

Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium of Workforce Boards

WIOA Multi-Year Regional Plan
Modification: 5-2023

Effective Dates:
July 1, 2021 → June 30, 2025

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Introduction

The Northeast Region of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is comprised of seven counties: Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne. Consisting of a major metropolitan area comprised of the cities of Hazleton, Scranton, and Wilkes Barre, it is also home to a large array of smaller cities, towns, boroughs, townships, forests and rugged/rural farm areas. Overall, the Region is home to 1,021,171 citizens¹.

Historically, the three local Workforce Development Boards/Areas that encompass the Northeast Region of the Commonwealth have striven to work together to ensure that comprehensive and analogous services are afforded to a wide spectrum of business and industry, thus, supporting a robust and resilient economy both locally as well as regionally. Recognized for decades as a leader in the manufacturing, transportation, warehousing and distribution, retail, and hospitality industry sectors, Northeastern PA is slowly rebounding from the recent pandemic.

1.1. Identification of the Region.

- **Name of the Region: The Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium of Workforce Boards** (or “Northeast Region)
- **Composition of Workforce Development Boards:**
 - Lackawanna Workforce Development Area – Lackawanna County
 - Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Area – Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties
 - Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area – Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne Counties
- **Key Regional Committee Members and Organizational Affiliation**
 - Virginia Turano, Lackawanna Workforce Development Board
 - Patti Lenahan, Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board
 - Sam Hellen, Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board
- **Key Regional Committee Meeting Dates (conducted via Zoom).**
 - 12/15/2022 Initial meeting to discuss Regional Plan development
 - 1/26/2023 Meeting to discuss Regional Plan development
 - 2/17/2023 Regional Plan Draft review of rough draft
 - 2/21/2023 Final review of rough draft prior to initial release for Commonwealth comment
- **Regional Plan Effective Date. July 1, 2021; Modification: 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.

¹ Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA), PA Department of Labor and Industry

The Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium of Workforce Boards (Northeast Region) knows that growth in a regional economy comes from a combination of economic development, workforce development, and community development; and it understands that workforce development is instrumental in reducing the number of people who are unemployed.

Its vision is to ensure a world-class trained, readily available workforce, which is the impetus for the enticing of new business ventures and the growing or retooling of existing industry, addressing the needs of all local workers is primary to stimulate progress within Northeastern Pennsylvania. To support this vision, it has established the following goals that consider the workforce and economic development priorities within the Region, including the coordination of services and providers.

- Increase the skill level of the Region's labor force through an innovative, integrated workforce infrastructure system that links labor demand and supply to meet the current and future workforce needs of the Region's businesses
- Utilize the expertise of educational institutions and training providers within the Region to develop training programs and services which are based upon clearly defined opportunities and needs, and supported by research within specific industry sectors
- Enhance linkages between workforce development and economic development delivery organizations with private industry in a collaborative manner that promotes high skill and high wage jobs

Strong linkages are maintained with representatives of labor organizations across the region to support various apprenticeship opportunities. Representatives of labor organizations maintain active seats on all three of the local workforce boards, thus, ensuring that the face and expertise of labor is at the table and providing valuable insight into development needs across all seven counties. Also, apprenticeship and trade opportunities are strongly promoted in all PA CareerLink® One-Stop centers across the region through the provision of informational workshops and outreach ventures. And, very importantly, unions are now actively posting apprenticeship opportunities on the statewide-approved *Eligible Training Provider List* to allow regional workforce boards the opportunity to expend WIOA funding on apprenticeship curriculums. The local Centers provide contact information to prospective trainees on local application submission processes.

A major Northeast regional project, awarded to and spearheaded by the Luzerne/Schuylkill Board, is a State-Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Grant, *Innovations in Management*, an apprenticeship training program available across the 7-County region. This project is designed to provide 192 hours of classroom instruction (first-time supervisory skills, office management skills, human resource management skills, business communication skills, and customer service skills) as well as a structured On-The-Job Training (OJT) workplace learning process (2000 hours). Involved participants can experience a step-by-step wage progression as they demonstrate competency and complete phases of the program. At the completion of the program, the apprentice will have earned 16 college credits and a Small Business Skills diploma from Luzerne County Community College.

In further support of the development of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities in Northeastern Pennsylvania, the Northeast PA Consortiums of WDBs will align with the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO)'s *Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide* to facilitate an upward movement of pre-

apprenticeship/apprenticeship growth and broaden the regional ecosystem.

The Northeast Consortium of Workforce Boards (Lackawanna County, Luzerne/Schuylkill, Pocono Counties), through representation by the local Boards' Executive Directors on numerous boards and councils, has long been entrenched across the economic development community in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Working locally with their individual Chambers of Commerce and County economic development agencies, development and implementation of strategic plans of action guide localized community progress. Taking into consideration the diversity (urban versus rural) among the three NEPA workforce boards, distinct localized plans must first be established which then, in turn, becomes integral to the formation of a concerted regionalized initiative.

Regionalization efforts across the 7-county Northeast region is spearheaded by the Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) Alliance, a regional community and economic development agency that promotes effective partnerships and collaboration, through a non-partisan organizational framework, to promote the continued social and economic development of the region through the retention and expansion of industrial, commercial, financial, research, educational, technology, and other business and development activities. This, then, stimulates improvement of the overall region's environment, recreational facilities, and quality of life. Many members of the NEPA Alliance Board concurrently sit as members of the local WDB's which allows for wide-spread communication (among business and industry, education, labor, community-based organizations) through quarterly WDB meetings. NEPA Alliance also coordinates the Northeast PA Partnerships for Economic Performance (PREP) that includes representation and instills linkages among the region's chambers, small business development centers, industrial development centers, and other economic development partners. NEPA Alliance also develops and maintains a *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS)* that provides a broad-based analyzation of the regional climate for establishing goals and objectives and development of an outcomes plan. Further, NEPA Alliance has, for many years, provided comprehensive regional and localized demographic data to the workforce boards for planning and development purposes. This coordination of activities with NE PA Alliance also ensures a linkage to Engage! with funding provided by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development for regional initiatives. Just recently, NEPA Alliance, working in collaboration with the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce and COLTS (County of Lackawanna Transit System) provided funding to support transit work programming that seeks to eliminate transportation barriers in Lackawanna County and supports the NE PA MOVES initiative. NE PA MOVES, which was formed in 2017 and is comprised of over 90 community leaders, is working to gain a better understanding of the specific barriers of current transit systems and is focused on a providing a solution to the transportation challenges through a strategic plan that promotes equity, encourages economic growth, and fosters a greater opportunity for all people and communities across Northeastern PA.

In looking at regionalized economic development linkages, the implementation of Next Gen Industry Partnerships across the region must be considered. Business and Industry is at the table providing invaluable expertise in both the workforce development as well as economic development arenas. Working hand-in-hand with workforce boards and educational representatives, companies can dictate their needs (present as well as future) to ensure that a specifically-skilled workforce is at hand which will, subsequently, spur the growth of both local as well as regional economies.

1.3 Describe the Collection and Analysis of Regional Labor Market Data

In a concerted attempt to articulate a specific geographic region's economic conditions and workforce

needs, a variety of sources must be used to thoroughly compile, dissect, and analyze available data. The following pages are full of statistics, graphs, charts, and diagrams that will provide a picture of the state of the economy of Northeastern Pennsylvania including the key industry clusters; existing and emerging in-demand sectors; existing and emerging occupational sectors; regional and local Location Quotients (LQs); and, perhaps most importantly, the identified needs of the employers across the region.

Location Quotient (LQ) is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. The largest LQ for Northeastern PA, from CWIA data, Spring of 2022, falls under Logistics and Transportation at 1.66 with a project to remain the highest sector through 2025 at 1.67². An LQ greater than 1 indicates that cluster has, on average, more employees locally than typically expected, implying a possible competitive advantage. This cluster has increased its average wage by 11% and is within 16% of statewide average for all jobs.

Now, let's take a look at industry clusters across the three NE PA workforce areas. The following three charts provide a numerical picture of the economic climate:

Lackawanna County Workforce Development Area:

Description	2020 Jobs	2030 Jobs	2020 - 2030 Change	2020 - 2030 % Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	200	200	0	0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	60	60	0	0%
Utilities	270	260	-10	-3.7%
Construction	3,400	3,340	-60	-1.8%
Manufacturing	9,540	9,280	-260	-2.7%
Wholesale Trade	3,750	3,810	60	1.6%
Retail Trade	10,580	10,680	100	9%
Transportation and Warehousing	4,510	4,960	450	10.0%
Information	1,040	930	-110	-10.6%
Finance and Insurance	4,670	4,610	-60	-1.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	680	740	60	8.8%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,560	2,780	220	8.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,210	1,070	-140	-11.6%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,590	5,090	500	10.9%
Educational Services (private)	7,990	8,320	330	4.1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	19,160	21,290	2,130	11.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	940	1,180	240	25.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	6,400	7,450	1,050	15.4%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,840	3,980	140	3.6%
Government (includes public education)	5,490	5,620	130	2.4%
Self-Employed Workers	4,290	4,780	490	11.4%
All Industries	95,170	100,400	5,230	5.5%

Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Area:

Description	2020 Jobs	2030 Jobs	2020 - 2030 Change	2020 - 2030% Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,220	1,310	90	7.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	800	800	0	0%
Utilities	1,840	1,850	10	.5%
Construction	6,310	6,600	290	4.6%
Manufacturing	25,550	25,320	-230	- 0.9%
Wholesale Trade	5,890	6,000	110	1.9%
Retail Trade	20,450	20,930	480	2.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	23,410	27,710	4,300	18.4%
Information	1,530	1,490	-40	- 2.6%
Finance and Insurance	5,990	5,430	-560	-9.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,210	1,290	80	6.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4,000	4,180	180	4.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,860	1,600	-260	-14%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	9,900	11,080	1,180	11.9%
Educational Services (private)	12,690	13,550	870	6.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	29,630	32,490	2,860	9.7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,190	1,540	350	29.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	11,370	13,210	1,840	16.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	6,320	6,580	260	4.1%
Government (includes public education)	14,120	12,290	-830	-5.9%
Self Employed Workers	9,240	9,240	0	0%
All Industries	194,510	205,480	10,970	5.6%

