using Technology to Manage Cross Referrals

ETR is now a local partner in the use of the Unite US, a technology solution which streamlines referrals for social needs to organizations providing direct services. By electronically linking an individual's entire "care team" to coordinate services, the burden is removed from the individual to navigate much needed services for themselves. Unite Us has been adopted by the Kern Community Care Network to create efficient linkages among healthcare providers, social services agencies, and local community organizations throughout Kern County that provide services vital to underserved populations

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

ETR administers a network of comprehensive, affiliate and specialized AJCC locations which are spread out to cover the KIM Consortium's 21,522 square miles. Given the vastness of the service area and the importance of reaching individuals and businesses in remote locations, ETR uses various strategies to connect customers with WIOA and other one-stop system services.

Remote Services Locations

For ETR, remote locations are considered communities that are not within reasonable commuting distance of Bakersfield and other population centers of Kern County. Through one comprehensive and 8 affiliate AJCCs, the WDB ensures that services are available throughout the region. Remote AJCCs include:

In Kern County: Ridgecrest AJCC (a comprehensive center) and Lake Isabella, Tehachapi, Mojave, Taft, and Shafter affiliate AJCCs.

In Inyo County: Bishop affiliate AJCC.

In Mono County: Mammoth Lakes and Walker affiliate AJCCs.

Another means of reaching individuals in remote areas, including those living in agricultural communities, is a mobile unit owned and operated by ETR's contractor Proteus, Inc. The Mobile Unit is equipped with computers, printers and Internet (wi-fi) to assist all AJCC partners, particularly those who serve residents in rural areas.

Current Use of Technology to Enhance Service Delivery to Remote Locations

AJCC resource rooms at all remote locations are equipped with computers, printers and internet. Online services available from any location include orientation, employment-related workshops, and training videos. Video conferencing services enable customers to communicate with staff and to participate in training, workshops, and other presentations.

Other electronic systems used to support communications with remote locations include CalJOBS, the Unite Us electronic community referral system (described above), and distance learning through approved programs. ETR's website includes job listings, descriptions of all WIOA services, links to partners services, and access to various social media postings on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

As outlined in Section V of the Local Plan, ETR and the system partners have prioritized efforts to enhance the availability of online services to improve access for all current and potential customers, including those in remote communities.

Coordination of Workforce Activities and Support Services

Supportive services are provided to WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Program participants as necessary to enable them to participate in career services and/or training. WIOA funds may be used for supportive services when such services are not available from other programs.

Determining Participants' Needs for Support Services

At the intake/eligibility appointment, supportive services needs are addressed and documented on the WIOA initial assessment form. Supportive services needs are again addressed as participants begin training and as they begin job search, since needs may change. Any adjustments are noted on the supportive service referral form. ETR has published a Supportive Services policy explaining types of support services that are available and the maximum costs allowed. Pre-requisites for supportive services include:

- A Readiness Assessment is completed.
- Completion of training program requirements are verified.
- Case Managers assess participant needs on a case by case basis once they are in job search.
- Once employed, job placement needs are assessed.

Service Available to Address Participants Needs and Barriers

Services that are frequently provided using WIOA Title I or special project funds include:

Transportation: Clients may be eligible for transportation assistance to enable their participation in WIOA activities. Transportation expenses available to eligible WIOA clients are limited to usual and customary public/community transportation, such as a bus line or personal vehicle. Additionally, transportation services may include, but are not limited to, cooperative arrangements with any public transit providers, including school districts, churches, and community centers.

Personal Care/Hygiene: Small hygiene kits are made available to give to clients, as needed.

Clothing: Clients requiring clothing must first be referred to the Clothes Closet, unless specific attire, such as a uniform, is required. Clothing required by clients for work and not paid for by the employer (e.g., steel toe boots, uniforms, etc.) may be provided through WIOA-fund supportive services.

Health-Related Issues: Medical expenses related to a condition of employment or training, such as testing for communicable diseases, eye exams, glasses/safety glasses, and drug screens may be provided. Support concerning broader health and medical-related issues is described below.

Tools: Tools required for employment may be authorized upon receipt of a letter from the employer on company letterhead. Clients are referred to pre-selected vendors for tools.

Certifications and License Fees: Allowable costs include union dues for training and employment, and fees for examinations such as High School Diploma, GED, or CBEST.

Miscellaneous Training Expenses: Payments may be made for items such as books, supplies, background checks, and other costs necessary to participate in training/job search activities that are not otherwise included in contracted training costs.

Relocation Assistance: The form of support is available for Dislocated Worker Program participants only. To be considered for relocation assistance, a dislocated worker must be currently enrolled into a WIOA activity and have a written confirmation from an employer of a bona fide job offer.

Services that are generally made through referrals to community-based organizations or public agencies include:

Childcare: Participants are referred to community agencies for childcare services, which may include pre-school and other early education programs.

Legal Services: Clients will be referred to Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance.

Food: Clients are referred to community food banks and similar resources.

Health Services: Uninsured clients with medical problems should be referred to Kern Medical Center or Clinica Sierra Vista and encouraged to apply for the Medical Indigent Adult program (MIA) or other health service programs, such as those that are available under the Affordable Care Act/Covered California.

