



Local Workforce Investment Area Strategy

Southwest Corner Workforce Investment Board
(Beaver, Greene and Washington Counties)

Overview

The Southwest Corner Workforce Investment Board (SCWIB) oversees a network of services that serve jobseekers and employers in Beaver, Greene and Washington counties. In this three county area, the SCWIB operates four PA CareerLink centers that provide frontline services to fulfill the needs of the employment community. The SCWIB is also responsible for compiling local labor market information, selecting qualified organizations to operate WIA Title I programs, certifying training providers and programs that prepare individuals for high priority occupations, negotiating local performance standards, and convening industry cluster partnerships to address common workforce concerns facing employers. The SCWIB is one of hundreds of oversight boards that derive authority from the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Board members, appointed by the county commissioners, represent employers, educational institutions and training providers, community based organizations, organized labor, and government.

This Operational Plan was developed to demonstrate the coordinated efforts in the Southwest Corner Workforce Investment Area in dealing with opportunities provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The ARRA is the nation's largest investment in infrastructure since the 1950s when the interstate highway system was initiated and the largest investment in education. The plan looks to build a foundation for sustainable future growth and will cultivate the talent needed to ensure the prosperity of our region, the Commonwealth, and the nation as a whole. Plan principles have been expounded with guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry and TEGE 14-08. The purpose of the plan is to ensure effective use of the funds provided by the ARRA. The Southwest Corner Workforce Investment Board is focused on making sure that the system is ready and prepared to deal with the influx of participants. The system includes WIB staff, WIB Board members, Fiscal Agent staff, Title I providers, and PA CareerLink Administrators and staff.

Pennsylvania's workforce development system has all of the necessary components to deliver a strong and skilled workforce. A collaborative and focused effort will be made to utilize all parts of the service delivery system to reach desired outcomes. Development of this plan is the first step in the collaboration. Through talks with SCWIB members and staff, SCWIB Title I providers, Industry Partnerships and PA CareerLink Site Administrators, this service plan was formulated. This plan advances the mission of the SCWIB and illustrates the focus on the four goals of the ARRA listed above. Information regarding the ARRA plan and the roles and responsibilities of our entire system was presented to the Southwest Corner Workforce Investment Board Members and community leaders, educators, and service providers at a public meeting on Tuesday April 28, 2009. The plan was approved and action was taken to submit this plan. Authority was given to the Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc. (WGCJTA, Inc.), fiscal agent and staff to the SCWIB, to enter into ARRA related contracts. Action was also taken at this meeting to release Requests for Proposals focusing on class-sized training programs. Also, plans have also presented to Local Elected Officials, local economic groups, and economic roundtables. These meetings have taken place over the last few months.

Response to the PA Department of Labor & Industry



1. **Provide an analysis of the LWIA's economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context.**

The SCWIB has experienced an economic downturn not unlike being seen throughout the Commonwealth and the Nation. The mission of the SCWIB has always been to develop policies, oversee public funds, and procure services that will help employers and job seekers throughout Washington, Greene and Beaver counties. Job placement assistance, education, training and counseling still aims to achieve a skilled workforce and economic development throughout the region, while envisioning a regional labor pool that possesses the skills and attitudes to attract and retain employers who offer sufficient wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. However, current economic conditions provide new challenges.

Through work performed by the PA CareerLinks, Business Service Teams, and Industry Partnerships, common business concerns have been identified. Western Pennsylvania has an aging population. Companies foresee a workforce that could retire faster than qualified replacement workers can be hired in this already competitive labor market. This factor alone highlights the importance of having a prepared and skilled youth pipeline to counteract these retirements.

However, the recent downturn has sidelined some workers retirement plans for the short term. The retirements are not happening as rapidly as first thought, but eventually the labor market will face an exodus. New home construction is seeing slow growth due to the lending and Country's financial woes. Being a consumer driven economy, where the population's actions dictates the success or failures of local industry, one can see where the downturn has a domino effect on the entire economic picture. The SCWIB plans will still be in place to face these challenges.

Another example local economic times deals with the Southwest Corner's newest and extremely promising industry – gas and oil due to the abundance of natural gas in the Marcellus Shale. Plans are still moving forward and companies are still planning relocations and expansions into the Southwest Corner, but the natural gas price drop and undecided legislative actions have slowed the plans of the industry. There is a possibility for thousands of jobs in this industry, both in gas and oil working and ancillary industries such as transportation, construction and manufacturing, but plans are not moving as initially projected and planned. Again, this is a short term issue that will turn around and the SCWIB will be prepared for with a skilled and educated workforce.

According to April 2009 unemployment statistics, Southwest Corner has 7.3% unemployment and neighboring Allegheny County's unemployment percentage is 6.2%. Both of these numbers are below the state percentage of 7.6% and national average of 8.6%. Recently, the Southwest Corner alone has seen over 2800 layoffs, coupled with a large number of layoffs in Allegheny County. Residents whose jobs are eliminated due to foreign influence will qualify for training under Trade Act have issued through the regional PA CareerLinks and will not affect ARRA plans. An analysis of job orders on the PA CareerLink CWDS system shows employers are looking for currently part-time employees and the number of job orders has drastically fallen. In Beaver County alone, comparing May 2009 with July 2008, job orders are down nearly 40% and at the lowest level they have been over the last five years. Appendix A of this document contains detailed industry cluster analyses as well as layoff information, skill gaps, and cluster growth potential on the Southwest Corner and surrounding areas. This data reinforces the SCWIB position that while there is an economic downturn, the trend is short term and the area is positioned to weather and begin to show signs of growth.