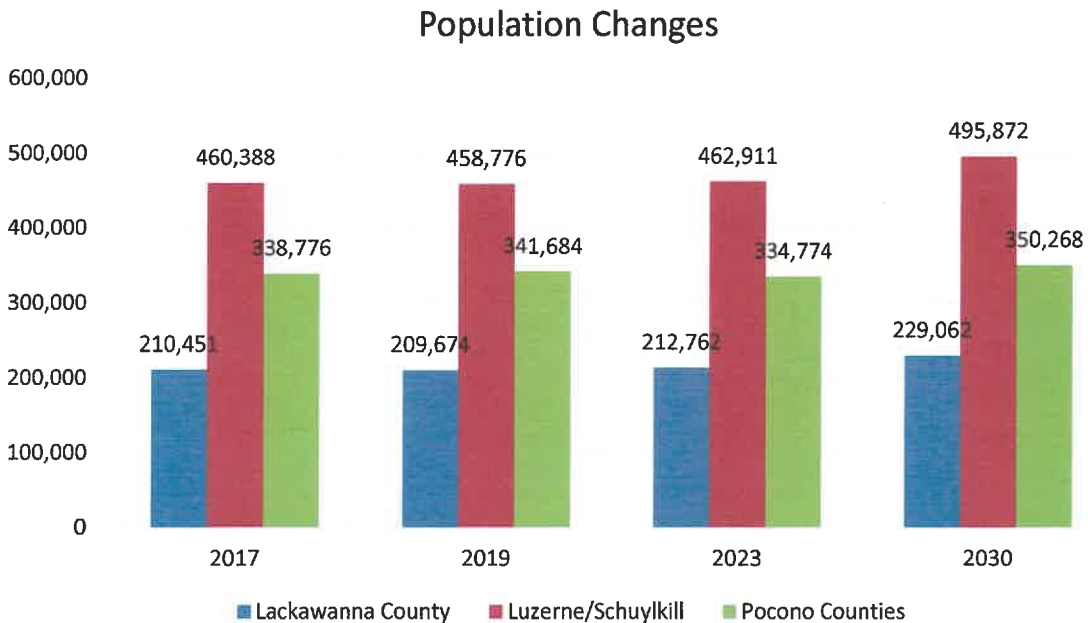
Pocono Counties (Carbon, Monroe, Pike, Wayne) Workforce Development Area:

Description	2020 Jobs	2030 Jobs	2020 - 2030 Change	2020 - 2030 % Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,020	1,110	90	8.8%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	0	0%
Utilities	190	190	0	0%
Construction	3,430	3,800	370	10.8%
Manufacturing	7,230	7,390	160	2.2%
Wholesale Trade	1,260	1,460	200	15.9%
Retail Trade	13,790	14,910	1,120	8.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	4,000	3,790	-210	-5.2%
Information	1,240	1,430	90	6.7%
Finance and Insurance	1,820	1,870	50	2.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	930	990	60	6.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,990	2,060	70	3.5%

Management of Companies and Enterprises	350	310	-40	-11.4%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3,110	3,560	450	14.5%
Educational Services (private)	8,690	9,790	1,100	12.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13,330	14,730	1,400	10.5%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,560	3,360	800	31.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	12,600	14,650	2,050	15.3%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	5,080	5,220	140	2.8%
Government (includes public education)	9,970	10,210	240	2.4%
Self Employed Workers	8,320	8,550	230	2.8%
All Industries	101,230	109,600	8,370	8.3%

The population in the Northeast Region has been decreasing over the last decade, while Pennsylvania continues to increase. It appears the decrease in the Region is due to an aging population, resulting in fewer births.

The following chart provides an overview of the population changes for the Region from 2017 through a projected 2030³.



If the projections prevail, the area will see a surge in population as we approach 2030 which could, in turn, promote a wider workforce base and improved economic forecast.

³ U.S. Census Bureau

As shown in the chart below, the current median age of citizens in the Northeast Region is 45.0 which is older than the State’s median age of 40.8⁴.

MEDIAN AGE	
Carbon County	46.2
Lackawanna County	42/1
Luzerne County	42.4
Monroe County	43.3
Pike County	48.6
Schuykill County	44.1
Wayne County	48.4
Pennsylvania	40.8

45.0 Median Age for the 7-County Region

This reflects the historical pattern that has been prevalent in the NE PA counties for many years.

In looking at ethnicity statistics for the two largest counties in the region (only available data) in comparison with State data, over the course of 20 years, it can be seen that the populations across the northeast region are becoming more and more diverse but, in most cases, still lag behind the Commonwealth.

⁴ CWIA County Profiles, January, 2023

Race by County and State								
	2000	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Lackawanna								
White/Caucasian	96.7%	92.0%	92.3%	91.7%	91.8%	90.5%	89.8%	82.9%
Black/African-American	1.3%	2.5%	3.1%	2.8%	2.7%	2.1%	3.5%	3.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%
Asian	0.8%	1.7%	2.3%	2.5%	2.8%	2.9%	3.2%	3.2%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Some other race	0.5%	2.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	1.2%	1.6%	3.9%
Two or more races	0.7%	1.5%	1.7%	2.3%	2.1%	3.2%	1.7%	5.9%
Luzerne								
White/Caucasian	96.6%	90.7%	88.3%	90.2%	88.5%	87.4%	84.0%	78.9%
Black/African-American	1.7%	3.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.9%	4.8%	7.2%	5.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Asian	0.6%	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.0%	1.3%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	0.4%	3.3%	3.6%	2.2%	3.6%	4.0%	5.4%	7.7%
Two or more races	0.6%	1.5%	2.3%	1.8%	1.4%	2.2%	2.2%	6.8%
Pennsylvania								
White/Caucasian	85.4%	81.9%	81.1%	80.9%	80.7%	80.1%	79.6%	75.0%
Black/African-American	10.0%	10.8%	11.0%	11.0%	11.2%	11.2%	11.4%	10.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian	1.8%	2.7%	3.3%	3.3%	3.5%	3.6%	3.5%	3.9%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	1.5%	2.4%	1.9%	2.1%	1.9%	2.4%	2.6%	3.9%
Two or more races	1.2%	1.9%	2.4%	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2000-2019) for the year 2020 (Decennial Census)

Also, in reviewing comparisons of housing units over the past 19 years, again in the two largest counties (only available data), the numbers of houses are rising; however, it remains to be seen if the number of housing units will support the projected population growth that is depicted in the chart on Page 8 of this Plan. It can be stated that an increase in “downtown” living units has been on the rise in the major metropolitan areas of the region through the refurbishing of older buildings into multi-unit dwellings.

Housing Density Comparison									
	Total Square Miles	2000		2010		2019		2020	
		Housing Units	Homes per square mile	Housing Units	Homes per square mile	Housing Units	Homes per square mile	Housing Units	Homes per square mile
Lackawanna	464.9	95,362	205.1	96,867	208.4	100,848	216.9	No Data	
Luzerne	906.3	144,686	159.7	148,736	164.1	150,503	166.1	No Data	
Pennsylvania	46,054.3	5,249,750	114.0	5,568,820	120.9	5,732,580	124.5	5,753,228	124.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

In a review of the educational levels of the current NE PA region, the pattern that emerges is that the highest percentage of residents are either high school graduates or some with college or associate’s degrees. As the economies have changed over the past few years, this becomes in line with jobs that are

not always requiring bachelor's degrees⁵.

Educational Attainment of Population (Ages 25 and older) by County - Percent

County	Less than high school graduate:	High school graduate (incl. equivalency):	Some college or associate's degree:	Bachelor's degree or higher:
Carbon	10.3%	44.5%	27.3%	17.9%
Lackawanna	8.5%	36.7%	26.1%	28.7%
Luzerne	19.8%	38.7%	27.9%	23.6%
Monroe	10.4%	34.7%	29.0%	25.8%
Pike	7.6%	33.8%	31.6%	27.1%
Schuylkill	10.6%	45.9%	26.6%	17.0%
Wayne	10.0%	42.4%	27.0%	20.7%
PA Total	9.0%	34.2%	24.5%	32.3%

A review of data regarding poverty and the labor force illustrates the Northeast region is comparable to the State with the rural counties falling slightly below the averages.

Poverty and Labor Force Status (Ages 16 and older) by County

County	Total Population Age 16 and Older	Individuals Below the Poverty Level Age 16 and Older						
		Total Individuals	Poverty Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Participation Rate
Carbon	52,337	5,280	10.1%	1,361	485	3,434	26.3 %	35.0%
Lackawanna	165,346	20,288	12.3%	6,186	1,422	12,680	18.7%	37.5%
Luzerne	251,435	30,361	12.1%	8,873	3,103	18,385	25.9%	39.4%
Monroe	138,159	13,602	9.8%	4,259	971	8,372	18.6%	38.5%
Pike	46,860	3,869	8.3%	971	518	2,380	34.8%	38.5%
Schuylkill	110,126	12,951	11.8%	3,562	1,130	8,088	26.8%	37.5%
Wayne	40,264	4,134	10.3%	1,073	204	2,357	16.0%	30.9%
PA Total		1,088,906	10.8 %	320,086	95,639	673,181	23.0%	38.2%

Commuting patterns reveal how workers travel from their home counties to their work counties. The

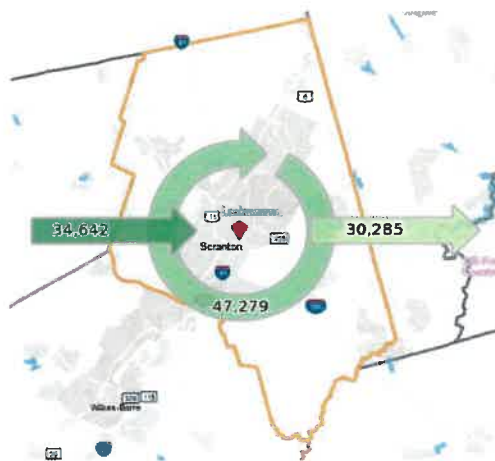
⁵ CWIA, December, 2022

specific reasons for commuting may be unknown; however, it may be reasoned that workers travel to other areas for job opportunities that are not found within their home counties or they may choose to live in their home counties due to housing, schools, or entertainment preferences. Proximity (or location) to larger metropolitan areas may also affect the migration patterns of the individual counties.