Housing: Clients requiring housing assistance are referred to the public housing agencies and community-based programs providing emergency and transitional housing.

Utilities: Customers requiring support are referred to their utility provider for enrollment in assistance programs for which they qualify, and to other social service agencies

All supportive service referrals are documented. There is no maximum amount for WIOA-funded supportive services that may be provided during training, except for transportation, which is limited \$400. Up to \$800 in WIOA supportive services may be provided while customers are participating in individualized career services in addition to the amount provided during training. Supportive services are not available during follow-up. When a participant has reached the maximum amount, no further supportive services may be provided without the management approval.

Specialized Grant Resources for Support

In addition to services available through WIOA Title I funding, support resources are available to those who are enrolled in specialized grant activities including the following:

- AB 109 Grant: Allowable services are the same as WIOA Title I formula programs.
- Prison to Employment (P2E) Grant: Allowable services are the same as WIOA Title I formula programs.
- National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Grant: Allowable services are the same as WIOA Title I formula programs.
- DEA Veterans Grant: Allowable services are the same as WIOA Title I formula programs.
- Rapid Response Grant: Allowable services are the same as WIOA Title I formula programs.
- Disaster Recovery COVID-19 Temporary Jobs Grant: Allowable services are the same as WIOA Title I formula programs.
- Dislocated Worker COVID-19 Grant: Can be used to purchase laptops and for temporary rent and utilities assistance
- La Cooperativa Campesina de California: Provides Housing Grant rental assistance or utilities support up to \$650.00
- CalFresh Employment and Training Program: Allowable services are the same as WIOA Title I formula programs and are available only to individuals enrolled in OJT or Paid Work Experience.

As indicated above, many forms of support are provided through partner resources; federal, state and local government agencies; and community-based organizations.

Physical and Programmatic Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

ETR is committed to providing services that offer maximum accessibility for customers with disabilities. By implementing and monitoring the services described below, ETR ensures compliance with WIOA Section 188, applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and state-issued policy guidance regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities.

Facilities, Technology and Services Supporting Accessibility

All comprehensive and specialized AJCC locations are ADA compliant. Universally-accessible workstations are located at the Southeast and Delano comprehensive AJCCs, as well as the Oildale affiliate AJCC. The stations feature technology to support job seekers with mobility, hearing, and visual barriers. The universally-accessible computer has Windows-based software with assistive technology including:

Screen Magnifier: Magnifies the computer screen up to a maximum of 1500%.

Narrator: Requires the use of headphones and has the ability to read a selection of words or paragraphs.

Speech Recognition: Uses an external microphone for speech-to-text. The built-in MS Windows software works in all applications, including the MS Office Suite, Google Chrome, and Internet Explorer.

Flatbed Scanner: Compatible peripheral device connected to the workstation with capability for individuals with mobility, hearing and visual barriers.

ETR contracts with an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter service. Spanish bilingual staff can translate documents, as needed, and services in other languages are available upon request.

Special Grants to Support Job Seekers with Disabilities

ETR has received several special grants to enhance services for our customers with disabilities, including Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA) grants to help individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to transition into the workforce. With one such DEA grant, ETR was able to prepare participants for employment and place them in jobs in the healthcare and manufacturing industries, using assistive technology. Under another grant, ETR provides employment and training services to 30 veterans with intellectual disabilities; mental health disabilities; and/or physical disabilities, including, but not limited to, being deaf/hearing impaired and/or blind/visually impaired.

Staff Training

ETR staff participates in annual training to improve and coordinate agency services to customers with disabilities. AJCC staff has been trained on the following topics by DOR:

- Windmills Training (Disability Awareness and Etiquette Training)
- Working with Individuals with Hidden Disabilities, Including Mental Health Disabilities; and
- Consumer Self-Disclosure and Related Barriers, How to Address.

In addition, DOR representatives have assisted ETR by identifying the assistive technology needed for each AJCC site located in Kern, Inyo and Mono Counties.

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, Kern, Inyo and mono 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

ETR collaborates with the Kern County Department of Human Services (DHS) to identify ways to increase communication and reduce barriers with shared customers. In addition, ETR w to work with community based organizations (CBOs), service providers, community colleges, and representatives of DHS to increase rates of employment and wage gains for all individuals receiving CalFresh. The partners have the common goal of supporting low-skilled, low-income or low-wage individuals to prepare for and secure sustainable employment.

In 2020, ETR and DHS entered into an MOU describing collaboration between the WIOA Title I programs and CalFresh Employment and Training Services. The MOU defines the responsibilities of ETR to serve CalFresh clients referred by DHS and provides funding to serve these clients. Services include orientation, assessment, supervised job search, workshops, and related activities. ETR monitors participation and provides monthly report to DHS. Unpaid work experience is available to help clients either gain basic job skills or enhance existing job skills. Due to COVID-19, flexibility in service delivery content and structure has been approved.