The main goal of ARRA funding is to have a higher focus of training in the high priority occupations and focused industry clusters. Extra attention must be given to the fact that today's job seekers will be discouraged and frustrated with their personal situation and the current economic climate. Data has shown that while the economy of the Southwest Corner is slowed compared to past levels, the strategic plan of the SCWIB is still focused on the correct areas of service. The ARRA funding will be able to enhance the prioritized efforts of the SCWIB.

2. What is the LWIA's vision for ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce?

In 2006, the SCWIB completed an industry cluster analysis to determine what industries should be priority for this workforce area. Results of this study showed primarily a suburban residential area to the City of Pittsburgh with a large portion of the economy being consumer driven. In addition, this study led the SCWIB to the formation of focused and priority industry clusters. These include Logistics and Transportation, Construction, Health Care, Energy and Metals/Metal Fabricating. Of course, other training opportunities are available, but these careers show highest projections of being able to offer employment in a strong industry with self-sustaining wages.

As a follow-up to the Industry Cluster Analysis of 2006, an analysis was completed of commuting patterns into and out of the Southwest Corner. This analysis strengthened the SCWIB position that this area is consumer driven, but showed that the local economy stretches outside the area borders to nearby Allegheny County and even into West Virginia and Ohio. In fact, 48% of Southwest Corner's residents also work here, while 33% travel to Allegheny County for work. Not considering Allegheny County's economic trends would not give the proper picture of local economic conditions and trends.

Focus of the PA CareerLink and Title I providers has shifted from matching job seekers to a wide range of employers that offered jobs across many areas and skill levels to an atmosphere where job orders are down and employers are looking for employees with specific skills and/or part time employees. The dislocated workers coming to the centers have skills in a particular field, but these skills often do not translate to the current job market. There are also increases in the number of job seekers coming to PA CareerLink without basic skills or looking for GED services.

SCWIB conducted an audit of services available at local PA CareerLinks to ensure that the proper partners are in place to counteract these increases. ABLE and Transitional Learning providers are in place at all four PA CareerLink sites to offer GED, remediation, and basic skills to job seekers of all ages, skill degree and education level. Staff will be prepared to assist those interested in training to focus on what they want to do and educate them to the local job market, high priority occupations, and growing careers.

Increases in training and education opportunities are the focus of SCWIB activities. The SCWIB has released an RFP for class-size training to meet more immediate needs. These class-size training efforts will allow for local training providers to present current and in-demand training to local residents at a cost lower than the regular ITA process. ITAs will still be available and will be utilized for trainings not covered by the class-sized training RFP. Job readiness training is being provided through the Work Certified Program. This nationally recognized work readiness program will supplement the youth program and prepare participants with important lessons of "real world" career expectations and trends. Participants will master over 50 competencies established by employers for success on the job. The Work Certified curriculum has shown fantastic results across all populations. Dislocated workers and adults are reintroduced



to current employer demands. These valuable lessons will allow job seekers to be more prepared from the time an application is sent through the interview and into employment. Work Certified programs are currently being operated in 8 states. This allows for transferable certification outside of Pennsylvania. SCWIB has connected the Industry Partnerships with Regional Career Education Partnerships and Business Service Teams to create a universal service environment.

The PA Department of Labor and Industry has suggested that 60% of ARRA funds be allocated to training. This is a very feasible level. With the rising rate of retirees and also the number of layoffs in various industry sectors in our area, the need for (and lack of) skilled labor is evident. There will also be a focus on training disconnected, out-of-school youth population to meet the demands of employers and allow these youth to find self-sustaining jobs and stay in our workforce area. The majority of ARRA funds will be reserved for ITAs. These training accounts will be executed within the SCWIB's high priority occupations and industry clusters. Class-sized training RFPs will be executed to address emerging employment opportunities in the Southwest Corner and surrounding metropolitan areas. With ARRA funds and activities, there are plenty of opportunities for training.

Local economic trends and industry cluster will consistently be reevaluated and updates. If a new job and required skill set emerges, SCWIB will petition to add the field to the high priority occupation list. This will ensure that local residents can be properly trained in these fields. SCWIB will also continue to look for new partners to be involved in PA CareerLink and WIB activities. There will continue to be public involvement with planning and implementation. All SCWIB efforts will foster and sustain economic growth and increase individual earning potential. This mission is not affected by the implementation of ARRA funds and programs; it is merely expanded. The ARRA funding is *in addition to, not a replacement* for those WIA dollars currently in the system.

3. **What is the LWIA's vision for ensuring that every youth has the opportunity for developing and achieving career goals through education and workforce training, including the young people most in need of assistance, such as out-of-school youth, homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, migrant and seasonal farm worker youth, youth with disabilities, and other youth at risk?**

SCWIB youth program serves at-risk youth (in-school and out-of-school) including those who are economically disadvantaged, pregnant or parenting, learning disabled, physically disabled, homeless, or in foster care. To ensure that eligible youth have the opportunity to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training, qualified youth service providers are carefully selected through a competitive process, with input from SCWIB Youth Council. These providers are monitored regularly to verify that contractual provisions and performance standards are being met.

In selecting youth services providers, the following criteria are used:

- *Program Design/Understanding of the Problem.* Goals and objectives reflect SCWIB vision of a coordinated youth system that strengthens the connection between academic excellence and success in the workplace. Program design (including follow-up services) reflects a clear understanding of youth programming as a sequence of program elements appropriate to individual



assessed need. All ten elements required under WIA are incorporated. Extent of service is appropriate.

