

Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development Local Plan for Program Year 2020 – 2023 Program Year 2021 Updates Highlighted in Yellow

1. Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the local area, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the local area.

Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development (LCEWD) provides a variety of workforce development activities (including education and training) in the local area. Some of the workforce development activities are funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) while a growing portion of Larimer County's workforce development activities are funded through local, state, and grant funds.

The **Workforce Connections Team** (WCT) provides all Wagner-Peyser job seeker and business services. This includes general business services such as posting jobs in Connecting Colorado, job fairs, skills assessments (for employers), and hiring activities, as well as the full array of Wagner-Peyser job seeker services. Job seeker services include offering job search and career pathway workshops, providing core services to job seekers (i.e., resume assistance, cover letter development, interviewing skills), assessing needs and making appropriate referrals internal or external to the agency, responding to general questions about Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits, and providing opportunities for employers to engage with staff and job seekers. Job seeker and business services may be provided in-person, on the phone, in group settings, or virtually.

The WCT provides an updated website that offers job search related information and videos, career assessments, and current labor market information. The WCT conducts outreach activities utilizing job search related email notifications and a job seeker newsletter, as well as providing onsite job search workshops and related activities at community organizations and events, public libraries, correctional institutions, non-profits, post-secondary institutions, and other places to serve unique job search related needs of Larimer County. The WCT serves as an internal expert for Connecting Colorado and **Unemployment Insurance (UI)**.

The WCT modified service delivery in March 2020 due to COVID-19 and related restrictions. The resource center was closed briefly when the "stay-at-home" orders went into effect. Job seeker workshops, business training, rapid response assistance, and hiring events were converted to virtual offerings. Modifications to service delivery change in response to the changing nature of COVID-19. As COVID-19 conditions stabilize, a hybrid service delivery model (utilizing both in-person and virtual) will be developed.

Coincidentally, LCEWD launched *My Career Compass*, an online job seeker platform, during COVID. LCEWD applied for an innovation grant through Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and was awarded one a grant in mid-2018.

Most recently, the platform was highlighted in CWDC's March 2021 News Round Up: (https://drive.google.com/file/d/10bGzkbcDIdo5-ClnQVNgFhOZTa_6pk3Y/view) Early indicators signal that this platform has been a useful virtual resource for job seekers during COVID.

It is important to note that services to job seekers and businesses continued unabated throughout 2020. LCEWD quickly and effectively converted all services to a virtual environment and has continued to provide seamless and responsive services throughout the pandemic. Although Larimer County closed its buildings, LCEWD continued to serve the community.

The primary strength of the WCT job seeker services is the ability to assist large numbers of job seekers through virtual group activities such as workshops and online services such as resume reviews, even during a pandemic. The limitation of these services is the inability to be more individualized with each job seeker and to allocate the amount of time needed to serve the volume of job seekers in ways they would appreciate, due to limited funding for these services and COVID-related constraints. Limited public awareness regarding the value of Connecting Colorado as a viable job search tool is also an ongoing challenge.

Another limitation that the WCT experienced this past year (and is still ongoing) is the public's misperception of LCEWD as the "unemployment office". Due to this misperception, the overwhelming majority of WCT's work this past year has been focused on assisting UI claimants with UI-related questions/issues. UI-related services and needs have been first and foremost within the WCT, replacing traditional and innovative workforce development activities, due to overwhelming needs of UI claimants within the community and the struggling and beleaguered UI system. WCT activities and services are primarily funded through WIOA and Employment Support Fund (ESF) funds.

In an effort to understand the workforce needs of local and regional employers, the Economic Development Team (EDT) outreaches to employers and coordinates with organizations that provide economic development-related services to employers. The goal is to identify employers with workforce needs and understand how to help them meet those needs. In addition to outreach activities, the EDT coordinates with the WCT to streamline processes for matching job seekers with employers and identifying education, training, and workforce development needs. During the past year, the majority of work managed by the EDT has been recovery-focused as a result of the pandemic and the substantial fires encountered during the summer of 2020. It is anticipated that recovery-focused work will remain as a mainstay of focus for at least 24-36 months. EDT activities and services are funded through County funds.

The **Career Transition and Training (CTT) Team** is the unit primarily responsible for the delivery of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA), and other federal WIOA-related adult discretionary programs. The **inCompass Team**, a vital component of the youth-focused CareerRise team, is primarily responsible for Larimer County's WIOA Youth programs. The collection of these WIOA programs are known as "Title I" and are all federally funded.

Both CTT and inCompass evolved their service delivery model beginning in March of 2020 to meet the needs of customers during the pandemic. These modifications included expansion to virtual meetings, electronic paperwork and processes, and simplified eligibility document collection (as allowable by federal law).

This allowed existing customers and new customers to continue receiving services as LCEWD shifted to a teleworking, virtual work environment for case management services.

WIOA Title I teams (i.e., CTT and inCompass) have the capacity to deliver the following workforce development activities:

Intensive Job Search Assistance: This service is provided to all CTT and inCompass customers. Some customers benefit exclusively from this service or they may use Intensive Job Search Assistance as a complement to other services outlined below.

As it relates to the federally-mandated performance measures that support economic growth and self-sufficiency, CTT and inCompass Programs work diligently to recruit and enroll customers most likely to benefit from services— services that assist customers with the education, training, and skills necessary to support their personal and professional economic growth and self-sufficiency.

Individuals with barriers to employment are often referred to WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services via onsite, internal partners. These partners currently consist of the WCT, Veterans Service Office (VSO), and other veterans-related entities. LCEWD is committed to maximizing our mandated partner relationships to prepare WIOA candidates for success. External partners that regularly refer to these programs include Colorado Works (TANF), Employment First (SNAP), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and other non-profit partner programs throughout the region.

As part of intensive job search assistance and hard-skill acquisition processes, staff also assist customers in understanding current workplace trends and expectations (essential skills), so that customers are prepared to secure and retain their employment and create further economic opportunity for themselves and their families.

The primary strength of this service is a customized Individual Employment Plan (IEP)/Individualized Service Strategy (ISS) developed in partnership with each customer. The IEP/ISS considers important life factors (i.e., resources, challenges, workplace and family values, and special family needs) that may influence a job search and the type of employment the customer secures. Through the IEP/ISS, staff works diligently with customers to create career pathways through the use of assessments, counseling, and case management services.

The major drawback of the Intensive Job Search Assistance service is that it is time and labor intensive for both the counselor and the customer. For best results, the counselor/customer meet regularly to continually adjust and refine the job search strategy.

Although in sporadic practice prior to the pandemic, counselors have consistently employed virtual technology to maintain regular, real-time contact with customers engaged in Intensive Job Search Assistance and training services throughout the pandemic (i.e., phone, video conferencing, email, text, chat, scanning technology).

Work-Based Learning (Internship & Apprenticeship Program): The primary work-based learning activity offered by the LCEWD is the subsidized internship program. LCEWD's internship program is coordinated by a cross-functional team called the Work-Based Learning Team (WBLT).

This team meets the needs of local businesses and job seekers through active worksite development and placement. Work-based learning builds opportunities for placement in a career pathway, making the learning applicable to longer-term employment and training goals. Due to the unique model of the internship program, there are several access points throughout the agency, making it a popular service for a variety of customers. Additionally, LCEWD has aligned staff to support partners to create registered apprenticeships as part of their on-boarding and hiring practices. The momentum to increase these opportunities is growing across a variety of industries and within public partner organizations that help develop the talent pipeline.

The capacity of these services is usually limited by the availability of employer worksites for certain customers with specific skill development needs and/or interests, a lack of sufficient financial/staff resources to fully meet employer and customer interest in the service, and/or specific populations targeted for access to the program. Access to work-based learning activities fluctuates based on availability of staff and funds to support this important activity. Work-based learning activities are funded through a variety of sources including federal, state, local, fee-based contracts, and grant funds.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs): WIOA eligible customers may apply for ITA scholarship funds for the development of in-demand work skills or credentials that lead to their identified career pathway. Eligible customers in the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs may be awarded up to \$4,000 in tuition assistance (ITA amount confirmed upon receipt of federal allocations) with exceptions to not exceed \$6,000. Funding for scholarships may include multiple internal funding streams and/or co-enrollment opportunities with other agencies. Strong partnerships with many local training providers exist such as Front Range Community College (FRCC), Aims Community College, Northern Colorado Truck Driving Academy, CSU Online Plus, and Digital Workshop Center. Additionally, the Youth program no longer offers ITA opportunities due to federal funding cuts. Should resources increase, this service will be explored.

Despite these strong local partnerships, CTT's capacity to provide ITA scholarship assistance is limited by fluctuating funding and staff to deliver these services, the federally mandated Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and the overall lack of low-cost, quick, and in-demand skills training in the local area.

LCEWD remains an active participant in the Northern Colorado Sector Partnerships, specifically in the Manufacturing and Health Sectors, and recently, the development of a Construction/Trades Sector Partnership. Through these partnerships, LCEWD continues exploring opportunities to learn about business talent needs and how CTT and inCompass services can provide training solutions to resolve these needs.

Please refer to [question 13](#) for a thorough review of WIOA Youth Services.

2. Describe the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and New Americans), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

The socio-economic realities in Larimer County are undergoing a significant shift and will continue to change over the coming decades. The local Workforce Development Board (WDB) is working to understand the imminent changes and develop strategies to address them with key community partners. The overall vision and mission of the WDB are:

Vision: Cultivate a well-trained, productive, and competitive workforce in our region.

Mission: Connect community, government, business and education to shape a robust, talented and sustainable workforce.

The local WDB prioritized three functions to support the mission and vision. Those priorities are:

- Act as a convener: Convening, brokering, and leveraging with local workforce development system stakeholders to address local workforce issues and to identify expertise and resources to leverage support for workforce development activities.
- Local and Regional Planning: In partnership with the chief elected official for Larimer County, the WDB will develop a comprehensive 4-year local plan and collaborate with other WDBs, Workforce Centers, and partners within the region to identify partner opportunities to strengthen the workforce system.
- Lead efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers and entities: The WDB will lead efforts in Larimer County to engage with a diverse range of employers and partners to identify, promote, and disseminate strategies and initiatives to meet the needs of employers and workers.

