

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local Plan
East Cascades Workforce Area

Submitted by
East Cascades Works



July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2028

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Strategic Portion

Section 1: Vision and Leadership

It is expected that Section 1 responses will be greatly influenced by the members of the local workforce development board and other community stakeholders. Further, it is expected that there will be strong alignment with the current WTDB Strategic Plan and Joint Priority Setting.

Please answer the questions in Section 1 in eight (8) pages or less. Provide a response for all items identified. Reports and/or expanded analysis can be included as links and/or attachments.

Strategic Vision and Goals

1.1 20 CFR 679.560(a)(5): Strategic Vision and Goals

- A. Provide the local board's strategic vision and goals for its local workforce system;
- B. Describe how the local board's strategic vision and goals:
 - Support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency (as defined) in the local area;
 - Prepare an educated and skilled workforce for work or to attain employment including youth and individuals with barriers to employment in the local area; and
 - Provide performance accountability in the local area including WIOA primary indicators of performance.

1.1 A.

Vision:

We envision an East Cascades region with thriving communities, where residents have access to education and training which leads to living-wage jobs, and where businesses find the qualified talent they need to succeed.

Strategic Goals:

- Ensure high-quality workforce services to local job seekers and business customers.
- Diversify and increase funding to maximize impact in support of the mission.
- Establish a strategic framework for private and public partnerships that supports collaborative service delivery to both businesses and job seekers.

1.1 B.

The vision for the East Cascades region emphasizes fostering thriving communities by prioritizing access to education and training, by ensuring residents have opportunities for education and training that lead to living-wage jobs, the vision directly supports economic growth and self-sufficiency in the area. Moreover, by focusing on preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including marginalized groups like youth and individuals facing barriers to employment, the vision contributes to the local economy's resilience and sustainability.

To augment the advancement of economic growth and self-sufficiency within our region, EC Works has wholeheartedly adopted the [Good Jobs Principles](#) established by the US Department of Labor to direct our services geared towards job seekers and youth, as well as our sector partnerships. A unified criterion delineating requisite skills for work readiness was collaboratively formulated in conjunction with WorkSource partners, drawing insights from employers' perspectives. Subsequently, this criterion was translated into a comprehensive Ready to Hire workbook, which WorkSource staff support job seekers in completing prior to their inclusion in a pool of potential candidates deemed work-ready, from which our WorkSource Business Services team selectively recruits.

In the pursuit of cultivating a well-educated and proficient workforce, adequate resource allocation is imperative. Upon its establishment in 2015, EC Works primarily relied on funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I, amounting to \$2.8 million, to bolster the workforce system spanning ten counties. Consequently, an important goal of the board was for us to diversify and increase our resources to expand education and training services. EC Works has been successful in this charge with a 2024 Annual Approved Budget of \$9.4M from more than 20 funding sources.

Additionally, our emphasis on performance accountability, including alignment with the primary indicators of performance outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), ensures that progress towards these goals is measurable and transparent, further bolstering the region's economic development efforts. Our staff monitor performance indicators across each of our funding streams on a regular basis and review performance with our subrecipient contractors monthly to ensure progress to targets. In addition, we present annually to the Board of Directors on our region's WIOA performance toward targets at our quarterly board meeting in October, ensuring comprehensive oversight and accountability in our operations.

1.2 WTDB 2023-2024 Strategic Plan Alignment (Oregon Requirement)

Describe how the local board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision, mission, and imperatives of the Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB):

The WTDB approved their [2023-2024 Strategic Plan](#) in March 2023.

Vision

Equitable Prosperity for All Oregonians

Mission

Advance Oregon through education, training, jobs and careers by empowering people and employers.

Imperatives

- An inclusive workforce system that advances equitable prosperity.
- Clear understanding of and improved use and impact of the workforce system.
- The WTDB is embraced by the Governor as an accountable convener, empowered facilitator and informed advisor.
- Strategic and close alignment between education, economic development, and workforce development, including public and private partners.

1.2

EC Works values and strategies are in complete alignment with the WTDB vision, mission, and strategic imperatives. Staff, board members, consortia members (our 10 local elected officials) and our service providers are expected to abide by our organizational values. We utilize them in decision-making around investments, contracting, service delivery and initiatives to ensure we are in alignment across our organization's work. This is operationalized through contracts and agreements; investments in education and training of staff, board/consortia members and field staff; and through investment strategies.

Our values include:

- We embrace equity and inclusion.
- We are experts in workforce development and rigorous stewards of public funds.

- We are collaborative and neutral conveners.
- We inspire a call to action.
- We are results-driven.
- We are innovative problem solvers.

EC Works has longstanding and robust relationships with our strategic partners. We partner and collaborate regularly with Economic Development stakeholders including but not limited to: Business Oregon, Mid-Columbia Economic Development, The Frontier Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development of Central Oregon, Bend Chamber, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, Klamath County Economic Development Association, South-Central Economic Development District, and Klamath Chamber of Commerce. There are five (5) highly regarded and effective colleges and universities in the East Cascades Region with whom we have strong and at times contractual relationships with. These institutions include Columbia Gorge Community College, Central Oregon Community College, Oregon State University Cascades, Klamath Community College, and Oregon Tech.

See response in section 1.3 for more information about how East Cascades Works’ aligns with WTDB imperatives.

1.3 Joint Priority Setting (Oregon Requirement)

Describe how the local board’s goals, strategies, programs, and projects align with and will contribute to achieving the priorities established in September 2023 through Joint Priority Setting:

- Concretely improve the connection between employers and the workforce system consistent with economic development priorities.
- Concretely deepen the integration of K-12 education in the entire workforce system.
- Improve workforce system impact by investing new and existing targeted resources that support work-based learning.
- Advance equity by identifying and closing the largest gaps in participant access to education, training, and job placement services.
- Complete necessary steps to align data in the WSO System to result in shared state and local performance reports/scorecards

1.3

To help drive greater utilization of WorkSource Oregon services, EC Works developed more accessible and user-friendly materials to help educate local employers about the myriad services they offer. Our [Business Services](#) magazine outlines the services available across all partners in WorkSource and is continuously being reviewed and updated as needed. We promote use of WorkSource Oregon with all our Sector Partnerships and include WSO Business Services team members in all meetings. In addition, there are Sector Partnership Magazines for both [Construction](#) and [Health Care](#) in which we promote WorkSource, Education and other workforce partners. In addition, we launched a Regional Business Services approach to serving our businesses. With support from Oregon Employment Department, EC Works co-convenes partners from WIOA Title I, Vocational Rehab, Oregon Employment Department, and Dept of Human Services monthly to coordinate business outreach, problem-solve, and share resources. This creates a more streamlined and coordinated approach to service our common business customers. Further, in Central Oregon, we launched a Business Response Network approach that brings together partners from economic development, small business development center and WorkSource to further improve collaboration and align business outreach. This approach is new, and we are exploring launching this format in our other sub-regions in the coming year.

EC Works is most helpful to our k-12 partners by supporting career exploration, work readiness training and work-based learning for the emergent workforce. To this end, we partner very closely with our regional Career Technical Education provider at High Desert Education Service District which shares the same footprint (all 10 counties same except for Klamath), as well as the Cradle to Career collaboratives and/or STEM Hubs across our region. Partners include Klamath Promise, Better Together, Central Oregon STEM Hub, and Columbia Gorge Stem Hub. We sponsor career exploration events, recruit private sector speakers/volunteers, host a work-based learning platform called Talent Hub for school-based partners to use to recruit guest speakers, schedule job shadows, and explore internships.

We have re-launched our youth internship partnership in Central Oregon in collaboration with 3 local school districts as co-funders including 509J (Jefferson County), Redmond and Bend LaPine School Districts called Youth Career Connect. Crook County, Culver and Sisters School Districts may join the collaboration in the future. We are currently exploring partnerships with Klamath Promise to expand their City and County schools' access to internships as well as exploring with Columbia Gorge Community College how to expand their Gorge Works internship program.

The increased offering of virtual WSO services during the pandemic has increased access for our more remote and rural customers. There is no public transportation in most of the East Cascades Workforce area and due to the large size of the region (~30,000 square miles) some locations are more than 2 hours round trip to the nearest WSO Center. Although virtual services increased access significantly, this region also lacks access to high-speed internet in many of our more frontier areas. Fortunately, some innovative approaches and partnerships are emerging. The WIOA Title I provider, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, in the Central sub-region sought a Future Ready grant to purchase a mobile WorkSource Unit (WSU) and EC Works is supporting the staffing costs to implement – see the [HECC article titled Work Support on Wheels](#). The WSU will launch in the spring of 2024 with regular visits to more remote areas of Central Oregon and will be available for hiring and lay-off aversion events. Further, Oregon's investment in WorkSource Navigators under the Future Ready initiative will enable us to invest in additional technology and staffing solutions to increase access to services.

Unfortunately, a local workforce entity cannot change state-operated data systems nor their integration, but we wholeheartedly support the alignment of data in the WSO System, so we have shared state and local performance reports/scorecards. Our hope is that the modernization effort underway by Oregon Employment Department will get us closer to that goal. In the meantime, locally we are exploring requesting annual performance data to co-present at our October Board meeting when WIOA Title I performance is presented. This will allow our board of directors to better understand the full impact of the robust services available in WorkSource.

High Performing Board

1.4 20 CFR 679.560(b)(17): High Performing Board

Describe the local board's goals, strategies, programs, and projects as they apply to becoming or remaining a high performing board consistent with the two resources below:

1. In [Building a High-Performing State Workforce Board: A Framework and Strategies for States](#), the National Governor's Association describes a high-performing state workforce board as one that provides leadership to the entire education and workforce system to create sustainable change including three key roles:
 - a. Communicate the Vision for the workforce system;
 - b. Model and manage Strategic Partnerships that achieve the vision; and

c. Use data and accountability systems to Keep the System Accountable to the vision.
These are not exclusive to state workforce boards.

2. In [A Call to Action for Workforce Development Boards](#), the United States Department of Labor outlines four strategic roles that all high-performing boards will play:
 - a. Strategist: Understanding trends, setting the collective vision.
 - b. Convener: Bring partners together, align services and vision.
 - c. Manager: Design and manage customer-centered service delivery.
 - d. Optimizer: Use data to drive decisions, continuous improvement.

1.4

East Cascades Workforce Area embraces the belief that workforce development is a team sport. No single sector or entity possesses the capacity to comprehensively tackle all the workforce requirements within the region. As a reflection of this guiding philosophy, when EC Works contracted with Coraggio Group to facilitate our board's 2023-24 Strategic Planning process, key partners were deeply engaged. Nearly 50 individuals across economic development, education (k-20), business and workforce training were engaged in at least one of four listening sessions; 135 stakeholders responded to a comprehensive survey; and 15 College, Economic Development or Chamber's existing strategic plans were analyzed. This inclusive approach revealed key stakeholders' perception of EC Works and the identification of areas of potential growth.