- *Performance Outcome Attainment/Soundness of Approach.* There are good prospects for project success, based upon the provider's understanding of the target population and associated challenges, program accessibility, recruitment strategies, design and coordination of service components, and innovation in program design.
- *Contractor Qualifications.* The provider demonstrates an ability to meet the terms of the RFP, based on the quality of the proposal, the prospect for successful outcomes, and the provider's operational, financial, and administrative experience with projects of this type and scope.
- *Personnel Qualifications.* The personnel assigned to the project by the provider appear competent as measured by experience, qualifications, and where appropriate, education.
- *Program Linkages/Partnership Building.* There is evidence of productive working relationships being developed among the provider, local school systems, and other youth organizations to achieve shared goals. There is a clear indication of how participants will benefit from the collaboration.
- *Cost/Reasonableness.* Costs are reasonable compared to programs with similar hours of training, program design, equipment, etc.

The additional ARRA funding will allow for a larger number of youth to be served. SCWIB looks to serve between 150-200 ARRA eligible out-of-school youth. Additionally, traditional WIA funds will be similar to the ARRA focus, but with 14-18 year old youths or those eligible youth that choose to not be served in the ARRA youth program. There will be a clear and transparent reporting system in place to ensure that ARRA funds and traditional WIA funds will be used simultaneously. Again, the goal is to offer services to a larger population of youth through a creative, flexible, and focused program.

In accordance with TEG 14-08, the ARRA summer youth component will focus on out-of-school youth age 18-24. These youth will attend job readiness courses focusing on the Work Certified curriculum. Recruitment for the summer program will be from the local County Assistance Offices, Foster Care providers, and Children and Youth Services. These classes, combined with up to 12 weeks of work experience, will prepare area youth for employment. There are also opportunities for internships at local worksites. These valuable career opportunities will be especially important with those youth previously disconnected with the work force and lacking skills. This population of youth historically is a hard to connect with the job market in normal economic conditions, let alone today's economy where they are competing with a larger number of dislocated workers and adults for the same employment. Interns and summer employees are already participating in vital ARRA required activities, including job readiness being provided through the Work Certified Program. Youth will be prepared not only for the time they serve in the summer, but also as they move beyond this supplemented employment into full time employment. Youth pipeline strategies have been the focus of SCWIB Industry Partnerships and aim to connect youth to the "gold-collar" careers offered in these industries. Follow-up services will be provided to this youth population to ensure that their employment needs are being met.

The SCWIB Regional Career and Educational Partnership will continually be involved with the youth programs. Connections between career education and local educators have been incredibly valuable. There will be continued



efforts to connect area youth to careers through a number of means, including a connection to pipeline projects being developed through SCWIB industry Partnerships.

4. Identify the LWIA's key workforce investment system priorities and how each will lead to actualizing the LWIA's vision for workforce and economic development.

As mentioned, a number of studies have been conducted to assist the SCWIB in developing industry priorities for this area and the surrounding metropolitan region. Feedback provided by PA CareerLink, Business Service Teams, and Industry Partnerships have strengthened these workforce priorities. Priorities include Logistics and Transportation, Construction, Health Care, Energy and Metals/Metal Fabricating. Local data has led to a focus in Mining as an additional priority. The SCWIB service providers have focused 50% of training and resources towards these priorities. This will ensure that local workforce will be prepared to move into these employment areas that have a positive outlook. Opportunities for basic skills training, short term training programs, class-sized training opportunities, and job readiness and soft skills training are have been put in place to offer maximum opportunity to participants. Changes have been made to the SCWIB Local Plan to eligibility and priority of service to open up the programs to a larger pool of individual. The ARRA funds will allow for more people to be served by focusing these dollars to appropriate populations, thus opening up the traditional WIA funds to more individuals.

The recent economic downturn has negatively affected these industries, but they are still high priority. For example, health care will always be a priority for the Southwest Corner. The aging population requires attention to fields such as allied health and nurse's aides. Along with the proximity to major medical centers such as the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and the West Virginia University Medical Center, opportunities in this industry will be available. As the Marcellus Shale natural gas project continues establish itself and to grow exponentially over the next few years, this industry will positively affect ancillary industries. It is said that only 15% of the work on a gas drill is done by the drilling company. That leaves 85% of the work to local transportation companies, construction companies that will build roads and fences and local manufacturers that will assist in keeping the drills running and up to date. The recent negative "domino effect" has clear potential to turn positive that these industry priorities need to remain the focus of SCWIB employment and training activities.

Continued focus will be on educating area youth and training providers on the growth potential of these careers. A coordinated and collaborative effort is ongoing. Partners include the SCWIB, PA CareerLink staff, Industry Partnerships, Title I Providers, ABLE, Literacy, and local and regional training providers. "Here to Help" activities are being offered throughout the workforce area to make the public aware of the opportunities offered through ARRA funds. Oversight on all activities will be provided by the SCWIB Oversight Coordinator and through regular reconciliation and review.

5. What strategies are in place to address the Governor's priorities, the LWIA's priorities, and the workforce development issues identified through the analysis of the LWIA's economy and labor market?

Keeping in line with the priorities set forth in the ARRA TEGL 14-08 and with guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, SCWIB has program strategies in place to effectively use ARRA funds. First of all, these funds will be used simultaneously with traditional WIA funds. Over the last few years, dwindling allocations have left the SCWIB with limited funds for training, making the ARRA opportunities exciting. SCWIB has allocated 30% of the ARRA funds to supportive services and OJTs. This will significantly expand training opportunities. Eligibility has been expanded so that more participants can receive



the services required to become employed in a job with self-sustaining wages. The SCWIB has opened up transportation supportive services to a greater number of individuals receiving intensive or training services. The maximum amount to be received via supportive services has been raised from \$250 per year to \$500 per year. This would assist with some costly services such as, but not limited to, a major car repair, tires for a vehicle, or clothing. The SCWIB Local Plan has been modified to provide uniformed service.