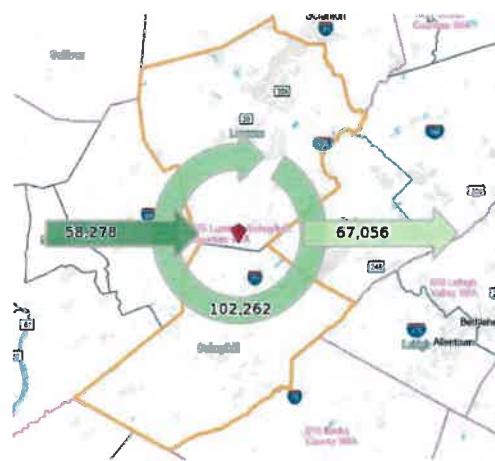
Both the Luzerne-Schuylkill and Pocono Counties WDAs have a higher number of out-commuters, meaning more people are traveling outside these areas for work than are traveling in for employment. The Lackawanna WDA, on the other hand, has a higher number of in-commuters.

The following charts (as supplied by CWIA) supports this information with actual data figures:

Lackawanna



Luzerne/Schuylkill



Pocono Counties



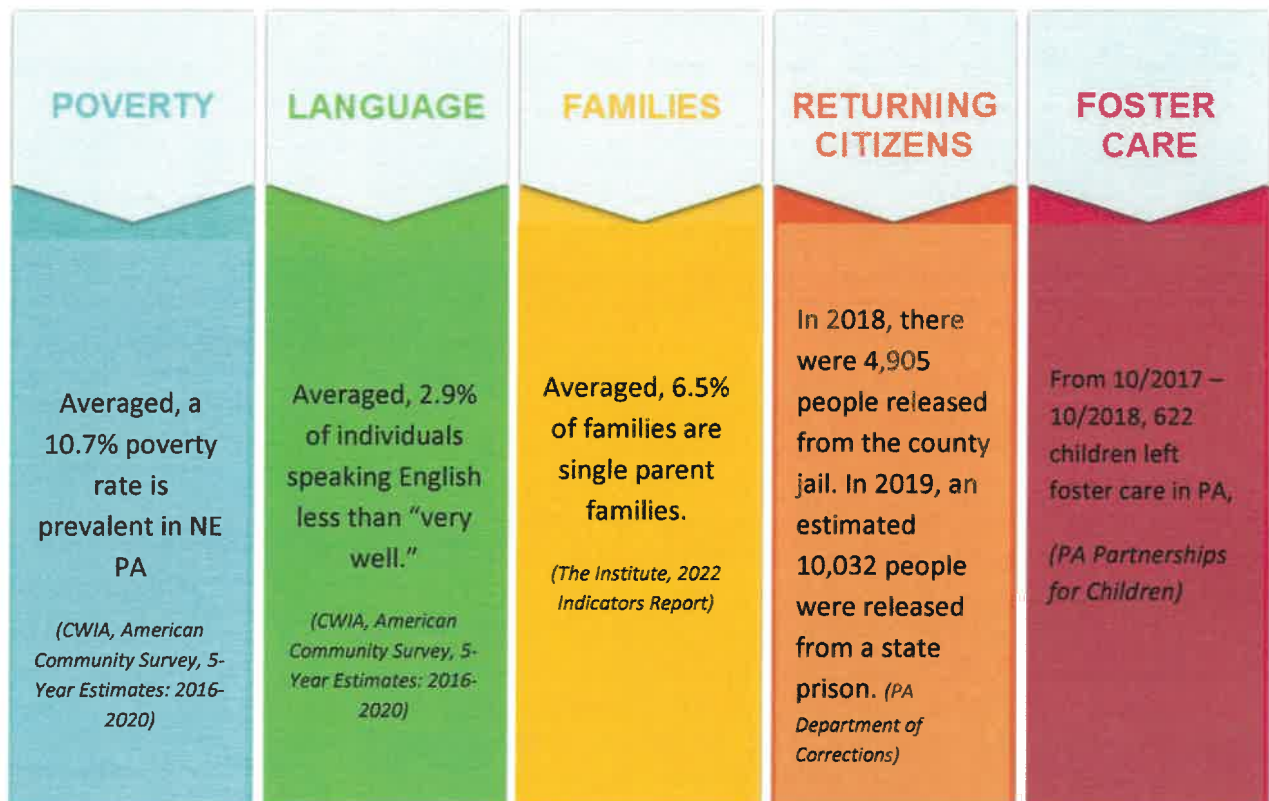
According to *datausa*, within the Northeast region of the Commonwealth of PA, the average travel time is 17.7 minutes. As of 2020, 83.9% of workers in Northeastern PA drove to work alone, followed by 7.66% who carpooled and 5.25% who walked to work. The two major metropolitan cities, Scranton and Wilkes Barre, do have public bus transportation but the hours are mainly day time in nature and, traditionally, have not been used by the majority of workers.

According to the Urban Institute, most individuals released from prison held some type of job prior to incarceration and want legal, stable employment upon release. Research also suggests that the higher the wage, the less likely it is that individuals will return to crime. However, most former prisoners experience difficulty finding a job after release. During the time spent in prison, many lose work skills and are given little opportunity to gain useful work experience.

Moreover, due to COVID-19, the availability of job training programs in prison significantly declined. These projects will now need to be re-instated and/or re-developed over the course of time. A large proportion of former prisoners have low levels of educational attainment and work experience, health problems, and other personal characteristics that make them hard to employ. Once in the community, not only are many employers reluctant to hire convicted felons, but many former prisoners are legally barred from certain occupations. It should be noted here that, due to COVID-19 and the workforce shortage, some employers have relaxed their hiring qualifications.

Research obtained from *Children's Rights* has shown that youth who age out of foster care are less likely than youth in the general population to graduate from high school and are less likely to attend or graduate college. By age 26, approximately 80% of young people who aged out of foster care earned at least a high school degree or equivalency compared to 94% in the general population. By age 26, 4% of youth who aged out of foster care had earned a four-year college degree, while 36% of youth in the general population had done so.

The following chart provides a descriptive overview of individuals with barriers to employment in NE PA:



According to the *Division for Social Policy and Development*, in developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%. Persons with disabilities are frequently not considered potential members of the workforce. Perception, fear, myth and prejudice continue to limit understanding and acceptance of disability in workplaces everywhere. Myths abound, including that persons with disabilities are unable to work and that accommodating a person with a disability in the workplace is expensive. Contrary to these notions, many companies have found that persons with disabilities are more than capable.

According to *Youth.Gov*, the high social and economic costs of teen pregnancy and childbearing can have short- and long-term negative consequences for teen parents, their children, and their community. Through recent research, it has been recognized that pregnancy and childbirth have a significant impact on educational outcomes of teen parents. Specifically:

- By age 22, approximately 50% of teen mothers have received a high school diploma and only 30% have earned high school equivalency certificate, whereas 90% of women who did not give birth during adolescence receive a high school diploma.
- Approximately 10% of teen mothers complete a two- or four-year college program.
- Teen fathers have a 25 to 30% lower probability of graduating from high school than teenage boys who are not fathers.

Children who are born to teen mothers also experience a wide range of problems. For example, they are more likely to:

- have a higher risk for low birth weight and infant mortality;
- have lower levels of emotional support and cognitive stimulation;
- have fewer skills and be less prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten;
- have behavioral problems and chronic medical conditions;
- rely more heavily on publicly funded health care;
- have higher rates of foster care placement;
- be incarcerated at some time during adolescence;
- have lower school achievement and drop out of high school;
- give birth as a teen; and
- be unemployed or underemployed as a young adult.

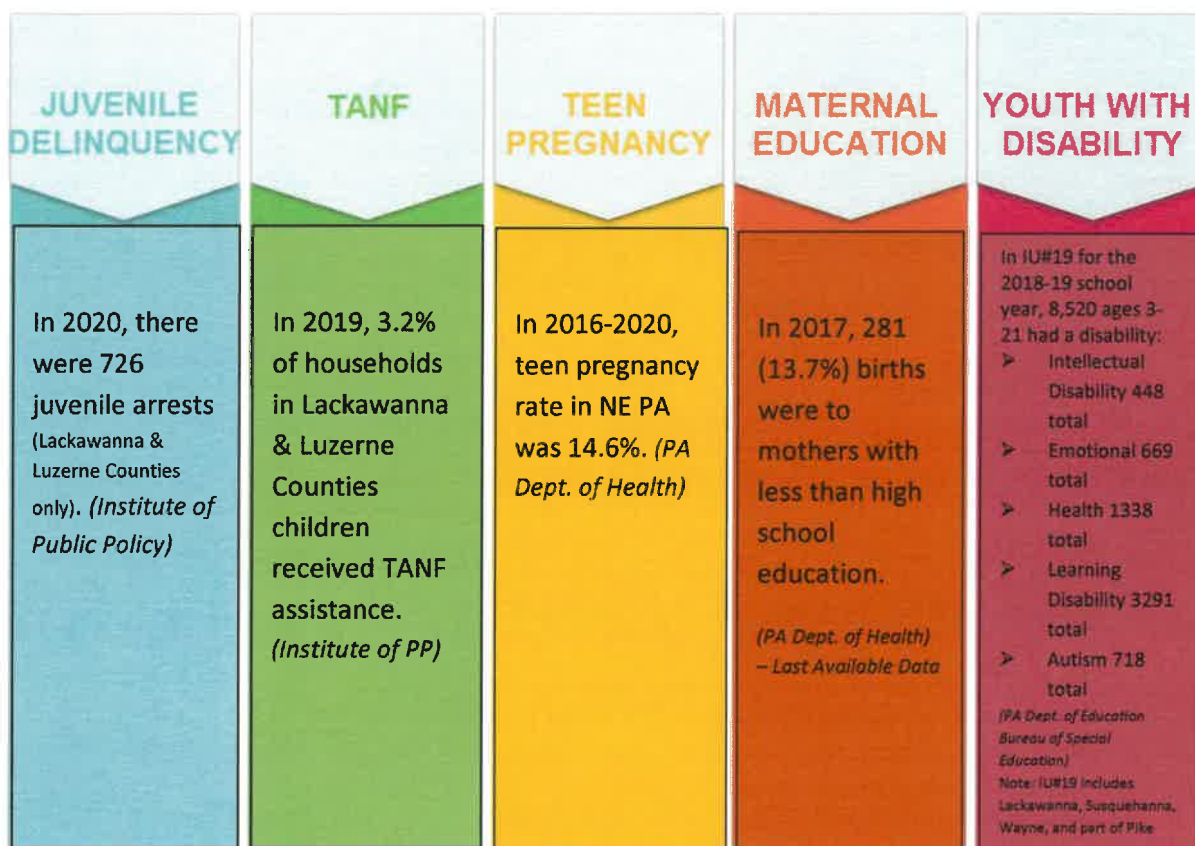
These immediate and long-lasting effects continue for teen parents and their children even after adjusting for the factors that increased the teen's risk for pregnancy—e.g., growing up in poverty, having parents with low levels of education, growing up in a single-parent family, and having low attendance and performance in school.

