WIOA LOCAL PLAN

2021-2024

Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC)

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Introduction

The Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC), also known as the Workforce Development Board (WDB), provides oversight, guidance and direction for the federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the 11-county region of Butte, Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity Counties. NoRTEC's mission is to develop strategic partnerships and solutions that meet the workforce needs of businesses and jobseekers, promoting the economic growth of the region. As part of that mission, one of NoRTEC's goals is to promote open communication among local and regional workforce partners to create a shared vision and regional strategy. Cultivating a network of partners and promoting aligned and collaborative efforts is critical for success, especially because of the large geographic area and diversity of the NoRTEC region. The region covers a vast geographical area, with diverse landscapes and economies, each with unique strengths and needs.

In 2020, the NoRTEC Workforce Development Board continued to build on prior stakeholder engagement by actively engaging partners and employers to understand the current environment, needs, challenges, and opportunities. Through an extensive engagement process, stakeholders identified common opportunities and challenges across county lines and municipal borders. Throughout the year, NoRTEC conducted extensive information gathering and stakeholder engagement, including data analysis, asset inventory, business surveys, and county outreach meetings.

This WIOA Local Plan for Program Year 2021-2024, is organized in accordance with requirements outlined in the Employment Development Department's (EDD) Workforce Services Directive 20-05. The plan describes how NoRTEC coordinates with partners to ensure person-centered service delivery. Together, agencies and organizations will promote a workforce development network that will strengthen communities across the entire region through collaborative efforts to serve businesses, support job seekers, and engage partners in a shared vision for success and opportunity.

VISION

Partners combining their diverse strengths to support healthy and thriving communities.

GOALS

Goal 1: Increase connections with employers to understand current and emerging business needs and increase awareness of the services that are available to businesses.

Goal 2: Implement career pathway strategies to fulfill the employment needs of the region.

Goal 3: Promote open communication among local and regional workforce partners to create a shared vision and regional strategy.

Goal 4: Increase awareness of NoRTEC activities, fostering regional awareness and partnerships.

The enclosed Local WIOA plan represent continued progress toward realizing this vision and achieving these goals. NoRTEC and its partners continue to promote collaborative efforts among its organizations

and communities. NoRTEC looks forward to continuing to innovate to meet the needs of businesses and jobseekers and promote the economic growth of the region.

Since the original local plan was submitted in 2016, large portions of NoRTEC's region were impacted by the November 2018 Camp Fire in Butte County, the most damaging wildfire in California's history. Also in 2018, the region suffered from the Carr Fire, a large wildfire that burned in Shasta and Trinity Counties. The region additionally experienced devastating winter storms in 2019 in Del Norte, Modoc, Shasta, and Trinity counties. The fires and winter storms resulted in a need for workers to complete clean up and repair damages.

In 2020, the region encountered numerous challenges due to COVID-19 and its impacts on every aspect of life. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the region. Businesses closed and unemployment soared during shelter-in-place orders. Employers deemed essential were required to have additional health and safety protocols for workers. NoRTEC and its partners responded by serving employers and jobseekers throughout the region. Despite these impacts, the region increased engagement and coordination with partners using technology to identify and understand needs, share information, and coordinate activities.

WIOA Local Plan

This local plan is being submitted on behalf of the North State Regional Planning Unit. This RPU consists of one local board – the Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) – which serves the 11-county region of Butte, Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Sierra, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity Counties.

Partnerships

In early 2020, NoRTEC began a planning process to gather input and engagement from as many regional partners and stakeholders as possible through calls, virtual meetings, surveys and by participating on regional and local boards and committees. NoRTEC conducted regular virtual meetings with partners across the region. Additionally, partners and community members were invited to complete a Workforce System Partner survey. NoRTEC also surveyed businesses about their workforce needs, with over 260 businesses responding. This survey was also translated and implemented in Spanish NoRTEC Business Survey.

Partners engaged in this planning process include:

- Business and Industry Representatives
- WIOA Title I Service Providers
- Industry Sector Partnerships and Members
- State Agencies
- Community Colleges and Universities
- County Offices of Education, K-12 Education, Career and Technical Education, and Adult Education
- Economic Development Agencies

WIOA Core and Required Partner Coordination

Coordination and Memorandums of Understanding

In 2016, NoRTEC initially brought together partners under Phase I MOU and Phase II MOU which resulted in the development of an "umbrella" MOU and 6 separate partner MOUs. The Phase I MOU addressed the roles, responsibilities, and resource contributions of AJCC partners. The Phase II MOU focused on Infrastructure Costs and the sharing of resources and costs. In 2020, consistent with EDD Directive WSD 18-12 WIOA Memorandum of Understanding, NoRTEC combined all MOUs into an umbrella MOU for the region. The Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) is an attachment to the MOU and is reviewed regularly. Although it was a lengthy process to develop and negotiate, having one streamlined MOU has simplified the review and update process from partners.

The 2020/2022 NoRTEC Partner MOU includes the following mission statement and goals to coordinate services and resources among AJCC partners:

NoRTEC's mission is to bring together workforce development, educational, economic development and other employment services in a seamless customer-focused delivery network that enhances access to program services and improves long-term employment outcomes.

The AJCC partners are committed to administering their independently funded programs as a set of integrated streamlined services to job seekers and employers, by:

- Helping businesses find skilled workers and access other support services, including education and training, for their current workforce;
- Providing an array of employment and business services and connecting customers to work-related training and education;
- Continuing to align investments in workforce, education, and economic development to regional in-demand jobs;
- Reinforcing partnerships and strategies to provide job seekers and workers with high quality career services, education and training, and supportive services needed to get good jobs and stay employed;
- Continuing to plan, coordinate, and provide services in an integrated manner to maximize the utilization of resources and ensure there will be no "wrong door" for customers seeking services from the system;
- Measuring customer satisfaction and continuously improving services based upon customer feedback; and
- Designing and continuously improving a system that reflects statewide/regional economic development strategies and is responsive to industry sectors in the region.

NoRTEC meets with new MOU signatories to provide background and explain work that is being done in the region. The meetings act as an onboarding process and further connect the partners to the workforce system through discussion of coordinated services and resources. Throughout the MOU period, NoRTEC sends out quarterly check-ins to gather information on activities and fulfillment of MOU responsibilities. Check-ins include virtual meetings, emails, eBlasts, surveys and one on one meetings. Having an established MOU partnership group assisted NoRTEC respond quickly to coordinate services to better assist clients. An example of this outreach is the Partnership Survey that was implemented at the start of the COVID 19 pandemic and is discussed in the following section of this Plan.

NoRTEC and its partners understand that strong partnerships are critical to offering the best services to customers. NoRTEC is working to strengthen and further establish existing working relationships with

core and mandatory partners as required under WIOA law. The following programs are part of the AJCC system and are parties to the regional MOU:

> NoRTEC, the WIOA Title I grant recipient and administrative entity, representing a Local Workforce Development Area comprised of a consortium of eleven counties: Butte, Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity. NoRTEC is a governmental entity, formed by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the aforementioned counties, and represented in the agreement by the Chair of the Governing Board (Chief Elected Official), and the Chair of the Workforce Development Board.

NoRTEC Memorandum of Understanding Partners	
WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs	Alliance for Workforce Development SMART Workforce Center Job Training Center of Tehama County
WIOA Title I Native American Programs (Section 166)	California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc.
WIOA Title I Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs (Section 167)	California Human Development Corporation
WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy Programs	Nevada Joint Union High School District Oroville Unified School District Plumas Unified School District Sierra County Office of Education
WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Programs	California Employment Development Department
WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Programs	California Department of Rehabilitation
Title V Older Americans Act Programs	AARP Foundation, The Senior Community Service Employment Program
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Programs	California Employment Development Department
Veterans Programs	California Employment Development Department
Unemployment Insurance Program	California Employment Development Department
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CalWORKs	Butte County Department of Employment & Social Services Lassen County Board of Supervisors (Health & Social Services Agency) Modoc County Board of Supervisors Nevada County Department of Social Services Plumas County Department of Social Services Sierra County Department of Social Services Del Norte County Department of Health & Human Services Shasta County Board of Supervisors Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors Tehama County Department of Social Services Trinity County Health and Human Services

In addition to the partners providing the programs above, NoRTEC understands that there are many other community agencies and organizations in the 11-county area that provide valuable services related to workforce development or that support workforce customers. NoRTEC maintains close working relationships with other non-core partners to ensure a strong network of resources and referrals is available to all customers, providing the best access possible to employment, training, education, and supportive services. NoRTEC has regular meetings with many of these partners for the purposes of developing a comprehensive workforce system that enhances access to the program services with the goal of administering separately funded programs as a set of integrated streamlined services to customers.