The culmination of that outreach resulted in the identification of the below themes that speak to several of the strategies above (specifically 1a, 1b and 2b)

1. EC Works has a positive reputation, and the organization's network cares deeply about its mission.
2. EC Works is seen to use public funds effectively but could deliver greater impact with additional funding and organizational capacity.
3. EC Works has an opportunity to become a more visible convener of the region's workforce development ecosystem.
4. EC Works' network sees the engagement, education, and training of younger workers as a top priority.
5. There may be an opportunity for EC Works to further embrace innovation and technology to enhance its impact.
6. EC Works' network is aligned around a set of industries to prioritize.
7. Rural communities in the East Cascades region face some of the greatest workforce development challenges.
8. While remaining a partner to the entire workforce development ecosystem, EC Works needs to maintain boundaries regarding its level of involvement in workforce-adjacent challenges.

In addition to addressing the above themes in future endeavors, EC Works is developing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to gauge progress toward realizing goals outlined in the strategic plan. These indicators will be regularly monitored and reported on a quarterly basis during Board Meetings. In addition, EC Works takes advantage of the expertise offered by Oregon Employment Department's Regional Economist and Oregon's State Economist. Both have presented both data and their analysis of labor market information including past/current trends and future projections. This data is essential to informing investments, priorities and strategies employed by EC Works. Please refer to section 1.1B on use of data to manage performance.

Section 2: Data and Analysis

It is expected that Section 2 include both data and relevant analysis for each local area. Further, it is expected that Questions 2.1 – 2.3 will be a collaborative effort between the local workforce development board and the Oregon Employment Department’s regional economist and workforce analyst stationed in each local area.

Please answer the questions in Section 2 in eight (8) pages or less. Provide a response for all items identified. Please limit the inclusion of tables and charts to those that are critical to your analysis. Reports and/or expanded analysis can be included as links and/or attachments.

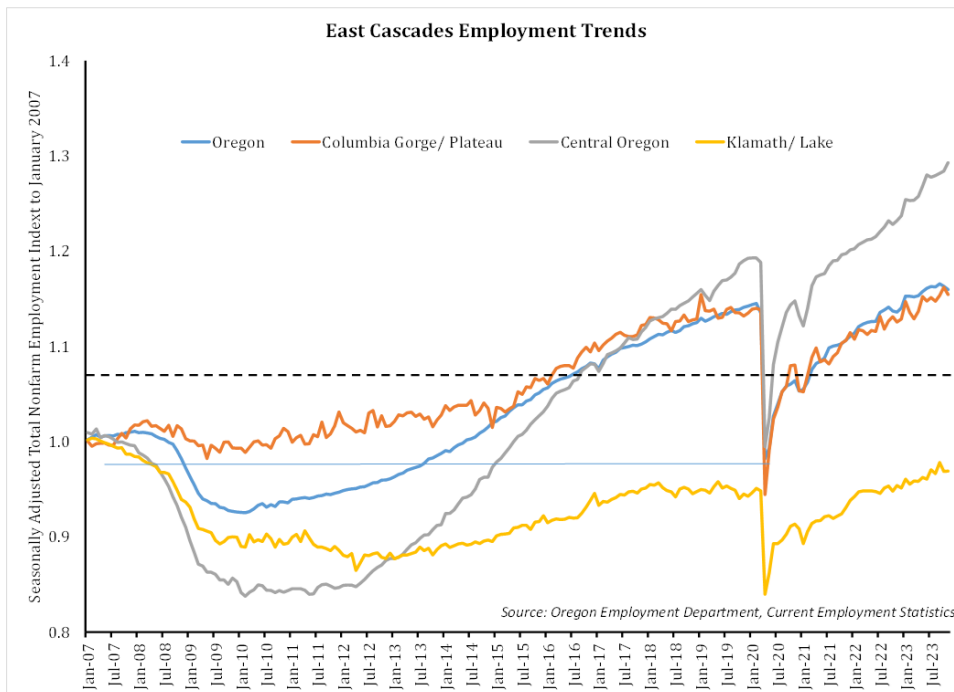
Economic and Workforce Analysis

2.1 20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(i): Economic Analysis – Part 1 Overall

Provide an analysis of the economic conditions in the local area.

2.1

The East Cascades workforce area consists of three distinct labor sheds: the northern, central, and southern regions. The northern region encompasses the Columbia River Gorge and a significant portion of the Columbia Plateau, including Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties. Central Oregon comprises Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties. The southern region includes the Klamath basin and the expansive Oregon Outback, spanning Klamath and Lake counties.

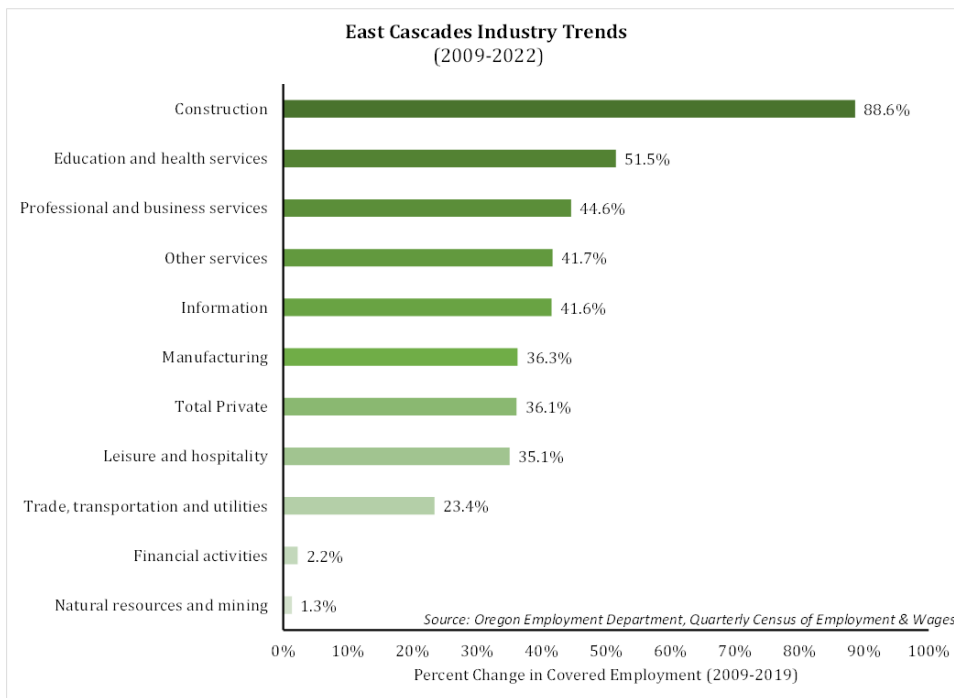


The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic plunged both the nation and the region into a recession, leading to a rapid and unprecedented number of job losses as a result of health restrictions aimed at slowing the spread of the virus. The East Cascades region experienced varying degrees of job losses during this unprecedented shock, with the Columbia Gorge and Central Oregon bearing the largest share of job losses, each seeing a decline of

17% in total nonfarm employment.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the region enjoyed over a decade of continuous job growth, particularly in Central Oregon and parts of the Columbia Gorge. Employment numbers in these areas had reached historical highs just before the pandemic struck. Following the recovery from the previous recession in the summer of 2015, Central Oregon witnessed a surprising 18% growth in total nonfarm employment over the next 4.5 years. Despite the southern portion of the region, specifically Klamath and Lake Counties, failing to fully recover from the impact of the Great Recession, employment had managed to regain approximately 95% of its losses and remained steady prior to the onset of the pandemic. However, structural declines in the manufacturing sector during this time prevented a complete recovery from being realized.

The recovery from the pandemic has been notably faster compared to previous recessions. While it took approximately 106 months (about 9 years) for employment in the East Cascades to recover after the Great Recession, the losses caused by the pandemic recession were recuperated within just 25 months (about 2 years) - a significant difference. By the end of 2023, employment in both Central Oregon and the Columbia Gorge had surpassed pre-pandemic highs, with growth rates of 8.4% and 1.3% respectively. In Klamath and Lake counties, where employment had shown no significant growth before the pandemic, there was a 1.9% increase, resulting in an employment level that is now 3.2% below the pre-Great Recession figures.



Despite the COVID-19 shock, all major industry sectors have witnessed an increase in employment over the past decade and a half, thanks to the rapid recovery and subsequent gains made in the post-pandemic recession period. Notably, all major industry sectors witnessed an increase in employment during this time. The construction sector has emerged as the fastest-growing industry. Although a sizable portion of this growth can be attributed to the industry's recovery from the Great Recession housing crises. Post-COVID growth in the construction industry was largely led by low interest rates and increased demand for housing as individuals and families sought larger living spaces to accommodate work-from-home setups, home offices, and remote learning for children after stay-at-home mandates were put into. Most of this growth taking place in the Bend-Redmond metropolitan statistical area (MSA).

The East Cascades has witnessed growth in various industries, including health services, professional and business services, information, and manufacturing. Growth in the healthcare sector can be largely attributed to the region's increasing and aging population, which creates a higher demand for healthcare services. The robust growth in professional and business services indicates the region's rapid diversification, with smaller professional firms specializing in marketing, engineering, design services, and technology driving this sector's growth. Despite relatively consistent job growth across most industry sectors for the broad East Cascades area, there have been some noteworthy losses at the local level. More recently, professional and business services and manufacturing has declined in the Klamath Basin and Columbia Gorge and employment levels are now closer to their pre-pandemic levels in these areas.

2.2 20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(i): Economic Analysis – Part 2 In-Demand Industries

Describe existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the local area.

2.2

Recent employment projections indicate that the region will see approximately 17,362 new jobs from 2022 to 2032, representing a growth rate of 10 percent. Among the industries, information, and leisure and hospitality are expected to be the fastest-growing sectors, with both anticipated to expand by 17 percent over the next decade. This is followed by the construction sector and health care and social assistance sector, which are expected to grow by 16% and 15%, respectively. The growth in these industries is primarily driven by the ongoing population gains throughout the region.

Health care and social assistance is projected to lead job creation, with approximately 3,900 new positions. Following closely behind is the leisure and hospitality sector, which is expected to generate around 3,500 new jobs by 2032, with most of these opportunities primarily concentrated within accommodation and food services (2,800). Construction is also poised to contribute largely to new job creation, with 1,800 new jobs projected during this time. As observed in previous cycles, Central Oregon is projected to play a dominant role, accounting for over 71 percent of the expected increase in new job gains. As a result, new job creation in Central Oregon is projected to experience an 11% growth rate, slightly surpassing the East Cascades region, as a whole. In comparison, new job growth in the Columbia Gorge area is projected to reach 9%, while the southern region is estimated to see an 8% increase in new jobs.