According the Department for Health for 2016-2020 (latest data available), the teenage pregnancy rate per 1,000 youth aged 15-19 for the Counties of Monroe (8.5) and Pike (8.3) were significantly lower when compared to the State (12.2).

However, teenage pregnancy rates for Carbon County (16.0), Lackawanna County (14.9), Luzerne

County (20.7), Schuylkill County (20.3) and Wayne County (13.7) were higher and, in some cases, significantly, to the State (12.2).

The following chart provides additional information on youth with barriers in the Northeast region:



(Please note: The figures, as charted above, are the latest available but demonstrate local trends prior to the 2020 Census.)

The following Intermediate Units are in the Northeast Region

- IU#18 includes: Luzerne and Wyoming Counties
- IU#19 includes: Lackawanna, Susquehanna, and Wayne Counties
- IU#20 includes: Monroe, Northampton, and Pike Counties
- IU#21 includes: Carbon and Lehigh Counties
- IU#29 includes: Schuylkill County

These Intermediate Units are instrumental in providing comprehensive services to school-aged students, 3-21, who require assistance in attaining their educational goals including preparing to enter the workforce.

According to the *National Coalition for the Homeless*, meaningful and sustainable employment is the

key to creating and maintaining housing stability. Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages relative to rent are frequent causes of homelessness and burden millions of families with the risk of becoming homeless. At the same time, individuals experiencing homelessness face obstacles to finding and maintaining employment.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines youth homelessness as:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations"
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters"
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.)
- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations".

Now let's look at labor market trends. The overall unemployment rate in the Northeast Region in 2021 was 7.3% with a labor force of 487,200. As can be seen in the chart below, the unemployment rate began a downward trend in 2021 that continues today.

Average Labor Force Statistics for 2021 and Seasonally Adjusted Statistics for 2021

Annual Average Labor Force Statistics, 2021

Annual Average	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2021	487,200	450,900	36,300	7.3%

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics, 2021

Month	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
May, 2021	492,600	467,000	30,670	5.1%
June, 2021	488,700	462,500	26,100	5.3%
July, 2021	487,000	463,200	24,000	4.8%
August, 2021	491,400	465,200	26,100	5.2%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Please note: the numbers above were compiled by combining the Lackawanna County, Luzerne/Schuylkill, and Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area data supplied by CWIA in December, 2022.

Labor Market trends can be examined by looking at Long-Term Industry Projections as well as other labor market information. Regarding Long -Term Industry Projections from 2020 - 2030, the total employment in the Region is expected to grow by 6.5%. This growth rate is lower than the Commonwealth's projection of 7.6%.

Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians, & Support is projected to experience the greatest percentage increase (12.6%) while Office & Administrative Support is projected to experience the greatest decrease

(-3.8%).

The following chart provides a wider overview of occupational area trends.

Long-Term Industry Projections for the Northeast Region

Industry	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)	
			Volume	Percent
Total Jobs	95,170	100,400	5,230	5.5%
Goods Producing Industries	13,200	12,880	-320	-2.4%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	260	260	0	0.0%
Construction	3,400	3,340	-60	-1.8%
Manufacturing	9,540	9,280	-260	-2.7%
Services-Providing	77,690	82,750	5,060	6.5%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	19,110	19,710	600	3.1%
Information	1,040	930	-110	-10.6%
Financial Activities	5,350	5,350	0	0.0%
Professional & Business Services	8,360	8,940	580	6.9%
Education & Health Services	27,150	29,610	2,460	9.1%
Leisure & Hospitality	7,340	8,630	1,290	17.6%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	3,840	3,980	140	3.6%
Federal, State & Local Government	5,490	5,620	130	2.4%
Self-Employed Workers	4,290	4,780	490	11.4%

Industry	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)	
			Volume	Percent
Total Jobs	194,510	205,480	10,970	5.6%
Goods Producing Industries	33,880	34,020	140	0.4%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	2,020	2,110	90	4.5%
Construction	6,310	6,600	290	4.6%
Manufacturing	25,550	25,320	-230	-0.9%
Services-Providing	151,390	162,220	10,830	7.2%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	51,590	56,490	4,900	9.5%
Information	1,530	1,490	-40	-2.6%
Financial Activities	7,200	6,720	-480	-6.7%
Professional & Business Services	15,760	16,860	1,100	7.0%
Education & Health Services	42,320	46,050	3,730	8.8%
Leisure & Hospitality	12,560	14,750	2,190	17.4%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	6,320	6,580	260	4.1%
Federal, State & Local Government	14,120	13,290	-830	-5.9%
Self-Employed Workers	9,240	9,240	0	0.0%

Long-Term Industry Projections for Pocono Counties WDA (2020-30)			Employment Change (2020-30)	
Industry	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Volume	Percent
Total Jobs	101,230	109,600	8,370	8.3%
Goods Producing Industries	11,890	12,520	630	5.3%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	1,240	1,330	90	7.3%
Construction	3,430	3,800	370	10.8%
Manufacturing	7,230	7,390	160	2.2%
Services-Providing	81,020	88,530	7,510	9.3%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	19,240	20,350	1,110	5.8%
Information	1,340	1,430	90	6.7%
Financial Activities	2,750	2,860	110	4.0%
Professional & Business Services	5,450	5,930	480	8.8%
Education & Health Services	22,020	24,520	2,500	11.4%
Leisure & Hospitality	15,160	18,010	2,850	18.8%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	5,080	5,220	140	2.8%
Federal, State & Local Government	9,970	10,210	240	2.4%
Self-Employed Workers	8,320	8,550	230	2.8%

Source: Long-Term Industry Employment Projections (2020-30)

*Data may not add due confidentiality

The above charts provide a comprehensive picture of the long-term industry projection across the three workforce areas that comprise the Northeast region of the Commonwealth. In analyzing these charts, growth trends, primarily, across all three areas are in the Leisure & Hospitality and Education and Health Services fields.

As shown in the chart on the following page, the occupations projecting the greatest volume growth are and Protective, Food, Building and Personal Service, Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians and Support and Transportation and Material Handling. Occupations in Office and Administrative Support, as well as the Production and Sales and Related areas are expected to decline.

Long-Term Occupational Projections for Lackawanna County WDA (2020-30)

Occupational Title	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)		Annual Demand
			Volume	Percent	
Total, All Occupations	95,170	100,400	5,230	5.5%	11,387
Management, Business & Finance	7,320	7,710	390	5.3%	654
Computer, Engineering & Science	3,210	3,400	190	5.9%	260
Education, Legal, Social Service, Arts & Media	9,450	10,210	760	8.0%	955
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	13,450	15,230	1,780	13.2%	1,447
Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service	14,850	16,540	1,690	11.4%	2,548
Sales & Related	9,410	9,390	-20	-0.2%	1,251
Office & Administrative Support	13,860	13,230	-630	-4.5%	1,441
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	160	160	0	0.0%	25
Construction & Extraction	3,770	3,880	110	2.9%	386
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	3,350	3,510	160	4.8%	339
Production	6,950	6,820	-130	-1.9%	743
Transportation & Material Moving	9,420	10,360	940	10.0%	1,336

Source: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-30)

*Data may not add due confidentiality

Long-Term Occupational Projections for Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties WDA (2020-30)

Occupational Title	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)		Annual Demand
			Volume	Percent	
Total, All Occupations	194,510	205,480	10,970	5.6%	23,529
Management, Business & Finance	14,530	15,240	710	4.9%	1,286
Computer, Engineering & Science	5,790	5,950	160	2.8%	454
Education, Legal, Social Service, Arts & Media	16,400	17,490	1,090	6.6%	1,601
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	22,090	24,880	2,790	12.6%	2,322
Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service	27,410	29,900	2,490	9.1%	4,632
Sales & Related	15,070	14,940	-130	-0.9%	2,039
Office & Administrative Support	25,180	23,770	-1,410	-5.6%	2,513
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	1,040	1,090	50	4.8%	171
Construction & Extraction	6,990	7,330	340	4.9%	749
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	9,440	10,100	660	7.0%	987
Production	18,090	17,560	-530	-2.9%	1,882
Transportation & Material Moving	32,480	37,230	4,750	14.6%	4,891

Source: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-30)