To truly promote a comprehensive system approach, NoRTEC sees that each of these community organizations has a valuable role to play in the workforce system. NoRTEC launched the Workforce Asset Service Directory to catalog the organizations that may be appropriate or beneficial for collaboration and alignment. Programs and organizations in the following categories were included:

Adult Education
AJCCs
Apprenticeship
Career and Technical Education
Career Pathways
Career Services
College Entrepreneurship Programs
College-based Business Services
Community Colleges
Disability Services
Economic Development
Entrepreneurship
Industry Associations
Justice-Involved
Literacy Programs
Other Business Services
Other Training
Planning Intermediary
SBDCs
SCORE Chapters
Sector Initiatives
Senior Services
Service Providers
Veterans Services
WIOA Service Providers
Work Experience Programs
Work-Based Learning
Youth Services

In addition to career and supportive services for job seekers, NoRTEC and its partners are continually working on ways to provide low cost, effective training platforms, such as customized training and OJTs, to meet the needs of employers and job seekers throughout the region. These training vehicles provide participants with an opportunity for hands-on, earn-while-you-learn training, and ensure employer buy-in to the training through the reimbursement to the employer of a portion of the participant's wages during the training period.

These efforts create a seamless AJCC delivery system by bringing together required partners in order to have a customer-focused service delivery network. An integrated system allows partners to improve services, maximize resources, avoid duplication, and enhance outcomes for all customers. The intended results are the development of meaningful MOUs and the integration of services and resources to the fullest extent possible. Additionally, NoRTEC and the AJCC MOU partners developed a consolidated system-wide budget for the network of comprehensive AJCCs, also known as the Infrastructure Finance Agreement (Exhibit A of the current MOU).

Workforce System Partner Survey

In an effort to better coordinate client and business services during the COVID 19 pandemic, NoRTEC implemented Workforce System Partner surveys. Various partners responded to the surveys including

state agencies, county departments of education, community partner (non-profit), economic development corporations, adult education, sheriff's departments, probation and parole operations, social services, TANF, and additional workforce partners.

The responding organizations had adapted in various ways to the COVID-19 pandemic. The most common adaptations were staff working remotely, changes in office settings, and changes in service delivery. NoRTEC responded to these needs by implementing a virtual hiring and resource platform and working with service providers to provide additional online services on their websites.

Adaptations	Number of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Employees working remotely	23	79.31%
Changes in office setting (distance of work spaces, masks)	22	75.86%
Changes in service delivery	16	55.17%
Temporarily closed	6	20.69%
Other	6	20.69%
Reduced employee hours	2	6.90%
Furloughed/laid off employees	2	6.90%
Permanently closed	0	0.00%
No action taken	0	0.00%

Respondents were asked how services had been modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most partners were offering their services remotely and providing fewer services in person.

Modifications	Number of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Offering services remotely (workshops, client meetings)	25	89.29%
Serving fewer clients in person	20	71.43%
Stopped offering certain services	10	35.71%
Offering different services in response to the pandemic	9	32.14%
Other	9	32.14%
No longer offering services to the public	0	0.00%

Respondents were asked if they had any suggestions for actions the workforce system should take to assist job seekers through the COVID pandemic. Respondents shared ideas around the following themes:

- Virtual job fairs, virtual hiring events, virtual job boards
- Increased availability of virtual services – workshops
- Continued collaboration with partners
- Help with virtual communication skills – how to present yourself on Zoom
- Increased check-ins and follow-ups
- Sharing events and job openings, encouraging job seekers to continue to apply for jobs
- Ensuring job seekers have access to computers, providing paper packets of information for those without access to technology

The respondents were also asked to provide suggestions for actions the workforce system should take to assist businesses through the COVID pandemic. The following are examples of the responses provided:

- Stay in contact – provide information about resources, grants, loans, PPE, PPP, safety precautions, policy updates, and other assistance
- Encourage employers to provide flexible scheduling for parents trying to balance work, distance learning, and childcare
- Help businesses find ways to stay open – help them figure out what to do and understand the options for grants and other resources
- Participate in the local Business Recovery Task Force to help deliver business support services
- Explore new ways to align the available workforce with their needs – hire then train, utilize OJT, work experiences, apprenticeships

Respondents also provided suggestions for the local America's Job Center of California^{SM} (AJCC) actions they can take to assist job seekers or businesses through the COVID pandemic. Some respondents expressed their appreciation for the "great job" AJCC is doing, and in particular for the number of bilingual staff that are available at the AJCC and the training programs that available with Spanish speaking instructors. Respondents provided suggestions around the following themes:

- Continue strong and consistent outreach, more advertising and marketing
- Keep creating partnerships to assist businesses with networking in the community
- Create a virtual job fair and virtual hiring events for the community, more virtual events and services
- Ensure communication and access are sustained
- Continue to adapt services and job readiness skill building to remote formats

Respondents were asked if they foresaw any needed changes to the referral process with the AJCC considering the COVID pandemic. Thirteen of the twenty-nine responded "no", "not sure", or "none specifically." Respondents also indicated the current referral process is working well with electronic and online referrals.

Finally, the survey asked respondents for other thoughts on how the workforce system should best adapt to address current circumstances (through 2022). Respondents identified suggestions around the following themes:

- Keep connecting through virtual platforms, look to modify business practices if needed
- Continue to be flexible and adapt to working with various programs
- Establish and communicate plans for future service delivery models, such as a hybrid system between in-person and remote service delivery

- Continue to provide bilingual staff
- Provide ongoing information about training programs, more online training
- Meet regularly via Zoom with community partners
- Support efforts addressing lack of technology/device access and internet connectivity issues
- Provide supports for those struggling with high levels of anxiety, unready or unavailable for work
- Serve homeless population

Co-location

NoRTEC's 11 counties cover over 32,000 square miles and represent approximately 24% of the land area in California. There are AJCCs throughout the region as well as numerous partners. However due to the size and rural nature of the region, very few mandatory partners are physically co-located within the AJCC. The following are specific examples of co-location within in the region.

- Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) in Oroville is located with the Employment and Social Services Department
- AFWD in Susanville is located with CalWORKS
- AFWD in Alturas is located with TEACH, a community-based organization that provides emergency services (housing, transportation, food bank), childcare resource information, and senior services)
- SMART Workforce Center in Crescent City is located with CalWORKS and the California Department of Rehabilitation

Referrals and Co-enrollment

Partners in the AJCCs have documented processes to refer among programs and to share participant data to the extent that is possible. All NoRTEC Service Providers also have established partnerships throughout the service area to offer participants access to a more comprehensive array of services. Partnerships with the Employment Development Department (EDD), Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Education (ROP), Adult Education/Literacy, Butte Community College, Shasta Community College, Lassen Community College, Feather River Community College, Experience Works, local economic development entities, and other community-based organizations, provide valuable services to the individuals accessing services at the AJCC's.

Local partner meetings are held each week to discuss partner activities and to ensure non-duplication of services. NoRTEC and its partners will continue to plan, coordinate, and provide services in an integrated manner to maximize the utilization of resources and assure there will be no "wrong door" for customers seeking services from the system.

When asked about the current referral process, respondents to the Workforce Partner Survey indicated the current referral process is working well with electronic and online referrals. The survey also asked respondents if they foresaw any needed changes to the referral process with the AJCC considering the COVID pandemic. Thirteen of the twenty-nine respondents indicated "no", "not sure", or "none specifically."

Referrals are tracked and co-enrollment occurs when it makes sense based on the participant's needs. All service provider programs have WIOA applicants sign information sharing documents that allow staff to share information with other agencies as necessary and applicable. In order to facilitate co-enrollment and improve access to activities, NoRTEC and partners will continue to develop work processes with one point of contact for each partner to streamline customer service, referrals, and

response so that everyone will know their “next steps” along their career paths, regardless of their program of entry to the system.

Common Case Management

Within all of NoRTEC’s AJCCs, case management is participant-centered and goal-oriented to assist WIOA-registered adult and dislocated workers with services that lead to self-sufficient employment, as well as follow up services after program exit. All WIOA adult and dislocated workers enrolled in career services and training services have met the eligibility requirements for such services and meet the requirements for the priority system. Case management activities support the customer's need based on individual circumstances. Case management begins with career services for registered adult and dislocated workers. Case notes in individual participant files document case management activities.

Case management consists of monitoring the progress towards goal attainment as outlined in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and noting any barriers and potential barrier resolution. Case managers meet with participants on a regular basis to discuss their progress toward established goals and identification of additional needs and services. Case management activities for registered participants in WIOA career services and training services may require more staff involvement based on planned program activities and the close monitoring of services. AJCC partner agencies may participate in joint case management activities to facilitate participant success.

All case management and/or service coordination contact with participants is documented in the NoRTEC MIS system (CalJOBS) and in case notes that will be included in the participant files. NoRTEC’s Service Provider case managers enter eligible client information into the CalJOBS system. CalJOBS can track multiple grant programs including WIOA Title 1, Wagner Peyser, TAA, and other programs or activities to indicate if they are co-enrolled.

Client-centered and strengths-based case management services include:

- Comprehensive assessments of skill levels, employment history, strengths, weaknesses, earning potential, employment goals, geographical area in which the client is willing and able to work, disabilities as it relates to employment, need for training, supportive services, barriers to employment and services needed. Assessment tools include, but are not limited to, DiSC (behavior assessment), Strengths Finder, On-Net, Holland's Theory of Career Choice, My Next Move, Myers Briggs, Elevations (skills, personality, and values), and Prove-It.
- Preparation of a competency-based IEP agreed upon by the client and career advisor to include employment goals, service plan, strategies to overcome identified barriers and action items with deadlines for both the client and career advisor. Ideally, assessment and IEP development are completed within the first month of service.