Under the MOU, ETR responsibilities for the program are to:

- Accept all referrals from DHS for CalFresh Employment and Training Services;
- Enroll participants in the CalFresh E&T Program, conduct an orientation, and provide DHS a participation report/log monthly;
- Provide supervised job search services for a minimum 12 hours per month;
- Evaluate CalFresh participants for potential placement in appropriate non-paid work experience programs;
- Provide CalFresh services to participants assigned to the DHS District offices of Lake Isabella, Lamont, Mojave, Taft, Ridgecrest, Delano and Shafter. These are in addition to those provided in Bakersfield;
- Review and verify participants CalFresh program eligibility each month, utilizing the C-IV system;

- Notify DHS by email if a participant is not complying with the CalFresh E&T program activities;
- Refer participants to DHS for questions regarding transportation supportive services, as needed;
- Ensure ETR makes contact with and tracks all registered CalFresh E&T participants; and
- Meet monthly with DHS to discuss policy, procedures, and program issues.

While COVID-19 has slowed participation rates in the CalFresh E&T Program, the partners remain fully committed to achieving the objectives of the MOU. DHS and ETR anticipate that participation will increase substantially as in-person services become available and the labor market significantly re-opens.

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

In 2019, KIM WDB entered into an MOU to establish a collaborate relationship with Kern County Department of Child Support Services (KCDCSS) to support the provision of workforce development services for non-custodial parents (NCPs). Under the agreement, the partners seek to increase communication and reduce barriers to employment for NCPs by installing video-conferencing equipment in kiosks located in certain AJCCs. The purpose of this effort is to:

- Provide a means for face-to-face interviews between child support case managers and ETR customers who are NCPs to discuss specific information pertaining to their child support cases;
- Inform the NCP about what to expect once he or she is employed;
- Review the NCP's case to ensure the child support order accurately reflects his/her current earning situation; and
- Make every attempt to remove any potential barriers that would prevent the NCP from successfully preparing for and securing sustainable employment with the assistance of ETR.

The partnership between ETR and KCDCSS builds on a model described in the California State Workforce Plan. Structured collaboration between local workforce development systems and child support agencies can result in employment for many individuals who are in arrears on child support payments and have enforcement orders. Employed individuals with a steady source of income have a much greater likelihood of meeting child support obligations.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the above referenced MOU has been placed on hold and there plans for installing kiosks have been pushed back to 2021.

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.

The Kern-Inyo-Mono Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) was signed in 2019. In accordance with the State Blueprint for expanding the use of competitive integrated employment (CIE) for persons with intellectual disabilities (ID) or developmental disabilities (DD), the three core partners are the California Department of Rehabilitation (through its local operations), the Regional Center, and special education programs of local education partners. Core partners for the KIM LPA are:

Local Education Agencies: Bishop Unified School District; Delano Joint Union High School District; Kern High School District; Mammoth Unified School District; Sierra Sands Unified School District; and Tehachapi Unified School District.

Department of Rehabilitation: DOR - Bakersfield Southwest Branch Office

Regional Center: Kern Regional Center

Several community partners (which are not party to the agreement) are also named, including KIM AJCCs.

The LPA outlines a process for collaboration in pursuit of Competitive Integrated Employment opportunities. CIE is a setting in which individuals with disabilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, are employed alongside non-disabled peers and earning at least minimum wage.

ETR participates in quarterly meetings with the LPA partners to discuss coordination of services outlined in the agreement. Core and community partners have worked to identify strategies to better utilize resources to produce improved employment outcomes for individuals with ID/DD using CIE.

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

ETR's most strategic partners is serving English language learners (ELLs), foreign born individuals and refugees are local education agencies. The Kern County Adult Education Program Consortium (Kern AEP) coordinates service delivery with ETR and other local workforce system stakeholders. The Kern AEP serves ELLs and other targeted individuals who are in need of adult education services, including English as a Second Language (ESL). The Kern AEP provides needed adult education services to support students' progression toward livable wage jobs and careers in regional sector pathways. The Kern AEP has adopted many of the following retention strategies at Kern AEP members' locations: child care, transportation, tutors, career and college counselors, post-secondary transition specialists, and other individualized supports. Kern AEP consortium members will continue to work with KIM WDB' stakeholders' service and

employment plans when the information is provided by the client/student at the time of enrollment in adult education program services. The client/student also provides the KIM WDB or stakeholders with Kern AEP enrollment information.

ETR is the grantee for the WIOA Section 167 programs serving Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. Information on these services is described in Section II.A of this Plan.

IV. WIOA TITLE I COORDINATION

The following narrative addresses services, activities, and administrative requirements of the Kern, Inyo and Mono 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

Over the last several years, ETR has engaged staff in various training activities that are aimed at improving awareness of and skill in using technology tools and applications. Training and professional development in which staff have participated includes, but is not limited to:

LinkedIn Learning: Multiple topics, including use of various software applications and web-based platforms.

CalJOBS Training: Training has been offered with respect to the wide range of system uses, including data management, case management, job development, use of labor market information, producing reports and more.

Training on EconoVue: This service is utilized by Administrative Analysts and the Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion team for labor market information.

Training on Career Hub's Virtual Service Model (VSM): VSM permits staff to communicate more effectively and efficiently with clients by texting information to their mobile devices. This will allow staff to provide job seekers in the targeted populations with assistance through the use of innovative service delivery methods.