However, the demand for labor in the East Cascades region is anticipated to exceed the 17,362 new job openings. In addition to these newly created positions, the region is projected to have an additional 205,478 replacement job openings over the next decade. These replacements will arise from retirements and normal occupational turnover, accounting for 92% of all employment opportunities in the region within the next 10 years. Even areas within the East Cascades with slower growth rates will experience a substantial number of replacement job openings as the aging baby boomer generation continues to retire from the workforce. Adding to the complexity of the situation, it is projected that population growth will occur at a lower rate compared to previous periods, compounding the challenges at hand.

Out of the 757 occupations spread across the East Cascades area, 50% are considered high-demand occupations ranging in education level and wage. These occupations account for more than 215,755 total job openings in the next decade. Over half (55%) of these 377 high-demand occupations do not require an education level beyond high school for an entry level position, while another 17% require an associate degree

or postsecondary training. The remaining high-demand occupations require varying levels of higher education, ranging from a bachelor's degree to doctoral or professional degrees.

2.3 20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(ii): Employment Needs of Employers

Describe employment needs of employers in the local area in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors occupations described in 2.1.B.

2.3

TOP 10 HIGH DEMAND OCCUPATIONS BY TOTAL OPENINGS

1. Fast Food and Counter Workers	14,194
2. Retail Salespersons	7,372
3. Cashiers	7,169
4. Waiters and Waitresses	5,813
5. Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	4,511
6. Stockers and Order Fillers	4,400
7. Home Health and Personal Care Aides	4,387
8. Office Clerks, General	4,287
9. Cooks, Restaurant	4,228
10. General and Operations Managers	3,629

When you look at the top ten most in-demand occupations, nine of ten do not require an education beyond a high school diploma or its equivalency for an entry-level position. These occupations also had a median wage of less than \$41,000 in 2023. If we expand our analysis to include all occupations with 1,000 or more job openings, we find that there are 36 occupations that make up approximately 55% (119,489) of all job openings in the next 10 years. The bulk of these job openings (104,493) do not require an education beyond high school and had a median wage below \$42,000 in 2023.

TOP 10 HIGH DEMAND HIGH WAGE OCCUPATIONS BY TOTAL OPENINGS

1. General and Operations Managers	3,629
2. Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	3,198
3. Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	2,662
4. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,268
5. Carpenters	2,069
6. Registered Nurses	2,006
7. Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,963
8. Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,872
9. Medical Assistants	1,856
10. Real Estate Sales Agents	1,508

However, there are 237 occupations which are considered high-wage and high-demand occupations spread

across the East Cascades area. These occupations account for more than 80,476 total job openings in the next decade. Additionally, 60% of all high-wage high-demand occupations in the East Cascades do not require education beyond an associate degree.

Overall, meeting the demands of the job market in the East Cascades region requires employers to be mindful of both new job openings and replacement job openings. To meet the evolving needs of the job market in the region, employers should consider the specific education and skill requirements of both high-demand and high-wage occupations, as well as the broader spectrum of high-demand occupations in general. This consideration becomes particularly important as the region experiences retirements, leading to the loss of valuable historical knowledge in many of these positions.

2.4 20 CFR 679.560(a)(2): Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- A. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area; and
- B. Describe specific knowledge and skill requirements needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

2.4 A.

Before the pandemic, in 2018, employers reported that 73% of all job vacancies were difficult to fill. This challenge persisted but slightly improved in 2019, with the difficulty decreasing to 66%. However, the number of job vacancies increased during this period, along with a rise in the proportion of vacancies requiring previous experience. In 2019, approximately 54% of job vacancies demanded prior experience.

By 2021, the year after the height of the pandemic, when employment was well on the way to recovery, vacancies more than doubled, and employers reported that 81% of these vacancies were difficult to fill. Among these, 53% still required some form of previous experience. Even before the pandemic, employers faced challenges in finding candidates due to a tightening labor market. The post-pandemic scenario exacerbated these difficulties, with the ratio of job vacancies to unemployed persons reaching 1 job vacancy per unemployed person. While there has been a slight improvement since then, with the current ratio standing at 1.2 unemployed individuals per job vacancy, the labor market remains tight. By the end of 2022, the percentage of job vacancies requiring previous experience had decreased to 43% of all vacancies. Simultaneously, the overall difficulty in filling vacancies decreased to 74% of all job vacancies, but the number of vacancies remains elevated compared to pre-pandemic numbers.

2.4 B.

As concerns about potential labor shortages persist in the long term as the baby boomer generation approaches retirement age and a slower rate of population growth is expected, replacing experienced workers who have accumulated decades of knowledge and expertise poses a challenge. As a result, it may become increasingly common for employers to provide additional training or education to increase their workforce's skills to bridge the knowledge gap.

Although the vast majority (72%) of high-demand occupations require less than a bachelor's degree for an entry-level position, most require effective communication skills, attention to detail, and strong organizational

skills. A significant number also require basic to intermediate computer literacy, particularly for medical and the more technical occupations. Several occupations, like heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers and bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks, also require specific training that must be gained in accredited programs, such as a postsecondary license or certification. Furthermore, the importance of upskilling the current workforce should not be understated. The labor market already presented hurdles prior to the pandemic, and the crisis magnified these challenges. Although there have been improvements, the labor market remains competitive, with a considerable proportion of vacancies requiring previous experience and a notable level of difficulty in filling them.

2.5 20 CFR 679.560(a)(3): Workforce Analysis

- A. Provide an analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data;
- B. Provide information on local labor market trends; and
- C. Describe the educational and skill levels of the local workforce including individuals with barriers to employment.

2.5 A.

Around late 2013 the labor force on the East Cascades began to recover from the Great Recession, and over the next five years would continue to grow steadily. This growth trajectory, however, experienced a notable reversal as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, causing a significant contraction in the labor force during its initial impact. This contraction was primarily due to the adverse economic conditions caused by the pandemic. As businesses shuttered, layoffs and furloughs became commonplace, resulting in a negative impact on employment opportunities. This shrinkage was short lived though, and the labor force began to rise within the same year.

As the pandemic situation improved and economic activities resumed, the labor force in the East Cascades region experienced a substantial rebound. The recovery post-pandemic was remarkably quick, almost matching the pace of the initial decline. By June 2020, the labor force had surpassed its pre-COVID-19 levels, reaching a high point. This upward trend continued, with the labor force reaching an all-time high by mid-2021 and stabilizing somewhat thereafter. More importantly, by mid-2021 the number of employed individuals was at an all-time high with only a small fraction of workers still on the sidelines.

This post-pandemic surge in growth can be attributed to various factors. As businesses reopened and economic conditions stabilized, job opportunities increased, prompting individuals to reenter the labor force. Additionally, government support programs and stimulus measures played a role in facilitating the recovery and boosting employment levels.

After experiencing another increase at the end of December 2022, the labor force began to decline. However, more recently, it has been on the rise. Nonetheless, it is challenging to determine whether this upward trend in the labor force will be sustained in the long term or if it will eventually stabilize at a slightly lower level than its peak. The expectation is that there will be a gradual slowdown in growth over the next decade. This trend is not unique to the East Cascades region, as many communities are struggling with an aging workforce. However, the impact is particularly pronounced in the rural areas of the region. These rural communities have a disproportionately higher proportion of their workforce aged 55 and older, making them more vulnerable to the challenges posed by an aging population. Additionally, these communities are not witnessing significant population growth from younger cohorts, further exacerbating the strain on their labor force as retirees

continue to leave the workforce.

The long-term tightening of the labor supply is an area that needs to be addressed if the East Cascades area expects to sustain labor force growth in the long term. Labor force growth being essential to the overall economic health of the region. In rural communities, this means working with young people to find good work opportunities that will persuade them to stay in rural Oregon, where job opportunities and room for upward mobility are limited by various factors such as limited industry diversity and infrastructure challenges. Additionally, efforts should be made to attract and retain skilled workers, including providing targeted training programs and incentives for individuals to relocate to rural areas. By addressing these labor supply issues and creating an environment conducive to economic growth, the East Cascades area can strive towards sustaining long-term labor force growth and ensuring the overall economic well-being of the region.

2.5 B.

As of December 2023, the East Cascades labor force had about 185,934 workers. The majority of these individuals, numbering 178,556, were gainfully employed. This is indicative of a robust labor market further emphasized by the region's low unemployment rate of 4%. This unemployment rate is historically low and mirrors the pre-pandemic levels witnessed in 2019.

Unsurprisingly, prior to the pandemic, the East Cascades region was experiencing a distinct labor shortage. Like today's labor market, a considerable number of job vacancies were classified as difficult-to-fill, primarily due to a lack of applicants or a deficiency in qualified candidates. This labor shortage was a significant challenge for businesses and organizations operating in the region, a challenge that continues to persist even in today's post-pandemic market. As it did back then, it highlights the ongoing mismatch between the supply of available workers and the demand for skilled labor.

2.5 C

The labor force in the East Cascades area boasts a high level of education, with 33 percent of individuals aged 25 and above holding a bachelor's degree or higher. This educational attainment surpasses the projected requirements for job openings in 2032, where approximately one-third of all positions are expected to demand a bachelor's degree or higher. Hence, the current workforce already meets or surpasses these educational thresholds. As a result, any potential labor shortages will not be due to lack of education.

However, it is crucial to recognize that the labor market can face challenges stemming from various factors beyond education, such as experience level. While individuals may be well-educated, possessing a degree does not necessarily guarantee practical experience or proficiency in the daily tasks and nuances of the jobs they seek. Academic environments often differ significantly from work environments, which can present a barrier to labor market entry and hinder labor force growth, especially considering that around half of all jobs require some form of experience.

Shifts in industry demands, the cost of living, and demographic changes are among other key considerations. These factors can exert significant influence on the availability and distribution of workers within the labor force. Therefore, while education may not be the sole limiting factor, understanding and addressing these additional challenges is essential to ensure a resilient and adaptable labor market in the East Cascades area.

Priority Populations and Communities

2.6 Priority Populations and Communities (Oregon Requirement)

- A. Based on the Economic and Workforce Analysis, the local area’s demographic data, and the local board’s understanding of local underserved populations and communities, identify and describe the populations and communities that will be prioritized for services in the local area.
- B. Based on this analysis, describe the local investment strategy toward Priority Populations.