According to TEGL 14-08, "Priority use of WIA Adult formula funds under the Recovery Act must be for services to recipients of public assistance and other low income individuals as described in WIA section 134(d)(4)(E)". When funds are limited, this priority policy of being low income is applied to WIA Adult funds. Now that ARRA money is available, Adult funds are not limited. Therefore, the SCWIB priority policy has been lifted for WIA Adult funds only. This will permit more adults to be served. Also, the SCWIB has adopted the most recent Self-Sufficiency Standard for PA as developed by PathWays PA. These changes and new levels are included on www.pathwayspa.org. BWDP is expanding its PREP program to inform dislocated workers of available options as they collect unemployment. A collaborative effort between BWDP, Title I Providers and PA CareerLink staff in this system provides for the strongest connection to quality services.

The SCWIB has positioned services that are easily attainable and flexible, a true customer-driven approach to service. The participant will be presented with options based on need. Basic skills attainment.

6. Describe innovative service delivery strategies the LWIA has or is planning to undertake to maximize resources, increase service levels, improve service quality, achieve better integration or meet other key LWIA goals.

All service providers in the SCWIB workforce development system have been briefed and are fully aware of the plans and objectives of the local workforce area. More sessions are being planned to ensure that the goals and objectives of SCWIB ARRA operations are fulfilled. The main goal of this plan is to ensure that participants are engaged and can easily navigate options. This is in line with the objectives of the ARRA master plan.

As participants are served at the PA CareerLink, staff will ensure that they are connected to the service provider that best fits their needs. These training needs will vary by participant, which necessitates that all options be clearly explained to the customer. The PA CareerLink is staffed to face all needs, from training through a Title I provider or OVR, ABLE or Literacy Services for those seeking basic skill remediation, or the Work Certified Program for customers to become acquainted with the demands and expectations of today's employers. Additional resources through Wagner-Peyser/ARRA allocation will support increased staffing at the PA CareerLinks within SCWIB. Part-time temporary/permanent staff hires will be assisting in the Career Resource Center. This will allow the local area to better manage increasing service needs in this area. These positions, coupled with PA CareerLink Partner support, will increase capacity to provided staff assistance for more intensive customer job search, assessments, job club, and workshops. PA Department of Labor & Industry annuitants knowledgeable in Unemployment Compensation have been brought on board at PA CareerLinks to personally address questions regarding claims.

Strong, longstanding relationships with regional training providers is critical to success. The SCWIB has continually stressed the need for these providers to be flexible and accommodating to the needs of the local industry. This will include the review and updating of the high priority occupation list when a skill gap is introduced. Training programs will continue to be added to the approved training provider list to ensure that the best possible options are available to customers. SCWIB has issued an RFP for class-sized training that will allow for quality training in a targeting high



priority occupation and industry cluster. This effort will allow SCWIB to maximize resources in able to serve as many individuals as possible.

The SCWIB has modified its Local Plan to open up services to more participants. Priority policy has been lifted for WIA Adult funds and supportive service options have been expanded. This will permit more adults to be served. Also, the SCWIB has adopted the most recent Self-Sufficiency Standard for PA as developed by PathWays PA. There are efforts to creatively institute options to customers that will maximize program dollars. For example, a local Career and Technical Center has offered the services of its Automotive Program to analyze and perform some troubleshooting and repairs on participant vehicles. This type of collaboration with community partners is at the heart of the ARRA program.

The expansion of the Summer Youth program will create opportunities and options for out-of-school youth, including those 18-24, to gain valuable work experience. Internships and placements will be made in communities in the Southwest Corner. These sites will represent public service, governmental, and other community based programs that will aide in the transition of this traditionally "hard-to-place" population to valuable career opportunities.

SCWIB will continue to rely on Industry partnership managers and participants to update and inform the workforce system on the current shortcomings and needs of the industry. As these demands shift, the SCWIB will revisit operational plans to see that these demands can be met with the resources available.

7. Describe the LWIB's vision for increasing training access and opportunities for individuals including the investment of WIA Title I funds and the leveraging of other funds and resources.

In order to increase access to training for the residents of the Southwest Corner, SCWIB efforts are focused on very specific areas. The first is educating the public about program availability; a public that includes employers, job seekers, service providers, and educators, just to name a few. The SCWIB has "Here to Help" activities in Beaver, Greene, and Washington Counties. Public meetings of the workforce Investment Board provides a forum to lay out the plans and receive direct feedback by members of the community. Strategies have been laid out in meetings with Local Elected Officials and economic development groups. Title I Operator will provide information on services available on agency websites and local media will be alerted to events and activities. Recruitment will be targeted with the local housing authorities and PA CareerLinks will continue to offer information through orientations. This interaction helps shape plans, objectives, and goals.

SCWIA is always looking for ways to leverage other funds to serve the area population. Industry Partnership employer match dollars will be used to support and expand youth career camps targeted to high priority occupations. Also, Industry Partnerships will assist in leveraging funds, as under new program guidelines, a portion of training dollars can be used to train new employees. Dislocated workers and adults looking to get into one of these high demand occupations will be able to be included in company training plans. Plus, with consortia based training being such a major focus of the Industry Partnership Training, the training may be able to be provided at a lower amount than traditional ITAs. Title I Operators will seek outside grants to further support workforce development.