In addition to the priorities highlighted above, the WDB is also setting strategic goals to:

- Take action and coordinate meaningful follow-up to the regular board meetings.
- Build awareness of the WDB and conduct greater outreach and marketing for the WDB and the LCEWD with the goal of creating more community engagement.

LCEWD will meet or exceed the goals related to the WIOA performance accountability measures for WIOA-funded programs, as outlined in the local plan and/or as negotiated with, or guided by, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency:

- Employment Rate – Second Quarter After Exit
- Employment Rate – Fourth Quarter After Exit
- Median Earnings – Second Quarter After Exit
- Credential Attainment
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Employment-related data, using supplemental methods for performance reporting purposes, will be gathered when it is not available through quarterly wage records. LCEWD will adhere to guidance provided by CDLE on the obtainment, reporting, and documenting of all performance accountability measures.

New Americans: LCEWD embraces efforts to ensure meaningful inclusion of New Americans, those who have immigrated or emigrated to Larimer County, into the social and economic fabric of our community. To this end, the WCT conducted a training to the predominant local organization dedicated to educating, informing, organizing, and promoting change to facilitate an improved quality of life for immigrants in our community. This training discussed the types of services available to immigrants and emigrants within the LCEWD. In addition to the training, a referral process was developed and implemented to streamline access to services for immigrants and emigrants from the LCEWD. Additionally, the WCT reassigned two bi-lingual (Spanish) staff to focus nearly half-time on assisting Spanish-speaking job seekers. LCEWD has also contracted with Voiance, a language phone line, to provide translation services for other non-English language job seekers.

WIOA Title I programs (i.e., Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker) continue to cultivate referral partnerships with a wide variety of internal and external partners that serve customers with barriers to employment. The Youth program serves nearly 100% of youth who are unattached to secondary or post-secondary education, demonstrating LCEWD's commitment to the most disconnected youth in Larimer County. The Adult program continues to focus services on WIOA mandated populations, including veterans who are disabled or qualify as low-income. When funding permits, the Adult program widens the enrollment opportunity for Larimer County residents who qualify as low-income.

Prior to COVID, LCEWD facilitated onsite job search-related workshops for our local Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA), WIOA Title II provider, that regularly serves youth and others with barriers to employment with a variety of literacy services including English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Those services are anticipated to resume once the COVID-19 situation has stabilized.

3. Describe the strategies and services that will be utilized to facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs. Specifically:
 - a. What outreach activities are planned to increase business engagement in your local area
 - b. How will the Business Services Team be utilized for this purpose?
 - c. How will the members (particularly business members) of the LWDB and Youth Council/committee support these efforts?
 - d. How will sector partnerships be utilized for this purpose?
 - e. What are your objectives and goals for these activities?

LCEWD business engagement and outreach activities focus on in-demand industries and small employers and utilize collaborations with business serving organizations throughout Northern Colorado to increase our understanding of the business community and broaden our efforts.

Outreach activities to increase business engagement in Larimer County:

- Weekly business newsletter to approximately 2,400 employers and business partners.
- Dedicated business section on larimer.org/ewd website and social media sites.
- Connecting Colorado “Job and Employer Query” reports analyzed to identify actively hiring businesses. Weekly emails sent to inform businesses of recruitment services available (11 core services).
- Provide individualized support to each business requesting assistance (quality over quantity).

The Workforce Connections Team (WCT) is dynamically configured to provide excellent services to the business community. WCT markets the state-defined 11-core services to ensure local businesses, as well as regional and national businesses, have access to the same menu of services. Specifically, the WCT engages with employers and business partners via a weekly newsletter that presents a united message from Larimer County and regional economic and workforce development partners to approximately 2,400 employers. This collaborative effort includes updates and resources from partners within the cities/towns of Loveland, Fort Collins, Estes Park, Berthoud, Windsor, and Greeley, members of our Small Business Development Centers, Chambers of Commerce in both Fort Collins and Loveland, and LCEWD.

The WCT generates weekly reports of businesses posting open positions to Connecting Colorado. Each business receives an email that explains the recruitment tools available through the LCEWD. These talent recruitment services include invitations to participate in virtual hiring events, multi-business virtual job fairs, job posting assistance/creation within Connecting Colorado, employer workshops, and access to occupational labor market data.

A group of local and regional economic and workforce development partners meets weekly to discuss business recovery and response strategies related to COVID-19 with the intent of sharing this information with the business community. This collaboration resulted in the creation of the website: www.nocorecovers.com. This website serves as a central hub to collect and broadcast information to businesses concerning recovery assets like “Keep NoCo Open” marketing materials, access to local, state, and federal recovery funding resources related to COVID-19 and the recent fires, as well as information on the Larimer County Level Up Program.

Additional services designed to increase business engagement include:

- Statewide Job Fairs: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and all local Colorado Workforce Center regions have agreed to facilitate a minimum of four statewide virtual job fairs in 2021. These collaborative events allow businesses to access talent from across Colorado.
- Hire Me. Connect my Partner: In partnership with the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, “Hire Me. Connect My Partner” actively supports employers in finding, attracting and retaining talent, specifically, by assisting their spouse/partner in connecting to job opportunities. LCEWD conducts outreach to local employers regarding this service and provides individualized and customized employment services to the spouse/partner of an employer’s potential job candidate or recently hired employee.

- Enterprise Zone: Every municipality within Larimer County has an Enterprise Zone designated area. Although state tax credits are only available to businesses within the zone, LCEWD commits to educating new and existing businesses within the zone on how to access the benefits and provides technical support to businesses.
- Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion: LCEWD provides Rapid Response services virtually and markets these services to both businesses and affected workers. A virtual 1-hour workshop, “Managing a Layoff”, is offered weekly for anyone who has experienced a layoff. The workshop explains the resources available from the LCEWD, how to navigate the Unemployment Insurance system, information on healthcare options available after being laid off, and a forum for questions. This session can also be requested by any business going through a reduction in force.
- Employer Workshops: Training sessions are available year-round, both in-person and virtually, with a focus in three major areas: HR Fundamentals and Workforce Management; Employee Communication and Engagement; and Leadership Development and Executive Coaching. Additionally, each September, LCEWD hosts an annual Workforce Symposium in partnership with the Workforce Development Board (WDB). Northern Colorado business professionals interested in learning about state and local workforce issues, hearing best practices from businesses that have effective solutions to workforce challenges, and receiving training on how they can institute solutions to workforce challenges in their own businesses are invited to attend. WDB members help plan the event and facilitate conversations about a variety of workforce management strategies throughout the day. The Workforce Symposium also provides an opportunity to highlight the work of the sector partnerships.
- Work-Based Learning Alliance: LCEWD convened a wide variety of public partners to support the development and implementation of a local work-based learning infrastructure. The name of this entity is the Larimer County Work-Based Learning Alliance (WBLA). To date, the WBLA has representation from the following partners: Thompson, Estes, and Poudre School Districts, Front Range Community College, Aims Community College, Colorado State University, School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), CareerWise, and Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development. The emergence of work-based learning opportunities provides a solution to address issues related to current and projected struggles for the talent pipeline. Outcomes of the WBLA include adoption of a common work-based learning framework, agreement on activity definitions for both the talent and business viewpoints, inventory of work-based learning activities occurring within each respective system, a strengths self-review, and a single point of contact for businesses within each unique system. The WBLA has drafted a menu of work-based learning services for the business audience and is currently seeking industry feedback prior to full-scale adoption. The WBLA has launched the NoCo Inspire website portal, intended for the business audience. The portal provides one access point for businesses to learn about work-based learning, identify which public partners in the region support work-based learning services, and navigation to specific representatives within each respective partner system to immediately assist the employer partner.
<https://www.nocoinspire.org/> The NoCo Inspire website has recently moved into partnership with the Weld County regional workforce partners, expanding the collective reach to a regional effort.

As stated above, LCEWD employer engagement and outreach activities focus on in-demand industries and our regional sector partnerships provide an opportunity to focus outreach on these specific industries. LCEWD staff are represented on the convener teams of the NoCO Manufacturing, Health and Construction Sector Partnerships as well as play a key role in advancing the workforce initiatives of each partnership. This deep engagement provides an in-depth understanding of business needs and challenges in each industry and the connections to effectively deploy interventions throughout the industries. Also, existing collaborations with the Larimer County Small Business Development Center, the local Chambers of Commerce, higher education, K-12 and a variety of business associations, greatly amplify LCEWD's ability to understand the needs of businesses in these industries and take effective action to address those needs.

LCEWD has three overall business outreach and engagement goals. First, understand the needs of businesses through deliberate and strategic activities such as participation and support of local sector partnerships, discussions facilitated through the Workforce Development Board, and collaborative efforts among employer, community, and regional partnerships. Second, LCEWD will work diligently with economic and workforce development partners to develop action plans and services to meet the needs of local and regional employers. Finally, LCEWD will leverage relationships with businesses and regional partnerships to address community-wide challenges.

4. Discuss the implementation of initiatives designed to meet the needs of employers in the local area that support the local board's strategy, including:
 - i. **Work-Based Learning Programs:** Explain how you will utilize and promote, incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, internships, or other activities for PY20, and identify targets for work-based learning activities for your youth, adults/dislocated workers, transitional jobs, and incumbent workers.
 - ii. **Apprenticeships:** USDOL and CDLE are emphasizing the importance of apprenticeships. Please provide a detailed response which includes the steps you will take to increase apprenticeship opportunities for your customers during the next program year.
 - iii. **Sector Partnerships Participation:** Explain how you will utilize the relationships built by your Business Services Team to enhance or expand participation in Sector Partnerships and also expand business services efforts. Indicate PY20 specific planned objectives and measurable outcomes.
 - iv. **Sector Partnerships - Status and Objectives:** In your local area or with partner local areas, what sector partnerships are you engaged in or do you plan to engage in during PY20? Indicate the current status of your partnerships, (active, emerging, or exploring), plus PY20 planned objectives and measurable outcomes. **Note:** For Sector Partnership Information, please visit: <https://www.colorado.gov/cwdc/sector-partnerships>
 - v. **Career Pathways:** Explain how you will utilize information gathered through your Business Services Team to provide a baseline for consideration of new or enhanced Sector Partnerships, and how this information will be used to inform changes to or development of Career Pathways in your Local Area. Indicate specific PY20 planned objectives and measurable outcomes.