2.6 A.

Through EC Works comprehensive community engagement process outlined in Section 1.4 above and based on the analysis in Section 2, several priority populations emerged in addition to the WIOA required priorities. By far the emergent workforce, defined as 16- to 24-year-olds, were identified as the most important priority population. The second priority population that both the data and stakeholders identified were the region’s rural and frontier residents. Rural residents in East Cascades area experience greater rates of child poverty, food insecurity and household financial hardship ([source](#)). There are fewer employment opportunities and physical proximity to essential services, and education and training programs. In addition, people impacted by the criminal justice system are a priority population for our board and region. This population presents a potential talent pipeline that has heretofore not been fully actualized.

2.6 B.

To ensure our emergent workforce is familiar with career pathways overall as well as what local opportunities exist, EC Works invests in career exploration and work-based learning programs across the region. We are expanding our work-based learning initiatives across the region as outlined in Section 1.3 above.

EC Works strategy to support people impacted by the criminal justice system is evidenced by our partnership with Oregon Department of Corrections and Oregon Employment Department. Together, over many years of collaborative effort, we implemented Oregon’s first WorkSource Center inside the two prisons in our region – Deer Ridge Correctional Institution in Madras and Warner Creek Correctional Institution. The partnership is codified through a memorandum of understanding. Our region led the effort to expand statewide, creating a collaboration across all 9 local workforce boards and Department of Corrections. Together we secured \$4.8M to support the expansion over the next 36 months. Our goal is to simultaneously reduce recidivism while activating a more skilled and ready pipeline of talent from our correctional system.

Finally, the identification of rural and frontier residents as a priority population occurred in early 2024 therefore initiatives are not yet in place. The addition of Future Ready Navigator funding will help support some of the technology solutions we’ve been exploring to create greater access to services for rural and frontier residents. In addition, an ad hoc committee of the board will be formed to further analyze both allocation methodologies to ensure equity and explore additional ways to reduce barriers to access for frontier and rural residents. Further, the identification of rural Oregon as a strategic priority by Business Oregon offers the potential for greater collaborative solutions across economic and workforce development strategies.

Section 3: Alignment and Improvement

It is expected that Section 3 responses will be based on strategic discussions with the local board, partners in the local area, and business and industry leaders. Further, it is expected that there will be strong alignment with the Economic and Workforce Analysis and Priority Populations and Communities in Section 2.

Please answer the questions in Section 3 in twelve (12) pages or less. Provide a response for all items identified. Reports and/or expanded analysis can be included as links and/or attachments.

Strategic Partnerships and Alignment

3.1 20 CFR 679.560(b)(1)(i): Local Area Programs and Partners

Identify the programs, partners, and providers that are included in the local area’s workforce development system. Include both organizations that provide WorkSource Oregon Programs (as defined) and Other Workforce Programs (as defined).

3.1

East Cascades benefits from housing some of the most integrated WorkSource Centers in the state, offering job seekers and businesses one physical location to access numerous services. Although services are coordinated across partners throughout this region, it can help create even more seamless integration to have partners physically co-locate. Below is a list of the partners in each comprehensive WorkSource Center in the ECW area:

Location	Deliver service at WorkSource	Services made available to WorkSource customers
WorkSource Bend	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Youth Build
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Warm Springs WIOA Title IB
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Regional Career and Technical Education
	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services	
	Oregon Employment Department	
	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth	
	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals	
WorkSource Klamath	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Title II Adult Basic Skills
	Oregon Employment Department	Oregon Commission for the Blind
	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth	Klamath Tribes WIOA Title IB
	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers
		Regional Career and Technical Education
WorkSource Redmond	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Youth Build
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Regional Career and Technical Education
	Oregon Employment Department	Warm Springs WIOA Title IB
	WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker	WIOA Title I Youth
		Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals
WorkSource The Dalles	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers
	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services	Regional Career and Technical Education
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Vocational Rehabilitation
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals
	Oregon Employment Department	
	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth	

3.2 20 CFR 679.560(a)(6): Local Area Program Alignment Strategies

Considering the analysis in Section 2, describe the local board’s strategy to align the WorkSource Oregon and Other Workforce Programs and resources identified in 3.1 to achieve the strategic vision and goals of the local board.

3.2

To actualize the vision and achieve our shared goals, ECW convenes partners on a regular basis to assure the integrated delivery of services across partners. Continuous improvement tools are utilized to strategically focus collective efforts on service delivery improvements to both job seekers and business customers. To this end, ECW convenes the following meetings with core system programs:

- East Cascades Works Board – consists of public and private members and convenes quarterly.
- Local Leadership Teams – each of the three (3) sub-regions convene their local area’s core and co-located partners monthly.
- Super Leadership Team – all Local Leadership Team members attend this regionwide annual/as needed meeting.

3.3 20 CFR 679.560(b)(1)(ii) and (b)(9): Coordination with Education

Building off the response in 3.2, describe how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities in the local area including, but not limited to, Essential Employability Skills (as defined) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) [Programs of Study](#) to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

3.3

ECW has a robust relationship with all three community colleges, the union and non-union State registered apprenticeships, and connections to Oregon State University – Cascades and Oregon Institute of Technology. Community colleges deliver much of the training accessed through WorkSource and ECW investments through scholarships / training accounts to individuals, and cohort / customized training investments. The cohort / customized training investments are focused on either Target Populations or Target Sectors of ECW and often leverage the colleges’ non-credit programs as a launching point.

Both Klamath and Columbia Gorge Community Colleges have made significant investments in their infrastructure and as such have completed significant construction projects including the creation of Skills Centers, student housing, and rural distance learning sites. Both colleges have been inclusive of ECW as well as Industry Partners in all stages of planning, development, and opening. Central Oregon Community College has expanded in several ways including launching a mobile construction pre-apprenticeship trailer and launching their Center for Business, Industry, and Professional Development with tools for businesses, jobseekers, and opportunities to collaborate on customized training. These relevant and essential expansion efforts have assisted in creating even more relevant and accessible education and workforce training opportunities.

In addition to the traditional ways of investing in training, ECW has also worked with Sector Partners to identify other ways to ensure a ready pipeline of talent to meet their industry needs.

3.4 20 CFR 679.560(b)(12): Coordination with Adult Education and Literacy

Describe how the local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. Include how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with 20 CFR 679.370(n).

3.4

ECW will continue to partner with each Title II provider in our region by including them as an active partner on our board, our subregional Local Leadership Teams, as well as being referral sources for each other's programs. ECW will also continue to direct our WIOA Title 1 providers to assist in developing resumes, cover letters, interviewing and other work ready skills to Title II programs and classes. Further, Title II GED classes are delivered at several of our WSO Centers.

The Higher Education Coordinating Council – Community Colleges and Workforce Development Department (CCWD) oversees the WIOA Title II funds and awards. ECW has and will continue to participate in their procurement process utilizing WIOA regulations and CCWD guidance in reviewing applications for Title II services.

3.5 Leverage Strategies (Oregon Requirement)

- A. Identify the sources of current leveraged funds outside of WIOA Title I funding and state general funds to support the workforce development system in the local area.
- B. Describe how this leveraged funding will impact the local system.
- C. Describe the local board's strategies for acquiring additional/future leveraged funds.

3.5 A.

ECW attributes approximately 75% of its resources to Federal Funding, 15% to State Funding and 10% to Diverse Resources. ECW models lean standards and rigorous funds management by maintaining below 20% of its resource in-house for coordination, convening and oversight costs. 80% or greater resources are therefore being allocated to support training and workforce development, with a focus on Target Populations and Sector Strategies. Each year, ECW continues to bring more resources to bear for local job seekers, youth, and business services. Based on the most recent budget, **EC Works spends \$9 on direct service delivery for every \$1 spent on payroll.**

3.5 B

ECW tenaciously works to secure additional funds so that our local programs are funded at a level that allows them to provide the maximum services and supports to customers in our region. More funding going into our workforce system allows more individuals to train for higher paying, family sustaining jobs that will in turn, attract a more diverse set of employers that will make our communities better able to weather recessions. Further, more leveraged funding allows us to create better more locally responsive programming which allows programs to be nimble and able to change as the economy changes.

3.5 C.

As mentioned in Section 1.1B above, ECW has diversified and increased our resources by nearly 60% since our inception in 2015 to address the goal set forth by our board of directors to "Diversify and increase funding to maximize impact in support of the mission." Therefore, ECW has developed relationships with foundations,

philanthropists, and seek state and federal competitive grants to support new and expanding existing programs.

To this end, ECW implements strategies to leverage direct state and Federal resources to attract additional funding to support the workforce system. Examples include:

- Oregon Health Authority and Central Oregon Health Council for nearly \$2M.
- Supported Oregon Workforce Partnership to secure US Dept. of Labor Pathways Home 4 grant \$3.8 million statewide and a \$1 million Future Ready Oregon grant to expand the WorkSource Oregon Reentry program to all 12 Department of Corrections Prisons.
- Central Oregon School Districts co-investment of approximately \$245,000 annually to support Youth Career Connect internship program.
- Meta (formally Facebook) annually co-invests through ECW in youth and construction workforce efforts across Central Oregon with a specific focus on Crook County. Overall, it has been more than \$510,000.

3.6 Next Generation Sector Strategies (Oregon Requirement)

- A. Identify and describe each industry in the local area where a next generation sector partnership (as defined) is currently active. Include in the description, the rationale for each active next generation sector partnership, recent outcomes, and how it will align with industry consortia where appropriate.
- B. Identify and describe each industry in the local area where there will be an attempt to convene a new sector partnership within the timeframe of the local plan. Include in the description, the rationale for each new next generation sector partnership and how it will align with industry consortia where appropriate.
- C. Identify and describe the strategy for any additional targeted sectors in the local area where the next generation sector model is not being used.

3.6 A.

ECW is currently engaged in strategic planning that will inform whether additional Sector Partnerships will be explored. Currently there are two main active Next Generation Partnerships being convened in Construction and Healthcare. The purpose of this alignment is to enhance coordination, achieve economies of scale, and foster collaborative efforts across the region, noting that each of the three subregions hosts varying concentrations of these two industries leading to differences in levels of partnership participation. The rationale guiding the establishment of each sector partnership is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of current industry trends and labor market data, supplemented by insights from our private sector-led board.

In Central Oregon, Health Care employer's focus has been most concentrated on the Behavioral Health workforce and cultivating traditional health workers through increasing enrollment in the many allied health programs offered by Central Oregon Community College. The strength of the Behavioral Health Sector Partnership is evidenced by the strong engagement of the 20 behavioral health employers, 3 post-secondary institutions and 3 advisory members who guide the effort with the nearly \$2M in funding secured from Oregon Health Authority and Central Oregon Health Council to form the Central Oregon Behavioral Health Consortia (COBHC). ECW serves as the backbone organization hosting the COBHC initiative. The effectiveness of the COBHC has piqued the interest of workforce partners statewide and we are currently facilitating conversations in our north sub-region around expansion or replication of the successful licensure and continuing education program for behavioral health professionals.