With training being a major focus of the ARRA funding, SCWIB has instituted flexible options for program participants that will maximize funds. Traditional ITAs will still be available, but opportunities offered by the class-sized training



RFP provides wider access to training. The Work Certified Program, which provides short term soft-skills training of up-to-date and relevant employer needs and expectations, is available to participants. This program will allow for the participant to gain valuable career information, without having to leverage ARRA funds. There is also a focus to expand opportunities of on-the-job training. SCWIB looks to expend all ARRA allotted funds by the end of the program in 2011.

8. Describe the LWIA's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need.

SCWIB is planning on the utilization the ARRA youth funding during both 2009 and 2010, with an effort to expend 100% of youth funds in 2009. The majority of the funding will be utilized to support work experiences, internships, and work readiness programs. Following a 2 week work readiness component in which youth will receive a work readiness certificate, youth will be placed in Summer employment opportunities with either non-profit, for-profit; educational; faith based; community based; and/or government work sites. Youth must complete this component prior to their employment opportunity. Pre and post testing will be done and a certificate will be issued. Out of school youth that do not have a GED or diploma will be referred to GED classes which are offered at each of our local PA CareerLink sites. All programs are open entry open exit and are self paced. Staff will monitor attendance and progress throughout their participation in the programs. This program will provide youth participants with career advice that will be extremely valuable as they enter "real-world" work.

All work site supervisors will attend an orientation and also must comply with all background checks and career goals will be discussed prior to worksite assignments. Youth will receive an orientation to employment services. The ARRA funded sites will be in addition to, and coordinated along with regular WIA and TANF sites for continuity. Each youth and site will be assigned a summer manager who will maintain case files, monitor time and attendance, and conduct surveys of both the youth and the work site supervisor. Along with individual worksites, there will be work crews. A crew leader will pick all youth assigned to his/her crew up in the morning and transport them to their assigned site and return them to their homes at the end of the work day. These sites are also considered to be community service projects.

Another component will be Internships for eligible, college level youth. The internships will be relevant to the youths' college majors. Staff will interview the youth to discuss the Internship program, possible worksite opportunities, and to enroll on the PA CareerLink system. Once assigned, youth are responsible for providing the worksite with their internship forms to be completed. All documentation must be copied and kept in the youth's case management folder. All youth will be surveyed throughout their work experience and/or Internship. All worksite supervisors will also be surveyed. Sites will be monitored for labor law compliance. The 10 program elements of the WIA youth program will be offered and included in the service plans for all youth participants, depending on eligibility.

Youth enrolled in a training program may be eligible to receive the following:

- a. YOUTH – NEEDS RELATED PAYMENT of \$10.00 a day if unemployed and not receiving Unemployment Compensation.
- b. TRANSPORTATION SUPPORTIVE SERVICE if not receiving Unemployment (UC), Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), or extended benefits AND if not receiving transportation money from another program such as DPA or OVR. It is determined as follows: \$5.00/day if less than 20 miles round trip or \$10.00/day if more than 20 miles round trip to school based on information contained in maps.expedia.com from home to school the shortest distance.
- c. Participants must be scheduled to attend classes at least 12 hours per week in order to be eligible for Needs Related or Needs Based Payments.



- d. Participants will be paid a daily rate based on days of actual attendance at school. Attendance is documented on bi-weekly timesheets that are signed at the school and sent in.
 - e. Participants will be paid bi-weekly provided that the timesheets are received in a timely fashion. Checks are only processed once a week so if timesheet is received after Wednesday, it will be paid the following week.
 - f. Out of School Youth Program Guidelines:
 - \$10 Daily attendance incentive given for classroom training activities.
 - \$7.25 hourly rate (or prevailing minimum wage rate if higher) for work experience. Internships will be \$10.00 hour.
 - Participants concurrently enrolled in classroom/work activity will receive \$7.25 hourly rate for work activity and \$10 daily attendance incentive for classroom.
 - 15 weeks maximum - 1 period for work experience/limited internship.
 - Job shadowing or on-the-job training may be in addition to work experience/limited internship activity.
 - Participants who obtain unsubsidized employment and still participating in classroom activity, e.g., GED instruction, will receive \$10 daily attendance incentive
 - \$100 cash incentive for GED attainment.
 - g. *Supportive services provided when deemed necessary and not available through County Assistance Office or Child Care Resources to enable participation and 6-month retention in post-secondary education, advanced training, military services, employment, or qualified apprenticeship. \$2,500 total dollar amount will be available.*
 - \$1,500 Transportation Allowance includes motor vehicle purchase, repair, insurance compensation, lease, rental, bus passes, or taxi fares. This assistance authorized only when no other practical transportation is available, i.e., no accessible public transportation.
 - Motor vehicle purchase will not be considered until participant has secured full time (30 minimum hours per week) unsubsidized employment that pays a self-sustaining wage defined as annualized income level (based on 30hrs/wk) that exceeds 150% of the Department of Health and Human Services official poverty guidelines. Participant will be required to obtain 3 bids (preferably from different sources) which state cost, general condition and indication of current State Inspection.
 - Repairs and insurance allowance will only be awarded when participant submits documentation of vehicle ownership. Participant must submit documentation on letterhead that repairs are necessary to keep vehicle in safe operating condition. To secure insurance funds, participant will be responsible for obtaining 2 bids on letterhead outlining minimum required coverage (as defined under PA State Law) at smallest incremental payment available. Note: if participant chooses to select higher than minimum coverage, a breakdown of costs will be required stating portion to be paid with supportive services.
 - Child Care and/or Dependent Care Allowance
 - Uniforms or other Work Attire Allowance
 - Housing Allowance includes rent, security deposit and utilities, i.e. gas, oil, Electric; water
9. **What policies and strategies does the LWIA have in place to ensure that, pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-288) (38 USC 4215), priority of service is provided to veterans (and certain spouses) who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor?**



The SCWIB PA CareerLinks have a local veterans' employment representative (LVER) who coordinates services for customers who have served in the armed forces. The LVER works with the partnering service providers to: 1) ensure that veterans are enrolled in the PA CareerLink website and complete all of the required information; 2) verify veterans' eligibility and status concerning "campaign badges"; 3) ensure that job preferences are completed, job searches are performed, and referrals to job orders are made; and 4) provide services directly and/or make appropriate referrals. The SCWIB Oversight Coordinator will ensure that P.L.107-288 is being followed and local veterans are being properly served.