Upon completion of services, NoRTEC service provider staff conducts an exit interview with the participant to develop an action plan for follow up services for the 12 months after WIOA program exit. Follow-up services, including interpersonal communication skills, work site safety, and financial planning skills are also provided. Other planned follow-up services consist of additional career planning and counseling; contact with the participant's employer (if needed), including assistance with work-related problems that may arise; peer support groups; information about additional educational opportunities, and information about supportive services available. The goal of follow-up services is to ensure job retention, wage gains, and career progress for participants who have been placed in unsubsidized employment. Follow-up services are documented in the participant’s file.

Remote and Rural Access

Technology

As noted, NoRTEC is a vast region with 11 counties covering over 32,000 square miles, approximately 24% of the land area in California. The region includes many remote and rural areas and NoRTEC is utilizing technology to coordinate activities across partners and reach remote areas including the employers and job seekers.

NoRTEC and its partners continue to invest in the use of technology to facilitate access to services in its remote areas. The pandemic accelerated efforts to increase access to services through technology. In regard to business services, NoRTEC and partners conduct business surveys and share information with all partners and continue to update labor market and industry information available on the NoRTEC website. Additionally, the partners make referrals to each other, attend regional meetings on State and Federal opportunities. The region established monthly webinars for all Business Service Representatives and invites partners to attend. The goal of these meetings was to stay current with Federal, State and local requirements, review technical assistance available and share partner information. From these meetings, an interactive team SLACK page was set up for the Business Services Group and Partners. The SLACK page allows individuals to share information, ask questions, and better coordinate activities. The page has increased communication sharing across the region as they share resources and develop common messaging and outreach materials.

In order to gather input from partners about virtual services, NoRTEC distributed a partner survey asking organizations how they have had to adapt to the COVID pandemic, how services have been modified, and suggestions for action. The survey results are helping direct our regional response as well as how to plan for enhancing technology.

The responding organizations indicated their employees are working remoting and they had made changes in their offices as well as changes in service delivery. Partners also indicated they were offering services remotely, seeing fewer clients in person, and had stopped offering certain services. As the partners offer more virtual services, they suggested the workforce system support job seekers through virtual job fairs and events, increased virtual services such as workshops, sharing events and information, assisting with technology access, and continuing to collaborate with partners. Partners suggested the workforce system support businesses through the pandemic by providing information about resources, grants, PPE, safety precautions, and other assistance, encouraging employers to embrace flexible scheduling, participating in local Business Recovery Task Force, and exploring ways to align the workforce with business needs. The survey responses supported the need for increased virtual services.

It is important to note that technology access and connectivity is a barrier across the region. Broadband access and connectivity are a significant issue for several of the rural counties in the region. NoRTEC actively participates in meetings with partners who are actively addressing the broadband issue in Northern California, such as the California State University Chico Geographical Information Center, the lead agency for the Northeastern and Upstate California Connect Consortia. Additionally, access to technology devices necessary for virtual services, and in some cases education and training, is a barrier for some individuals in the region.

Virtual Services

The services in the region are provided by the: Job Training Center of Tehama County; SMART Workforce Center in Del Norte, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties; and Alliance for Workforce Development in Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, and Sierra Counties. Though NoRTEC supports at least one

physical AJCC location in each of its 11 counties, due to the vast size and rural nature of the region there are still many communities that have difficulty accessing these locations. Because of this, NoRTEC and its Service Providers utilize technology as a tool for ensuring access to service delivery in the region, allowing customers access to information on job search, job openings, and other services delivered in the workforce system. Job interviews and other typically face to face interactions can be facilitated by way of tools such as Skype. While this expands the system's reach, there will still be an important population of customers using AJCCs who lack basic technology skills and digital literacy, as well as a significant portion of the population that is located in areas without internet.

As the state shut down during the pandemic, staff at the AJCCs began meeting and increasing communications with clients over email and the phone, as well as through virtual appointments via Zoom and Facebook. The partners increased the virtual services and updated websites with online services including chat features. The AJCCs also moved workshops online utilizing Zoom, which allows presenters to still connect with job seekers in a personal way as attendees can ask questions and receive immediate feedback. Examples of the virtual workshops include: Secrets to a Successful Interview; DIY: Resume Workshop; and Job Search Like a Pro. In addition, NoRTEC is coordinating the update of service provider websites for more consistency of information, to increase virtual interaction, ease navigation for clients and implement additional ADA website requirements. Alliance for Workforce Development website is an example AJCC website that has been updated to reflect virtual services.

Premier Virtual® Platform

In order to serve businesses and meet their number one need of recruitment assistance. NoRTEC invested in Virtual Premier® Platform to be utilized for virtual job fairs. The platform allows NoRTEC and its partners to address industry needs and provide services on a regional level. Through the platform, virtual job hiring events are occurring throughout the region. Example hiring events have addressed single-employer hiring needs, industry specific health-care events, and geographical specific events. All of the NoRTEC supported Industry Sector Partnerships are utilizing the platform.

The easy-to-use platform allows job seekers to explore careers throughout the region and meet numerous employers without having to travel, which is especially important for job seekers with transportation barriers and in rural areas of the region. Job seekers are able to upload their resume so participating employers can view the resume and chat with candidates directly and even conduct on-the-spot virtual interviews. Employers also benefit by not having to travel to an in-person fair or staff a booth and reach a broader range of applicants. In addition, they are able to post openings, log in to the fair, meet with and then follow-up with candidates. AJCC staff prepare job seekers for the virtual events through resume development and virtual job fair resume workshops.

Although COVID-19 accelerated the pace at which organizations turned to virtual engagement, NoRTEC believes the results will keep this format in place post-COVID-19. Staff, partners, job seekers, and employers have reported several benefits of the system including:

- Ease of use;
- Ability to scale an event to any size;
- Unlimited access to the event;
- Alleviation of transportation barriers; and
- Robust reporting and tools to increase efficiency and effectiveness and allow for follow-up.

NoRTEC and its partners have experienced the benefits and successes of enhanced websites, live chat features, and increased virtual appointments, services, workshops, and job fairs. With the observed benefits, NoRTEC and its partners will continue to embrace and support the use of technology to facilitate access to AJCC services for job seekers and employers across the region.

Industry Sector Partnerships

NoRTEC is also a leader in Next Generation Industry Sector Partnerships (Next Gen IPs), a sector strategy to coordinate and align workforce, education, economic development, and other public and community partners to support an industry. A Next Gen IP is a partnership of businesses from the same industry and in a shared labor market region who work with economic development, education, workforce development, and community organizations to address the overall competitiveness needs of the targeted industry. By addressing these business-driven priorities, Next Gen IPs not only support the overall competitiveness of an industry and regional economy and promote cross-sector collaboration, but they also benefit workers, students, and the broader community by connecting people to career pathways. In turn, NoRTEC supports this model for these benefits along with the training and credential attainment, increased wages, talent recruitment, and increased career and industry awareness supported by Next Gen IPs.

The Next Gen IPs are another way that NoRTEC and its partners are reaching the more remote and rural areas of the region. As a result of COVID-19, partnership meetings occur virtually, and this has resulted in increased outreach and participation in remote areas. There are currently six Industry Sector Partnerships in the NoRTEC region and additional information can be found in the WIOA Regional Plan and at NoRTEC's Next Generation Industry Sector Partnerships page. Two Industry Sector Partnerships specifically focus on rural healthcare:

> **Rural Healthcare Collaborative:** There are two partnership efforts supporting the healthcare sector needs in the rural communities. Service providers AFWD and SMART are working together to support these partnerships. AFWD is expanding their partnership which has been in operation since 2016, and SMART is just starting a partnership. AFWD is aligning the Modoc partnership with the SMART and the HWY 299 Healthcare Collaborative. This partnership will promote and increase employer engagement throughout NoRTEC's most rural counties. AFWD will take its model for rural healthcare engagement and expand to eastern Shasta County and Siskiyou County. Working together, the partners will provide needed support to the HWY 299 Healthcare Collaborative which primarily serves as a recruitment tool for partner facilities. The collaboratives serve Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Shasta, and Siskiyou Counties.
>
> Healthcare organizations serve rural communities with limited resources and funding, and struggle with recruiting, training and retaining talent. The collaboratives formed to support the unique needs of rural healthcare. A more robust collaborative will leverage resources and workforce supports across the region. This will promote and increase employer engagement throughout NoRTEC's most rural counties. These projects work to align education, workforce, and industry to provide real-time industry needs to ensure there is an adequate labor pool to meet current and future demands. Efforts focus on reducing employer recruitment and turnover costs, increase employee retention, increase job placements, and provide career pathway opportunities for currently employed workers.
>
> COVID-19 created challenges and opportunities that demanded healthcare professionals work in new ways. This collaborative can help with information sharing and resources to support healthcare professionals in the rural counties to effectively support community members. Even prior to the COVID-19 effects on the economy, the rural areas were experiencing difficulty both attracting and retaining high quality employees. Rural hospitals and clinics were already stretched thin from a staffing standpoint. Now these facilities are under tremendous financial strain. With the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, workforce development services will be vital to the sustainability of rural healthcare facilities.