*Data may not add due to confidentiality

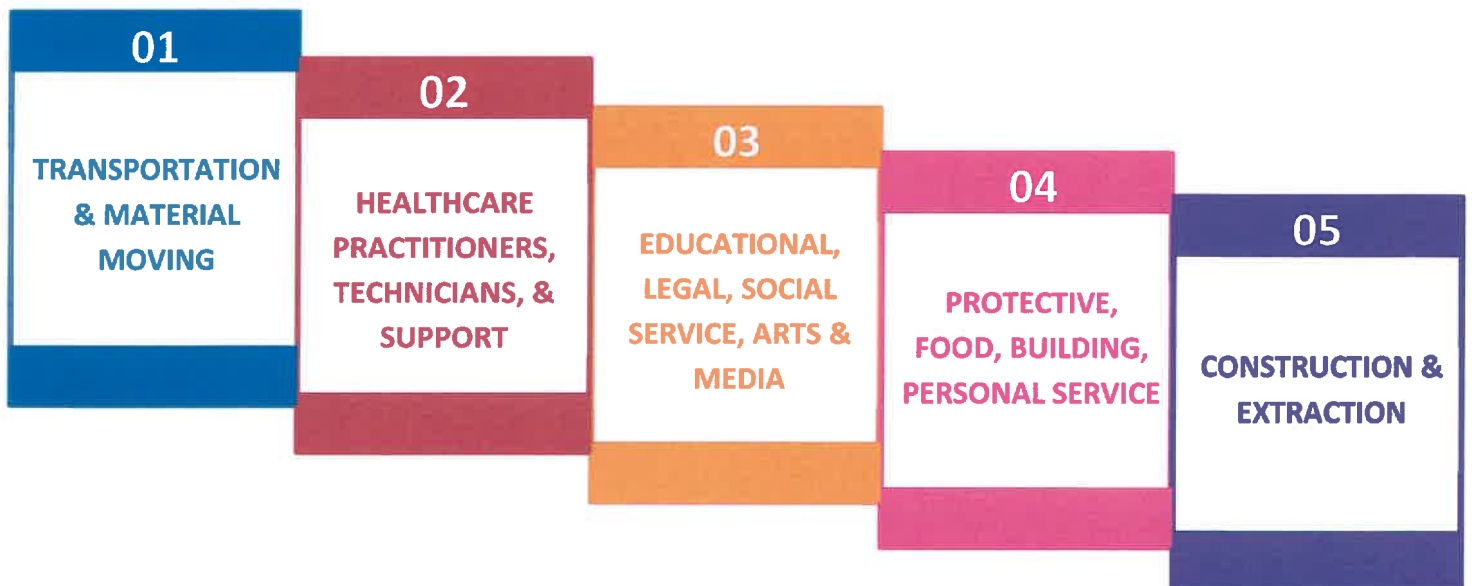
Long-Term Occupational Projections for Pocono Counties WDA (2020-30)

Occupational Title	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)		Annual Demand
			Volume	Percent	
Total, All Occupations	101,230	109,600	8,370	8.3%	13,013
Management, Business & Finance	7,570	8,130	560	7.4%	709
Computer, Engineering & Science	3,120	3,310	190	6.1%	270
Education, Legal, Social Service, Arts & Media	9,910	11,100	1,190	12.0%	1,044
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	10,280	11,520	1,240	12.1%	1,049
Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service	22,500	25,330	2,830	12.6%	3,961
Sales & Related	11,010	11,400	390	3.5%	1,572
Office & Administrative Support	12,380	12,210	-170	-1.4%	1,345
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	790	840	50	6.3%	132
Construction & Extraction	4,340	4,820	480	11.1%	500
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	5,150	5,690	540	10.5%	568
Production	4,750	4,820	70	1.5%	523
Transportation & Material Moving	9,450	10,430	980	10.4%	1,340

Source: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-30)

*Data may not add due confidentiality

The following occupational groupings are prevailing across the Northeast region:



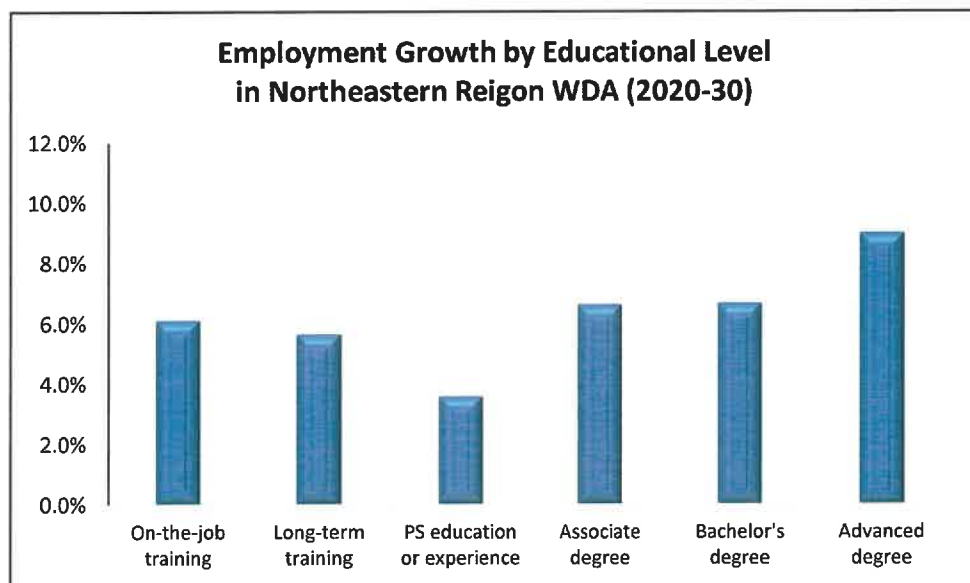
What continues to be apparent, and in line with previous data presented, is that, with the exception of Registered Nurses, the major prevalent occupational fields are in areas that require only on-the-job training or a certification that can be achieved through short-term training.

One way to measure the skill gap is to compare the current educational attainment with the projected employment growth by educational level.

As shown in the charts below, there are projected to be 82,860 jobs that require a Bachelor’s Degree or higher in the Region projected for 2030. Also depicted is that only 32.3% will achieve this educational level (see chart on page 11). Therefore, as can be rationalized due to the pandemic, and, as documented by the figures, it appears that there will be a lack of potential workers with the appropriate levels to meet the projected demand.

At the same time, there are expected to be 313,980 jobs that will require some level of on-the-job training, long-term training, or postsecondary education or experience. Within the Region, 24.5% have some level of college with no degree with 34.2% having achieved a high school diploma. Thus, these two groups may be able to fulfill the projected demand if they are able secure the required skills via additional education and/or training.

Area	Educational Grouping	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Percent Change (2020-30)
Northeast Region	On-the-job training	229,570	244,520	6.1%
Northeast Region	Long-term training	14,350	15,210	5.7%
Northeast Region	PS education or experience	62,880	65,220	3.6%
Northeast Region	Associate degree	7,180	7,690	6.6%
Northeast Region	Bachelor's degree	62,420	66,880	6.7%
Northeast Region	Advanced degree	14,550	15,980	9.0%



Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

In reviewing the educational data, it is interesting to note that the percentage distribution across educational groupings from 2020 through 2030 are relatively even across the Northeast region which will play a major role in workforce development strategies over the next decade.

Estimated Population Age 25+ by Educational Attainment for the Northeast Region

NEPA Region		
Estimated Workforce Composition by Educational Attainment Level		
Educational Attainment	Jobs	Proportion
Less than high school diploma	42,744	9.9%
High school diploma or equivalent	124,559	29.0%
Some college, no degree	96,490	22.4%
Associate's degree	42,654	9.9%
Bachelor's degree	78,722	18.3%
Master's degree	31,289	7.3%
Doctoral or professional degree	12,171	2.8%
N/A (Military Occupations)	1,221	0.3%
Total Jobs included in Estimate	429,851	99.97%
EMS Total	429,964	--
High School or Less	167,303	38.9%
Bachelor's or Higher	122,182	28.4%

EMSI

Looking at on-line postings provides insight into skills and certifications that employers are seeking. The top requested hard skills in the Northeast Region include recruitment, training and driving. The top soft skills are scheduling, leadership, and leading. The most requested certifications are Commercial Driver's License, Registered Nurse, and Licensed Practical Nurse.

Top Hard Skills	Top Soft Skills	Top Certifications
Recruitment	Scheduling (Project Management)	Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
Training	Leadership	Registered Nurse
Driving	Leading	Licensed Practical Nurse
Management	Learning	Nurse Practitioner
Sales	Listening	Board Certified
Customer Service	Ethics	Certified Nursing Assistant
Insurance	Cleanliness	Licensed Vocational Nurses
Retailing	Coordinating	Certified Global Meeting Planner
Cargos	Mental Health	Transportation Worker ID Card (TWIC)
Health Care	Creativity	Certified Benefits Professional
<i>Source: EMSI</i>		

The following sectors account for the largest number of jobs in the Northeast Region.