The LVER participates in weekly PA CareerLink staff meetings and provides employer recruitment, hiring, workshop, and training information to partnering service providers. The LVER is also an integral member of the Business and Employer Service Team, participating in meetings and reaching out to local employers in high priority industry clusters. The LVER is instrumental in organizing job fairs for veterans at the PA CareerLink centers.

For veterans returning to employment after their service time is completed, many options are available to them. All activities under the ARRA and WIA plans will be utilized, including traditional classroom training activities, class-sized training opportunities, and OJTs. The Work Certified Program will offer soft skills to bring the veterans up to date with current and necessary business practices and expectations. This option will be extremely helpful as this transition from military to civilian life may understandably be difficult. Proper priority will be given to veterans under ARRA services, as they have been under the traditional WIA programs.

10. Describe the LWIA's strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the LWIA's PA CareerLink delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, women, minorities, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, limited English proficiency individuals, and people with disabilities).

All PA CareerLink sites undergo a thorough evaluation to be certified an official PA CareerLink. Sites must be verified to present proper facilities and modifications based on ADA compliance, proper signage must be in place, and security and safety issues are a priority. In addition to the initial building review, PA CareerLink sites are monitored annually to ensure all compliance issues are being strictly followed. During these oversights, any recommendations for improvement or enhancement are made to ensure facilities are up to date and offer the most welcoming and customer-friendly environment possible.

PA CareerLink is a vital partner in spreading the word for ARRA funds, recruiting, and will be the front line staff in dealing with the public; a public that in many instances will be discouraged, frustrated, and looking for any assistance they can get. PA CareerLink Site Administrators all attend quarterly SCWIB meetings and have assisted in the development of SCWIB ARRA plans and activities. Goals and objectives for this ARRA plan will also be shared with every PA CareerLink in the Southwest Corner so that all staff members are informed of expectations and goals. With Title I Provider staff being located in each of the PA CareerLinks in the Southwest Corner, a simple connection can be made for the good of the participant. PA CareerLink staff will be aware of SCWIB service policies to ensure that the correct message is being delivered by the SCWIB's front line to the public. Local PA CareerLink staff will be able to funnel traffic to proper service options. For example, participants interested in training will be referred to Title I providers and individuals with disabilities will work with OVR. Those who are basic skills deficient will be able to attend



literacy or remediation clients, while individuals being reintroduced into an unfamiliar economy and employment situation will be connected with the Work Certified program to enhance soft skills. SCWIB also has strong and important linkages with the EARN program for those receiving public assistance, PA Women Work for advancing this population in the workplace, and the United Mineworkers of America. PA CareerLinks provide services to all populations at all skill levels including aging services, ESL, and veterans. All of these efforts ensure that the needs of the SCWIB, the ARRA, and the communities served will be fulfilled. Also, it again demonstrates the collaborative efforts of the SCWIB.

If any assistance is required from PA CareerLinks in the Southwest Corner, contact information for each is:

- i. *Nan Sninsky, PA CareerLink Washington County - nsninsky@state.pa.us - 724-223-4508*
- ii. *Trish Brickner, PA CareerLink Mon Valley - pbrickner@dli.state.pa.us - 724-379-4750 x 102*
- iii. *Barbara Cole, PA CareerLink Greene County - bacole@state.pa.us - 724-852-2900 x 229*
- iv. *Dianne Stoner, PA CareerLink Beaver County - diastoner@state.pa.us-724-728-4860 x202*

11. Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the local level to award grants and contracts for activities under Title I of WIA including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts.

SCWIB will follow its procurement policy as outlined in its Operational Plan and will include the provision allowed for through waiver #1 permitting the expansion of existing competitively procured contracts with youth providers. Therefore, in accordance with directives from the PA Department of Labor & Industry, current Youth Program service contracts will be modified and extended. The current service providers (Southwest Training Services, Inc. and Job Training For Beaver County, Inc.) have long been involved with youth programs and the summer component of the program. The SCWIB has utmost confidence in these institutions to provide quality work experience and career readiness services to area youth. An RFP for youth services was released by the SCWIB on March 30, 2009.

In line with the ARRA provision allowing the LWIB to award contracts to institutions of higher learning, the SCWIB has released a class-sized training RFP that will be executed to meet emerging needs of the local industry. Criteria for these RFPs required those applying to focus on high priority occupations and to be flexible with start times and locations. These programs will be subject to oversight through the SCWIB and will be expected to focus on the same priorities and goals set forth by the SCWIB. Based on the April 28, 2009 meeting of the SCWIB, these services will be contracted with based on need of the public and availability of funds. Authority was given to the WGCJTA, Inc., fiscal agent and staff to the SCWIB, to enter into ARRA related contracts. Action was also taken at this meeting to release Requests for Proposals focusing on class-sized training programs. When prioritizing training plans, the needs of the customer will be met through the Individual Training Account. SCWIB will use the RFP for class-sized training to focus on emerging employment opportunities or those areas where demands of the labor force are not being met. RFPs are advertised on the SCWIB website and in four local newspapers to make all potential bidders aware of opportunities. Any prior bidders for SCWIB services are directly sent a copy of newly released RFPs.