The collaborative set out to use real-time, employer-validated data to identify specific needs. The partnership regularly identifies and shares critical and hard to fill positions highlighting job titles, companies reporting the position, skills needed for the position, ideal candidate qualifications, and number of open positions.

The Grow Manufacturing Initiative has confirmed a 2021 Partnership goal to focus industry engagement and outreach into more rural areas. Due to the pandemic, the annual GMI Expo that usually takes place at California State University, Chico needed to pivot to a virtual platform in order to maintain engagement with educational partners about manufacturing careers available throughout our region. This resulted in more engagement from our rural partners who were prohibited by lack of funding and/or transportation to attend an in-person event.

Through the support of the Next Gen Industry Sector Partnership team, the rural Healthcare and Manufacturing Industry Sector Partnerships are participating on a national forum with other rural partnerships to facilitate the development of a Rural Regional Support Partner Team. The goal of the support network is to align efforts and assist move Partnership initiatives forward in our rural areas. The NoRTEC rural team includes representatives from Shasta College, Butte College, CSU Chico, Shasta EDC, and 3Core.

Service Delivery

Supportive Services

Supportive services are critical for many of NoRTEC's customers to ensure that they can overcome obstacles to completing training or staying in a job. Staff at the AJCCs are well-trained on the services that are available through the AJCC or other means in the county and surrounding areas to offer to those who are in need. Supportive services provided by NoRTEC and its Services Providers to individuals with barriers to employment may include, but are not limited to, linkages to community services, assistance with transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, educational testing, reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, legal aid services, referrals to healthcare, work attire, and work-related tools. Additional supportive services available include assistance with necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes that are not covered under an ITA (Individual Training Account), as well as payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications. NoRTEC and its Service Providers' networks of relationships with other community partners are especially important for referring individuals to support services when they are not available through the AJCC. NoRTEC will continue to build upon current relationships to create an even stronger network of partners, targeting areas of the region and service types where gaps are found to exist.

NoRTEC's Supportive Service Policy allows for the provision of supportive services at the discretion of the service provider. For WIOA-only customers, NoRTEC fosters the coordination and leveraging of other personal and/or community resources to fill these needs so that NoRTEC training investments can be used to their highest capacity. Training and best practice sharing for frontline staff is routinely provided to ensure effective coordination of resources.

Additionally, NoRTEC has compiled and published a regional Asset Inventory that geographically locates regional partners who provide services related to, or supportive of, workforce development activities. Partners have utilized this virtual platform to build out additional career pathway criteria. The inventory is not exhaustive and does not include all supportive services throughout the region, but it can be used as a starting point to identify partners who may be able to provide WIOA customers with additional resources and support. The inventory can be filtered by county and category. The inventory is

continuously updated as additional resources are identified to ensure that frontline staff in the region have a good understanding of the resources that are available, and customers have access to the most comprehensive list of opportunities possible.

Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

In the delivery of its programs, NoRTEC's Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policy states no one shall be excluded from participation, denied benefits, subjected to discrimination, or denied gainful employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. NoRTEC and all Service Providers provide services to the broadest populations possible utilizing the universal access approach outlined in WIOA.

NoRTEC and subrecipient offices and AJCC sites are designed to accommodate the needs of physically and mentally disabled individuals, as appropriate:

- AJCCs provide intake, assessment, and referrals that are accessible.
- WIOA participants and staff may request medically necessary accommodations by putting their request in writing and submitting it to their point of contact in the NoRTEC AJCC system. All requests shall be reviewed and responded to by the EO Officer and/or Executive Staff of NoRTEC or its subrecipients, as appropriate.
- Programs and activities shall be conducted in the most integrated setting appropriate for qualified disabled individuals.
- Programs and services, when viewed in their entirety, shall be accessible.

AJCC Certification

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) establishes a framework under which local workforce development boards are responsible for maintaining a network of high quality, effective AJCCs (America's Job Centers of California). Local boards are required to "certify" their AJCCs once every three years. The WIOA regulations outlines three key requirements for AJCC certification: (1) effectiveness of the AJCC, (2) physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities and (3) continuous improvement. The California Workforce Development Board developed criteria and procedures for local boards to use when certifying AJCCs and set a statewide standard of service delivery that ensures all customers consistently receive a high-quality level of service.

In order for to implement the CWDB's AJCC Certification and its criteria requirements, a comprehensive evaluation process was established. The process is specific to the two certification levels through the following phases: Self-Assessment, Baseline Certification Evaluation and Hallmarks of Excellence Certification Evaluation. In accordance with WSD 16-20, NoRTEC will conduct the AJCC Certification process, which includes the two certification levels, every three years.

The Baseline Certification ensures that every AJCC follows key WIOA statutory and regulatory requirements. In 2017, this process was completed with all 13 AJCCs baseline certified. Each AJCC is reviewed annually for baseline certification.

The Hallmarks of Excellence Certification is more in-depth and is intended to encourage continuous improvement by identifying areas where improvement is needed. There are eight Hallmarks that must be evaluated and they are to be ranked on a 1-5 scale. In order to be certified as a "Hallmark Center,"

the AJCC must receive rankings of at least a "3" on each of the eight Hallmark areas. In 2018, NoRTEC staff completed evaluations and rankings for all 13 AJCCs: NoRTEC AJCC Certification Action

NoRTEC works with our local providers to ensure improvements in areas that have been identified through the annual AJCC Continual Improvement Plan.

Equal Opportunity Officer

NoRTEC has a designated Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer that is responsible for addressing equal opportunity issues that arise as a result of questions that people may have in regard to the proper implementation of Section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The EO Officer provides EO training to Service Providers and staff throughout the region. The EO training consists of a review of the laws and provisions as well as opportunities for staff to view and evaluate scenarios where EO violations may be occurring.

The EO Officer also completes a review of EO compliance by WIOA Service Providers in the course of monitoring reviews each year. The Compliance Monitoring Checklist issued by NoRTEC must be completed annually. Providers must have proper EO signage in place, and their facilities must be accessible to individuals with disabilities following ADA guidelines. They must also demonstrate how they are able to provide services to people with disabilities or those who need translation or interpretation assistance. The NoRTEC EO Officer also reviews the availability of assistive technology at all AJCC sites.

NoRTEC will continue to work to:

- Expand awareness to assist individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment via:
  a. Communication and confidentiality,
  b. Disclosure and permissions,
  c. Accommodation requests, equipment, tools, auxiliary aids, and
  d. Inclusive/integrated service delivery that encourages full access and participation in WIOA and One-Stop activities.
- Review partner activities and policies related to access and provision of services by individuals with barriers to employment to establish best practices and cross agency standards.

State Strategic Partner Coordination

County Health and Human Services Agencies and CalFresh Employment and Training services

NoRTEC, CalFresh partners, and the local AJCC work together to provide clients with workforce services. Through this partnership, referral systems have been set up in each of the 11 counties for a better customer experience for individuals who access CalFresh Employment and Training services. NoRTEC and its partners are aware of numerous barriers faced by the individuals, so efforts are being made to coordinate activities. On-going coordination meetings ensure partner agencies share who is doing what and coordinate activities that address barriers and service needs.

Partners agreed that substance abuse and mental health issues are among the biggest barriers facing their clients. Transportation is also a significant barrier to employment because the area is geographically large and spread out. In Nevada County, it is difficult for people to find full time jobs in their area while also taking care of children. Housing availability and affordability were also identified as issues by partners. Furthermore, rural counties lack sufficient resources to serve their client population; staff are few and are required to perform many different roles, which makes it difficult to provide clients with the support that they need.

CalFresh partners have expressed a desire for more subsidized employment opportunities for their clients, as well as more on-the-job training opportunities. Human Service Agencies (HSAs) in the region refer clients to the AJCCs for job search assistance, training, and supportive services. In addition to the AJCCs, CalFresh entities partner with colleges, Probation Departments (for employment and training services at their day reporting center), and the Child Abuse Prevention Council. For the subset of CalFresh recipients who also receive General Assistance/Relief, county HSAs also have dedicated staff to work with those individuals on their employment goals.

Local Child Support Agencies

Required partners including core WIOA partners and the Local Child Support Agencies (LCSA) for NoRTEC's eleven counties continue to meet regularly and work together to serve non-custodial parents. During the meetings, some of the items that are discussed include LCSA demographic data, partnership/relationship, barriers, and services.

LCSAs have previously reported that they are unable to provide demographic data on their client population without permission and assistance from their state agency. Despite repeated requests and advocacy by LCSA partners on behalf of NoRTEC, the efforts were ultimately unsuccessful in acquiring that data.

Many LCSAs work closely with the AJCC staff in their areas or are in the process of establishing that relationship. For example, in Tehama County, child support clients are required to attend workshops at the AJCC in Red Bluff, and the instructor signs to verify their attendance. Some child support case managers have received or will receive training on AJCC resources and programs, and some LCSAs are working with their AJCCs to ensure that a good referral process is in place for clients who need workforce services.