Initiatives designed to meet the needs of employers in the local area include:

Work-Based Learning Programs: LCEWD implements work-based learning programs, most notably subsidized internships. Work-based learning is a continuum of activities that engages employers to offer students and job seekers the opportunity to learn, in the workplace, and to develop hands-on, real world experience.

Through the lens of a common mission, LCEWD committed staffing resources to organize an internal, cross-functional team of staff titled the Work-Based Learning Team (WBLT). WBLT's mission is to implement a variety of work-based learning services including internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training (OJT) for customers from all LCEWD programs. Combining staffing expertise across local/state/federal funds allows this integrated team to work with industry partners in a concerted effort, resulting in less duplicated business contact combined with staff trained to address workforce needs, regardless of the funding stream or targeted populations. COVID-19 has created strain for some work-based learning programs, most notably the uncertainty for some industry partners to participate and support work-based learning opportunities in their place of employment, at this stage of the pandemic.

LCEWD continues to support a broad base of work-based learning services within the model noted above, focusing most notably on internships and work experiences, as funding and staffing permits. LCEWD is prepared to deliver these services across youth, adults, dislocated workers, and other talent populations based on eligibility and funding. LCEWD was recently made aware of the Technology Employment in Colorado Partnership (TEC-P 2.0) grant and will participate with other Colorado regions. LCEWD is actively planning how to incorporate an increased use of customized training to support regional businesses, potentially using work-based learning strategies as a primary modus operandi.

Apprenticeships: The approach to increase apprenticeship opportunities in Larimer County has focused on expanding expertise and knowledge around apprenticeships – both around the development of new programs and the operation of existing programs – and then using this expertise to build partnerships and trust with businesses and community partners who are interested in and can benefit from using apprenticeships as an effective tool of workforce development. When needed, staff directly support businesses in the creation of new programs and the staffing of existing programs as well as help job seekers learn about and connect to apprenticeship opportunities in the area. Work has been directed most around the growth of Registered Apprenticeships and CareerWise-related apprenticeships.

To aid in the expansion of expertise regarding apprenticeships, LCEWD invested time and resources in local staff who participate in statewide efforts to grow apprenticeships, specifically through the State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grant and Colorado HELPS apprenticeship. LCEWD staff regularly communicates with State staff around tools and strategies to help clarify and facilitate the growth of apprenticeships for businesses, job seekers and other workforce staff.

Through the Work Based Learning Alliance (WBLA), public partners committed to advancing and growing apprenticeships, and other work-based learning strategies, within the region meet monthly to discuss growth and partnership strategies, improving efficiency and communication for businesses and job seekers.

LCEWD staff meets with area school districts, as well as higher education providers, to help facilitate the partnership of interested businesses to these educational partners. To ensure that businesses receive the answers and help they need regarding apprenticeships, LCEWD works to determine the overall workforce landscape and shares potential resources/workforce solutions that best meet their needs. Once an apprenticeship has been identified, staff actively works with business partners to guide the employer toward registration with the federal registered apprenticeship partner.

LCEWD staff take time to explain apprenticeships and existing program opportunities to interested job seekers, clarifying different kinds of programs, training requirements and expectations, and connecting them to programs and training resources when appropriate. Larimer County is currently home to 13 employer sponsors of apprenticeship programs. Specifically, five employer sponsors in the world of Utilities, two in Health Care, one each in Plumbing, Arborist, HVAC, Ironworking, Law enforcement and Operations Management (2020.) Many programs employ one apprentice every 1-2 years.

Currently, apprenticeships in the trades offer the most opportunities for job seekers, with strong hiring needs expected over the coming years. To expand apprenticeship opportunities, both in number and in reach, new programs need to be developed. To meet the high demand for labor in the health care field, LCEWD works with partners and the State to increase health care apprenticeships in Larimer County, including partnering with higher education partners around occupations such as Medical Assisting, Sterile Processing Technician, Ophthalmic Technician, and Pharmacy Technician. Additionally, LCEWD continues to pursue development of programs in industries such as Education, IT, Manufacturing, Business, Automotive Services, and Transportation and to work with both secondary education, higher education and community partners to help increase access and equity into these programs for job seekers.

Sector Partnerships Participation: Moving into the eighth year of operation, the Manufacturing and Health sector partnerships continue to serve as useful models for engaging private sector and public partners in beneficial business service efforts. With significant wins accomplished, sector partnerships are attracting more businesses and helping the LCEWD grow deeper relationships with long-standing members. Moreover, LCEWD continues to facilitate more crossovers between sector partnerships and the local WDB, creating synergy between the two and facilitating stronger relationships between the private sector and workforce system.

Additionally, LCEWD helped to convene a new construction/trades partnership for Region 2. Initially this partnership is focused on many of the same career pathways as the other two partnerships, as well as, an industry specific action focused on the bid and procurement process (see below).

LCEWD staff is heavily involved in our sector partnerships, filling seats on convener teams, supporting committees, and administering sector-led programs. For example, LCEWD's CareerRise Team coordinates the Summer Internship Program and, after the pandemic, they will reconvene facilitating Career Tours for the partnerships, exposing young adults to careers and opportunities in the field of manufacturing and health care (see below). This activity opens the door for LCEWD to offer additional services to businesses that host tours.

Sector Partnerships - Status and Objectives: LCEWD is actively engaged in three regional sector partnerships: (1) Manufacturing, (2) Health Care and (3) Construction/Trades. In conjunction with the Northern Colorado (NOCO) Manufacturing and Health Care Partnerships, LCEWD coordinates with other public partners to increase the number of work-based learning opportunities available to students/job seekers and industry partners through the Work Based Learning Alliance (WBLA). Additionally, in support of the Health Sector Partnership's goals, LCEWD continues to support individual health care providers starting registered apprenticeships. As it emerges as a sector partnership, the NoCO Construction Partnership will work with LCEWD and other public partners to solidify its strategic direction.

1. **Manufacturing Sector Partnership:** LCEWD is actively engaged with the NOCO Manufacturing Partnership. One of the primary activities of the manufacturing sector partnership is Manufacturing Rocks!

Manufacturing ROCKS! connects future workforce (particularly students and young adults) to manufacturing careers, via Career Tours of local manufacturers, and by working with educators to provide manufacturing presentations, internships, and scholarship opportunities.

Accomplishments:

- Unfortunately, last year, the NoCO Manufacturing Partnership canceled most of the scheduled Career Tours due to the pandemic. However, 120 students were able to take advantage of this outstanding educational opportunity before Stay-at-Home orders were implemented. The Manufacturing Rocks! Committee is planning to continue on-site tours as soon as possible.
- Also due to the pandemic, the Partnership cancelled the 2020 Parent's Manufacturing, Design & Engineering Night, but will re-sponsor this event when it is safe.
- In conjunction with LCEWD, the NoCo Manufacturing Sector Partnership was able to quickly adjust the Summer Internship Program to provide meaningful remote work opportunities for nine young adult/interns in 2020. Because of this quick action, and the success of the program over the years, the Partnership is seeing a record number of applicants for the 2021 internship positions.
- Additionally, the NoCo Manufacturing Sector Partnership continued its work to uncover actionable information on key skills gaps in manufacturing. The Rocks committee used labor market data and qualitative input from NoCo manufacturing employers and employees to understand the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for employees to be successful in a set of six critical occupations: Machinists, Welders, Assemblers, Technical Sales Representatives, Engineers, and Production Managers. In addition to detailed profiles of each of these critical occupations, this process uncovered a set of foundational talent needs for the broader manufacturing workforce.

- Based on the results of this process, the Rocks committee identified priority actions to address skills gaps and improve the manufacturing talent pipeline in Northern Colorado through their Career Tours, internship program and coordination with key public partners.
- On March 6, 2020, the Partnership held very successful Regional Advisory Meetings for educators, workforce agencies, and manufacturers to address how schools may better leverage their industry advisory councils and to learn the workforce talent needs. During this meeting, action plans were set for addressing industry talent needs, critical skill gaps and inclusive practices.
- Participated in a variety of virtual Career Fairs and industry awareness events throughout the Northern Colorado region.
- Partners serve on Career and Technical Education Advisory Boards for Poudre High School, Front Range Community College and Aims Community College.

Northern Colorado Health Sector Partnership: LCEWD is actively engaged with the Northern Colorado Health Care Sector Partnership by serving on the regional convener team, participating on committees, and contributing to ad hoc work groups for specific projects. On the convener team, LCEWD plays an important role to align resources around industry priorities and to serve as a voice for workforce and economic development with the organization.

LCEWD is most involved in the Workforce Committee, whose overarching goal is to "bring health sector employers together with educators and workers to meet growing workforce needs." LCEWD does this by introducing students and young people to local health care businesses through Career Tours and work-based learning experiences. While many young people are aware of the careers related to patient-facing occupations (e.g., doctor or nurse), far fewer are aware of the diversity of jobs available within health care (e.g., facilities management, nutrition, information technology).

Through school presentations and facility tours, young people are exposed to a wide variety of career options in health care. This is not always easy in the highly regulated health care environment, but the Health Sector Partnership finds creative ways to get young people interested in health care related fields and to start them on an academic track alongside work experiences that increase the likelihood of success.

In addition to promoting the health sector as a viable career option, the Health Sector Partnership also works on overcoming the systemic challenges that have contributed to the regional nursing shortage.

A few notable successes from the last year include:

- Working with Front Range Community College and Aims Community College to support scholarships in Medical Assistant programs. The scholarships cover the fees for the certification exam required to work as a medical assistant in Colorado. This removes one of the barriers for young people to move from the classroom to a clinical environment.
- Helping to facilitate a Registered Apprenticeship Program for Medical Assistants with Associates in Family Medicine.