Contractors for youth and all SCWIB activities are based on systematic efforts detailed in the SCWIB Operational Plan. The contracting process takes into account Program Design/Understanding of the Problem, Performance Outcome Attainment/Soundness of Approach, Contractor Qualifications, Personnel Qualifications, Program Linkages/



Partnership Building, and Cost/Reasonableness. Results of the procurement process, along with methods for selection of grantees, will be posted on the SCWIB website.

12. How will the LWIB ensure that ARRA funds will supplement, not supplant, existing resources?

A major priority defined by ARRA TEGL 14-08 is for funds to be used simultaneously with traditional WIA funds. SCWIB welcomes the opportunity to serve a larger population than previously allowed by budget restrictions. Title I providers will be keeping detailed descriptions of participant activities. The SCWIB will utilize 60% of ARRA funds in training exercises that will be focused on high priority occupations in targeted industry clusters.

SCWIB fiscal operations will be transparent will ensure that ARRA funds are tracked separately from WIA expenses. Title I providers will track the expenses as participants are served. As determinations are made as to which funding stream will be used to support the efforts, detailed records will be kept. The TABE and SAGE Assessment tools will be used to determine if the participant is suite to attend training. A training plan will be developed to determine the participant's best course of action. The expenditure of ARRA funds will be focused on short-term training activities (classroom and on-the-job training) where there is a high likelihood of immediate placement into a career that will garner a self-sustaining wage. Traditional WIA dollars will be used to continue building participants' skills through core and intensive services. This information will be shared with the SCWIB fiscal agent so that accurate and timely expenses and funding requests can be performed. With the expanded opportunities for out-of-school youth provided by the ARRA funding, this population will also need to be tracked separately from traditional WIA costs and activities.

Again, educating local SCWIB providers, elected officials, employers and job seekers to the ARRA prospective events is vital to program success. Within the service delivery system and into subsidiaries, the goals and plans for using the ARRA funds will be made clear and concise.

13. Describe the monitoring and oversight criteria and procedures the Local Area has in place to ensure not only compliance with the laws, regulations, and guidance but also with the intent and spirit of ARRA.

As in normal SCWIB functions, oversight of the current WIA programs and those activities expanded through the ARRA funds will be subject to oversight and monitoring. The SCWIB is in the process of developing an oversight tool to monitor the recovery program based on ARRA policies and procedures. With more funds and training opportunities available to the public, there will also be more work experience sites, case files, fiscal responsibilities, and educational sites. The SCWIB Oversight Coordinator and staff will verify that activities are being carried out as directed and ensure compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Monitoring reports, including the results of the ARRA monitoring, will continue to be presented at quarterly SCWIB meetings. However, as with program operations, the monitoring will be tracked and reported separately from traditional WIA activities. These reports summarize observations from site visits and record reviews and outline corrective actions taken to address any concerns.

14. Identify the performance indicators and goals established to track progress toward meeting strategic goals and implementing the LWIA' vision for the workforce investment system.

This plan has presented the SCWIB operational plans for the ARRA recovery funds. A collaborative effort among all facets of the service provider community in the Southwest Corner will lead to a more prepared and skilled workforce; a workforce ready to



meet the needs of a slowed economy that is poised to rebound. The goals of the plan will be reinforced throughout the program period, and will be monitored to measure program effectiveness. These measurable goals, with descriptions of analysis include:

1. Expansion of participation in local high priority training activities.
 - Measured through reported program numbers
2. Increased placement in training related occupations.
 - Measured through reported program numbers
3. Increased average earnings at placement for ARRA participants.
 - Measured through reported program numbers
4. Increased job readiness of adults, dislocated workers and youth.
 - Measured the amount of individuals completing the Work Certified Program
5. Expansion of high priority occupation list, thus expanding training opportunities.
 - When new and emerging opportunities arise, the SCWIB will ensure that the industry's needs are being met.
6. Engaging the community to become involved in workforce development efforts.
 - Collaborative efforts in SCWIB activities, especially at the PA CareerLink
7. Expanded funding opportunities to ensure sustainability.
 - Continued search for opportunities to leverage funds and resources
8. Reduction of duplication of services to expand resources.
 - Persistent auditing of SCWIB partners to ensure that funds are maximized and public is best served.
9. Establishment of a transparent record that documents change.
 - Visible through operator practices and policies



Appendix I – Priority Industry Cluster Information

When looking at high priority occupations for the Southwest Corner, a list of current and expected skill needs for employers in the region were highlighted. In general terms, the most common barriers to employment include the need for additional training and/or skill sets in order to find self sustaining employment but a lack of financial stability to devote time to training; an absence of basic computer skills; and transportation issues. More specifically to certain high priority industry clusters, the results of these surveys can shape training plans and service priorities can be developed. The SCWIB has matched these skill needs to the local High Priority Occupation list. In the instance that the following are not included on the High Priority Occupation list, SCWIB is petitioning to include them so that proper attention and funding may be allocated. The following breakdown describes skill gaps and shortages by industry cluster. Also included is a description of targeted training. The included table presents a sample of data on recent job losses affecting the Southwest Corner and surrounding metropolitan area.