Two of the major barriers to employment for child support clients, as identified by partners, are criminal records and a lack of transportation. The LCSAs do not have the resources to provide motivational tools or supportive services directly, but the degree to which child support clients are referred to other community services or resources for support varies from LCSA to LCSA. Efforts are being made to increase consistency across referrals and to share information about available resources through tools such as NoRTEC's Workforce Asset Service Directory.

Child support clients who utilize the AJCCs are able to access the full range of AJCC services, including career counseling, job search assistance, training, supportive services, and referrals to other community services.

In the past, LCSA partners expressed interest in partnering in a number of ways, including having a single point of contact at the AJCC and more individualized attention for clients referred to the AJCC. NoRTEC is working to address the variety of requests.

There are partnership agreements in place describing on-going and future collaboration. Furthermore, in order to enhance future communication and information sharing, NoRTEC added the LSCAs to their newsletter distribution list and has made efforts to increase communications.

Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint

The NoRTEC region falls under two Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) districts: The Redwood Empire District and the Northern Sierra District. A Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) is in place between DOR and NoRTEC. The Redwood Empire District Administrator is currently serving as the point of contact for NoRTEC with regards to DOR. NoRTEC meets with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint

partners on an ongoing basis. Efforts are continually made to coordinate activities to better serve individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Discussions take place during regular meetings on the status of local planning efforts and ways that NoRTEC and its AJCCs may be helpful in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD). Efforts are continually made to strengthen the referral process between AJCCs and regional centers and DOR and education partners, to ensure that consumers do not fall through the cracks. The partners work together to refine the referral process to maximize the number of consumers with ID/DD who are able to utilize the AJCCs. While education partners most often encounter the majority of these consumers and could potentially connect other partner services via the IEP process, parents need to agree to allow any other organizations to be part of the process.

NoRTEC provides support to the Competitive Integrated Employment effort through outreach to employers. As materials are developed to educate employers about the benefits of employing individuals with disabilities, business services staff are able to help reach employers and provide them with information and referrals, including to DOR for paid work experience and job coaches.

DOR has not developed any specific trainings on serving consumers with ID/DD yet, however they do provide Windmills training. DOR also intends to make training available on all the core partners' services including the IEP process. NoRTEC and individual AJCC's will coordinate with DOR for needed staff development. DOR will continue to conduct "WIOA Training Topics" trainings "ADA Basics" and "Serving Customers with Disabilities," which staff will attend as appropriate.

English Language Learners, Foreign Born, and/or Refugees

NoRTEC and its partners continue to coordinate with community-based organizations and local partners who serve individuals who are English Language Learners (ELL), foreign born, and/or refugees. Given the rural nature of NoRTEC's area as well as the small number of English Language Learners, available services are somewhat limited. However, NoRTEC and its providers are serving these populations. One of the respondents on the workforce partner survey noted its appreciation for the number of bilingual staff that are available at the AJCC and the training programs that available with Spanish speaking instructors. NoRTEC and its service providers continue to actively engage in county-level outreach and coordinate with local organizations.

For example, Job Training Center (JTC) staff attended the annual Health & Wellness Care Hop hosted by Latino Outreach of Tehama County and Anthem Blue Cross. Staff provided information on jobs, training, and the 2020 Census. The JTC also received Workforce Accelerator funding to create Spanish video and outreach materials to engage the Latinx population about employment and career opportunities. The content utilizes prominent local Latinx professionals as a way of reaching more broadly to English Language Learners. Another example is AFWD's work with the North State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, which is one of the first Chambers of Commerce in the area to support underserved individuals. The group endeavors to bring minority business owners together to promote equity and knowledge wealth. AFWD translated both business and client services flyers to be distributed in an attempt to expand support in the community to Spanish-speaking employers and job seekers in the region. AFWD has several staff members who are bilingual in English and Spanish and also offers translation and interpretation services in additional languages through a professional agency.

The primary provider of services to migrant seasonal farm workers in the area is California Human Development (CHD) which offers employment and living assistance services to low-income farmworkers, farmworker family members, and others in NoRTEC's counties. CHD creates paths and opportunities for migrant/seasonal farm workers seeking greater self-sufficiency, independence and dignity through education, training, criminal justice alternatives, housing, and other services. Working together with

County Social Services, WIOA, EDD, DOR and other onsite partners, CHD provides outreach, intake, and orientation to employment services available at or through the AJCCs in each county.

As noted, some services for ELL, refugees, and foreign born are limited due to the vast geographic size of the region resulting in additional challenges and barriers. According to partners, some classes for ELL students are available via adult education and community colleges, but there are a limited number of certified ESL instructors in the area. Adult education schools struggle with providing classes in ways that are supportive of ELL individuals as well as all students with jobs and families. In Siskiyou County, once the adult education school started providing childcare, enrollment increased. Another challenge is that given the vast geographical spread of some of the counties, transportation is a major challenge for students to be able to access services which can be even more challenging for ELL students.

Partner organizations are making sure to connect all students, including ELL students, with career pathways and living wage jobs by referring them to the AJCCs which are located in every county. California Human Development (CHD) is focusing its efforts on connecting students with apprenticeships because of the higher wages and benefits. Currently they are mainly helping students access the laborers apprenticeship, since it does not require a high school diploma.

With regards to gaps in services and outreach efforts, some partners report that it is currently difficult to gauge the true demand because of the political climate at the federal level. Potential ELL, foreign-born, or refugee students are reluctant to seek services or to connect with organizations which may inquire about personal information. Partners report from past experience that flyers or other written outreach materials are not as effective with these students; word-of-mouth appears to be one of the primary ways that ELL individuals find out about services.

WIOA Title I Coordination

Digital Fluency and Distance Learning

NoRTEC and its service providers continue to invest in training and professional development. Recent activities have focused on ensuring staff gain and expand proficiency in digital fluency and distance learning which has become even more important due to the pandemic. NoRTEC will continue to invest in and support training and professional development opportunities for frontline staff similar to the following examples of recent trainings completed by staff.

Staff across the region participated in a variety of virtual professional development opportunities. Many of the trainings focused on serving customers virtually. Specific examples include: An Educator's Guide to Teaching Over Zoom; Leading and Learning: Effectively Leveraging Experiences in the Pandemic; Reimagining Workforce Services for a Virtual World; Protecting Your Office 365 Data in a Remote Work Environment; Higher Education Zoom Opportunities This Week and in the Future; Mock Virtual Hiring Event; Customer Service Virtual Training; Career Advising Fundamentals; and CareerOneStop to Provide Virtual Career and Job Services. These trainings have enhanced AJCC staff ability to effectively deliver services virtually to job seekers and employers.

Additionally, frontline staff attended a week-long Training Online Essentials program through the University of California San Diego. The training took place virtually and staff learned fundamental strategies and tools to support online lessons and workshops. Staff attending this training could then share the strategies with other staff to increase their proficiency in virtual and distance learning. Due to the training being virtual, more staff were able to attend the conference because there were no travel expenses.

NoRTEC also invested in Premier Virtual®, a virtual platform designed for virtual job fairs and career events. In order to gain buy-in from regional partners and service providers, NoRTEC hosts "mock" events to demonstrate the ease of navigation, how to set up a virtual employer booth and to demonstrate how job seekers can register for the event. NoRTEC has held various industry led hiring events that have resulted in positive feedback from employers and job seekers. Some of the hiring events have so many interested businesses that registration had to be closed. The platform will allow staff to deliver virtual job fairs and connect local employers with job seekers as well as better coordinate with educational partners.

Seeing the value and benefit of the training as well as the movement to more virtual services, NoRTEC will continue to invest in training and professional development for staff to expand proficiency in digital fluency and distance learning.

Cultural Competencies and Trauma-Exposed Populations

NoRTEC and its service providers continue to invest in staff completing training and professional development to ensure cultural competencies and an understanding of trauma-exposed populations. The catastrophic fires in recent years have had a significant impact on the region including staff. Residents throughout the region have experienced various fire-related traumas. In addition to the trauma resulting from the fires and pandemic, job seekers across the region have been exposed to a variety of other personal traumas such as job loss, homelessness, or abuse. In addition to trauma, job seekers experience inequities in employment, wages, etc., therefore NoRTEC has committed to supporting staff in training and professional development opportunities. Examples of recent trainings completed by staff include: Suicide Intervention Training; Preventing Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination in the Workplace; Managing Across Generations; Customer Service Success with Angry and Challenging Customers; Workforce Accelerator Fund Brain-Based Approach to Understanding & Working with Survivors of Trauma; and First 5 Trauma Informed Practices.

As one specific example, staff attended the North State Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) VIRTUAL Summit, hosted by Northern ACEs Collaborative (NAC), a division of the Population Health Innovation Lab (PHIL), a program of the Public Health Institute. The virtual summit included presentations and breakout sessions led by experts to address the following objectives: raising awareness of the disproportionate high rates of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores in the North State of California; increasing participant understanding of the effects of ACEs on individuals and communities leading to a more trauma-informed region; providing a platform for relationship building through dialogue and information sharing; and providing both short-term and long-term solutions to addressing ACEs and the linkages to the Social Determinants of Health.