In-house training by lead staff and peer-to-peer trainings sessions have also been utilized to increase the effectiveness of staff in using various software and online tools. The need for and usefulness of in-house training was evident during the early stages of the pandemic when it was critical that all staff, contractors and system partners acquired knowledge and skills to communicate via virtual platforms, such as Microsoft Teams.

As technology is consistently changing and at a more rapid pace than ever before, ETR will assess staff's technology training needs semiannually and implement training based on the outcomes of the assessment. There are abundant resources available for training of this type, including many that are provided online.

Frontline Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Cultural Competency and Effectiveness in Working with Individuals and Groups that Have Been Exposed to Trauma

ETR and the workforce system partners are committed to promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in all workforce programs and services. Training in cultural competence skills and in working effectively with individuals having experienced trauma would enhance the workforce system staff's skills.

Training in Cultural Competence Skills

While ETR has regularly makes a wide range of training available to staff, extensive training that is specifically designed to increase staff's skills in cultural competence has not been offered. Training that may benefit staff and partners to increase cultural competence includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

Cultural Competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises four components: awareness of one's own cultural worldview; attitude towards cultural differences; knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews; and cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures and leads to a decrease in miscommunication. Cultural competence has a fundamental importance in every aspect of work.

Training in the following areas may also be useful for workforce system staff and partners:

Cultural Sensitivity: To attain the goal of cultural competence, cultural sensitivity must be understood. Cultural sensitivity is the knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of other cultures, and includes "the willingness, ability and sensitivity required to understand people with different backgrounds", and acceptance of diversity. Crucially, it "refers to being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value."

Cultural Identity: When defining the ideas that surround cultural competence training, defining what culture is can help one understand the ideas that shape the concept. Culture is defined as the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization. When looking at culture in terms of cultural competence training, certain groups of individuals should be focused on because of their relevance to society. There are many groups that are marginalized and underrepresented; a few examples of concepts that make up one's cultural identity include: race, religion, nationality, and LGBT. Including identity helps to shape the ideas and themes that go into cultural competence training.

As indicated in Section V, the partners are considering the establishment of one or more workgroups to examine opportunities for improving the ways in which the workforce system promotes equity. These workgroups will likely provide valuable input on both training topics and potential trainers.

Training to Enhance Skills in Working with Individuals Dealing with Trauma

All ETR youth staff are trauma-informed trained and are provided on-going training to assist with their case management skills and customer services skills. Other ETR and workforce system staff, including contractors, may have received some training in this area. As we have considered training that could benefit staff, ETR has identified the following topics as holding promise: understanding and recognizing participants dealing with trauma; types of trauma; causes and impacts of trauma; recovery; and trauma-informed service delivery.

Some training and professional development sessions that ETR has identified that deal with this subject matter include:

- Trauma Informed and Beyond, Engaging Youth in a Trauma Organized Culture
- Bridges out of Poverty
- Employing the Justice Involved
- Our Journey Together: A Trauma-Informed Approach for Youth and the Workforce System (U.S. DOL-sponsored presentation on Workforce GPS)

Identifying and Securing Training

As the Local Plan is implemented, ETR will continue to work to identify specific training that is available and trainers that are experienced and qualified to provide instruction on these important subjects. Given the California Workforce Development Board's interest in local boards' addressing these topics, it is likely that the California Workforce Association and others will be developing and/or sponsoring training.

Coordination of Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities

ETR has designed and implemented an effective approach to addressing the needs of distressed businesses and workers affected by potential or actual company closures or layoffs. Working with system partners, ETR provides effective rapid response services, which include efforts to avert closures and downsizing and displacement of workers.

Approach to Rapid Response Activities and Layoff Aversion

ETR takes a unified approach to providing rapid response and layoff aversion activities. State guidance suggests that layoff aversion is an integral component of rapid response and anticipates that local workforce development delivery systems will implement strategies that incorporate the two activities when dealing with struggling businesses. The purpose of rapid response under WIOA is to assist workers to quickly re-enter the workforce or to prevent layoffs all together. The intent of layoff aversion is to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment. ETR will address these areas proactively by following industry trends, identifying sign of businesses in distress, and working closely with employers to identify and implement solutions.

Rapid response and layoff aversion services are provided through ETR's Back to Work/Business Center in Bakersfield, where staff specialize in assisting businesses using

WIOA services and those of the one-stop partners and other stakeholders that provide business services. Business engagement is the primary focus of the center, with rapid response and layoff aversion being ancillary activities, as needs for these services are identified.

The Rapid Response Team is comprised of ETR, EDD and Child Support Services staff, who conduct outreach to businesses and provide Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion workshops and services to affected individuals. The Team uses EconoVue (including the Dun and Bradstreet wellness scale) and specialized business data systems (e.g., JobsEQ) available through the local economic development agencies to identify businesses or sectors experiencing challenges or that are expanding. The team also coordinates with the Economic Development Corporation and the Small Business Development Center to identify and provide specific information on services and solutions that could help a business stabilize, such as Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans, GoBiz programs, reduced utility rates offered by PG&E, and earn and learn training programs available through the AJCC.