In the Central and South subregions, the Construction partnerships have effectively engaged employers to

identify the [NCCER](#) curriculum and certification as the foundation for the BOLI approved pre-apprenticeship programs being offered at several High School CTE programs of study as well as both Klamath and Central Oregon Community Colleges, and Heart of Oregon’s Youth Build program. In addition, employers in Klamath and Jackson counties partnered to develop the first BOLI approved non-union construction apprenticeship program, the Southern Oregon JATC. Leveraging their successful application to BOLI, Central Oregon construction employers followed their lead and developed a JATC. This alignment of curricular content makes it possible to invest in cohort trainings that prepare job seekers and youth for entry level jobs in the Construction Industry and offering priority for entry into the myriad BOLI approved Construction Apprenticeships offered in East Cascades area. ECW has directly funded several cohorts of this training program through both Klamath and Central Oregon Community Colleges as well as secured additional funding to support the training through Meta, City of Bend and others. Further, Fortis Construction leveraged this curriculum to launch their "Hard Hat in Hand" program that result in trainees being employed by local construction companies, equipped with tools and supplies, and subsequently enrolled in an 8-week paid construction pre-apprenticeship to initiate their employment and training journey. In partnership with the community college and other supporters, this program led to the creation of other paid pre-apprenticeship programs that resulted in further training and employment outcomes for participants.

3.6 B

To address labor shortages despite a lack of density in the employer base, the board is interested in exploring a way to identify skill sets that are cross sector to focus on rather than only a single industry. This could help “recession-proof” people when there are industry fluctuations. For example, there are common safety skills that could be applicable in a Manufacturing or Construction setting. In addition, the board is exploring identifying specific high-demand occupations that may or may not cross industries. For example, accounting technicians are in great demand across all industries. ECW will be forming an ad hoc committee of the board to explore and research these strategies.

3.6 C.

Although ECW embraces and supports the Next Gen Sector Partnership (NGSP) model, within our more rural sub-regions that is not always a viable approach due to lack of employers. For example, there is one hospital in Klamath County, and they own most of the clinics as well therefore convening a traditional Next Gen Sector Partnership is not possible. This does not mean that ECW does not work closely with both training providers and health care employers in both north and south sub-regions, just that those investments and efforts do not meet the state’s definition. In fact, some of the most innovative programs are happening in these subregions. Collaborations between healthcare providers and training partners have given rise to essential initiatives, including a dental assistant apprenticeship and two medical assistant apprenticeship programs that ECW has co-invests in. Recognizing the critical shortage of certified medical assistants and dental assistants across all subregions, these programs are instrumental in addressing employment gaps.

3.7 20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(i): Employer Engagement in Workforce Development

Describe the strategies and services (as defined) that will be used in the local area to facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

3.7

As mentioned in Section 1.3 above, there are two key areas of coordination to ensure better engagement with local employers. First, in partnership with Oregon Employment Department, ECW launched a Regional Business

Services effort to ensure all WSO partners are aligned and informed around business outreach. The team includes Vocational Rehab, OED, ODHS, Title I providers and ECW. They meet monthly and share resources, problem solve and align outreach efforts. Second, in partnership with COCC’s SBDC and Economic Development of Central Oregon we launched a Business Response Network to ensure alignment, shared resources, and industry reconnaissance across economic development partners and WSO. This effort was initiated in Central Oregon and will be replicated in the north and south subregions.

In support of collaboration across partners and to ensure consistency in quality referrals of job seekers, WSO partners collaborated to develop a shared definition of what work-ready looks like through the implementation of Ready to Hire initiative.

Finally, ECW invests in marketing and educational materials that are more user friendly to business, including the Sector Magazine and Business Resource Guide referenced in Section 1.3 above.

3.8 20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(ii): Meeting the Needs of Businesses

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to support a workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses.

3.8

ECW partners closely with economic development providers, chambers of commerce, and small business development centers to support the recruitment, retention, and expansion of businesses and workforce markets in the region. These collaborative industry partnerships allow ECW to effectively meet the needs of and support business through the implementation of these key strategies:

- Apprenticeship and internship opportunities in partnership with colleges, local businesses, and labor industry organizations.
- Career counseling and guidance within the local business ecosystem in partnership with colleges, WorkSource, and colleges.
- Continuous learning and upskilling through educational institutions and innovative digital learning platforms such as Transfr virtual reality.
- Job placement services through WorkSource, contracted service providers, career programs, vocational rehabilitation, and reentry services for justice-involved individuals.
- Tailored training programs and cohorts in partnership with specialized industry experts, advanced educators, and community collaborators.
- Data-driven decision making based on real-time business and labor market information in partnership with Oregon Employment Department and other data analysis sources.

ECW developed a streamlined and rolling incumbent worker training grant application process, allowing employees to access a matching training fund grant throughout the program year. These Employee Advancement Training Grants are available to businesses, regardless of industry, to support employee retention, advancement, training on new technologies or programs, upskill/backfill activities, in addition to the creation of strong recruitment programs. This funding has been highly sought after requiring additional investment in 2024 to keep pace with demand.

3.9 20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(iii) and (b)(4): Coordination with Economic Development

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development including the promotion of entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

3.9

ECW leverages several local partners' entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services. The primary partners in the provision of these services are the community colleges' Small Business Development Centers housed at Columbia Gorge, Central Oregon, and Klamath Community Colleges. In addition, there are strong and active Chambers of Commerce in this region that offer a variety of services and training, including but not limited to The Dalles, The Frontier, Hood River, Bend, Klamath, and Lake Chambers of Commerce. There are also services that are available through our Economic Development partners at Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, Redmond Economic Development Inc., Economic Development of Central Oregon, Klamath County Economic Development Association, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, and South-Central Oregon Economic Development District.

In 2021, our northern subregion initiated the development of an entrepreneurship apprenticeship program in collaboration with Columbia Gorge Community College, the Small Business Development Center, and a local small business owner and advocate. This innovative program orchestrates a collaborative relationship between adults aspiring to launch small businesses and seasoned mentors from the local business community, guiding them through the intricacies of the startup process. Within this program's framework, the apprentice engages in educational courses offered by the SBDC and the college. Upon completion, participants not only possess a comprehensive business plan but also establish connections with local mentors and potential opportunities to gain access to funding and various other regional resources. Our commitment is to sustain and elevate this initiative, positioning it as a benchmark in entrepreneurship training over the next four years.

Please also see Sections 1.3, 3.7 and 3.8 above.

3.10 20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(iv): Linkages to Unemployment Insurance

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to strengthen linkages between WorkSource Oregon (as defined) and unemployment insurance programs.

3.10

ECW understands that there is a strong relationship between the labor exchange and career services offered within the WSO offices and unemployment insurance programs. During the covid-19 pandemic, most OED staff were reassigned to assist unemployment insurance programs to help clear the backlog of claims. ECW will continue to advocate for WSO staff to be trained to be able to handle simple Unemployment Insurance transactions in the center to help with overall customer satisfaction.

Continuous Improvement

3.11 20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(i): Expand Access to Services

Describe how the local board will work with entities in WorkSource Oregon (as defined) to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment

3.11

As outlined in Section 3.2 and 3.3, the Local Leadership Teams (LLT) and Super Leadership Teams meet to collaborate and align services. The WorkSource Operational Standards (WSO Standards 3.0) and their implementation are the minimum basis on which their work is derived. In addition, ECW contracts with a neutral third party to serve as the One Stop Operator (OSO) for the region in support of continuous improvement in implementation of the WorkSource Standards. The OSO is also responsible for assessing the current state of our implementation, which helps establish next steps.

With the WSO Standards 3.0 just being released, each of our subregional LLTs have been setting local policies that are more intentional about cross training staff so that they better understand all the employment, training, education, and support services available to customers. This will strengthen their ability to help customers overcome their barriers to employment even more effectively.

3.12 20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(ii): Career Pathways

Describe how the local board will work with entities in WorkSource Oregon (as defined) to facilitate development of career pathways.

3.12

ECW has strong relationships with Columbia Gorge, Central Oregon, and Klamath Community Colleges in our region. We have proven over the past 8 years that our community partnerships and knowledge of economic trends across our region is valuable to both employers and colleges. We will continue to actively participate and collaborate with all our partners so that we can continue to help identify areas in need of new or updated career pathways. To date, we have helped facilitate construction pre-apprenticeship development, helped launch a dental assistant apprenticeship, and are currently helping to develop a preschool teacher apprenticeship with multiple partners that we hope to launch next program year. We are also investing in growing the manufacturing and construction trades program at one of our community college partners. That funding will allow them to grow the programs to be sustainable into the future while creating more career pathways.

3.13 20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(ii): Co-enrollment

Describe how the local board will work with entities in WorkSource Oregon (as defined) to facilitate co-enrollment in WSO programs.

3.13

Often, no single funding stream will cover all the true costs of supporting / launching an individual on their career pathway, nor can one partner provide the robust array of specialized services that may be required; therefore, co-enrollment is an effective strategy. Through a cross-referral system and based on the career plan for an adult job seeker, WorkSource partners collaborate to co-enroll adults into the programs and services that they most need to be successful. Additionally, to build on foundational investments made into services for WIOA Title I enrolled youth, co-enrollment in WIOA Title I Adult services and / or other programs in the community may be warranted to achieve their career goals.

3.14 20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(iii): Improve Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Describe how the local board will work with entities in WorkSource Oregon (as defined) to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

3.14

ECW understands the value of our customers obtaining industry recognized postsecondary credentials. Unfortunately, we are continuing to see year-over-year reductions in our WIOA funding which prohibits our ability to fund all the training necessary in our region. To help mitigate this reduction, we will continue to not only support the development of stackable credentials as described in section 3.12 with our partners, but we will actively work to seek out additional funding sources so that our providers will have the funding needed to effectively train our workforce. We will also seek more cost-effective ways to train our customers through cohort style and customized training.

3.15 20 CFR 679.560(b)(5)(i): Continuous Improvement of Eligible Providers

Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through WorkSource Oregon (as defined) and that such providers will meet the employment needs of employers, workers, and job seekers in the local area.