Additionally, because of the virtual format, numerous AJCC staff from across the region were able to attend the Virtual CWA Conference WorkCON 2020. NoRTEC sponsored many staff in the region to attend. Diversity and equity were major topics at the conference, providing numerous strategies to front-line staff.

Individuals experiencing homelessness often have experienced trauma in their background. Therefore, NoRTEC is supporting staff increasing their understanding of homeless clients through professional development. Various staff attended the webinar "Homeless Clients: Compassionate Solutions to Problematic Behavior" which discussed how to empathetically manage problematic behaviors in homeless clients and encouraged staff to look deeper into their clients' behaviors. Many individuals in the homeless community have experienced trauma that influences the way their brain functions and how they respond to situations. The training also reminded staff to take in all factors of a situation, which provided an important reminder for working with any trauma-exposed population.

In addition to trainings, NoRTEC and its partners actively engage and align with regional efforts around access, equity, and inclusion. For example, Shasta College SCAILE (Shasta College Attainment and Innovation Lab for Equity) recently released the **Special Programs Data Report 2021** featuring community based strategies for postsecondary attainment, innovation, and equity. The group is focused on strategies to increase educational attainment and reduce equity gaps and build upon successes in the North State.

Regionally, there is a focus on race, equity, diversity, and inclusion and NoRTEC partners regularly share virtual technical assistance opportunities. For example, in a recent Cal Chamber virtual event, one of the primary focus areas was the race, equity, diversity, and inclusion training series. During the session, the attendees were able to listen to a thought provoking and engaging presentation as well obtain information on how to maintain momentum on current conversations related to race and equity. Nate Baptiste, founder of EDI Mindfulness Consulting, LLC, was the presenter.

Seeing the value and benefit of the trainings, as well as the need, NoRTEC will continue to invest in training and professional development for frontline staff to ensure cultural competencies and an understanding of trauma-exposed populations. The trainings will assist the region in continuing the conversation and focusing on improvements to service delivery for all populations.

Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities

NoRTEC coordinates with statewide activities to provide early support and connection to employment and training services for participants who are affected by layoff events. NoRTEC and its service providers have a strong connection with county and regional economic development and maintain regular communication to support employers at risk for layoffs. Collaboration between workforce development, economic development, and statewide activities are available to assist companies and dislocated workers with the goal of assisting workers in returning to work as quickly as possible. A response can be coordinated quickly and tailored to the needs dictated by the situation.

While the region's focus for dislocated worker programs is minimizing periods of unemployment and rapid transition to new employment, it is also understood that businesses may experience a variety of stressors in day-to-day operations resulting in the consideration of layoffs or even business closure. Effective Layoff Aversion and Rapid Response requires Business Service Representatives (BSRs) to build relationships with the local business community, pay attention to early warning signs of economic stress to businesses, and proactively reach out to those businesses to discuss issues and potential solutions. BSRs have various tools at their disposal to assist with proactive layoff aversion strategies such as assistance obtaining loans, employee training, and other assistance to keep businesses competitive. Layoff aversion efforts are intended to provide consultation service, training options, feedback, and information to businesses that would potentially allow the business to avoid layoffs or closure.

Consultations may occur as an onsite, in-person meeting or other form of communication (e.g., conference call, online chat, Skype, etc.). Engagement includes a representative of the employer involved with decision making authority within the company. The content of the discussion will include the well-being of the business, training needs, labor market information, economic development corporation referrals, and other relevant information to determine how to best serve the business and its needs. There are several identifiers to consider while working through the assessment process with the business: health of the local economy and the business cycle; business's marketing and outreach activities; debt to income ratio; cash flow; business plan; and training of current employees.

When a business discusses its challenges with a Business Services Representative, the business is referred to appropriate consultation, training, financial, or other resources. If the services or referrals provided by Service Providers result in jobs saved, the BSR must obtain certification from the business

relating to the layoff aversion activity and number of jobs saved and submit it to the Rapid Response Coordinator. A layoff is averted when: 1) a worker's job is saved with an existing employer that is at risk of downsizing or closing, or 2) a worker at risk of dislocation transitions to a different job with the same employer or a new job with a different employer and experiences short-term or no unemployment. To be considered as a job saved, the maximum period of unemployment shall not exceed one week.

The COVID 19 NoRTEC Business Survey that was implemented across the region in 2020 and 2021 was reviewed weekly and forwarded to a Business Service Representative if there was any indication the business needed immediate assistance or was in danger of closing within the next three months. NoRTEC likewise reviews financial stress indicators of regional industries from Duns & Bradstreet utilizing the EconoVue platform. Industry information is discussed at monthly Business Service Representative Meeting and placed on the Slack page for immediate review from our service providers.

Rapid Response Teams

When businesses must close their doors, NoRTEC's Rapid Response teams help employers plan effectively, comply with federal and state regulations, reduce stress, bolster employee morale, and help guide dislocated workers through practical re-employment. Led by a Rapid Response Coordinator at each AJCC, the teams are pro-active and business-focused, and they respond to a closure as quickly as possible, often within 24-48 hours of receiving notice that the business plans to close. The Rapid Response Teams are comprised of representatives from workforce development, unemployment insurance services, community-based organizations, AJCC partners, community colleges, and any other service or agency that is focused on providing services to the displaced workers.

The Rapid Response teams take pre-emptive action to manage layoffs more effectively by quickly providing information to companies and workers about comprehensive outplacement services and unemployment insurance. These teams work with businesses to swiftly maximize public and private resources and minimize the disruptions on companies, affected workers, as well as communities affected with job loss. These services are available without any cost to the business or workers.

Team members and service provider staff provide on-site orientations and eligibility services to immediately begin working with the displaced workers. This approach helps minimize the frustration associated with job loss for the displaced workers.

NoRTEC service providers will continue to offer services and provide access through partnerships to adult education, job training, postsecondary education, registered apprenticeship, career advancement activities, and supportive services. All of these are aligned with economic and community development strategies to meet the skill needs of existing and emerging regional employers and high-growth occupations as well as the needs of under-skilled adults.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Activities

Each of NoRTEC's 11 counties has at least one physical AJCC offering adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities. Within the NoRTEC WDA, there are 13 AJCC facilities. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker formula programs are critical pieces of the AJCC delivery system providing workforce development resources and activities in the region. The AJCC delivery system's intent is to be employer-driven, and to provide value-added, "just in time" career and training services for jobseekers and current workers. WIOA services can be provided in any order and allow the AJCC service delivery approach to be customized and customer-centric.

All participants have access to a series of opportunities including information on relevant employment trends, job referral, job placement, etc. Career services through the AJCCs include a menu of job seeker

services for customers to access that are either self-directed or staff-assisted all with th goal of ensuring these services are universally available and easily accessible to job seekers in the region.

Individuals who access self-service options are not enrolled in the WIOA program. Individuals receiving staff-assisted career services are required to be enrolled in the adult and/or dislocated worker programs. If an individual is unable to obtain or retain employment through self-directed or staff-assisted career services, training services may be considered. Training services will only be extended for occupations that are in demand in the NoRTEC service area or in an area outside NoRTEC where the participant is willing to relocate. The same is true for employed individuals, except that these individuals must be earning less than a self-sufficient wage or be presented with a different job that provides a higher wage or a better opportunity for advancement.

When self-directed services are not sufficient to assist a job seeker with obtaining work, he/she may then meet with an AJCC staff member for staff-assisted services. This begins with an assessment of the skills, abilities, and aptitudes of the job seeker, and culminates with the development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). The IEP is a blueprint, mutually developed and agreed upon by the job seeker and the case manager, that outlines the activities the job seeker must complete successfully in order to obtain and retain employment. The IEP also includes a plan for remediating barriers to employment the participant might be facing such as childcare issues, transportation difficulties, etc., and if training is necessary, the IEP will outline where the training will be accessed and how it will be paid for. The plan is then implemented under the guidance and oversight of AJCC case management staff who maintain frequent and consistent contact with the participant. Once the participant obtains employment, a follow-up plan will be developed, if necessary, to ensure the individual remains employed. Partner agencies may participate in joint case management activities to facilitate participant success.

Priority of Service

Individuals enrolled in the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs must meet eligibility criteria outlined in NoRTEC's Policy Statement for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs. The policy describes the region's priority of services for (A) Veterans and Eligible Spouses, and (B) Public Assistance Recipients, Low Income, and Basic Skills Deficient Adults. All WIOA programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) are required to provide priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses of veterans. The Adult program is additionally required to provide priority of service to: public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals that are basic skills deficient. NoRTEC applies priority of service in the following order (for the Adult program):

1. Veterans and eligible spouses (also known as "covered persons") who meet the mandatory priorities (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient) must receive the highest level of priority for WIOA programs and services.
2. Non-covered persons who are part the Adult program's priority of service groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient) receive the second level of priority for WIOA programs and services.
3. Veterans and eligible spouses ("covered persons") who are not public assistance recipients, low income, or basic skills deficient, receive the third level of priority for WIOA programs and services.
4. Non-covered persons who are not part of the Adult program's priority of service groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient) receive the fourth level of priority for WIOA programs and services.