A Business Hotline has been established to assist businesses with emergency assistance.

Coordination with Key Partners to Respond to Dislocation Events

ETR and Business Services staff rely on WARN notices, media, and word of mouth for notification of layoffs. Upon notification, the Rapid Response Team contacts businesses to set up a planning meeting where information is provided to the company about services of the Kern Economic Development Corporation, Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, CSUB Small Business Development Center, the City of Bakersfield and the local workforce development system. Arrangements are made to provide onsite or offsite rapid response orientations to affected workers. Orientation sessions are led by the Rapid Response team. Sessions address Unemployment Insurance benefits, Trade Adjustment Assistance services, WIOA training and career services, and other resources and programs.

Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
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which the local workforce development delivery system operates. These formula programs provide the administrative funding that supports the WDB and the program funds that are foundational to one-stop service delivery. ETR has built a strong network of AJCCs to serve the vast geography of the three-county service area and has implemented services that prepare job seekers for job and careers that are in demand within the local labor market area.

One-Stop Delivery System

Delivery of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program services is coordinated within the fourteen (14) KIM comprehensive, affiliate and specialized AJCCs, which include:

Comprehensive Centers: There are three comprehensive AJCCs: the Southeast Center in Bakersfield; the Delano Center; and the Ridgecrest Center. All are located in Kern County.

Affiliate Centers: The nine affiliate AJCCs include six in Kern County (the Oildale, Taft, Shafter, Lake Isabella, Lamont and Mojave centers); two in Mono County (the Mammoth Lakes and Walker centers) and one in Inyo County (the Bishop Center).

Specialized Centers: There are two specialized centers operating in Bakersfield: the Back to Work Center, which concentrates on employer outreach, rapid response, layoff aversion, and services for displaced workers; and the EPIC Center, which is home to full service workforce development programs for youth and young adults.

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

ETR's WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and services are employment-focused and targeted to industries in which there is significant demand for talent. While ETR strives to continuously improve services, the local workforce system is highly effective in meeting the needs of business and jobs seekers, offering the full range of services and supports available under WIOA.

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.

Among the most frequently utilized career services provided through the AJCC network are typing test/certificates; job clubs; resume and interviewing skills workshops; mock interviews; training in the use of social media for job search; and basic computer skills tutorials/support.

Training Services: ETR makes available a wide range of training, including off-the-shelf courses from approved providers that have been placed on our Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which includes 235 vocational training programs through 26 training providers. Also available are work-based learning programs, which our staff customize to job seekers skills development needs and the talent needs of local businesses. On-the-job training (OJT) has become an increasingly popular option. In Program Year 2019-2020, 236 OJT contracts were developed and, in Program Year 2020-2021, approximately 100 contracts have been written to date.

Job seekers can attend in-person or online orientations to become familiar with and receive information about training programs. Once customers complete intake, they must attend a Career Path Workshop and Work Keys assessment, if they are interested in receiving training. The Career Path workshop provides career information, an interest inventory (using a Traitify assessment), and labor market information to ensure that customers make an informed choice about training programs. Training is offered for in-demand occupations that meet the needs of local and regional employers. Staff place an emphasis on programs offering industry-recognized credentials, career paths, and connections to work-based learning. Customers select a program based on their interests and qualifications. Most “classroom” training (some of which are delivered through distance learning) are accessed through qualified vendors on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

A few training programs are available through contracted classes with providers that meet the WIOA exceptions for use of contract training by specialized local providers. However, under this Plan, ETR is moving away from the use of reimbursement contracts for training services. The last remaining reimbursement contracts for adult training services are being phased out with short-term agreements intended to cover the costs of participants enrolled prior to converting those programs to an ITA reimbursement format.

ETR has published an Individual Training Account policy. Training activities are assessed by ETR using various tools and benchmarks to measure performance. Annually, staff visits selected programs and monitors all training programs for WIOA compliance.

Priority of Service

Local AJCCs prioritize services for Adult Program participants that meet criteria prescribed by federal and state guidance and local policy.

Compliance with Federal and State Requirements: These are the levels/tiers of priority:

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.

During the WIOA intake process, customers will be assessed for basic skills proficiency, low income, public assistance and veteran status to determine their level of priority.

Local Policy: ETR has established the following local procedures for implementing the priority of service requirement.

When training funds are determined to be limited or there is a waiting list for training, veterans and eligible spouses have priority for WIOA funded training if they meet Adult priority guidelines. If they do not, they will be in the third tier group for priority.

Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Youth Program

ETR funds a wide array of providers, programs and services for youth and young adults under the WIOA Title I Youth Program. Together programs for in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) comprise a comprehensive and effective approach to exposing youth to the world to work and setting them on a path to prepare for fulfilling careers in demand sectors that will ultimately afford them economic self-reliance.

WIOA Youth Programs and Providers

The centerpiece of local youth programs in the Envision-Plan-Innovate-Connect (EPIC) Program for young adults ages 18-25. The program is operated directly by ETR at the Beale Memorial Library in Bakersfield, which functions as a youth-oriented AJCC. A new stand-alone location is opening in 2021, which will enable the program to expand.