A. Transportation

This cluster has always been strong in the Southwest Corner, and throughout all of Western Pennsylvania. Being at the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 79, close location to the Pittsburgh International Airport, the proximity to river transport, and a still active railway leads to a multi-modal system that benefits all industry. This cluster has shown significant growth over the last 15 years, specifically in the occupations of general warehousing and storage; general freight trucking; long-distance LTL and TL; process and logistics consulting services; and used household and office goods moving. Select high priority occupations include Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer; Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers; Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators; Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services; Bus, Truck & Diesel Engine Mechanics; Supervisors - Transportation & Vehicle Operators; General & Operations Managers; and Customer Service Representatives. The SCWIB has an Industry Partnership in Logistics and Transportation.

- *Targeted Training Areas - Training and skills needed for Certified Driver's License (CDL)*

Employer Name	Number of Layoffs
General Motors	392
US Airway Group, Inc.	33
Woods Cab Company	30

B. Health Care

With an aging population, the projected growth in the health care industry is significant, especially in long-term care. This industry is rapidly growing and is high-skilled, but in some instances can be lower paying. The population and industry dictate that adequate attention must be given to health care. The industry is growing in the areas of offices of physicians (except mental health); residential mental retardation facilities; nursing care facilities; continuing care retirement communities; and pharmacies and drug stores. Select high priority occupations include Registered Nurses; Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants; Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses; Home Health Aides; Medical Assistants; Personal & Home Care Aides; Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics; Dental Assistants; Medical Secretaries; and Dental Hygienists.



- *Targeted Training Areas - Training and skills needed for LPN/RN, Nurse's Aide, and Medical Assistant*

Employer Name	Number of Layoffs
Commonwealth Medical Center	120
Washington Hospital	80
Mayview State Hospital	34

C. Manufacturing

While the area has seen a small decline in the manufacturing cluster over the last few years, it is still a viable and large industry in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Like many industries, the local, national, and world economies have affected local manufacturers. However, these surviving employers are poised and determined for a return to prominence, and they are planning for a regeneration of the industry. There is employment growth in the areas of secondary processing of other nonferrous; non-packaging plastics film and sheet manufacturing; electric power and specialty transformer manufacturing, nonferrous metal (except CU and AL, shaping); Iron, steel pipe and tube from purchase steel. Select high priority occupations include Team Assemblers; Supervisors - Production & Operating Workers; Machinists; Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers; Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers; Maintenance & Repair Workers, General; General & Operations Managers; Sales Representatives; Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators; and Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers & Weighers.

- *Targeted Training Areas - Training and skills needed for Electronic Technician and Assembler*

Employer Name	Number of Layoffs
SONY Technology Center	450
Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel	277
Sherwood Valve, Inc	260
All Clad Metals	120
IPSCO Koppel Tubulars	118
ArcelorMittal Holdings, Inc	116
Nova Chemicals Inc.	86

D. Building Trades/Construction

Building trades and construction has always been an important industry in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Presently, the focus on this industry is reaching a critical level. An aging workforce in this area opens the door to many "gold collar careers" which are high skills, high, wage, and high demand. The focus has been on industries that involve apprenticeship as a priority. The industry is showing employment growth in the areas of Nonresidential plumbing and HVAC contractors; Nonresidential site preparation contractors; Nonresidential electrical contractors; Industrial building construction; Water and sewer system construction. Select high priority occupations include Carpenters; Electricians; Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters; Supervisors - Construction Trades & Extraction Workers; Construction Laborers; Operating Engineers; General & Operations Managers; Sales Representatives; Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers; and Roofers. The SCWIB has an Industry Partnership in Building and construction trades.



- *Targeted Training Areas - Training and skills needed for Electrician, Welder, Machinist (In addition to this, downturns in the financial markets lead to a “domino-effect” that hurts the Construction industry)*
- *Layoffs in the construction trades vary from trade to trade. In many instances, these dislocations are short-term and when local construction rebounds, so will the industry.*
- *However, when the trades are located within another industry, for example a welder in a mine or steel mill, these dislocations may be long term.*

E. Mining

The mining industry, when studied at the state level by CWIA was not seen as significant throughout Pennsylvania. However, in Southwestern Pennsylvania, mining is still a viable industry. In fact, when the SCWIB petitioned to begin an Industry Partnership focusing on mining, the partnership has grown exponentially. It now encompasses 13 WIBs and 23 counties throughout Pennsylvania. Traditional underground coal mining is still performed here, along with other types of service mining operations. A mining training school was opened in Greene County and new training programs and certifications are being developed.

- *Targeted Training Areas - Training and skills needed for Mine Electricians, Supervisors, Miners*

Employer Name	Number of Layoffs
Maple Creek Mine (2002)	464
84 Mine	75

F. Energy

An admittedly new industry to the Southwest Corner Workforce Investment Area, energy shows the promise of growing rapidly. The SCWIB will meet the demands of this growing industry, and is leading to way to ensure the local workforce is prepared to meet the employer demands. With the aid of local representatives and economic development, the SCWIB is planning to apply for an Industry Partnership grant in the Gas and Oil industry. This will allow for local training and recruitment of individuals, expansion of employment efforts, and a connection of newly located employers to SCWIB related functions, such as PA CareerLink, local education providers, and assistance with keeping the industry growing and stable.

- *Targeted Training Areas - Training and skills needed for Oil and gas industry needs: i.e. drilling operator. As talks and plans continue, training and skill needs will become more evident.*
- *The energy cluster in Southwest Corner is entering a new and exciting era. The Marcellus Shale project will provide opportunities in this sector in the very near future. Growth potential in energy is extremely high and should provide employment opportunities for a long time.*