- Continuing to champion the new Medical Assistant program at Front Range Community College.
- Sponsoring Health Care Career Panels for high school teachers and counselors. Panels included participants from many of the largest health care providers in Northern Colorado.
- Unfortunately, the high school career events were postponed during the pandemic; however, the partnership is planning to continue this program as soon as possible.

Construction/Trades Partnership: LCEWD is actively engaged with the emerging Northern Colorado Construction/Trades Partnership. On the convener team, LCEWD plays an important role of aligning resources around industry priorities and serving as a voice for workforce and economic development.

The last year was particularly challenging for a new partnership because many of their goals included in-person meetings but they adjusted to support the industry quickly and have begun planning for the next year.

A few notable successes include:

- Quickly adjusting to the demands of the pandemic by hosting seven virtual information and resource sharing events for the NoCo construction industry.
- Hosting and participating in multiple industry awareness events for students and public partners.
- Advancing the initiative to address systemic challenges and inequity in the bid and procurement processes through a series of fact finding interviews with procurement officers throughout Northern Colorado.

LCEWD will continue to work with the Manufacturing, Health Sector, and Construction/Trades Sector Partnerships in the implementation of initiatives designed to meet the needs of local and regional employers.

5. Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable);

In Larimer County, there are a number of internal partners that share a common mission of expanding access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for individuals with barriers to employment, including co-enrollment with other programs (as beneficial), developing career pathways, and improving access to recognized postsecondary credentials. These internal partners include: WCT (Wagner-Peyser), WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Veterans programs, Larimer County Work-Based Learning (WBL) Funds, and the National Emergency Grants COREcover and Colorado Responds.

As a result of these co-located partners, LCEWD is well prepared to maximize resources to expand access to activities, for eligible individuals with barriers to employment, that result in meaningful employment through the attainment of credentials. Prior to COVID-19, staff from the DVR had onsite days at the LCEWD for meeting customers interested in their services. This is an activity both partners intend to restart back to, once the community has returned to in-person services. For partners not co-located, LCEWD hosts conversations about resource maximizing and co-enrollment strategies through the development of local Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with partner agencies. Current relationships are established with the local offices of the DVR, Adult Basic Education (ABE), TANF, Employment First (SNAP E&T), local school districts, and similar partners.

For WIOA Youth programs, LCEWD continues to provide access to eligible youth by ensuring a strong presence within the community and with core program partners. LCEWD made adjustments to offer virtual, on-line orientations to explain eligibility requirements, available services, and application instructions. Orientation is designed to be portable, resulting in off-site awareness opportunities to capture a wider audience. Orientation is also available virtually to increase access to services which result in increased career pathways and co-enrollment with mandated partners as determined appropriate for the young adult. All LCEWD youth-related services have a strong social media presence, including Facebook pages. Facebook is utilized to post LCEWD events, as well as community events, including lists of open positions defined as entry level career path opportunities.

LCEWD hosts youth oriented Open House events during the year, and in 2020 modified the events to a virtual Zoom environment. Public and core partners are invited to learn about services for youth and young adults. Employers are invited so that attendees learn about what the employers are looking for in ideal employees. Many employers use these events to conduct onsite interviews and/or collect applications from interested attendees.

To expand access to justice-involved youth, LCEWD staff met regularly, prior to COVID-19, with probation and parole officers. This led to the establishment of a referral form for parole officers to expedite the enrollment process for candidates, along with periodic visits to correctional staff to share services and explore ways to facilitate the employment transition of young adults from incarceration. We are exploring ways of re-engaging this meeting structure post COVID-19, but are still accept these referral forms.

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Discretionary Grant programs are well positioned to build co-enrollment opportunities outlined by WIOA. Currently, all WIOA Title I programs, along with Wagner-Peyser, are co-located in Fort Collins. LCEWD received two federal disaster grants designed to address the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the grants, RecoverCO, will provide opportunities for dislocated worker-eligible customers to receive a variety of services that facilitate career pathway development and credentials including, but not limited to, career exploration, post-secondary training, and work-based learning activities (i.e., internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training). Colorado Responds connects job seekers who have been laid off with businesses seeking temporary employment specifically related to the pandemic recovery.

LCEWD continues to serve customers in new ways. For example, the WIOA Adult program **continued prioritizing** eligible veterans and/or eligible veteran spouses into WIOA Adult services due to the reduction in resources. Although this minimized opportunities for non-veterans, it positioned Adult services to more intentionally braid funding specific for the veteran population. **Pending an increase in funding allocations**, the WIOA Adult program **may expand services beyond** statutorily-eligible veterans; however, all other enrollments will be deferred until funding is available.

WIOA Dislocated Worker program has seen an increase in the demand for enrollment, specifically to access training services to acquire updated education and skills, to compete in our local labor market. **LCEWD is actively hiring new Employment Specialist staff to help expand the services and opportunities to laid-off workers.** The RecoverCO grant has helped to provide **increased access to these services.**

In an effort to meet the needs of customers that qualify as WIOA Adults and/or Dislocated Workers, the Career Transition Team (CTT) collaborates with the Larimer County Work-Based Learning Team to integrate services and resources as available. These additional resources infuse into WIOA programs to stretch resources and services farther. **Additionally, LCEWD actively engages in planning conversations with the Larimer County Department of Human Services (DHS) to create a revised Work-Based Learning partnership, and other TANF-focused services, funded by DHS. This partnership, if successful, will expand internship services to Colorado Works families.**

In year's past, LCEWD's staff has worked closely with the local Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) provider, Center for Adult Learning (CAL), to grow partnership opportunities to increase access to WIOA services for students enrolled in adult basic education activities. Larimer County has a **relatively** new Title II AEFLA provider, The Learning Source. LCEWD will continue to connect with The Learning Source to design strategies for successful co-enrollments in order to facilitate career pathways for mutual customers and to pave the way for additional credentials as determined beneficial.

In order to increase access to post-secondary education, career pathways, and credential completion, LCEWD partnered with Project Self-Sufficiency (a local non-profit) for **three** successful grant applications resulting in an additional **\$450,000** in scholarship funds for low-income adults in Larimer County over the past four years. COSI scholarship funds are part of the Colorado Department of Higher Education's (CDHE) plan to establish a statewide network of scholarship programs by encouraging philanthropic giving within Colorado for low-income adults. **Both** agencies will have contributed time and funding match to create the \$450,000 in scholarship funds that supports career pathways, credential completion, and advanced post-secondary education for low-income individuals, many of whom have barriers to employment.

In addition to the COSI scholarship funds, LCEWD receives funds from Larimer County to support a wide range of work-based learning activities (i.e., internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training) to assist with career pathway identification and confirmation. Work-based learning activities include everything from working in a conservation-related position through the Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) to an internship or apprenticeship in an emerging or growing industry.

All work-based learning opportunities contribute to career pathways by the nature of their design. Apprenticeships, in particular, are strongly linked to credential completion.

6. Describe the strategy to work with adult education providers funded under Title II of WIOA and Vocational Rehabilitation to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in question 5.

LCEWD has a long history of strategic engagement with the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) providers in Larimer County. These strategic partnerships have been in existence for years and customers served by both partner agencies have had opportunities to be co-enrolled in the full array of services offered among each entity.

LCEWD will continue coordination of service delivery with both partners. The goal is to reach local agreements regarding the One-Stop delivery system, identify the service strengths of each agency, and develop an improved cross-agency referral process and co-enrollment linkages leading to the development and implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In situations where a MOU is developed at a state level, conversations will occur regarding operationalization of the state-derived agreements.

Prior to COVID-19, LCEWD and DVR held quarterly meetings to discuss organizational processes, procedures, challenges, and growth opportunities to build best practices across both partners to enhance service delivery to our mutual customers. DVR had assigned staff to specific office locations and LCEWD scheduled customers to meet with the DVR staff. These strategic practices resulted in an improved attendance rate for the initial appointment and reduced the wait time for ongoing DVR services. In the upcoming year, LCEWD plans for the return of DVR staff to be onsite monthly to meet with LCEWD customers. Additionally, LCEWD and the School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP), funded in part by DVR, has integrated services to serve youth with disabilities in the community. This long-held strategic partnership continues to meet quarterly with SWAP, LCEWD, and DVR staff. In these meetings, systems that represent youth with disabilities have the opportunity to access resources and support that are beneficial to their customers.

LCEWD partners with the local Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) provider, The Learning Source (TLS) in a variety of ways. LCEWD has a staff member who sits on the AEFLA advisory board which meets quarterly and LCEWD staff are connected to a TLS Navigator position to streamline referrals between the organizations. Continued communication within the advisory board and similar meetings will occur with TLS staff to identify appropriate referrals and ways services can be coordinated.

7. Describe the strategies and services that will be utilized to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

LCEWD has consistently maintained linkages with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program for decades. However, as the pandemic occurred and the stay-at-home orders went into effect, those linkages became critical and significant to the community and have absorbed a majority of WCT staff time throughout the course of the pandemic (and continues to do so to this day).

As the result of a struggling, under-resourced, and beleaguered UI system, LCEWD became the “local” UI office as customers’ needs focused almost exclusively on UI questions, issues, and concerns. WCT readjusted its daily processes to include a daily status meeting to stay informed of changes or updates to the UI system. WCT staff attended UI trainings, watched informational videos, and engaged with other sources of UI information to try and provide the very best information and service to very stressed and, often times, extremely angry UI claimants.

Managing UI customers’ experiences with the failing UI system has become the primary purpose of the WCT during the pandemic. As mentioned above, this purpose continues unabated. Workforce development and job search services for unemployed workers have become secondary in priority. The impact of the UI system on daily services offered by the WCT cannot be overstated, as well as the toll it has taken on staff.

WCT developed an online job seeker newsletter immediately prior to the pandemic. Once the pandemic took hold, the newsletter became an important channel of communication with those impacted by the pandemic. Each newsletter begins with a topic related to Unemployment Insurance benefits. Initially, our subscribers were in the hundreds; we now have 20,000+ subscribers of our newsletter. Along with the newsletter, our website is updated regularly to keep customers informed about UI and significant changes to that system. Our website regularly sees 1,000+ visits per week, another substantial increase in our viewership.