Contracted In-School Youth Programs: There are currently four contracts with local education agencies that operate ISY Programs.

- Delano Joint Union High School District: *WIOA In-School Youth Program*
- Kern County Superintendent of School: *Jobs Plus! Program*
- Kern High School District (KHSD): *Quest 4 Success Program*
- Tehachapi Unified School District: *Comprehensive ISY Program*

Contracted Out-of-School Youth Program: There are also four contracted OSY programs, including the following:

- Kern Community College District – Bakersfield College: *Student Outreach and Academic Reintegration (SOAR) Program*
- Kern High School District: *KernWorks! Program*
- Tehachapi Unified School District: *WIOA Out of School Youth Program*
- West Kern Adult Education Network Joint Powers Authority: *West Kern Youth at Work Program*

In addition, ETR contracts with KHSD to provide the work experience component for young adults enrolled in the EPIC program.

Over the active period of the Kern, Inyo, Mono WDB PY 21-24 Local Plan, ETR will competitively procure WIOA Youth Program Services. Issuance of a competitive Request for Proposals is expected in 2022.

Youth Services

WIOA Youth Programs in the KIM Local Workforce Area provide all 14 of the following WIOA-required youth elements:

- Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion or attainment of an equivalency credential
- Alternative education
- Paid work experience
- Occupational skills training
- Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation
- Leadership development opportunities
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring
- Follow-up services
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Services that provide labor market information
- Postsecondary preparation and transition activities

WIOA Youth Program contractors directly provide services for most of the 14 elements, while some services are provided via referrals to program partners that have been

approved by ETR. Contractors are required to offer work experience and follow-up services. All programs comply with local WIOA Youth Program policies, such as those addressing supportive services, work experience, incentives, and follow-up.

The EPIC Program features services that prepare young adults for jobs, advanced education, and careers. Services are customized to meet the needs of each participant through the development of flexible individual service strategies. Broadly, EPIC services include:

Career Exploration and Training: Career assessments, workforce preparation, vocational and technical training, educational planning, and financial literacy training.

Internships and Paid Work Experience: On-the-job training, earn while you learn, and entrepreneurial development.

Opportunities to Network with Employers: Referrals to job openings, job fairs and employer recruitments, work-readiness workshops, resume and interviewing preparation, and assistance on completing applications.

Other Services to Increase Job Readiness: Online high school diploma program, peer-to-peer support, counseling and mentoring, computer lab access, typing certificates and GED testing lab.

EPIC has developed strategies and partnerships to promote the program to local youth, and regularly hosts orientation events for students that will be graduating within 60 days. Staff has designed an "EPIC" flyer to be placed in each graduate's diploma holder. EPIC has a strong partnership with the Dream Center, which provides services for youth in or who have aged out of the foster care system. This partnership has resulted in many direct referrals to the program. EPIC also continues to work closely with the Department of Child Support Services to accept direct referrals for parenting youth who are in need of career and educational planning services. EPIC staff is working with the Arel Moody Group, which features an international motivational speaker that supports disenfranchised youth is seeing barriers as assets and "launch pads" to a vibrant and successful future.

Services to Increase the Digital Skills of Youth

The WIOA Youth Program offers a variety of experiences for participants to gain proficiency with 21st Century skills, including digital technology skills. Examples include:

- KHSD currently offers courses that provide instruction in the use of email, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Microsoft Access. Additional courses are being added that address technology literacy and how it relates to skills required in the workplace.
- Bakersfield College offers non-credit, free-of-cost courses in basic office skills that cover digital literacy topics. Laptops/computers, hotspots, printers, and other technology assistance are available as supportive services.

- LinkedIn Learning courses that are being used by Youth Programs to increase youth's digital literacy include: Building Digital Literacy Skills; Computer Basics; and Google Drive Essential Training.

Through ETR's current technology assistance policy, EPIC clients may be eligible to receive laptops and printers. Due to COVID-19, all enrolled youth have had to adapt to the more regular use of technology, as EPIC has offered services both in person (when permissible) and through virtual platforms. Clients needing a laptop were provided a new Chromebook. In addition to providing a means of participating in training, workshops and other services, this has enabled participants to stay connected to their case managers and peers during group activities. All youth are also oriented to the use of CareerHUB, an internet-based case management tool that allows clients to text and or email their case managers.

Many youth require some training in digital technology skills, while others exhibit strong digital skills based on extensive exposure in school and other environments. More than training, securing hardware and internet access are problems for youth and others in our three-county workforce area. While the pandemic has created some options, as described above, for making hardware available to participants, the need for these resources will exist long after the virus is controlled. Increasing digital access for WIOA and other local workforce system customers will remain be a priority under this four-year Local Plan.

Serving Youth with Disabilities

Youth with disabilities have access to the same range of WIOA activities and services as all other youth and young adult participants. During the Youth Program procurement process, priority is given to programs that are able to effectively serve participants with barriers, such as individuals with disabilities. Such programs and services include:

Bakersfield College: A wide range of services are provided through the college's Disabled Students Programs and Services. The college's Workability III program supports students with disabilities are receiving CalWorks.