Description of Services

Basic Career Services are considered "universal services" and do not require eligibility determination or enrollment into the WIOA program. These career services are delivered by

AJCC staff either through orientation workshops or one-on-one engagement. Some of the services can also be accessed on the CalJOBS website. The services carry no additional costs that must be paid to outside vendors on behalf of the participants. Basic career services include, but are not limited to:

- Determination of whether an individual is eligible to receive assistance under the WIOA Adult, Dislocated worker, or Youth programs;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to the information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system;
- Initial assessment of skill levels (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency), aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs.
- Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, career counseling (if needed) which includes provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and provision of information on nontraditional employment; and appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers including small employers in the local area.
- Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs within the AJCC delivery system, and when appropriate, other workforce development programs;
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including: Job vacancy listings in relevant labor market areas; Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs; and Information relating to local occupations in demand, the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for such occupations.
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on training services by program type and provider (e.g., California's ETPL (eligible training provider list), providers of adult education services under Title II of WIOA, providers of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).
- Provision of information on how NoRTEC is performing on performance accountability measures, as well as any other performance information relevant to the one-stop delivery system.
- Provision of information, and referral to such services, related to the availability of supportive services or assistance, including child care, child support, medical or child heath assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program, benefits under SNAP, assistance through the earned income tax credit, housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and assistance under a State TANF program (and other supportive services and transportation through that program).
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim.
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not funded under WIOA.

Individualized Career Services are not considered universal services, and individuals who receive them must be eligible under WIOA and enrolled in the WIOA program as a participant. These services are accessed through one of NoRTEC's 13 AJCCs. Individualized Career Services are those that are appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment, and include the following:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adult and dislocated workers, including diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools, and in-depth

interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.

- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the provision of information on eligible providers of training services and career pathways to attain career objectives.
- Group and individual counseling.
- Career planning.
- Short-term prevocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers.
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment.
- Financial literacy services.
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance.
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
- Follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants placed in unsubsidized employment for up to 12 months after the first day of employment, as appropriate.

Training Services are not considered universal services, and individuals who receive them must be eligible under WIOA and enrolled in the WIOA program as a participant. These services are accessed in-person at any one of NoRTEC's 13 AJCCs. Training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who:

- A one-stop center or one-stop partner determines, after an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning, are:
    - Unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services;
    - In need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; and
    - Have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services.
- Select a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate.
- Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay costs of such training, including such sources as State-funded training funds, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Federal Pell Grants, or require WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance.

Training services include, but are not limited to:

- Occupational skills training (provided through an Individual Training Account), including training for nontraditional employment, and apprenticeships.
- On-the-Job training (OJT).
- Incumbent worker training.

- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs.
- Training programs operated by the private sector.
- Skill upgrading and retraining.
- Entrepreneurial training.
- Transitional jobs.
- Job readiness training provided in combination with services described in training services listed above.
- Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services described in items training services listed above.
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

Follow-up Services may be provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment.

Youth Workforce Investment Activities

The goals of NoRTEC's youth programs are to improve long-term employability; enhance educational, occupational, and citizenship skills; encourage education completion; increase employment and earnings; and reduce future dependency on social service programs for youth participants.

Services are provided to those who have been determined to need and are able to benefit from, such services. The majority of youth enrolled in the program will be economically disadvantaged (up to 5% may be not economically disadvantaged, but must have one or more barriers to employment), and all will have one or more barriers to employment including: basic skills deficient, high school dropout, subject to juvenile or adult justice system, homeless, pregnant or parent, runaway, in or aged out of foster care, disability, or requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or to hold employment.

The Youth program consists of the following elements:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. Paid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include: a. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the year; b. Pre-apprenticeship programs; c. Internships and job shadowing; and d. OJT (on-the-job) training opportunities.
4. Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations within NoRTEC's service area;
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;
7. Supportive Services;
8. Adult mentoring (for not less than 12 months);

9. Follow-up services (for not less than 12 months, as appropriate);
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
11. Financial literacy education;
12. Entrepreneurial skills training;
13. Services that provide labor market information and employment information about in demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Success in meeting the unique needs of hard-to-serve youth has been demonstrated through NoRTEC's programs that enhance the basic educational skills of youth, encourage secondary school completion or enrollment in supplementary or alternative school programs, and that provide youth with work-based learning opportunities. The programs that are in place are designed to develop and reinforce a positive orientation to work for economically disadvantaged youth. NoRTEC's service providers have strong working relationships with agencies such as Department of Rehabilitation to serve youth with disabilities. The providers also have relationships with local high school districts (including alternative high schools) and community colleges, Foster Youth and Independent Living Programs, Juvenile and Adult Probation, Social Services/Teen Parent Programs, and other local community-based organizations. Youth referred from these partner agencies have the benefit of completing their educational and employment goals with additional support and wraparound resources.

A key component of NoRTEC's youth programs is the strong linkage to local employers. Through collaboration with Business Services teams, jobsites are developed on an ongoing basis for enrolled youth to participate in paid work experience, OJTs, and job shadowing. Youth programs are regarded as a resource to employers, and business owners have had input in all areas of job readiness training.

Referrals are received through all local partner agencies who serve youth. Outreach and recruitment efforts are ongoing and provided through presentations to partner staff as well as directly to youth through high school and community presentations, social media accounts (Facebook), and other social media outlets (Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter).

All youth that are referred for the program meet with a staff member, and if they are eligible for services, that team member generally becomes their case manager for their duration of their participation in the program, including follow-up. The development of this relationship is crucial to the success of the youth and the program. Following eligibility sign off, the assessment process begins, reviewing the path for each youth. Youth case managers use an assessment interview to address background information including social, behavioral, and substance abuse issues, financial circumstances, academic history, work history, basic skills, work readiness skills, and occupational skills. The youth client also completes interest, aptitude, and personality assessments to help them determine which career industry/pathway is a good choice for them to pursue. Current and relevant labor market information is always explained to the youth and is used as an important component in the guidance and development of an occupational training plan.

The information gathered during the initial assessment period is used to produce the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The ISS is used to ensure that the youth has contributed to the development of their plan and has had the opportunity to learn self-advocacy skills, ensuring a higher level of buy-in and accountability. Upon completion of each incentivized and planned activity, the youth may also be eligible for a cash incentive.

Basic skills deficiencies are often addressed prior to placing the youth in a work site learning opportunity when appropriate, and educational goals take priority over work-based activities if so indicated in the youth's service strategy. NoRTEC youth programs have seen challenges in asking youth to focus solely on educational goals before the opportunity to participate in a work placement, so in many cases, a plan is developed to work concurrently on educational attainment and work-based learning goals. In some instances, an incentive may be available when educational goals are completed.

Youth services are embedded within the local AJCCs and the program focuses on out-of-school youth (OSY). This structure leverages many services offered to adult customers and prevents unnecessary duplication. When a young person enters the AJCC, they are greeted, and basic information is gathered verbally to determine if they would be best served with youth or adult services. Those 18-24 year olds that have few/no barriers to employment and a positive work history may be served through the AJCC's adult program. Sixteen and 17 year olds, and 18-24 year olds that have severe barriers to employment and/or a poor work history will have a need for more intensive case management services that are provided through the youth program. These youth will be encouraged to fill out an application and attend a orientation session specifically designed for youth.

NoRTEC subcontracts with a diverse group of service providers with deep community connections and capacity to meet the region's diverse geographic and demographic needs. These providers assist NoRTEC in developing and implementing integrated education and training models that provide accelerated learning opportunities for youth lacking a high school credential and/or who are basic skills deficient.

According to updated Labor Market Information and Demographic studies and to the insights gathered from partners, a focus on youth in the region is critical to address the shrinking pool of talent. NoRTEC will work to develop alternative career pathways and innovative strategies that meet the needs of at-risk youth, with an emphasis on targeting dropouts and reengaging them into education and employment.

Youth Programming

NoRTEC youth service providers have also implemented innovative, individualized training related to entrepreneurship and small business development for interested youth to foster the entrepreneurial spirit, teach the necessary skills, and provide opportunities and incentives to pursue business ideas. These may include business development, market research, income statements, producing a commercial, outreach, project management and investment strategies. Enrolled youth receive instruction and demonstrate skills in analytical thinking, public speaking, dressing for success, communication, time management and social responsibility. For example, SMART youth services collaborate with the Young Entrepreneur Program at Shasta College where youth participate in a mock business startup using "Know Opportunity," a board game that focuses on addressing the gap between contextualized learning and real-world application of skills and college options.

Job Training Center of Tehama County's Accelerator program "Launching Latino Youth" includes outreach events and activities designed to accelerate and expand career awareness and improve opportunity and access to services, as well as to increase the number of youth participating in internships and mentoring activities.

In Del Norte County, SMART offers the E3 (Experience, Education, Employment) program. E3 is available during summer months and is for incoming high school juniors, seniors, and recent graduates. The program provides youth with a paid internship and the opportunity to earn up to 10 high school elective credits for participating in the program. Youth also earn wages during the work experience. The wages are a key component of supporting the youth, which have many barriers to education and employment.

The program provides valuable work experiences that develop critical employability skills, helping prepare the youth for future full-time employment.