WCT currently provides customer UI support through the following services:

- Providing triage services to hundreds of UI claimants per week (most of them via the telephone and/or email).
- Coordinating access to the UI Telephone Hotline via two cell phones which allows remote access to the Hotline and ensures safety for both customers and staff when connecting customers to UI.
- Assistance in the computer lab when filing a UI claim.
- Providing timely updates via email and/or the newsletter when there are important changes are happening with the UI system.
- Managing highly irate and desperate UI claimants and trying to facilitate connection to the UI system so that issues related to their claims can be resolved.

WCT no longer provides in-person or virtual UI chats for customers due to the amount of staff time involved. LCEWD will provide a computer for UI chats again when that is approved by UI.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) was paused during the height of COVID due to the high volume of fraudulent UI claims resulting in many customers who were inaccurately selected for the program. LCEWD will begin the RESEA program in mid-April. RESEA was, and continues to be, an effective enrollment strategy for serving WIOA Dislocated Workers. WCT provides intentional referrals to the local Dislocated Worker program for those UI claimants that seek a more in-depth intensive job search and/or access to work-based learning and training related services.

8. Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with economic development activities carried out in the planning region, and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

The local WDB recognizes and supports the idea that entrepreneurship and microenterprise services are a viable opportunity for job seekers looking for the next opportunity. Likewise, LCEWD identified small to medium-sized business support as a critical element in the suite of business services provided to the community. LCEWD has a strong relationship with the Larimer Small Business Development Center. The organizations reciprocate membership on each other's boards and have a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines partnership agreements when it comes to entrepreneurial and small business support. These agreements avoid duplication of services and minimize customer confusion regarding the functions of each entity. Additionally, the LCEWD has specific programs to help entrepreneurs and small business owners scale their operations in Larimer County.

As evidence, the LCEWD has supported entrepreneurship services for thirteen years within the CareerRise program through an innovative public/private partnership titled the Young Entrepreneur Tournament (YET). Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, YET was forced to cancel the spring and fall of 2020, and spring of 2021 program, due to the in-person, experiential learning environment. It remains unclear if YET will be reconvened in the fall of 2021.

When active, YET provides an opportunity for participants (18 years of age and under) to learn, create, and grow an idea into a business plan and compete in a business pitch competition to win business seed funds. The program occurs over four consecutive Saturdays with a final pitch event held the fifth Saturday.

YET participants receive 20 hours of direct instruction and support, matched with a contracted entrepreneurial facilitator, to develop ideas into feasible and attainable business plans. Participants meet with local entrepreneurs for advice in building their business. Over the last 13 years, over 260 young adults have engaged in the YET and received entrepreneurial skills training. The OtterCares Foundation has funded YET for at least seven years.

9. Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system. Also describe how you will partner with the required WIOA partners to increase awareness of career pathways and the critical role that workforce development plays in ensuring that all Coloradans have access to educational and career pathways that result in meaningful employment.

LCEWD provides a comprehensive workforce development system in Larimer County. Located solely in lovely Fort Collins, Colorado, LCEWD offers the following programs:

- Wagner-Peyser (Workforce Connections Team)
- WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Career Transition and CareerRise/inCompass Teams)
- WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Career Transition and CareerRise/inCompass Teams)
- WIOA National Emergency Grants
- WIOA Discretionary Grants

- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA)
- Year-round youth services including Governor’s Summer Job Hunt (GSJH)
- Larimer County Conservation Corps
- Larimer County Enterprise Zone
- CDLE Disabled Veterans Opportunity Program (DVOP) and Regional Veterans Employment Representative (RVER) Programs co-located at LCEWD
- Veterans’ Service-to-Career Program
- Veterans Service Office (VSO)
- Economic Development

As described in other sections within the Plan, LCEWD will partner with required WIOA partners to increase awareness of career pathways and will outline the critical role that workforce development plays in ensuring that all Coloradans have access to educational and career pathways that result in meaningful employment, contingent on available resources. For specifics, please refer to answers in the earlier questions.

10. Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area, in particular:

- Identify the locations of the comprehensive physical one-stop centers (at least one) within your local area; also list the locations of your network of affiliate sites, both physical and electronically linked, such as libraries.
- Identify your key strategies for integrating the core programs (WIOA Title I, II, III, and IV programs), as well as all required partner programs, within the local one-stop system of comprehensive and affiliate offices.
- Describe the roles and resource contributions of each of the one-stop partners.
- Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means; include your intended use of virtual job fairs, the upcoming virtual job shadowing capability, and other innovative strategies and initiatives to streamline and enhance services, as well as increase access.
- Identify the types of assessments and assessment tools that will be utilized within the one-stop delivery system and how these assessments will be coordinated across participating programs to avoid duplication of effort and multiple assessments of customers being served by more than one partner program.
- A description of how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including your centers, one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- A description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers;

- h. Provide a description of how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G), including, if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.
 - i. Outreach to Individuals with Barriers to Employment: Describe how you will engage your LWDB and Youth Council/committee to increase the awareness of the services offered to returning veterans, out-of-school youth, individuals with disabilities, long-term unemployed, and other targeted groups? What additional strategies will be utilized to reach out to these groups? What are your objectives and goals for this effort?
 - j. Describe your specific outreach strategies to eligible New Americans and your objectives for this effort. In addition, what strategies will you deploy to ensure your services and programs effectively serve eligible New Americans?
- a. Identify the locations of the comprehensive physical one-stop centers (at least one) within your local area; also list the locations of your network of affiliate sites, both physical and electronically linked, such as libraries.

Comprehensive Physical One-Stop Centers: For more than thirty years, LCEWD maintained at least two offices in Larimer County. Unfortunately, in 2020, the physical office presence in Loveland was relinquished due to budget reductions. Virtual and pre-scheduled services continue in Loveland and southern Larimer County. The comprehensive one-stop center is located at:

Comprehensive One-Stop Office

Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development
 Fort Collins, Colorado
 200 W. Oak Street, Suite 5000

Due to COVID-19, most of LCEWD’s services have been converted to a virtual presence which has strengthened the department’s ability to serve job seekers and businesses throughout Larimer County. Additionally, LCEWD has long-term, strong partnerships with libraries in cities and towns throughout Larimer County. LCEWD coordinates with each library’s employment/business services personnel for training and services as needed. LCEWD staff are knowledgeable of the resources available to job seekers through the local libraries and inform customers of services and classes as beneficial to their job search.

- b. Identify your key strategies for integrating the core programs (WIOA Title I, II, III, and IV programs), as well as all required partner programs, within the local one-stop system of comprehensive and affiliate offices.

Under the direction of the Larimer County Board of Commissioners and the Workforce Development Board, LCEWD administers, supports and integrates the following core programs: Economic Development, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Colorado Works (TANF), Employment First (SNAP),

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), Regional Veterans Employment Representatives (RVER), Veterans Service to Career, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Unemployment Insurance initiatives.

Program integration is managed through a unified Leadership Team with a coordinated service delivery system that includes common core services including customer orientations, workshops, resource lab, referrals to targeted programs, and co-enrollments as appropriate. Core services provided through other one-stop partners including ABE and DVR are coordinated through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed at the State and local levels.

- c. Describe the roles and resource contributions of each of the one-stop partners.

The roles and resource contributions of each of the one-stop partners remains consistent with historical precedence. No major changes have occurred in this arena although modifications to move most processes and resources to a virtual environment as a result of COVID-19.

- d. Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means; include your intended use of virtual job fairs, the upcoming virtual job shadowing capability, and other innovative strategies and initiatives to streamline and enhance services, as well as increase access.

COVID-19 fast-tracked the onboarding of virtual service delivery strategies for the LCEWD. All forms and types of services have been converted to a virtual format in addition to the traditional technological standbys: Connecting Colorado and the LCEWD website. Additionally, the LCEWD worked with a local business to co-create a job seeker platform called My Career Compass. This platform is an interactive, online platform that provides job seekers with access to A-Z tools and resources to assist with career planning and/or job search goals. Job seekers are able to complete each step at their own pace while receiving virtual support from the department's Career Consultants. This platform went live in 2020 and can be found in a customer's "toolbox" on Connecting Colorado.

LCEWD continues to explore additional virtual strategies including offering digital literacy training for job seekers and small business owners, software to support appointment scheduling software for customers, and providing key support for the statewide virtual workshop initiative.

- e. Identify the types of assessments and assessment tools that will be utilized within the one-stop delivery system and how these assessments will be coordinated across participating programs to avoid duplication of effort and multiple assessments of customers being served by more than one partner program.

LCEWD offers a wide variety of assessment tools, many of which are accessible across partner agencies. Career assessments help participants identify their work values, aptitudes, and interests. Many customizable career research tools include labor market information and job descriptions.

The Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) is the common education assessment utilized at the LCEWD. The LCEWD has created informal service agreements with program partners to accept TABE results, up to six months from the previous testing date, in an effort to minimize duplication and redundancy. Results are shared after the participant has signed a Release of Information agreement between participating agencies.

The following are common career awareness, clarification, and exploration assessments utilized at the LCEWD: My Career Compass, My Next Move, PathwayU (formerly jobZology), EMSI Career Coach, E-Skills, Skills Engine & Skills Matcher, Career Cluster Interest Survey (CCIS), 16 Personalities (free Myers-Briggs assessment tool), and ONET. Each of these assessments serves different purposes to aid job seekers in the identification of occupations that match well with their specific interests and circumstances. Releases of information are completed, as required, to allow for the sharing of assessment results with partners/partner agencies.

The following are common labor market identification tools utilized at the LCEWD: Wanted Analytics, Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI), ONET OnLine, and Connecting Colorado Supply/Demand reports. Additional tools include: industry input through sector strategy conversations, Workforce Development Board sponsored business panels, and training vendor industry advisory groups.

- f. A description of how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including your centers, one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

An initial analysis of Larimer County facilities was conducted by Meeting the Challenge (Colorado Springs) in 2017 and 2018. They conducted surveys of facilities based on the 1991 ADA Standards and developed a rationale for prioritizing accessibility improvements for buildings owned and operated by Larimer County based on: accessible approach and entrance; access to goods and services; access to public toilet rooms; and access to other items such as water fountains and public telephones. Following the analysis, Larimer County hired an ADA Coordinator and each department has an identified ADA Compliance Monitor. Marcy Kasner is the ADA Compliance Monitor for LCEWD and recently completed the required training. Larimer County is actively managing the findings and recommendations outlined in the final report. The analysis did not find any high priority issues for LCEWD.