Health Care and Social Assistance

- Registered Nurses is a top occupation in the Region and a top job posting
- Employs the highest paying occupations
- Personal Care Aides, Registered Nurses and Home Health Aides are among the fastest growing occupations
- Registered Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Licensed Practical Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse, and Certified Nursing Assistant are among the top certifications requested by employers
- With the exception of Lackawanna, individuals in these jobs are likely to commute outside of their county of residency and/or region for employment

Government

- Teaching, Military and Law Enforcement occupations make up the majority of employment opportunities in this sector
- Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education, and Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education are declining occupations
- Accounts for the largest amount of the Region's imports and exports
- Monroe, Lackawanna, and Luzerne are likely to have residents filling teaching occupations, while the other counties and the Region overall have more commuters
- There are more qualified candidates graduating from education programs than are needed to meet the regional demand

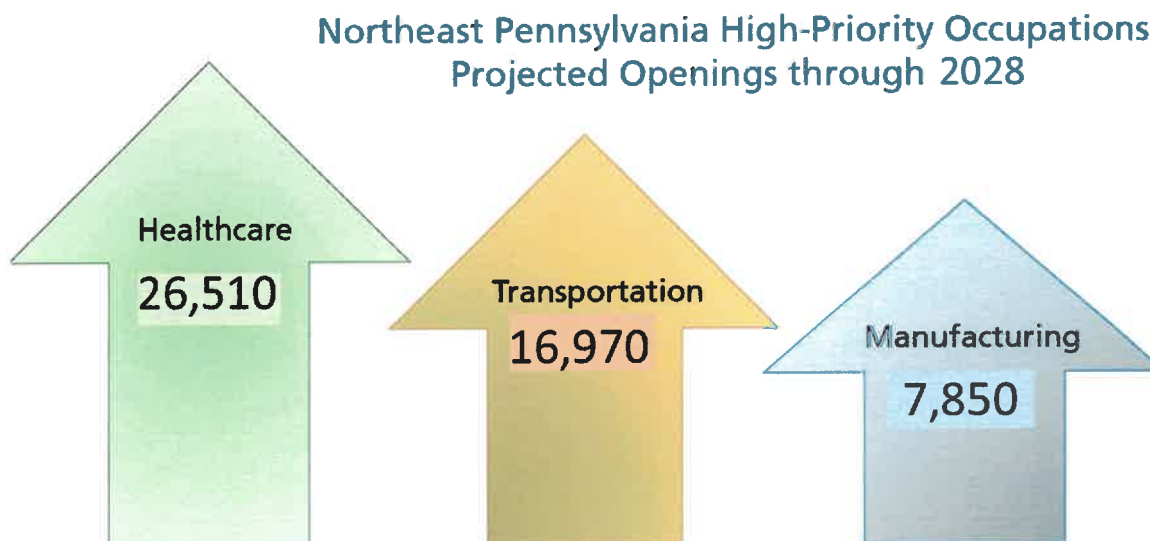
Hospitality, Leisure and & Entertainment

- Retail Salespersons, Cashiers and Stock Clerks and Order Fillers are among the largest occupations
- Retail Salespersons, First-Line Supervisors, Food Preparation Workers, Marketing Promoters, Caterers, Cashiers and Stock Clerks and Order Fillers are among the top posted positions
- Sales, Customer service, fitness and Recreation Workers are among the top skills employers look for
- While this industry tends to hire large numbers of employees and positions are accessible to those with minimal education, they do not offer family sustaining wages

Manufacturing

- Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand is a growing occupation
- Most entry level occupations require a high school diploma or equivalent
- Manufacturing has the greatest economic impact on the Region
- Several types of manufacturing are available within the Region

Based on the analysis of the skills and educational levels of the existing and emerging labor force in the Northeast Region, as compared to the area's current and projected occupational demands, the Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium of Workforce Boards has identified five primary Industry Partnerships that drive its workforce development activities: advanced materials /diversified manufacturing, food production, logistics and transportation, healthcare, and energy.



Healthcare Projected Openings by 2028					
Luzerne/Schuylkill		Lackawanna		Pocono	
Substance Abuse & Behavioral Disorder Counselors	960	Child, Family & School Social Workers	560	Registered Nurses	22101
Social & Human Service Assistants	1,130	Mental Health & Substance Abuse Social Workers	680	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	360
Registered Nurses	5040	Paralegals & Legal Assistants	260	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	760
Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians	N/A	Registered Nurses	2630	Medical Records & Health Information Technicians	90
Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	N/A	Surgical Technologists	N/A	Nursing Assistants	1080
Pharmacy Technicians	1050	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	1330	Massage Therapists	N/A
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	2240	Nursing Assistants	2100	Dental Assistants	N/A
Nursing Assistants	2920	Dental Assistants	N/A	Phlebotomists	N/A
Physical Therapist Assistants	240	Phlebotomists	N/A	Total	4500
Massage Therapists	N/A	Total	7480		
Dental Assistants	N/A				
Medical Assistants	950				
Phlebotomists	N/A				
Total	14,530				

Transportation Projected Openings by 2028

Luzerne/Schuylkill		Lackawanna		Pocono	
Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	640	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	N/A	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1650
Supervisors - Helpers, Laborers & Material Movers	N/A	Supervisors - Helpers, Laborers & Material Movers	350	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators	780
Supervisors - Transportation & Vehicle Operators	1260	Bus Drivers: Transit & Intercity	N/A	Total	2,430
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4170	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2030		
Light Truck Drivers	1550	Light Truck Drivers	660		
Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators	N/A	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators	N/A		
Total	7,620	Total	3,040		

Manufacturing Projected Openings by 2028					
Luzerne/Schuylkill		Lackawanna		Pocono	
Supervisors - Production & Operating Workers	1400	Supervisors - Production & Operating Workers	520	Supervisors - Production & Operating Workers	490
Team Assemblers	N/A	Team Assemblers	80	Team Assemblers	N/A
CNC Machine Tool Operators	350	CNC Machine Tool Operators	N/A	Machinists	N/A
Extruding & Drawing Machine Setters/Oprs/Tenders	N/A	Cutting, Punching & Press Machine Setters/Oprs/Tenders	270	Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers	90
Cutting, Punching & Press Machine Setters/Oprs/Tenders	N/A	Machinists	N/A	Chemical Equipment Operators & Tenders	N/A
Machinists	N/A	Multiple Machine Tool Setters/Oprs/Tenders	370	Total	580
Multiple Machine Tool Setters/Oprs/Tenders	N/A	Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers	230		
Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers	630	Printing Press Operators	N/A		
Printing Press Operators	450	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers & Weighers	300		
Chemical Equipment Operators & Tenders	N/A	Total	1770		
Separating, Filtering & Precipitating Setters/Oprs/Tenders	N/A				
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers & Weighers	1060				
Packaging & Filling Machine Oprs/Tenders	1520				
Total	5,410				

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

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

The Northeast Region relies on both workforce development and economic development initiatives to engage businesses throughout the seven-county area. The role of workforce development is to support the expansion and development of local talent and to assist employers with their workforce needs. Economic development is closely related in that it helps communities with business attraction, supports programs for workforce development, and promotes small business development and new business startups.

The Northeast Region's strategies and activities are overseen by the three local boards of the Northeast Consortium of Workforce Boards as discussed in Section 1.1. They have well- established working

relationships, and are also closely aligned with the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board that is responsible for similar activities for Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, and Wyoming Counties.

To promote regional workforce efforts, the group meets, at a minimum, bi-monthly. Formal agendas and minutes are recorded to document activities, progress, and outcomes. Some examples of regional best practices that have been implemented include alignment of Individual Training Account (ITA) levels, standardized operational forms, and a consistent approach to PA CareerLink® customer service. The Boards also work collaboratively to secure ancillary grants to further leverage and supplement regional sector initiatives.

The Region's economic development activities complement and support its workforce development initiatives. Specifically, business financing, government contracting assistance, international trade assistance, non-profit assistance, transportation planning, research and information and local government services are coordinated across the Region through the Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP). The Northeast Region PREP partners include:

- 📌 Local Development District: The Northeast Pennsylvania Alliance (Lead Organization)
- 📌 Small Business Development Centers at the University of Scranton and Wilkes University
- 📌 The Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center located in Hanover Township
- 📌 The Manufacturers Resource Center headquartered in Bethlehem
- 📌 The Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturing and Employers Association located in Pottsville
- 📌 Local Industrial Development Organizations: Berwick Industrial Development Association, CAN-DO Inc. (Hazleton), Carbon County Economic Development Corporation, Monroe County Industrial Development Authority, the Pike County Economic Development Authority, Schuylkill County Economic Development Corporation, Scranton-Lackawanna Industrial Building Company, and the Wayne Economic Development Corporation.

These PREP partners provide a powerful network of regional experts to help business owners address challenges facing their companies. Additionally, the network also helps businesses access critical state and federal resources, such as loans, grants, technical assistance, and other support. PREP partners provide services to local businesses and also to individual residents who may be interested in business start-up and management. Of key significance, many of the PREP partners serve on Local Workforce Development Boards in the Northeast Region.

At this time, there are no formal cooperative service delivery agreements in place; however, informal agreements among all constituents support strong linkages. This includes the willingness to collaborate and coordinate in systemic development of regional initiatives, readiness to prepare and submit overarching proposals for support of funding for regional projects, and the development of integrated strategic plans supporting regionalized economic and workforce development growth.

To ensure overarching support for all segments of the regional population such as youth and/or individuals with barriers to employment, it must first be noted that each local area receives Workforce

Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding to support these segments of the population. Procedures are established in each of the PA CareerLink® One-Stop sites to conduct program enrollments, provide assessment and case management services, and assist young adults and others with barriers in attaining their educational goals. WIOA Case Managers serve as advocates for these individuals as they research training and career pathway options that will set them on a path to self-sufficiency. Also, located within the area, in Luzerne County, is the Keystone Job Corp Center who actively recruits across the entire region through scheduled sessions in the PA CareerLink® sites. There are no YouthBuild projects currently within the region but an Americorps project revolving around the provision of mentors to youth was recently approved for Carbon County through the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley. It is envisioned that youth from the southeast corner of the region will be recruited for this project.

Within the Northeast Region, each PA CareerLink® has a Business Services Team (BST) that works directly with employers. They identify needs and match them to qualified candidates to fill open positions. As needed, they help employers maximize job postings on PA's workforce development system of record. Additionally, they establish on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, or incumbent worker training programs to help businesses develop workers.

BSTs also use labor market information to help businesses determine appropriate compensation levels and related benefits packages to remain competitive in the Northeast Region. Further, to avoid duplication of efforts, BST staff members communicate and collaborate with the partner organizations that are a part of the PA CareerLink® system. Moreover, each local area's BST members convene at least once each quarter on a regional basis to share best practices and identify emerging trends and needs.

To address the on-going needs of business and industry, the use of apprenticeships can support a workforce growth strategy. An apprenticeship is a program that trains a worker to become skilled in a particular trade, often combining hands-on work with classroom learning to train a new hire or upgrade the skills of an incumbent worker. Apprenticeships are generally considered full-time employment. As the apprentice is learning, they are also applying the lessons through working.

Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programming provides an opportunity for regional coordination. In addition to support for traditional Joint-Individual Registered Apprenticeship programs, the region also promotes Non-Joint individual and Group Registered Apprenticeship programs for non-traditional occupations. While not exclusive, our recruiting efforts with our PA CareerLink® partners intentionally focuses on reaching underserved, underrepresented, displaced, and veteran groups.