Digital Literacy and Fluency

As with all populations served by NoRTEC and its service providers, digital literacy and fluency is an important service component for youth. Youth experience the same barriers as the general population regarding access to technology devices and a lack of broadband in rural and remote areas. During the pandemic, the need for technology devices and broadband became even more essential as youth required technology for their education. Service providers also realize they cannot assume that youth have access to devices and are fluent in digital literacy. Young people may know how to navigate websites, but not have typing skills, or know how to use software like the Microsoft Office Suite, or understand email etiquette. Service providers make efforts to improve digital literacy and fluency for young adults. Additionally, many of the virtual services available to adults are also available to the youth. The youth are able to access videos, online tools, online workshops, and virtual job and career fairs. Youth staff continue to provide access to the virtual services and coaching to support youth in digital literacy and fluency.

Analysis of Youth Programs

The following includes key lessons learned from NoRTEC's youth programs, including some successes or strengths that can be leveraged, as well as challenges that will be addressed and/or acknowledged moving forward.

- It is challenging for most disadvantaged youth to identify realistic career goals. Often, they identify a career that sounds interesting or pays a high wage, but do not have a real understanding of the work itself, the training required, or how it meshes with their personal interest, aptitudes, and values. More in-depth career exploration and planning is needed than what they have experienced, as well as work experience that provides needed exposure to their career choice.
- Many disadvantaged youth do not come from a family, culture, or social circle that values, supports, or encourages higher education or credential attainment. Mentoring and other formalized financial and moral support systems must be positioned for them.
- Youth are more likely to stay engaged in planned activities when tied to paid work experience.
- Youth engage more and have greater success with basic skills improvement when instruction is tied to specific job tasks (real world experience) and financial incentives are offered.
- Some youth become dependent on a long-term work experience (6 months) and are fearful or reluctant to seek unsubsidized employment on their own.
- Youth generally need more supportive services than adult clients. Assistance with child care is often needed as often the youth must depend on unpaid family members. This leads to unreliable care and may cause the youth to drop out of the program. Transportation is another major barrier and limits availability for many jobs.
- Many disadvantaged youth are "couch surfing" and have no stable home. This causes some to leave the program prior to completion because they have been required to leave and must find another friend to stay with for a short time. This creates instability in their lives and affects their ability to participate in the program.

Procurement and Disbursal of Grant Funds

In 2018, NoRTEC created Guiding Principles to guide the AJCC Procurement Process. The guiding principles were developed for staff to use in the development of the Request for Proposal document for WIOA services beginning July 1, 2019. The overriding consideration in developing the guiding principles

was to achieve the best and most cost-effective service for the greatest number of residents in the region. The Guiding Principles are: 1) Greater access to the workforce system, 2) Greater number of clients enrolled, 3) Lower overhead expenditures, and 4) Emphasis on employer engagement and service.

NoRTEC has been designated and is responsible for the disbursal of WIOA funds under WIOA Section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III).

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was released for WIOA AJCC Employment Center, Job Seeker, Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs for all 11 NoRTEC counties on September 3, 2019. The RFP process involved a set of rules to safeguard fair and objective decision-making when awarding grant funds to a winning bidder. The rules comply with applicable federal, state and local requirements, i.e., Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200.

Notice of the RFP was legally published in local newspapers within all 11 counties and all RFP material was posted on NoRTEC's website. The RFP contained the following sections: RFP Purpose and Schedule, Background, Proposal Format and Rating Criteria, Disclaimers and General Provisions. Following its release, a bidder's conference was held providing prospective bidders an opportunity to request clarification regarding the RFP's programmatic specifications from NoRTEC's staff. All questions and answers from the conference were posted on NoRTEC's website.

After proposals were submitted, proposal components (i.e., technical narrative, performance, budget, cost allocation/indirect cost proposal, organizational capabilities) were rated by a Selection Committee. Interviews with the top respondents were scheduled with the NoRTEC Executive Committee. Entities not recommended by the WDB for a contract to deliver the solicited services received a letter from the Director of Program Administration, notifying that entity of its appeal rights under NoRTEC's appeal process.

NoRTEC last procured Service Providers in 2020, with contracts beginning on July 1, 2020, for a one-year term that may be renewed annually through June 30, 2023. NoRTEC procured a One Stop Operator in 2020 with Racy Ming, of Racy Ming & Associates. This contract has a term ending on July 1, 2021, with an option to renew annually through June 30, 2023.

AJCC Operator and Career Services Providers

NoRTEC is the WIOA Title I grant recipient and administrative entity representing the Local Workforce Development Area comprised of a consortium of eleven counties: Butte, Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity. NoRTEC procures AJCC Operators and Career Services providers in a competitive process. The current AJCC Operators/Career Services Providers for the region are:

- Job Training Center of Tehama County;
- SMART Workforce Development Center in Del Norte, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties; and
- Alliance for Workforce Development in Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, and Sierra Counties.

An RFP for One Stop Operator was issued on June 26, 2020. The One Stop Operator selected was Racy Ming, of Racy Ming & Associates, contracted on July 1, 2020 for a period of time not to extend three years, or until June 30, 2023. The One Stop Operator is responsible for coordinating the service delivery of the required one-stop partners and service providers in accordance with the AJCC System MOU and ensure the implementation of partner responsibilities and contributions agreed upon in NoRTEC MOU. Roles and responsibilities of the One Stop Operator include coordinating the implementation and updates of the NoRTEC Partner MOU as well as acting as a liaison between the WDB and AJCC partners

to resolve disputes, address grievances, and identify any changes that may be needed to the working agreements. On a quarterly basis, the One Stop Operator connects with NoRTEC staff and partners on the status of partner contributions outlined in the MOUs, including reconciling partner contributions and infrastructure costs. The One Stop Operator also convenes partner meetings as necessary to coordinate service delivery in accordance with the MOU.

Appendices

1. Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Participation	Comments
Partner Survey (virtual meetings/telephone/ online/website/WDB Meetings/social media/email)	Workforce System Partners sent to 142 Partners via Survey Monkey and Constant Contact emails. NoRTEC core partner agencies as well as other education and economic development partners, including: County Departments of Health/Social Services, EDD, California Human Development, AARP, High School Districts, Offices of Education, DOR, California Indian Manpower Consortium, CalFresh, Child Support Service Partners, Competitive Integrated Employment Partners, English Language Learners Partners, Re-Entry Services Partners, Community Colleges, CSU Chico, Economic Development Districts and local chambers of commerce.	30 Responses	Comments were incorporated into the Plan regarding how to better serve clients, align resources and streamline services and referral systems.
Regional and Local Plan Survey (virtual meetings/telephone/ online/emails)	Workforce System Partners	5 Responses	Comments were included in Local Plan
Business and Industry Survey (telephone/online)	Business and Industry implemented through regional partners, BSRs	270 Responses – all industry sectors represented:	Comments regarding COVID impacts and

	and Industry Sector Partnership meetings	Healthcare, Manufacturing, IT, Tourism, Hospitality, Agriculture, Personal Services, Professional Services, Public Services	industry/technical assistance needs were incorporated into the Regional Plan Economic Analysis and Local Plan Business Assistance
Encuesta de Negocios (telephone/online)	Business and Industry	5 Response	See above
Public Comment Survey (online)	Public	1	Comment was made that a bigger investment in *high wage* career path training, like that provided by the Building Trades unions in Northern California was needed.
Public Comment Post (online)	Public	0	n/a
Public Comment Community Hearings (virtual - Zoom)	Public and Partners Stakeholder meetings were held to attain feedback and recommendations specifically about the Regional and Local plan content. These focused on the needs of the AJCC System, regional needs, and system improvements to ensure that the system serves those most in need. March 23, 2021 and April 1, 2021	NoRTEC Staff, One Stop Operator and TPMA & Associates	n/a

Regional Partner Meetings (virtual)	Regional Workforce, Education and Economic Development Partners Coordination with regional planning processes	3Core Economic Development District, Sierra Business Council, Superior California Economic Development District and CSU Chico Center for Economic Development, County and City Economic Development Departments	Need to coordinate planning processes, business input (surveys) and labor market information.
Workforce Development Board Meeting (email/website/public notices/PowerPoint presentation)	January 28, 2021, NoRTEC Governing Board, Workforce Development Board, NoRTEC staff and Service Providers and Public	NoRTEC Governing Board, Workforce Development Board, NoRTEC staff and Service Providers and Public	Regional planning process, opportunities for input, preliminary economic and workforce data presented.

2. Public comments received that disagree with the Local Plan

Throughout the regional and local planning process, stakeholder comments were solicited to ensure that both plans meet the needs of the entire 11-county NoRTEC region. Throughout the public comment phase of there were no comments submitted that disagreed with the plans.

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3. Signature Page

NoRTEC Local Plan

This unified local plan represents the NoRTEC Workforce Development Board's efforts to maximize and coordinate resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

This local plan is submitted for the period July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2025, in accordance with the provisions of WIOA.

Local Workforce Development Board Chair	**Chief Elected Official**
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Signature	Signature
Joe Wilson	Bob Williams
Name	Name
Chair	Chair
Title	Title
Date	Date

Attachments

- NoRTEC MOU 2020/2022
- AJCC Certification Matrix (Baseline and Hallmark)