3.15

ECW uses several methods of continuous improvement with contracted service providers to ensure services meet employers', workers', and jobseekers' needs:

- Monthly contracted provider meetings are utilized to review enrollments, performance, expenditures, and problem-solving. Quarterly narrative reports are also discussed at these monthly check-in meetings.
- Super IB is a meeting during which all contracted (Adult/Dislocated/Youth) providers' staff meet to share best practices and receive training. The goal is to create greater alignment and connectivity for all contracted providers, as well as ensure that our programs and services are meeting the needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.
- A weekly manager's meeting is a meeting with contracted provider management to address outstanding issues, problem-solve, conduct training, and ensure our programs and services are meeting the needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.
- ECW convenes Sector Partnerships wherein business partners lead by articulating common needs and challenges and co-develop strategies to address their needs with support partners from education and training, economic development, industry associations, chambers, and community-based organizations.

3.16 20 CFR 679.560(b)(20): Intake and Case Management

Describe any recent innovations, promising practices, or efforts to increase and streamline access to programs and services at WSO centers particularly as it relates to case management.

3.16

We have mentioned several innovations and promising practices throughout this whole document but

additionally, across our region, workforce service providers have implemented multiple other creative ways to increase and streamline access to programs and services. Some of these initiatives include:

- Mobile WorkSource Office: P10k grant funds were used to convert a sprinter van to a mobile WorkSource office. This allows customers who reside in more rural areas, where access to “brick and mortar” WorkSource Offices may be difficult.
- Work crew programing: paid work experiences for adults who may want to learn specific trade skills and improve soft skills. These work crews rotate through multiple job sites including, but not limited to - manufacturing, construction, and agriculture
- Re-Entry Program and Community-Supported Shelter: providers physically travel to local prisons, and supported living shelters to provide workforce services in person to those who otherwise may not be able to access them.

Operational Portion

Section 4: Services and Activities

Please answer the questions in Section 4 in twelve (12) pages or less. Provide a response for all items identified. Reports and/or expanded analysis can be included as attachments.

Available Workforce Development Activities

4.1 20 CFR 679.560(a)(4): Workforce Development Activities – Part 1 Adults (Includes both WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers)

- A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities for adults in the local area including education and training and including individuals with barriers to employment;
- B. Describe specific strengths and weaknesses of these adult workforce development activities in the local area to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers;
- C. Describe the capacity to provide these adult workforce development activities in the local area to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers;
- D. Identify successful models and best practices in the local area for adult workforce development activities.

4.1 A

Across our region, workforce development activities for adults encompass a comprehensive approach, addressing education and training initiatives tailored to diverse needs, including individuals facing barriers to employment. These activities often include skill-building programs, vocational training, and educational opportunities aimed at enhancing participants' employability. Special emphasis is placed on designing inclusive programs that accommodate individuals with barriers such as disabilities, lack of formal education, or other challenges. Collaborative efforts between local educational institutions, WorkSource Oregon partners, and businesses play a pivotal role in ensuring a holistic approach to workforce development, fostering economic empowerment and social inclusion among adults in the community.

4.1 B

We believe our biggest strengths are found in our robust relationships with training providers, employers and WorkSource partners, our ability to offer customized programs and support services that cater to individuals with various barriers, and our well-trained contracted field staff. However, weaknesses may arise in the availability of resources since the majority of our region is considered rural and lack local training opportunities which potentially limits the scale and impact of these initiatives. Additionally, coordination gaps between educational institutions and employers could impede seamless transitions into the workforce. Striking a balance between specialized training and broader skill development is crucial. Ongoing assessment and refinement of these programs are necessary to ensure alignment with evolving workforce demands and the specific needs of local employers, thus maximizing their effectiveness in bridging the skills gap and promoting sustainable employment opportunities.

4.1 C

Robust collaborations between educational institutions, community organizations, WorkSource partners, and businesses contribute to a comprehensive infrastructure. Adequate resources are allocated to tailor programs to the diverse needs of participants, including those with barriers to employment. However, challenges may arise in scaling these activities to meet the growing demand, and ongoing efforts to secure sustainable funding and enhance program accessibility are crucial for ensuring continued success in aligning workforce development with local employment needs.

4.1 D

Specific examples are described in sections 3.8, 3.9, 3.12, 3.13, and 3.16. We believe that our robust relationships with our WSO partners, training providers, employers, and industry stakeholders allows for best practices to emerge in our region. Overall, we've seen that programs that offer hands-on training, apprenticeships, and internships with local employers provide practical skills aligned with industry needs. Flexible and adaptive curriculum structures that cater to diverse learners, including those with barriers to employment, have also proven effective. Public-private partnerships that facilitate resource sharing, mentorship programs, and ongoing engagement with employers enhance the relevance of training. Additionally, initiatives promoting lifelong learning and upskilling contribute to a dynamic workforce.

4.2 20 CFR 679.560(b)(8): Workforce Development Activities – Part 2 Youth (Includes WIOA Youth)

- A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities for youth in the local area including education and training and including individuals with barriers to employment;
- B. Describe specific strengths and weaknesses of these youth workforce development activities in the local area to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers;
- C. Describe the capacity to provide these youth workforce development activities in the local area to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers;
- D. Identify successful models and best practices in the local area for youth workforce development activities.

4.2 A

Local workforce development activities for youth are multifaceted, focusing on education, training, internship opportunities, and overcoming barriers to employment. Tailored programs offer educational opportunities, skill-building initiatives, and vocational training to equip youth for the workforce. Initiatives addressing barriers such as limited access to education, socioeconomic challenges, and lack of experience play a crucial role. Collaborations between schools, the court system, other community organizations, and employers ensure a holistic approach, providing mentorship, internships, and other hands-on experiences. However, challenges can arise in reaching vulnerable youth populations, necessitating innovative outreach strategies like social media platforms and word of mouth. Funding challenges are also always present. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of these activities are essential to meet the evolving needs of youth and effectively prepare them for a competitive job market.

4.2

There are many strengths that our youth workforce development activities have throughout our region. ECW as well as our youth services providers have extensive relationships with employers throughout their individual

service areas. We also have strong partnerships with each community college, economic development district, chamber of commerce, and WSO business services teams throughout our region. These strong partnerships mean that when shifts begin to occur, we can quickly and easily make programmatic changes. Most of the challenges we have revolve around funding. Employers throughout our region often want to host internships as well as mentor our youth, but without funding from our service providers, most employers find it impossible to participate. Another challenge is bringing new employers on to host internships due to the way low unemployment levels often leave employers short-handed, making it difficult to spend the time needed to teach and train interns.

4.2 C

The local area demonstrates a considerable capacity to provide youth workforce development activities that address both the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment requirements of employers. Collaborative efforts between community colleges, community-based organizations, and employers contribute to a robust infrastructure. Adequate resources are allocated to tailor programs to the diverse needs of youth, especially those with barriers to employment.

4.2 D

There have been several best practices and successful models across our diverse region. Over this past year, ECW purchased internship coordination software that is made available for free to community-based organizations who develop internships for opportunity youth to use. This system offers a centralized platform where employers can easily upload their job opportunities within their local community. This not only reduces confusion and competition among various youth service providers operating within the same community but also provides employers with a single platform to manage all their internship opportunities efficiently. In our Central Oregon subregion, we have partnered with school districts and other community partners to provide internship coordination and placement across multiple communities. This example uses ECW funding along with school districts and other community partners to make this program successful. We are working to expand the model to our other subregions over the next few years. Another best practice seen in our northern subregion has been placing out of school youth in internships on the community college campus in areas that interest the individual youth due to not having enough employers in some trades who are able to take on internships. For example, youth interested in manufacturing are placed on campus as a teacher's aide in the welding and manufacturing department. This has resulted in several youth going on to enroll in the training program.

4.3 20 CFR 679.560(b)(6): Employment and Training Activities

Considering the response in 4.1, provide a specific description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

4.3

Due to the vast and rural nature of our region, the employment and training activities and opportunities are very different throughout. For example, our northern and southern subregions are very rural and people often have to travel long distances to access training opportunities. For those regions, emphasis is placed on removing transportation barriers by suggesting online trainings while providing the technology needed to access them and

by providing robust other support services like paying mileage, housing and utility costs, and hotel stays for more short-term trainings. Types of training available across our entire region include Heavy Equipment Operators, Certified Medical Assistant, Class A CDL, Certified Pharmacy Technician, Registered Nurse, Licensed Massage Therapist, and many more. ECW recognizes that there is always a need to improve access to more types of trainings and will be actively working with employers and training providers to create more career pathways throughout our region.

4.4 20 CFR 679.560(b)(18): Training Services

- A. Describe how training services outlined in 20 CFR 682 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts. If contracts for training services are used describe how they will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under 20 CFR 682; and
- B. Describe how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how training services are to be provided.

4.4 A

ECW has an Individual Training Accounts (ITA) policy for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. This policy outlines participant eligibility criteria, coordination of WIOA training funds and other federal assistance, ITA authorization requirements, continued ITA funding, and ITA modifications. Eligible participants engage with a Title 1B Employment Counselor for an individual assessment of job readiness, employment and training needs, financial, social, and supportive needs, labor market demand and potential for successful completion. This is documented on an Individual Employment / Education Plan. Participants then choose career training with Eligible Training Providers. Participants go through a scholarship application process for consideration of funding. Individuals with documented priority of service considerations (recipients of public assistance, individuals who are deficient in basic skills, or those who are low-income, in addition to veterans and eligible spouses) are prioritized accordingly. ITA's are intended to provide training services in instances where there is no grant assistance or insufficient assistance from other sources. Providers do not have any required limits on ITA funding, rather they are limited by their budgets.

4.4 B

ECW's utilizes training contracts when providing on-the-job training services to employers and participants, otherwise ITA's are used as the primary method of procuring training services. Because OJTs are a hire first form of training, it is the customer's choice to train with that employer as they train on the job. ECW's training providers utilize the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to help guide participants toward training options, specifically when informing an Individual Training Account. If the ETPL does not provide a customer with adequate options for their industry or occupation, a search for reciprocal agreements with other programs or assistance to facilitate adding additional programs onto the ETPL are explored. ECW has also implemented a waiver program to allow for resources to be accessed for training for individuals who are exploring alternative training options, which fall within the ETPL exceptions like self-guided programming. ECW wants to ensure that all participants, especially those that already have difficulty in gaining access to programming due to the distance in which they live from the nearest training centers, have adequate choices.

4.5 20 CFR 679.560(b)(7): Coordination with Rapid Response Activities

Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.