Recognizing the importance and value of apprenticeship programming, each local board in the Northeastern PA Planning Region is committed to expanding apprenticeship opportunities within their respective workforce areas as well. For example, the region's Local Workforce Development Boards connects the development of apprenticeship programming to their ongoing industry partnerships and sector strategies. A notable example is the Non-Joint Individual Mechatronics Registered Apprenticeship program, developed in partnership between the Greiner Corporation, Luzerne County Community College, and the L/S WDB. In the Pocono Counties WDA, ongoing discussions with community organizations, employers, and Penn State University center on the development of food processing and agriculture related group sponsorship Registered Apprenticeship programs. Regional LWDB support was paramount in the development of the Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce's "Innovations in Management" (IM) Group Sponsorship Registered Apprenticeship program, as described in Section 1.2 of this Plan. The IM

Registered Apprenticeship is a one-year program intentionally developed to meet the needs of all industries and to prepare individuals develop the skills they need to be successful in a supervisory role. Successful completers of this innovative Registered Apprenticeship receive sixteen transferrable college credits, a Small Business Diploma from the Community College and a Journey Worker Certificate. In addition, the regional LWDB partners were awarded a grant to expand apprenticeships in the region.

The region's employers struggle to find workers with the right skills. Registered Pre-Apprenticeship provides the instruction needed to help individuals acquire the skills to be successful in registered apprenticeship programs. The region's LWDBs are committed to supporting the development an ecosystem that connects training providers and other organizations with the capacity to administer Pre-apprenticeship programs to Registered Apprenticeship programs. For individuals, Pre-Apprenticeship programs can be a bridge to career opportunities. For employers, Pre-Apprenticeships can provide a dependable pipeline to skilled job seekers.

Further, given the geographical differences across the three NE PA workforce boards and the nature of the individualized business climates, each area must develop their own action plan for dissemination of information and development of specific apprenticeship opportunities. The dissemination of information regarding apprenticeships falls to the Business Services Teams (BSTs) within each of the applicable PA CareerLink® One-Stop Centers across the region. Similar in nature across the various Centers, staff have been trained to initiate discussions regarding this opportunity as they infiltrate business and industry, most commonly through the internal human resources departments. Staff are made available to provide presentations to business owners and/or representatives and provide informational material on establishing apprenticeships as part of their overall outreach campaigns. Having assisted the local workforce boards for many years, the various NE PA institutions of higher learning are well aware of the viability of apprenticeships and have been progressive in their development of courses of study to support apprenticeship usage. The mechanisms are in place to promote apprenticeship development; however, the challenge has always been the engagement of business and industry for participation. Local Boards recognize the qualitative results that can be recognized from apprenticeship development; therefore, the following strategies can be universally applied for strategic planning purposes;

- Each of the three NE PA workforce areas will ensure that BST staff are well-trained and well-versed in their knowledge and support of apprenticeship applications and that all PA CareerLink® partner staff are engaged in the promotion of apprenticeships as part of the overall services available through the Centers;
- The workforce board directors and administrative staff will continue to promote post-secondary curriculum development revolving around emerging industries and apprenticeship applications including addressing non-traditional occupational areas;
- Information on apprenticeship opportunities will be stressed at Quarterly workforce board meetings to ensure that the varied membership of the boards (private and public representatives) have the knowledge to further disseminate this information throughout their local communities;
- Support of the current projects will continue; and
- Successful best practices, as they emerge, will be utilized to promote expansion of apprenticeship usage.

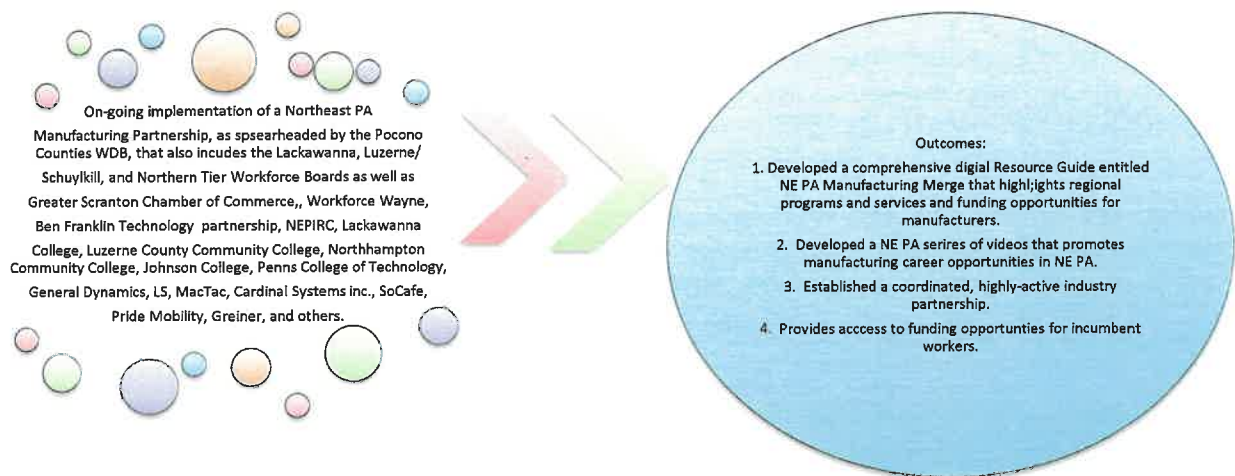
All said, the Northeast PA Consortium of Workforce Boards is committed to promoting pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities across its 7-County region and will utilize the PA ATO's recently developed *Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide* for long-term planning and development of the next comprehensive Local Plan cycle in July of 2025.

Across the 7-County Northeast Region of the Commonwealth, there are 54 school districts, 17 post-secondary institutions of higher education, and various other providers of training (i.e., tractor trailer driving schools, LPN and CNA training programs, technical school offerings, computer programs, and the like.) Business Education Partnership (BEP) Grants received by the three Boards support the provision of career awareness and pathway information to intermediate and high-school-aged students and immerse workforce system information into school districts’ 339 plans of action. The receipt of WIOA formula funding by the Boards allows for the channeling of millions of dollars to the post-secondary institutions and local training providers. Given that the selection of training is an individualized choice, there are no boundary regulations for training placements (i.e., a Lackawanna County resident may choose to attend Luzerne County Community College). Finally, WDB Executive Directors and administrative staff are well entrenched on Career Technology Centers and other post-secondary Perkins boards and committees and have participated in the recent development 5-year Perkins operational plans.

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

Currently, the Northeast Region is focusing workforce development efforts within the region on the key sectors of advanced materials/diversified manufacturing, healthcare, food processing, logistics and transportation, and energy. These sectors have been the most prominent across the region for the past decade and appear to be stable in nature. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 2020, it must be noted that the Northeast region was struggling somewhat in convening meetings of industry leaders across the various sectors, due mainly to the large geographic footprint of the region. In some instances, attending a meeting involved a two-to-three-hour one-way commute. Prominent business owners and leaders cannot afford this valuable time away from their business to attend a planning session. This issue did not fall on deaf ears. The Northeast Region listened to the concerns voiced by sector representatives about travel time and the appearance of duplicative efforts within the prevailing Industry Partnership structure. As discussions were underway for discovery of alternate ways to conduct meetings and initiate plans of action, the pandemic hit. If anything, positive came of this, it was the ability of major constituents to rapidly adapt to new methods of communication, most notably ZOOM/TEAM–type meetings. And, as this occurred, so did a revitalization of sector initiatives.

An example of how this can work is shown in the diagram below:



Building on events/meetings that had occurred prior to the pandemic, the NE PA Manufacturing Partnership (grant held by the Pocono Counties WDB and aligned with Keystone Development Partnership) regrouped and was able to produce substantial and sustainable outcomes (see blue circle).

This structure can be replicated across industry sectors. Continued sustainability, from the Commonwealth's perspective, through the on-going outlay of funding opportunities, will further support IP development.

Given the nature of the Region, the focus of sectoral efforts on its successful Industry Partnership initiatives should rest, primarily, with NEPA Alliance, the previously-mentioned regional community and economic development agency that serves the seven counties of the Northeast Region. Collectively, NEPA Alliance partners provide a powerful network of regional experts who help business owners address nearly every type of challenge facing their companies, including workforce development issues.

As regional opportunities arise, the constituents will convene groups (most likely now through a ZOOM or the like platform) to discuss the strategies and actions that are required to address specific needs. This action will ensure that fluctuating in-demand occupational areas remain at the forefront of any workforce/economic development planning efforts and ensure that both foreseen, as well unforeseen changes are addressed, in real time. The Region believes that by taking incremental steps, and building upon the strong foundation of its past as well as existing Industry Partnerships, it will be able to gather the momentum that is required to gain commitment from sector representatives for ~~Next Gen~~ sectoral activities. To note: in cases where IPs must be revived, the three local Workforce Development Boards will assume a lead role in the developmental process and acquisition of funding.

As existing apprenticeships continue to grow or expand or new registered apprenticeships emerge, regional partners will ensure linkages to workforce initiatives and opportunities that can, in turn, promote sustainability. Additionally, the three local Workforce Boards encompassing the Northeast PA region strongly support the development of apprenticeship opportunities and promote this development across the varied workforce sectors. Please see Section 1.4 for more in-depth information.

And, as previously stated, the Northeast PA Consortium of Workforce Board's goal is to utilize the *Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide* as issued by the PA ATO Office in March of 2023 for the next Regional planning cycle in July of 2025 to support the Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship ecosystem.

One last item of note: in June, 2022, the Lackawanna County WDB received a Clean Energy Grant to encompass all of the regional workforce areas. Targeting businesses that self-declare as 51% "clean/green" in nature, this project is just commencing and will replicate regional efforts.

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.

The Northeast Region continues to utilize the State-approved *High-Priority Occupational (HPO) List* and *Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)* to connect jobseekers, including those with barriers to employment, with occupational demands across the region. The services provided through the PA CareerLink® centers and satellite locations are designed to assist individuals who are actively seeking employment or who are interested in improving their current skills. Overall, the Northeast Region strives to ensure that at least

51% of enrolled participants are individuals with barriers to employment, such as veterans, recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and out-of-school youth. The following strategies promote the achievement of this goal.