LCEWD takes steps to ensure that appropriate auxiliary aids and services are made available to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate and benefit from services. Annual training is conducted with the Wagner-Peyser job seeker team/LCEWD staff for the purpose of understanding the assistive technology available for customers with disabilities. Printed materials, websites, and electronic communication offer the following notification: "Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities."

One-stop partners are responsible for complying with section 188, if applicable, in ways appropriate to their entity. The LCEWD does not monitor their compliance nor does Larimer County's One-Stop Operator.

- g. A description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and job seekers;

The Workforce Development Board (WDB) understands the importance of having eligible providers of services that deliver high quality, relevant training to meet current and future needs of business, while meeting the interests of workers and job seekers. As the primary service provider, the LCEWD works closely with the local WDB to ensure that a high level of quality service is delivered to the community. The WDB receives regular updates from the Economic and Workforce Development Director and Leadership Team on program metrics and overall performance. On an annual basis, the WDB reviews and votes on the annual plan, which is designed to detail how the LCEWD will meet the needs of employers and job-seekers. LCEWD Leadership Team meets weekly to discuss challenges and opportunities facing the Department. During these meetings is where much of the internal quality assurance occurs.

It is in everyone's best interest to make sure that the providers of services are well informed about the issues facing the workforce and business community.

To do this, the local WDB strives to have participation from the LCEWD and many of its partners in the WDB activities, which are designed to convene people on various workforce related topics and connect individuals and organizations throughout the county.

The WDB will have eleven formal board meetings in 2021

- Board meetings will focus on: Board business, including Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) operations, Economic and Workforce Development budget review, in-depth information on innovative Economic and Workforce Development programs, WDB initiatives and priorities, and other relevant regional and local workforce initiatives.
- One or two meetings in 2021 will be regional meetings with the Weld County Workforce Development Board. The February 10, 2021 meeting reconvened the Boards to help identify areas of collaboration.
- Other WDB meetings will explore timely workforce issues in depth such as diversity and equity in hiring, work-based learning, and targeted industries.

- h. Provide a description of how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c) (3) (G), including, if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

LCEWD will continue to support WIOA customer training through Individual Training Accounts in accordance with the law and applicable local policies. Eligible program participants who seek training services may, in consultation with Workforce Center staff, select a training vendor from the list of providers approved through the Colorado Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) process.

Additionally, LCEWD provides navigation support for training vendors not yet approved on the ETPL. If the training vendor takes the necessary steps to comply with the ETPL requirements, access to training choices increases. It's common for LCEWD staff to work with training vendors new to the ETPL system to ensure training candidates receive quality training. Upon selection, in accordance with local policies and available funding, LCEWD refers participants to the eligible providers and arranges for payment through an Individual Training Account. At this time, we do not intend to develop contracts for training services.

However, should circumstances including customer demand and limited training opportunities warrant the development of customized training, LCEWD will work with our local Workforce Development Board to achieve the objectives.

- i. Outreach to Individuals with Barriers to Employment: Describe how you will engage your WDB and Youth Council/committee to increase the awareness of the services offered to returning veterans, out-of-school youth, individuals with disabilities, long-term unemployed, and other targeted groups? What additional strategies will be utilized to reach out to these groups? What are your objectives and goals for this effort?

LCEWD has a strong history of serving individuals with barriers across the LCEWD and engages the WDB in increasing the awareness of the services offered to returning veterans, out-of-school youth, individuals with disabilities, long-term unemployed, and other targeted groups. The overall objective and goal for these efforts is to support upward mobility, wealth generation, and economic inclusion for all individuals with barriers to employment.

To support these efforts, the WDB offers subject-focused panels that explore strategies for workforce engagement and retention for individuals with barriers to employment. Topics highlighted for 2021 include skills transferability as an economic recovery strategy, mental health, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and local and regional economic recovery.

Throughout the year, strategies to increase services to individuals with barriers to employment are deployed in a variety of ways:

LCEWD's prioritizes services to individuals with barriers to employment in both the WIOA Youth and Adult programs. From January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, the WIOA Youth program maintained a steadfast commitment to serving the hardest to serve youth in Larimer County with 100% of youth meeting the definition of disconnected from school and 85% of the youth reporting not being a high school graduate. Twenty-seven (27%) entered services with a documented disability, 25% entered services as offenders, 18% entered services as pregnant or parenting, and 37% were identified as low-income individuals. LCEWD's objective and goals for this effort is an ongoing commitment to continue recruiting, and effectively serving, disconnected youth through thriving partnerships with local school districts, youth-related non-profits, and WDB supported activities such as the summer internship program and the Young Entrepreneur Tournament (YET) (COVID-19 permitting).

From January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, the WIOA Adult program provided services for adults with barriers in Larimer County. Over this timeframe, 86% of adults were verified as low-income households, 12% entered services as offenders, 39% single parents, 28% self-reported as disabled, and 31% were veterans. LCEWD currently reports 90% of the Adult Population meeting the statutory requirement with over 96.67% of the participants falling within the total Adult Priority of Service categories (January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020). Likewise, the LCEWD provides employment-related services to all referred TANF participants and Employment First recipients (i.e., food assistance). Significant program changes occurred in both programs in 2020; however, ongoing collaboration continues to bring LCEWD services to these customers. LCEWD's objective and goals for this effort is an ongoing commitment to low-income members of the community.

Referral processes and service delivery strategies between the LCEWD and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) for individuals with disabilities have improved over the past few years and the number of referrals between the agencies has increased substantially. DVR staff was regularly onsite in the LCEWD office prior to the pandemic to provide direct eligibility/service strategy consultations for LCEWD customers. These connections changed to a virtual connection due to COVID-19. Continued improvement in coordinated service delivery philosophy and strategies between the departments remains critical; however, fundamental, structural differences between departments may be difficult to surmount. Opportunities for innovative funding and service delivery opportunities exist (i.e., DVR could fund the LCEWD to provide summer career/employment opportunities for youth with disabilities) and could be identified as an objective and goal for this effort.

Increased outreach and service coordination has emerged over the past few years with the local Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) program, The Learning Source. In addition to enhanced coordination to assist out of school youth/adults achieve their High School Equivalency, LCEWD provided regular onsite outreach and informational sessions to ESL students regarding LCEWD services and opportunities; these activities occurred prior to COVID-19 and will likely resume when safe to do so. These outreach/informational sessions increased LCEWD's exposure to English language learners with lower levels of literacy and other youth/adults seeking to earn their HSE.

LCEWD houses a variety of veterans-related services and programs including the Veteran Services Office (VSO) for benefit assistance and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), Regional Veterans Employment Representatives (RVER), and Veterans Service to Career. Veterans, and eligible spouses, receive priority of service regardless of service or program.

All marketing, recruitment, and program materials provide information regarding disability accommodations and veterans' priority of service.

- j. Describe your specific outreach strategies to eligible New Americans and your objectives for this effort. In addition, what strategies will you deploy to ensure your services and programs effectively serve eligible New Americans?

LCEWD has developed a partnership with the premier organization in Larimer County specifically dedicated to serving New Americans. In our initial discussions with this organization, LCEWD was informed that the vast majority of the clients are Spanish-speakers. Therefore, LCEWD re-aligned two bilingual staff members to work specifically with these customers and trained a third staff member on utilizing our language phone service for customers who speak other languages. Many job search-related documents have been translated into Spanish and provided to this organization to advance our outreach strategies. Digital literacy strategies for those struggling with technology are also planned for the near future. Feedback from staff providing direct services, in addition to reports from the organization working with New Americans, will inform the level of success current services are experiencing and options for new initiatives or directions.

11. Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

LCEWD works closely with the Poudre, Thompson, and Estes Park School Districts in Larimer County. These partnerships have grown through work-based learning groups, advisory boards for Career and Technical Education (CTE), and other in-school services provided by the CareerRise team. LCEWD participates in the CTE advisory boards in Poudre and Thompson School District and provides labor market information and year-planning support to meet the Department of Education work-based learning goals in order to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. This includes providing information and resources for the future CTE centers, Futures Lab in Poudre School District and Thompson Career Center (TCC) in Thompson School District. LCEWD also assisted with a handful of school requests for mock interviews and job readiness presentations throughout the school year. Over the years, strong connections with the middle and high school educators have supported LCEWD services and successes. Additionally, the Thompson School District is represented on the WDB and attends meetings regularly to share and gather input to avoid duplication and ensure alignment.

LCEWD has also stayed connected with school district partners through sector partnership work by supporting the organization of career presentations, virtual chats geared for students, and the employer-sponsored summer internship program for high school students.

Likewise, LCEWD supported the development of career exploration activities that involves high school students and the sector partnerships and connected the school districts' Work-Based Learning (WBL) coordinators to community colleges and four-year universities as a result of the Larimer County WBL Alliance. This Alliance has been collaborating across workforce, education, and community partners to create easier and more efficient access for businesses across our workforce region and helping them connect to the students and job seekers that the Alliance represents.

LCEWD also supports a Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) navigator role that reaches out to post-secondary education programs on behalf of individuals interested in pursuing training. The navigator helps to coordinate services and ensure participants have a wide variety of training accessible to them as they pursue re-employment services.

12. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area; in particular identify how the local area will expand services to dislocated workers utilizing all sources of formula and discretionary funds targeted to the dislocated worker population.

Please see Question #4 for a full analysis and availability of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker activities.

Utilizing appropriate co-enrollment service strategies, LCEWD is able to expand the capacity to serve dislocated workers through increased access and funding via Individual Training Accounts (ITA) and supportive services. One example is the receipt of the National Emergency Grant, RecoverCO funding initiative. This initiative expanded enrollment opportunities across Dislocated Worker services. These services mirrored the full analysis noted in Question #4, and included increased access to Individualized Training Accounts, supportive services, and work-based learning programming (as available).