Local Education Agencies: School districts operating WIOA Youth programs provide services in accordance with requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which ensure accommodations are provided to participants, when needed.

ETR's EPIC Program collaborates with DOR in serving in-school youth to ensure that they have an effective transition plan following graduation, which includes familiarity with EPIC. EPIC and DOR staff regularly make cross referrals. All EPIC staff attend DOR-sponsored training described in Section II.E. The EPIC site has a universal access workstation that is equipped with assistive technology to support clients that may have visual and or hearing impairments. Reasonable accommodations are made to reflect participants' needs in training and on the job.

Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds and the Competitive Process Used to Award Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities

The Kern, Inyo, Mono Workforce Development Board (WDB) is responsible for the distribution of grant funds through ETR, its fiscal agent. The WDB is granted this authority under its agreement with the Kern County Board of Supervisors.

Award of Contracts

WIOA Title I programs for which contracts are awarded are Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. The local board conducts competitive procurement for WIOA programs and services no less frequently than every four years. In the interim years, the WDB may utilize Request for Proposals (RFP), Request for Refunding (RFR), or sole source procurement processes to award sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities. The issuance of RFP's are announced through public notice in the local newspaper, the AJCC's website, ETR's website, and the County of Kern's website. Separate RFP's may be sent for specific programs or services (for example, Youth programs), in which case both the format of the RFP itself and the review forms used for that procurement may be specific to that program or service. In addition to publishing the notice as described above, RFP packets are sent to agencies on the local board's Bidders/Mailing list. For each funding opportunity, ETR may hold bidder's conference.

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

The WDB fulfills the WIOA-prescribed One-Stop/AJCC Operator and Adult and Dislocated Workers Career Services Provider functions in accordance with federal and state requirements and guidance.

AJCC Operator

The WDB is required to select a One-Stop/AJCC Operator (hereafter OSO) to support continuous improvement of the system and to competitively procure the operator every four years. In 2017, the Kern, Inyo and Mono WDB approved ProPath, Inc. (ProPath) to be the OSO for local area's comprehensive AJCCs.

As OSO, ProPath's services include:

1. In conjunction with the oversight and designated administrative staff of ETR, the OSO coordinates the implementation of a negotiated Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreements with all mandated partners;
2. The convening and facilitation of quarterly WIOA partner meetings that focus on system alignment, process improvement, and building value-added collaboration among system partners;

3. The OSO acts as a liaison between the WDB and the WIOA partners and, as such, is required to submit a written report to the ETR's Director identifying the services being provided and progress made a minimum of ten (10) business days prior to your Board's quarterly Executive Committee meetings and board meetings, and to attend the meetings in order to present the content contained in each written report;
4. On a quarterly basis, perform customer satisfaction surveys for all WIOA partners co-located at each of the comprehensive AJCC one-stop centers, and submit a written report detailing the results of the surveys to the ETR's Director a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the Board's Executive Committee meetings and board meetings, and attend the board meetings in order to present the content contained in the written report; and
5. Any other assigned duties consistent with WIOA and related regulations, directives, policies procedures and amendments issued pursuant thereto.

Career Services Provider

ETR has served as the principal career services for the local workforce development delivery system since the early 1970s. While WIOA envisions that local boards will competitively procure a provider of career services (as described in the foregoing description of local Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs), boards have the option to fulfill this function using its own staff, as is the case for the KIM local workforce development area. The WDB and the Chief Local Elected Official have submitted a request to the State to continue in this capacity effective for four years, beginning July 1, 2021. ETR provided the following evidence of its capacity to continue to fulfill the career services provider function.

Significant Experience: ETR began providing career services in Kern, Inyo and Mono counties under the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and has continued to provide them through every subsequent iteration of federal workforce legislation up to the present. With nearly half a century of experience serving the residents of the three counties, the WDB and the Chief Local Elected Official agree that ETR should continue to be a provider of career services. Under their Joint Powers Agreement, the Kern County Board of Supervisors (Chief Local Elected Official) authorized the KIM Career Services Provider application to the State which was approved for the four Program Years 2017-2021. The CLEO is requesting that the local area continue this designation for another four years. Successful performance over the last program years provides the basis for approval to continue to operate as a Career Services Provider.

Effective Partnerships: Over the years providing career services, ETR has built strong relationships with the local community, workforce system partners, and businesses. Having established these relationships helps us to coordinate efforts and, thereby, avoid duplication of services. We are also able to leverage funding from other sources to provide

additional services to system customers. In fact, for the last 38 years, we have been the only local workforce area in California to directly receive the DOL National Farmworker Jobs Program funding.

Qualified Staff: ETR has highly qualified staff in place to provide career services. As County employees, hiring policies require application screening, testing, background checking, and interviewing. Vacancies are posted on each county's website, and only applicants who meet the minimum job requirements are considered for employment. Since 2017, all career services provider staff have been cross-trained on services provided by our local WIOA partners, which enables staff to better serve their clients and meet their needs with additional services available outside of WIOA. The cross-training of the 20 local WIOA partners was recorded and added to our YouTube video library in order to make the videos available to new employees to learn about the various services partners provide and as a reference for established employees to refer to when needed before referring clients to other services.