Title I staff within the PA CareerLink® system work closely with Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs). Priority of service is given to veterans at PA CareerLink® offices (a veteran or qualified spouse receives priority access to services and training opportunities).

Individuals on public assistance and low-income individuals are identified on initial visit in the PA CareerLink® centers. They are informed of their right to receive priority of service. Strong partnerships are established among title I Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN) providers to integrate services and offerings.

PA CareerLink® staff identify individuals who are basic skills deficient through an intake process, then refer them as needed to literacy programs, including high school equivalency review classes, English as a Second Language (ESL), and remediation courses. Co-enrollment with Title II Adult Basic Education and title I services is encouraged for individuals with basic skill deficiencies.

Any/all services that have been described and/or are available through the workforce system are extended to all workforce customers engaged in pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship activities or seeking a linkage to such entities. New strategies, as outlined in the PA ATO's *Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide*, will be implemented across the Region and comprehensively defined during the next Regional Plan development cycle in July of 2025.

The usage of *SkillUp PA* is also widely promoted for customers who are seeking both short-term course work to enhance existing skills sets as well as industry-recognized certification attainment.

All of these services, as described, are conveyed and discussed at local WDB Quarterly Meetings, thus, ensuring the engagement of business and industry, educational, labor, and community leaders in the oversight of their local area. Of note is that there are Board members crossing geographical workforce areas to sit on contiguous boards which, in turn, allows for the dissemination of information across the various workforce areas and promotes conformity in the development and provision of services. Finally, as has been previously stated, many of these individuals also sit on the various NE PA Alliance boards and committees and transfer information as appropriate.

Of key significance, the Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium's regional strategies go beyond its borders. The three Northeast Region WDBs (Lackawanna, Luzerne-Schuylkill, and the Pocono Counties) are solidly partnered with the Northern Tier Region to ensure a wider-based systemic approach to the provision of services and the coordination of initiatives. The Northern Tier Workforce Development Board is also a major contributor to the Northeast Region AMDM Industry Partnership as described in 1.5 above.

The Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium will continue to discuss additional opportunities for expanding services on a regional basis and to leverage the best practices learned through the collective impact model in the local areas.

In 2019, in collaboration with The Institute, a major public policy and educational development entity in Northeastern PA, prepared and distributed a 2019 NEPA Talent Report that analyzed the current and future workforce, industry, and educational of six NE PA Counties: Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike,

Schuylkill and Wayne. The report highlights the top sectors and occupations in each county based on the number of employed workers for each. Also highlighted were the fastest growing industries and occupations, as well as forecasted job growth, replacement demand, exits, and transfers within each of these industries per county. This study provides some answers to questions regarding the supply and demand within the individual counties with the following chart detailing the largest share of the regional economy:

<p align="center"><u>Health Care</u> Employees: 46,639 Average Annual Growth Rate: +0.8 Forecasted Job Demand, 2018-23: 25,450</p>	<p align="center"><u>Retail Trade</u> Employees: 30,469 Average Annual Growth: -1.0% Forecasted Job Demand, 2018-23: 19,319</p>
<p align="center"><u>Manufacturing</u> Employees: 26,058 Average Annual Growth Rate: +0.8% Forecasted Job Demand, 2018-23: 11,093</p>	<p align="center"><u>Transportation, Warehousing, & Logistics</u> Employees: 23,044 Average Annual Growth Rate: +6.0% Forecasted Job Demand, 2018-23: 12,951</p>
<p align="center"><u>Accommodation & Food Service</u> Employees: 20,707 Average Annual Growth Rate: +1.8% Forecasted Job Demand, 2018-23: 16,538</p>	<p align="center"><u>Administrative & Support Services</u> Employees: 16,129 Average Annual Growth Rate: +2.4% Forecasted Job Demand, 2018-23: 9,664</p>
<p align="center"><u>Construction</u> Employees: 10,892 Average Annual Growth Rate: +1.4% Forecasted Job Demand, 2018-23: 5,651</p>	<p align="center"><u>Finance & Insurance</u> Employees: 10,417 Average Annual Growth Rate: +0.8% Forecasted Job Demand, 2018-23: 4,757</p>

As can be seen, information such as the above clearly provides local workforce and economic development professionals with significant information to support planning efforts. Please note: the statistics, as documented, are the most recent available; however, in analyzing the numbers, they are still in line with the types of industries/occupations that are prevalent across the Northeast region of the Commonwealth. When these statistics were compiled, they contained projected data through the current calendar year; therefore, can reasonably be utilized as a current stepping-off point for re-evaluation.

Additionally, The Institute prepares and conducts a yearly community-wide information session (most recently conducted in May, 2022) centered around an Indicator’s Report, a statistical-heavy report on the demographics, economic development, community development, education, energy, government, health and health care, housing, industry, infrastructure, land use, planning, public safety, tourism and arts and culture, transportation, and workforce development for two of the region’s largest counties: Lackawanna and Luzerne. This report is used by local workforce development professionals as a tool for local as well as economic/workforce development planning.

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

As discussed, the Northeast Region includes three local workforce boards covering seven counties. Taking into consideration the geographical nuances that impact overall regionalization efforts, they work cooperatively to coordinate and collaborate their strategies, services, and delivery methods to maximize services for businesses and job seekers.

Using information from the Northeast Pennsylvania Regional Skills Gap Analysis prepared by NC3T (National Center for Career and Technical Colleges), the Boards identified primary supportive service needs. They established coordinated spending caps, similar priority of service policies, and key sector initiatives (i.e., industry partnerships, community-based grants, sector partnership grants, and other regionally-awarded grants) to promote consistency and provide systemic stability.

Access to public transportation is a principal impediment for many of the Region's jobseekers. Overall, the Northeast Region encompasses nearly 4,400 square miles that is connected by both Interstate highways and rural roads. Additionally, many residents commute to work outside of the local area, including to Lehigh Valley, Berks County, New Jersey, and New York. Commuting is largely in personal, motorized vehicles with public and private transit providing a much smaller share.

As can be seen in the charts in Section 1.3, both the Luzerne-Schuylkill and Pocono Counties WDAs have a higher number of out-commuters, meaning more people are traveling outside these areas for work than are traveling in for employment. The Lackawanna WDA, on the other hand, has a higher number of in-commuters.

The public bus transportation services that are available in the more urban areas of the Northeast Region are not well coordinated with the needs of business and industry. Services are restricted to traditional day-time hours with limited service on Saturdays, and no service on Sundays. Moreover, many individuals in the Region seek employment in the bordering States of New York and New Jersey. However, public transportation to these areas consists of a daily bus run from Wilkes Barre through Scranton, through the Poconos, and on to New York City. Rail service between NE PA and New York City has long been under discussion; however, to-date, has not materialized.

The Northeast Region is very interested in improving public transportation options. For example, discussions are underway with Commuter Services of Pennsylvania, an organization based in York, PA that works to reduce traffic congestion by helping commuters find alternatives other than driving alone and by reaching out to employers so they can help their workforce find those options. Established practices may be easily transferable to the Northeast Region.

Additionally, NEPA Alliance, the Lead Organization for the Northeast Region's PREP, coordinates the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) that works in conjunction with the PA Department of Transportation and County officials to coordinate transportation planning and programming. TAP projects are intended to build pedestrian and bicycle facilities, improve access to public transportation, create safe routes to schools, preserve historic transportation structures, provide environmental mitigation, create trails projects that serve a transportation purpose, all while promoting safety and mobility. The Executive Directors of the three local workforce boards attend NEPA Alliance meetings where transportation topics are explored and discussed.

Also, the three Boards are strategically involved as partners in NE PA MOVES which is described in Section 1.2 of this Plan.

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

The three NE PA Workforce Development Boards are well aware of the need to increase training options for inclusion on the statewide *Eligible Training Provider List* or *ETPL*. The *ETPL* is a listing of programs of study at local/regional education and training providers that are, yearly, determined to be in high demand in each designated workforce development area by the Commonwealth's Center for Workforce information and Analysis (CWIA). If a course of study is not included on the published List, the education/training provider has the opportunity to petition the Commonwealth for consideration of inclusion. This petition process involves local Board approval prior to submission and must include documentable information regarding the number of local job opening projected over the next three years as verified by letters of support from established businesses. Petitions may be filed for unmet employer demand, career pathways, or local workforce initiative/sector partnerships.

As the economy and workforce situation fluctuates and with an expectation of regional growth following the pandemic, it will be necessary to increase these training options to allow for the expenditure of WOIA dollars to significantly increase the numbers of trainees to fulfill probable job openings. As the employment opportunities vary, so must the training options. To this end, the local Boards work closely with their educational and training providers to ensure the understanding of current labor market data and the trends that are projected. This proactive approach also allows for the development of new courses of study to accommodate new job openings. As technology continues to change, educational institutions and training providers must be adaptable in their methods of educational delivery systems which will, in turn, enhance options to be included on the *ETPL*.

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

The Northeast Region does not pool administrative funds. The Lead Applicant is the designated Fiscal Agent for regional grants and receives the administrative dollars.

When securing regional grants, the Boards utilize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement to identify the specific breakdown and eligibility requirements for the funding the workforce has access to. The funds are typically divided equally among the workforce boards (less administrative dollars) and remain in the control of the designated Fiscal Agent.

If, prior to the last quarter of the funding period, a Board has not expended its allocated portion, then its balance may be re-allocated to one or more of the other areas, typically on a first-come, first-serve basis.

1.10. Describe the agreement between the local boards that describes how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Department 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.

The three local Boards comprising the Northeast region each negotiate performance levels individually with the Commonwealth of PA. That said, a review of the Common Measures Performance Goals and Performance Levels for the past three years, indicates that the Boards that comprise the Northeast Regional

Planning Area have had similar performance goals, as well as similar results.

The highest deviation rate was for the Average Quarterly Earnings, which is to be expected since the Lackawanna and Luzerne/Schuylkill local areas include more urban labor markets as compared to the rural nature of the Pocono Counties.