Additionally, LCEWD received a second National Emergency Grant, COResponds. This temporary jobs grant permits dislocated workers access to temporary employment opportunities directly related to humanitarian pandemic recovery. LCEWD instituted these dislocated worker programs with partners that have eligible temporary jobs that meet the specific roles and responsibilities tied to pandemic recovery. With these partners, LCEWD identifies eligible dislocated workers and subsidizes the temporary employment wages for a period of time.

Also, LCEWD will resume the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program in the near future. Dislocated workers connected to this initiative are automatically eligible for WIOA services. Through these initiatives, LCEWD has developed virtual orientations that introduce the full array of LCEWD services, including an overview and suggested action steps to consider when enrolling into the Dislocated Worker program. Interest levels have ebbed and flowed for new dislocated worker enrollments since the pandemic occurred, having months of high interest and growth with other months being more static; however, LCEWD is on-track to meeting our enrollment goals for the program year and utilizing all sources of formula and discretionary funds targeted to the dislocated worker population.

13. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities; in addition, indicate how services to out-of-school youth will be expanded and enhanced to incorporate additional work-based learning opportunities.

LCEWD provides a wide range of workforce development services for youth of all ages, beginning at 14 years of age through 24. The future talent pipeline begins in these early years as young adults make choices related to their career pathways, and as a result, the LCEWD has a variety of youth services.

These activities can be divided into two basic categories: (1) services to all youth ages 14-24 regardless of WIOA eligibility and (2) services to WIOA eligible youth, ages 16-24. All targeted populations are encouraged to participate in each of the service offerings, including youth with disabilities, youth living in poverty, or youth disconnected from school. LCEWD's philosophy is to provide access to services to all youth while wrapping intensive services around those most in need. While the focus of LCEWD's youth services are out-of-school youth, in-school youth services are offered when staffing and funding permit.

As noted earlier, youth services were impacted in March of 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. Service adaptations occurred and included an expansion into virtual case management meetings and orientations, electronic paperwork, and simplified eligibility document collection when allowable by federal law. This allowed existing participants and new participants to continue receiving services as the department shifted to a teleworking, stay-at-home work environment for case management services. Additionally, the CareerRise team forged a partnership with the Berthoud Habitat for Humanity organization, providing no-cost laptops to young people in need. Being able to bridge this digital divide was crucial to continuing services for new and existing participants. To date, approximately 35 total laptops have been distributed.

LCEWD offers the following menu of workforce development services to youth and young adults in Larimer County including:

CareerRise Program: (i)ndependence begins when we get involved. Serving ages 14-24, LCEWD's CareerRise programs inspire independence. Helping young action-takers accept more responsibility for early career achievements is the mission. The CareerRise team partners with resources across Larimer County to provide forward-thinking training, employment skills development, paid opportunities, entrepreneurial workshops, and educational assistance for younger job-seekers in our community to serve, work, and excel using their unique talents.

Year-Round Employment Support: LCEWD converted year-round employment support services to a virtual environment, providing access to easily accessible employment support services. Get prepared, get hired. For ages 14-24, youth and young adults can learn skills critical for completing successful job applications, creating winning resumes, interviewing with ease, and developing overall professionalism in order to earn (and retain) job opportunities.

Activities include workforce preparation workshops, access to youth-friendly employer database, CareerRise newsletters where subscribers receive monthly updates on youth-friendly employers, hiring events, job search tips, and invitations to meet with a CareerRise team member to obtain customized support to maximize job search. Support may include developing a job search plan, resume review, identifying employment opportunities, application assistance, and more. The LCEWD ran an e-newsletter, Summer Works, with weekly information on hot jobs featuring employers and job search tips to over 2,033 subscribers.

Summer Employment Nights: LCEWD hosted two youth-focused hiring events in a virtual Zoom environment in March, 2021 under the name of Summer Employment Nights. The nights were geared toward young adults, ages 14-16, with a panel of businesses who were hiring and offering advice for young job seekers. The Summer Employment Nights drew eight businesses and over 150 youth attendees and their parents together for hiring information and employment opportunities.

Youth-Focused Internship Programs: The NOCO Manufacturing Sector & Northern Colorado Health Care Sector partnerships launched the sixth annual Summer Youth Internship Program, administered by LCEWD. Fully funded by business and sector partnership investments, the summer program is designed to place high school students, ages 16-18, with local manufacturers and healthcare providers into paid internship experiences. LCEWD administers the program to build employer partnerships, market the program, vet applicants, complete pre-employment requirements, place interns, administer payroll, monitor work-based evaluations, and close out the internships. This program gives business partners an avenue to easily host high school interns while connecting and attracting their future workforce. For 2021, LCEWD anticipates over 25 internship sites and candidates across Northern Colorado.

Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDHE) is continuing their internship program partnership with LCEWD for the fourth year. LCDHE will provide full funding for four, six-month long Youth Engagement Specialist internship positions for high school students enrolled in the 2021-2022 school year. The program expands across Fort Collins and into the rural community of Estes Park. LCEWD administers the program and builds employer partnerships, markets the program, vets applicants, completes pre-employment requirements, places interns, administers payroll, monitors work-based evaluations, and closes out the internships. This program fostered a meaningful relationship between LCDHE and LCEWD by opening doors to more engagement and marketing to youth and young adults through LCDHE's youth advisory groups and the work of the Youth Engagement Specialists.

LCEWD is also preparing to administer a local, Larimer County-funded internship program geared toward low-income Larimer youth. LCEWD is offering 15 paid, summer internship positions across a variety of industries and occupations. LCEWD will administer the program to build employer partnerships, market the program, vet applicants, complete pre-employment requirements, place interns, administer payroll, monitor work-based evaluations, and close out the internship. Also included in this program is a cohort model of mentoring and support. LCEWD provides pre-internship preparedness workshops with a facilitated, group touchbase midway through the internship and at the end of the internship. These group meetings support essential skill growth and job readiness skills. LCEWD will also provide individual case management to these interns so that more wrap-around support can be offered for a successful internship completion.

Registered Apprenticeship Bootcamp: LCEWD, in partnership with Columbine Health Systems, developed and hosted a two-day Registered Apprenticeship Bootcamp for their program. In 2020, Columbine Health Systems grew their US Department of Labor (DOL) Registered Apprenticeship, hiring five youth apprentices for their Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) Pathway. The apprentices are juniors and seniors from the Poudre and Thompson School Districts, ranging from 16 to 18 years old and were supported through the Apprenticeship USA grant. The Bootcamp was customized with their patient-centered work in mind. The first day involved sessions focused on employee identity which included: True Colors personality assessment, learning styles quiz, and an activity on work excuses vs. explanations. The second day of the Bootcamp involved sessions focused on essential skills at work which included: generational presentation, Think Like the Employer scenarios, and a personal brand activity. LCEWD is actively working with Columbine Health Systems to on-board 10 new youth apprentices in 2021.

School Partnerships: As previously noted in Question #11, LCEWD works closely with the Poudre, Thompson, and Estes Park School Districts in Larimer County. These partnerships have grown through work-based learning groups, advisory boards for Career and Technical Education (CTE), and other in-school services provided by the CareerRise team in the classroom.

LCEWD participates in the CTE advisory boards in Poudre and Thompson School District and provides labor market information and year-planning support to meet the Department of Education work-based learning goals. This includes providing information and resources for the future CTE centers, Futures Lab in Poudre School District, and Thompson Career Center (TCC) in Thompson School District. The LCEWD assisted with a handful of school requests for mock interviews and job readiness presentations throughout the school year. Over the years, strong connections with the middle and high school educators have supported LCEWD services and successes.

LCEWD has also stayed connected with school district partners through sector partnership work committees by supporting the organization of career presentations and virtual chats geared to students and have supported the development of career exploration activities that involve high school students and the sector partnerships. LCEWD also stays connected to the school district WBL coordinators through the work of the Larimer County WBL Alliance. This Alliance has been collaborating across workforce, education and community partners to create easier and more efficient access for businesses across our workforce region and helping them connect to the students and job seekers that the Alliance represents.

Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC): The LCCC addresses two key issues: the persistent challenges youth and young adults face in gaining work experience and securing employment, and maintaining local parks, open spaces, and natural lands for the enjoyment of the community. Through conservation projects and environmental education, LCCC empowers corpmembers to become environmental stewards, while developing self-sufficiency and work preparation skills to help them become productive members of our community.

The LCCC is an accredited corps through the Colorado Youth Corps Association and The National Corps Network. It is operated and administered within the LCEWD. LCCC successfully implemented three distinct conservation corps programs in 2020 which was quite an accomplishment given the challenges associated with COVID-19. However, LCCC is actively expanding services in 2021 to include six summer-based crews for young adults 16-25 years of age, one Water and Energy crew for young adults 18-25, and the potential for expansion into the fall of 2021 work season. Below is a list of the service opportunities that will make up the 2021 action plan for the LCCC.

The **Land Crew** is a full-time service opportunity, for young adults ages 16-18. Throughout the season, corpsmembers serve on local, state and federal lands throughout Northern Colorado and perform projects such as trail construction and maintenance, ecological restoration and invasive species management.

The **Fire Recovery Crew** is a full-time service opportunity, for young adults ages 18-25. Throughout the season, corpsmembers will work on various conservation projects across the Cameron Peak Burn Area. Projects focus on ecological restoration, invasive species removal, erosion control, post fire debris clean-up, and other conservations projects.

The **Trail Crew for the United State Forest Service (USFS)** is a full-time service opportunity, for young adults ages 18-25. Throughout the season, corpsmembers will perform various conservation projects in the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest. Projects typically focus on trail maintenance and rock work.

The **Trail Crew for Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP)** is a full-time service opportunity, for young adults ages 18-25. Corpsmembers camp and work in Rocky Mountain National Park for the summer season. During that time, corpsmembers perform trail construction and maintenance projects.

The **Forestry Crew** is a full-time summer service opportunity for young adults, ages 18-25. Throughout the season, corpsmembers become S-212 certified for safe and effective chainsaw use and complete pine beetle kill/hazardous tree removal, fire mitigation and restoration projects on public lands throughout Larimer County. Upon successful completion of this program, corpsmembers may be eligible to receive an AmeriCorps Education Award.