Strong Performance: Operationally and fiscally, KIM continues to meet performance and monitoring compliance measures. The local area has consistently met or exceeded performance goals for many years. Finally, in February 2015, KIM was qualified as a High Performing Board. KIM WDB was renewed as a High Performing Board in 2020.

V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2021 - 24

Based on discussions held throughout the planning process, the following topics have been identified as priorities for further exploration, development, and/or enhancement as the WDB, ETR and the partners implement the Local Plan.

Partnership-Focused Strategies

- The WIOA core programs partners (Titles I through IV) and other one-stop system partners should meet on a scheduled basis to discuss strategies for pursuing grant funding focused target populations and priority sectors.
- Assess the feasibility of using the Unite Us platform as the referral system among all partners.

Training and Skills Development

- Identify the interest of businesses (particularly in priority sectors) in training incumbent workers and opportunities to backfill positions as workers are promoted.
- Develop a plan to more effectively use work-based learning strategies for priority and emerging sectors, including logistics, construction and manufacturing.
- Leverage the power of distance learning to provide more diverse and robust skills development opportunities to individuals living and seeking employment in remote communities.
- Increase the availability of entrepreneurial training to reflect increased opportunities that are anticipated with the re-opening of the economy.

Job Seeker Services

- Consider using mentors, job coaches, and navigators to increase participation by and success of individuals from underserved populations.
- Provide AJCC and workforce system services on a more flexible schedule, including Saturdays.
- Make more walk-in and on-demand services and resources available at the AJCCs.
- Use staff-of-the-day to guide and answer questions from customers about the AJCCs and workforce system services.
- Assess the feasibility of conducting more marketing and providing more services in Spanish to reach underserved communities.

Services for Business Customers

- Identify methods to better promote workforce services to businesses.
- Survey business customers on a regular basis regarding skill sets needed by workers to track emerging needs.
- For each priority sector, business, education and workforce development partners should identify goals for the development of career pathway programs.

Use of Technology to Support System Services

- Increase the availability of digital skills training, hardware, and internet access throughout the local workforce area.
- Building on gains in virtual service delivery that have been made during the pandemic, develop a plan for enhancing on-line service and maintaining a hybrid strategy.
- Determine how virtual platforms and online services can improve access for individuals in Inyo and Mono counties and remote communities.
- Develop a social media toolbox as a resource for system partners and stakeholders in outreaching to customers and potential customers.
- Develop AJCC-based workshops that provides instruction in basic computer operations
- Identify web-based services that could be delivered via mobile apps to increase usage.

Other Priorities

- Development strategies to track outcomes for priority target populations.
- Identify strategies to increase career information and exploration to youth in middle school and high school.
- Using one or more workgroup, consider engaging the partners in discussions on equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.
- Assign ETR managers and staff to follow-up on priorities outlined in this section of the Local Plan.

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 Kern, Inyo and Mono 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 January 21, 2021.

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 27, 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 February 3, 2021.

Where necessary, agency-to-agency discussions were held with various partners and stakeholders to collaboration between their programs and those of the Kern, Inyo and Mono WDB. Such discussions were conducted via Zoom and included meetings with:

- California Department of Rehabilitation on February 4, 2021
- California Employment Development Department on February 9, 2021
- California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc. on February 3, 2021
- Kern Community College District on February 9, 2021
- Kern County Department of Child Support Services on January 28, 2021
- Kern County Department of Human Services on February 12, 2021
- CIE Local Partnership Agreement – Core Partners on February 5, 2021

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email and telephone	CA Employment Development Department	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email and telephone	CA Department of Rehabilitation	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.

Email and telephone	California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc.	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email and telephone	Kern Community College District	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email and telephone	Kern County Department of Child Support Services	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email and telephone	Kern County Department of Human Services	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email and telephone	Kern High School District	-Attended forums. -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.

Attachment 2

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THAT DISAGREE WITH THE LOCAL PLAN

1.	From:	Date:
Comment:		

2.	From:	Date:
Comment:		

SIGNATURE PAGE

The following signatures represent approval of the Local Plan by the Kern, Inyo and Mono Workforce Development Board and the Chief Elected Official of the Kern, Inyo and Mono Local Workforce Development Area.

For the **Kern, Inyo and Mono Workforce Development Board:**

Name, Chairperson	Date

For the **Kern, Inyo and Mono Counties Local Workforce Development Area:**

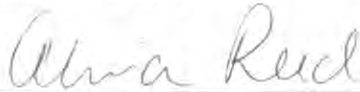
Name, Title	Date

SIGNATURE PAGE
Local Plan

Instructions

The Kern, Inyo and Mono Workforce Development Board's chairperson must sign and date this form. Include the original signature with the request.

**Kern, Inyo and Mono Workforce
Development Board**



Signature

Alissa Reed

Name

Chair

Title

04/20/2021

Date

SIGNATURE PAGE
Local Plan

Instructions

The Chief Elected Official of the Kern County Board of Supervisors must sign and date this form. Include the original signature with the request.

Kern County Board of Supervisors



Signature

Phillip Peters
Name

Chairman of the Board
Title

MAY 11 2021
Date