4.5

Response services are available throughout the East Cascades region. To accommodate local area needs, Rapid Response Services are divided into three sub-regional teams and coordinated by an identified Rapid Response Coordinator:

- North – Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler Counties
- Central – Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties
- South – Klamath and Lake Counties

Rapid Response Team members in each sub-region include but are not limited to:

- WIOA Title 1B Service Provider
- Oregon Employment Department Business & Employment Specialist and Business Services Rep
- Trade Act Navigator
- State Labor Liaison
- Local community college
- Social Service agencies as appropriate

A company who may potentially or actually lay-off workers and/or the labor union who represents the affected workers will contact either the Rapid Response Liaison or the Rapid Response Coordinator in the area. In addition, the Rapid Response Team proactively reaches out to companies they find in the news or via Quality Info who are experiencing or potentially experiencing downsizing. The Rapid Response Coordinator works with the company to create a Rapid Response Information Session based on the company's individual needs. If the company has union representation, the State Labor Liaison is brought into the planning discussion. If the company was affected because of shifts in production to foreign countries or increased imports, Trade Act Navigators are brought into the conversation and a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition is filed for additional assistance. If additional assistance funds are needed to support the affected workers, a request for Rapid Response State Additional Assistance funds will be completed and submitted to the State Dislocated Worker Unit for approval. Upon approval, ECW coordinates the delivery of services among all WorkSource Oregon partners with the goal of getting the affected workers back to work in a comparable or higher wage position as quickly as possible.

4.6 20 CFR 679.560(b)(10): Coordination with Supportive Services

Describe how the local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities in the local area with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services.

4.6

Supportive services are offered to eliminate barriers to employment for program participants, or to support participants in need of access to training or employment. Participants may not have the proper tools, equipment, or transportation they need to achieve success.

As part of the Local Leadership Team (LLT) service strategy, supportive services available through the various WSO partners’ resources are discussed to maximize service delivery opportunities and avoid duplication of services. If common gaps and / or needs become apparent through LLTs, the area of needs are elevated to ECW for clarity and support to address the common need across the region.

WorkSource Oregon

4.7 WorkSource Oregon/One-Stop Delivery System (Oregon Requirement)
<p>List all WorkSource Oregon (WSO) Centers in the local area and provide for each site the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location (City); • WSO Center Type (Comprehensive, Affiliate, Partner Site/Specialized); • List of Partners Represented; and • Means of Service Availability by each Partner (physically present, direct linkage through technology, or referral only). <p>Each Center must be consistent with the One-Stop Center definitions and requirements contained in the One-Stop Certification Policy (including Attachment A - WSO Centers and Other Sites – Requirements Matrix, Attachment B - One-Stop Center Certification Minimum Requirements, Attachment C - Certification Documentation Requirements, and Attachment D - References.) and the Memorandum of Understanding and Cost Sharing Policy (and attachments).</p>

4.7

Location	Partners Represented	Means of Service
Comprehensive One-Stop		
WorkSource Bend	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Physically Present
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Physically Present
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Physically Present
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Physically Present
	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services	Physically Present
	Oregon Employment Department	Physically Present

	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth	Physically Present
	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals	Physically Present
	Youth Build	Referral Only
	Warm Springs WIOA Title IB	Referral Only
	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers	Referral Only
	Regional Career and Technical Education	Referral Only
WorkSource Klamath Falls	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Physically Present
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Physically Present
	Oregon Employment Department	Physically Present
	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth	Physically Present
	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals	Physically Present
	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services	Referral Only
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Referral Only
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Referral Only
	Klamath Tribes WIOA Title IB	Referral Only
	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers	Referral Only
	Regional Career and Technical Education	Referral Only
WorkSource Redmond	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Physically Present
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Physically Present
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Physically Present
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Physically Present
	Oregon Employment Department	Physically Present
	WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker	Physically Present
	Youth Build	Referral Only
	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services	Referral Only
	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers	Referral Only
	Regional Career and Technical Education	Referral Only

	Warm Springs WIOA Title IB	Referral Only
	WIOA Title I Youth	Referral Only
	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals	Referral Only
WorkSource The Dalles	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Physically Present
	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services	Physically Present
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Physically Present
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Physically Present
	Oregon Employment Department	Physically Present
	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth	Physically Present
	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers	Referral Only
	Regional Career and Technical Education	Referral Only
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Referral Only
	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals	Referral Only
Affiliate One-Stop		
WorkSource Hood River	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Referral Only
	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services	Referral Only
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Referral Only
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Referral Only
	Oregon Employment Department	Direct Linkage through Technology
	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth	Physically Present
	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers	Referral Only
	Regional Career and Technical Education	Physically Present
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Referral Only
	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals	Referral Only
Partner One-Stop		
WorkSource Lakeview	Dept of Human Services – Jobs and SNAP ET	Referral Only
	Vocational Rehabilitation	Referral Only

	Oregon Employment Department	Physically Present
	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth	Physically Present
	Senior Community Service Employment Program – Easter Seals	Referral Only
	Dept of Human Services – Aging & Disability Services	Referral Only
	Title II Adult Basic Skills	Referral Only
	Oregon Commission for the Blind	Referral Only
	Klamath Tribes WIOA Title IB	Referral Only
	Title 1B Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers	Referral Only
	Regional Career and Technical Education	Referral Only

4.8 One-Stop Operator Procurement (Oregon Requirement)

- A. Identify the One-Stop Operator.
- B. Describe the procedures and timelines for future procurement of a One-Stop Operator consistent with the [One-Stop Operator Procurement Policy](#) (including [Attachment A - Process for Local Workforce Development Boards as One-Stop Operator](#)).

4.8 A.

Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership

4.8 B.

The current contract is effective July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024, with the option to extend it for one additional year.

Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP) provides One-Stop-Operator Services throughout the East Cascades Workforce Region in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. As the One-Stop-Operator, OMEP is considered a subrecipient of federal funds and is required to follow Uniform Guidance.

EC Works selected OMEP through a full and competitive procurement process conducted for Program Year 2021. The Request for Proposals was released on May 3, 2021, and sought proposals from entities with the capacity and demonstrated ability to coordinate staff and operate as the One-Stop Operator under the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Entities interested in applying were also expected to have the ability and capacity to work in coordination and collaboration with multiple entities serving within a complex and matrixed environment.

Workforce services in the East Cascades workforce area are primarily funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The work authorized under this federal legislation provides support for workforce

development activities in the local area, which are supplemented and aligned with other funding sources. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and Oregon’s Higher Education Coordinating Commission - Office of Workforce Investments (HECC-OWI) oversee this funding. As defined by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 678.620, the One-Stop Operator’s role at a minimum is to coordinate the service delivery of required one-stop centers, branded in Oregon as WorkSource, partners and service providers. As the selected entity, OMEP has demonstrated effectiveness and experience in providing services in Oregon and is able perform the duties of the One-Stop Operator without any conflicts of interests.

4.9 One-Stop Center Certification (Oregon Requirement)

Identify the established procedures for ongoing certification of one-stop centers consistent with [One-Stop Certification Policy](#) (including [Attachment A - WSO Centers and Other Sites – Requirements Matrix](#), [Attachment B - One-Stop Center Certification Minimum Requirements](#), [Attachment C - Certification Documentation Requirements](#), and [Attachment D - References](#)).

4.9

All Comprehensive and Affiliate One-Stop Centers are Certified by ECW every three years using an Assessment developed by ECW, which evaluates the center on four categories: Availability of Programs, Effectiveness in Serving Customers, Implementation & Continuous Improvement of the WorkSource Standards, as well as Physical Accessibility.

As part of ongoing assessment and contributing to Center Certification, our One-Stop-Operator is specifically responsible for evaluating Effectiveness of Serving Customers and for Implementation and Continuous Improvement of the WorkSource Oregon Standards, within all Comprehensive and Affiliate On-Stop Centers within the region.

EC Works existing most recent certification was completed prior to June 30, 2022, and included all required elements. The next certification to be completed and submitted prior to June 30, 2025.

4.10 WorkSource Oregon Operational Standards (Oregon Requirement)

- A. Do all Comprehensive and Affiliate WSO Centers in the local area provide services that meet or exceed the [WorkSource Oregon Operational Standards](#) effective June 9, 2023?
- B. If not, please describe the strategies to bring WSO Centers into compliance.

4.10 A.

Yes

4.10 B.

N/A

4.11 20 CFR 679.560(b)(11): Improving Service Delivery

Describe plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through WorkSource Oregon (as defined).

4.11

Our plans include regular meetings such as Local Leadership Team meetings, within each of our sub-regions, to discuss ongoing initiatives, share updates, and address any challenges that may arise. Additionally, we provide assurances through formal agreements and memoranda of understanding that outline the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each partner, fostering a shared commitment to our common goals.

In terms of improving service delivery, our strategies focus on identifying areas for enhancement through continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms, identified by the One Stop Operator, or by managers within the centers. We actively seek input from partners, service recipients, and stakeholders to identify opportunities for innovation and efficiency. This collaborative approach allows us to adapt and refine our services based on real-time feedback, ensuring that we meet the evolving needs of our community.

To avoid duplication of services, we utilize the tracking systems available through I-Match Skills and I-Trac. These systems help us identify any overlaps in services provided by different partners and allow for strategic adjustments to ensure resource optimization. Clear delineation of responsibilities and regular communication help prevent redundancies, promoting a more streamlined and effective service delivery network.

Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

4.12 20 CFR 679.560(b)(5)(iii): Accessibility

- A. Describe how entities within WorkSource Oregon (as defined), including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, will comply with 29 CFR, Part 38, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities.
- B. Describe how entities within WorkSource Oregon (as defined), including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, will comply with 29 CFR, Part 38, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities.
- C. Considering the response in A. and B., describe how entities with WorkSource Oregon (as defined) provide staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

4.12 A.

ECW places high priority on ensuring compliance with 29 CFR, Part 38 and ADA requirements at all One-Stop locations. This is a compliance requirement as a condition of WorkSource Center certification that ECW conducts every 3 years and through regular monitoring annually, which includes completion and updating of a Universal Access Checklist. All comprehensive WorkSource Centers in the region are provided at barrier-free ground level and have been upgraded to implement the benefits of universal design elements. ECW will continue to assure appropriate staff training and support in connection with individuals experiencing disabilities.

4.12 B.

ECW, Title 1 contracted providers and all partner entities within WorkSource Oregon are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals, including those with disabilities, by implementing modifications and adjustments to our application and registration processes. These changes are designed to empower qualified

applicants and registrants with disabilities, enabling them to be considered for the aid, benefits, services, training, or employment they desire. Moreover, we understand the importance of adjusting the environment where work is performed or where aid, benefits, services, or training are given. Additionally, we recognize the significance of adapting the customary way a job is performed, or aid, benefits, services, or training are given. Our commitment to reasonable accommodation extends to various measures, such as making facilities readily accessible, restructuring jobs or services, adjusting work schedules, acquiring, or modifying equipment, and providing support like readers or interpreters. These efforts aim to ensure that individuals with disabilities can enjoy the same benefits and privileges as their counterparts without disabilities, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment.