The **Water & Energy Program** is a full-time winter/spring service opportunity for young adults, ages 18-25. Throughout the season, corpsmembers perform home efficiency assessments in Fort Collins and Loveland and deploy energy and water efficiency products in homes. Upon successful completion of this program, corpsmembers may be eligible to receive an AmeriCorps Education Award. The City of Fort Collins Utilities and City of Loveland Power and Water exclusively fund this opportunity as a part of their on-going portfolio of conservation related investments.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) inCompass Program: Education and employment are everything, but not everyone is on an equal playing field when it comes to how and when these goals are achieved. The Larimer County inCompass team supports a variety of customized services for those, ages 16-24, facing barriers or other obstacles to employment. Paired with a Career Specialist, youth design a career plan that could include: financial support and training for obtaining a High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma, paid work-based learning activities including internships, scholarships for post high school training, intensive career guidance and employment support. These services remain open to the community's most disconnected young adults, through a variety of on-line, virtual, and in some instances, in-person related services.

14. Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under title II in the local area, including a description of how the local board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232, the review of local applications submitted under title II.

LCEWD partners with the local Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Title II provider, The Learning Source (TLS), in a variety of ways. This is a relatively new provider within our region; however, many of the staff transitioned employment from the previous provider to TLS making this a seamless relationship transition. LCEWD has a staff member who sits on the AEFLA advisory board which meets quarterly. TLS also has a staff member on the WDB. Additionally, LCEWD staff are connected to a Navigator position hosted at TLS to streamline referrals between the organizations. Continued communication within the advisory board and independent meetings occur with TLS staff to identify appropriate referrals and identify additional ways services can be coordinated as needed. Additionally, as LCEWD gathers and further refines the service footprint for New Americans, new partnership opportunities may exist with TLS as one of the region's primary ESL and ELL service providers. LCEWD looks forward to those conversations in the coming year.

15. Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs maintained the Supportive Service policy to include the provision of transportation assistance. In addition, the total supportive service maximum has been increased to \$1,000 per enrollment year for each participant in accordance with the goals outlined in the Individualized Employment Plan (IEP)/Individualized Service Strategy (ISS).

Other programs operated within the LCEWD may provide transportation assistance and/or supportive services as allowable within the specific funding. Transportation assistance may take the form of gas cards, bus passes for public transportation, alternative modes of transportation (i.e., bicycles), car repairs, and other realistic activities that support customers navigating personal and public transportation options to engage and retain employment.

As with all partnership activities related to transportation and other supportive service activities, LCEWD actively collaborates and coordinates fund acquisition and service provision as beneficial to the customer and consistent with the vision and mission of the LCEWD.

16. Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the One Stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

The Workforce Connections Team (WCT), funded by Wagner-Peyser, has streamlined how job seekers connect to employers. Plans and strategies for coordinating Wagner-Peyser funding to improve services and avoid duplication fall into three focus areas:

(1) Streamlining processes for connecting job seekers and employers - Prior to COVID, staff members who worked with job seekers also engaged with businesses: posting open positions, assisting with job descriptions, rapid response activities, and setting-up regular meetings with employers/hiring managers and staff. These activities will continue again in the upcoming year.

(2) Coordinating efforts with external organizations that serve job seekers and students - LCEWD has developed strong connections to the community-based organizations including our local housing authority, the local libraries, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, plus agencies serving New Americans and those experiencing homelessness.

(3) Coordinating efforts with external organizations that serve employers - LCEWD is working in collaboration with local Chamber of Commerce to implement identified business-focused goals, with the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for referrals and data-sharing and participating in a variety of economic development workgroups.

17. Identify the administrator/administrative entity responsible for the disbursement of Title I and III funds in the local area, as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor, and the fiscal agent if different.

Title I programs (WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) are implemented through the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development Department, as is Title III (Wagner-Peyser), under the auspices of the Larimer Board of County Commissioners.

18. A description of the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under this title.

Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development Dept. follows both LCEWD and Larimer County Financial Policy and Procedure 300.1P for grant purchases.

19. Provide a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to section 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area.

The following WIOA Performance Indicators are the most recently negotiated standards for Larimer County. Please see the side by side comparison of Colorado State Standards and Larimer County Standards.

WIOA Performance Indicators: Adult

	State Standard	Larimer Negotiated Standard
Employment Rate (Q2)	76.00%	67.50%
Employment Rate (Q4)	75.00%	69.96%
Median Earnings (Q2)	\$7061	\$6702
Credential Attainment Rate	70.00%	65.00%
Measureable Skills Gains Rate	62.50%	58.00%

WIOA Performance Indicators: Dislocated Worker

	State Standard	Larimer Negotiated Standard
Employment Rate (Q2)	76.40%	78.00%
Employment Rate (Q4)	76.90%	80.00%
Median Earnings (Q2)	\$9000	\$9800
Credential Attainment Rate	67.00%	72.00%
Measurable Skills Gains Rate	58.60%	58.60%

WIOA Performance Indicators: Youth

	State Standard	Larimer Negotiated Standard
Employment Rate (Q2)	67.00%	68.80%
Employment Rate (Q4)	71.00%	74.00%
Median Earnings (Q2)	\$3954	\$3650
Credential Attainment Rate	63.00%	67.00%
Measurable Skills Gains Rate	58.80%	58.80%

LCEWD successfully met the negotiated Performance Indicator levels of 13 of 15 WIOA Performance Indicators in PY19 within WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. Two (2) of 15 categories were not met (Adult Q2 and Adult Q4). LCEWD increased efforts into managing performance follow-up in an effort to most effectively manage these indicators and to capture positive outcomes of past participants. Workforce regions will soon enter performance quarters tied directly to the pandemic. It remains to be seen what type of impact the pandemic will have on performance.

20. Provide a description of the actions the local board will take, if any, toward achieving the High Performing Board designation as outlined in the Colorado High Performing Local Workforce Development Board Rubric (PGL GRT-2019-01, Attachment 3).

The WDB achieved High Performing Board designation as outlined in the Colorado High Performing Local Workforce Development Board Rubric in program year 2019. The WDB has met the qualifications for High Performing Board designation and will seek the designation for 2021.

21. Use of evidence in decision making and program implementation.

Colorado is focused on enhancing its use of evidence to inform workforce development strategies and to influence the design and execution of initiatives. By measuring progress and the results of implementation, the state overall and each local area will be able to collect data that can move our work along an evidence continuum. When we refer to an ‘evidence-based’ program or strategy, it is helpful to have a shared definition. Evidence of effectiveness exists on a spectrum, including:

- a. **Strong evidence:** meaning at least two evaluation reports have demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested nationally, regionally, at the state- level, or with different populations or locations in the same local area using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental design evaluation (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)) or a quasi-experimental design evaluation (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. See [CLEAR.dol.gov](https://clear.dol.gov) for full definitions of strong or moderate study design.
- b. The overall pattern of evaluation findings must be consistently positive on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluations should be conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.
- c. **Moderate evidence:** meaning at least one evaluation report has demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental design showing evidence of effectiveness on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluations should be conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.
- d. **Preliminary evidence:** meaning at least one evaluation report has demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested using a well-designed and well-implemented pre/post-assessment without a comparison group or a post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups showing evidence of effectiveness on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluation may be conducted either internally or externally.
- e. **Pre-preliminary evidence:** meaning there is program performance data for the intervention showing improvements for one or more key workforce outputs or outcomes.

For interventions at each tier of evidence, it is important to leverage administrative data analysis or increasingly rigorous evaluation to build new evidence, improve programs and participant outcomes, and progress to the next tier.

Please describe which level of evidence applies to the overall approach of your local area in implementing programs. If any specific programs have a higher use of evidence than your programs overall, please highlight those programs.

Additionally, would your local area be interested in receiving technical assistance on the application of evidence-based practices to workforce development?

The time, resources, expertise, and leadership commitment needed to build “evidence” is substantial and, while a noble and worthy endeavor, it is not for the faint of heart or free of cost. Given that perspective, the level of evidence that applies to the overall approach within the local area is contingent on the purpose of the evaluation, available funding, research expertise (i.e., do we have trained and competent researchers guiding the process?), staff capacity and bandwidth.

LCEWD most frequently uses the evaluation process colloquially referred to as a “road test”. A road test is a systematic approach to testing whether a programmatic change is likely to result in the expected outcomes. Road tests are regularly done prior to full implementation of a proposed change. A road test clearly identifies the learning objectives, feedback gathering methods, and proposed timeline. Road tests are typically limited in time duration and allow for rapid learning and adjustments before full roll-out commences. Not sure where road tests fit within the above-stated definitions but LCEWD has conducted road tests in a wide range of programmatic changes and have been able to implement more successful changes as a result of the learnings that happened during the road test. At this time, there are no road tests or other formal “evidence” gathering processes in place.

Technical Assistance is welcomed if it comes from a reputable source with experience in workforce development programs, specifically WIOA, and is experienced in working with and supporting the populations served through WIOA.

22. Describe the process used by the local board, consistent with subsection (d), to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the local plan, prior to submission of the plan.

Public participation at WDB is embedded into WDB events. It consists of a series of activities and actions including:

- All WDB meetings are open to the public. Guests are welcome and encouraged to attend.
- Time at the beginning of every meeting is set aside for networking.
- We operate an informal Board. Aside from voting and formal discussion of Board business; community participation is welcome at meetings.
- The local plan is the focus of our May meeting. During the meeting Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development program managers provide an overview of programs, including budgets, and share accomplishments and challenges.
- When directed by CDLE, and in concert with the Workforce Development Board, LCEWD has established a multi-tiered process for public comment on the local Plan.

Notice for public comment is placed on our local LCEWD website, including the draft plan narrative. During the public comment phase of the plan the plan is available via mail. Public comment meetings may be scheduled if public gatherings are allowed and considered safe. The full draft narrative and executive summary will be available to the Workforce Development Board list serve in preparation for the Board Executive Committee and full Board review. The Board includes representatives of business and labor organizations.

All notifications will be provided to allow for the minimum comment period and adjustments to the plan will be made if necessary, based upon the comments. Comments will be collected and reported through a tracking document.