4.12 C.

ECW is also very fortunate to have both Vocational Rehabilitation and Oregon Commission for the Blind co-located in many of the comprehensive WorkSource centers as per Section 3.2. Vocational Rehabilitation and Oregon Commission for the Blind actively participate on all WorkSource Safety Committees, Local Leadership Teams, and Regional Business Services teams where they provide valuable input and guidance. This proximity has helped ensure that our programs, services, materials, and tools meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. This helps us expedite more awareness and training of WorkSource partner staff.

4.13 20 CFR 679.560(b)(5)(ii): Virtual/Remote Access

Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through WorkSource Oregon (as defined), including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

4.13

EC Works' service providers use a variety of virtual ways to deliver services technology are available across the East Cascades workforce area, they cannot be accessed without high-speed internet. There are many rural and frontier areas in East Cascades where high-speed internet is not available; therefore, ECW supports efforts by partners to increase high-speed internet access to residential areas across the region (e.g., Regional Solutions, Economic Service Districts, etc.). Community Colleges in this area are also foundational partners in ensuring greater access to these more frontier areas in that they allow ECW to leverage their infrastructure investments in both facilities and technology. Columbia Gorge, Central Oregon, and Klamath Community Colleges all offer simulcast technology allowing for synchronous and asynchronous delivery of content and facilities in remote areas where WorkSource Centers are not located. Lastly, EC Works' Central region utilizes a mobile WorkSource, a van driven to the more remote areas of the region capable of providing all in person eligibility, enrollment and computer-based services, through the units "mobile computer lab".

Section 5: Compliance

Please answer the questions in Section 5 in ten (10) pages or less. Most responses should be staff-driven as each are focused on the organization's compliance with federal or state requirements. Provide a response for all items identified. Required documents can be included as attachments.

Local Board

5.1 20 CFR 679.320: Local Board Membership (TEGL 27-14, cited in Policy, is no longer active)

Complete the Local Board Membership Roster form provided (same as Attachment C - Local Board Membership Roster Template) consistent with [Oregon WTDB Policy Local Board Membership Criteria](#) (including [Attachment A - Local Board Membership Requirements](#), [Attachment B - LWDB Membership Calculator \(Excel\)](#), [Attachment C - Local Board Membership Roster \(template\) \(updated 11/1/2021\)](#), and [Attachment D - References](#)). Submit the Local Board Membership Roster form as an attachment.

5.2 20 CFR 679.320: Local Board Membership Policy (TEGL 27-14, cited in Policy, is no longer active)

Submit as an attachment the local board policy and process for nomination and appointment of board members compliant with [Oregon WTDB Policy Local Board Membership Criteria](#) (including [Attachment A - Local Board Membership Requirements](#), [Attachment B - LWDB Membership Calculator \(Excel\)](#), [Attachment C - Local Board Membership Roster \(template\) \(updated 11/1/2021\)](#), and [Attachment D - References](#)).

5.3 20 CFR 679.310(a): Local Board Certification

Complete Local Workforce Development Board Certification Request form provided (available in October 2023 through Basecamp) consistent with [WIOA Title I Policy Appointment and Certification of Local Workforce Development Boards](#) (including [Attachment A - LWDB Certification Request Letter Template](#), [Attachment B - LWDB Board Certification Process](#), and [Attachment C - References](#)). Submit the Local Workforce Development Board Certification Request form as an attachment.

5.4 Equal Opportunity Officer (Oregon Requirement)

Provide the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for WIOA within the local area.

5.4

Jessica Fitzpatrick, East Cascades Works, jessica@ecworks.org, 541.213.0684

5.5 Local Board Documents (Oregon Requirement)

Provide completed copies of the following local board approval forms as an attachment:

- Statement of Concurrence
- Partner Statement of Agreement
- Assurances

WIOA compliant versions of these documents are available in October 2023 through Basecamp.

Required Elements

5.6 20 CFR 679.560(b)(14): Responsible Entity for Grant Fund Disbursement

Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in 20 CFR 679.420, as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under the same section (20 CFR 679.420).

5.6

ECW serves as the fiscal agent as designated by the Central Oregon Workforce Consortium.

5.7 20 CFR 679.560(b)(15): Competitive Process for Subgrants

- A. Describe how the local board remains a neutral broker of adult, dislocated worker, and youth services consistent with [Oregon Executive Order 13-08](#) by describing the competitive process that will be used to award subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.
- B. Submit an organization chart as an attachment that depicts a clear separation of duties between the board and service provision.
- C. Provide the current names of contracted organizations and the duration of each contract for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services.

5.7 A.

EC Works uses a competitive procurement process to select its service providers and One-Stop Operator. The service provider's procurements are for a five-year period and the One-Stop Operator Procurement is for a four-year period. Contracts are written for a one-year period with the option to extend the agreements for four additional one-year periods (three additional one-year periods for the One-Stop Operator) based on meeting contract expectations.

5.7 B.

See attached organizational chart

5.7 C.

ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICE PROVIDERS - WORKSOURCE EAST CASCADES

Per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Title I formula funds allocated to local areas for adults and dislocated workers must be used to provide career and training through the one-stop delivery system (WorkSource). Per 20 CFR 680.140 of the same legislation, local workforce boards (EC Works) are responsible for determining the most appropriate delivery of these services.

Furthermore, and to comply with Executive Order 13-08 of the State of Oregon which disallows for Local Boards to provide direct services to participants, EC Works has selected the following providers of Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Jobseeker and Employer Services through open and competitive procurement processes. All three providers of Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Services are considered subrecipients of federal funds and are required to follow Uniform Guidance. As subrecipients, each are also monitored annually for fiscal and programmatic compliance and provide regular reporting on performance measures. Contracts are effective on a July 1- June 30 basis and renewed in accordance with EC Works procurement policies.

Northern Sub-Region, defined as Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler Counties
Columbia Gorge Community College

Central Sub-Region, defined as Crook, Jefferson, and Deschutes Counties
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council

Southern Sub-Region, defined as Klamath and Lake Counties
Klamath Works

YOUTH COMPASS PROGRAM SERVICE PROVIDERS

Per Executive Order 13-08 of the State of Oregon which disallows for Local Boards to provide direct services to participants and per WIOA sec. 123, EC Works used a competitive process to select the following providers to carry out all the Title I Youth 14 elements and services.

All three providers of Title I Youth services are considered subrecipients of federal funds and are required to follow Uniform Guidance. As subrecipients, each are also monitored annually for fiscal and programmatic compliance and provide regular reporting on performance measures. Contracts are effective on a July 1- June 30 basis and renewed in accordance with EC Works procurement policies.

Northern Sub-Region, defined as Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler Counties
Columbia Gorge Community College

Central Sub-Region, defined as Crook, Jefferson, and Deschutes Counties
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council

Southern Sub-Region, defined as Klamath and Lake Counties
Klamath Works

ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDERS

In Oregon, the Eligible Training Provider List for all local areas is managed by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and can be found at this [link](#).

5.8 20 CFR 679.560(b)(12): WIOA Title II Application Review

Describe how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with 20 CFR 679.370(n)(1).

5.8

The Higher Education Coordinating Council – Community Colleges and Workforce Development Department (CCWD) oversees the WIOA Title II funds and awards. ECW has and will continue to participate in their procurement process utilizing WIOA regulations and CCWD guidance in reviewing applications for Title II services.

5.9 20 CFR 679.560(b)(13): Local Cooperative Agreements

Submit as an attachment executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in WorkSource Oregon (as defined) to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination consistent with 20 CFR 679.370(n)(3).

5.10 20 CFR 679.560(b)(5)(iv): Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement

Describe the roles and resource contributions of the WorkSource Oregon partners by providing as an attachment the current Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement for the local area.

5.11 20 CFR 679.560(b)(16): Negotiated Performance

Provide as an attachment, the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with 20 CFR 677.205-230, 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 WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the WorkSource Oregon delivery system in the local area.

5.12 20 CFR 679.560(b)(21): Priority of Service

Describe the direction given by the Governor ([WTDB Priority of Service Policy](#)) and the local board to the one-stop operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and 20 CFR 680.600.

5.12

See attached Priority of Service Policy.

5.13 20 CFR 679.560(b)(19): Public Comment Period

Describe the process used by the local board, consistent with 20 CFR 679.550(b), to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations.

5.13

The local plan was posted on EC Works' website on February 12, providing the opportunity for the public to comment on the development of its Local Plan. Comments from our board of directors, chief elected officials, along with members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations and education were welcome. A copy of the draft Local Plan was made available electronically on the website and through other means by contacting us via LocalPlan@ecworks.org. A copy of the draft Plan was also sent directly via email to any entities named within the plan, providing them with the opportunity to submit comments during the public comment period. All comments were to be submitted in writing by March 13, 2024, to LocalPlan@ecworks.org. Summary of Substantial / Disagreeing Comments made during the public comment period. Submission of the local plan will be voted on by the board on March 15, 2024.

5.14 Compliance Concerns (Oregon Requirement)

State any concerns the local board has with ensuring the compliance components listed below are in place. Copies of documents are not required at this time but may be requested during monitoring.

- Administration of funds
- Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local elected officials
- Agreement between the Local Elected Officials and the Workforce Development Board
- Local Workforce Development Board Bylaws
- Code of Conduct
- Approved Budget
- Required policies on the following topics:
 - Financial Management including cost allocation plan, internal controls, cash management, receipts of goods, cost reimbursement, inventory and equipment, program income, travel reimbursement, audit requirements and resolution, annual report, property management, debt collection, procurement, allowable costs
 - Program Management including equal opportunity for customers, supportive services, needs related payments, file management, eligibility, self-sufficiency criteria, individual training accounts, layoff assistance, priority of services, grievance for eligible training providers list, determination of an insufficient number of eligible training providers in the local area (if applicable), transitional jobs, stipends, training verification/refunds,
 - Risk Management including records retention and public access, public records requests, monitoring, grievance, incident, disaster recovery plan
 - Board Policies including board appointment, board resolutions, conflict of interest

- Human Resources including employee classification, benefits, holidays and PTO, recruitment and selection, employee development, discipline, layoffs, terminations, and severance, drug policy, sexual harassment, equal opportunity/non-discrimination
- Professional Services Contract for Staffing/Payroll Services, if applicable
- Contract for I-Trac Data Management System

5.14

ECW is compliant with all the required components and does not have any concerns related to the monitoring of any of the required policies; however, as we further explore the relative benefit and proportional use of services to our common customer, in compliance with WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D) a common data system or means to ensure data systems integration is essential. Currently, WorkSource partners need to enter data into multiple systems that do not all connect. This creates a burden for both customers and staff and misses an opportunity to ensure greater alignment and the ability to serve our common customers efficiently and effectively.