



## Local Workforce Investment Area Strategy

Delaware County Workforce Investment Board  
(Delaware County)

In response to the funding that is being made available to local workforce investment areas through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Delaware County Workforce Investment Board puts forward this document which is the framework of its strategy for implementing programming funded by the Act.

### *Response to the PA Department of Labor & Industry*

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

In 2006, as part of our strategic planning processes, Delaware County identified several priority industries, including:

- Healthcare
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Hospitality, including Accommodations, Retail and Food Services
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Information Technology
- Biotech and Pharmaceuticals

Until the recession hit, we were seeing job growth in all of these sectors. However, between March 2008 and March 2009, we saw our unemployment rate rise from 4.6% to 7.2%, a significant increase. In the CareerLink, between February 2008 and February 2009, we had a 78% drop in new employers in the system and an 84% drop in job orders. We've had a concurrent rise in CareerLink traffic, which is up by 40%.

#### **Layoffs and Closings**

Job losses have occurred across all sectors, although the retail, manufacturing and healthcare sectors have been the hardest hit. It appears that at this point, the only sector that has been immune from layoffs is Education. Below is a chart with the larger layoffs we've experienced so far in 2009.

Company	Number Laid Off	Positions
Circuit City	60	Sales Associates, Supervisors and Managers
Crozer-Keystone Healthcare (5 sites in the county)	Targeting 400	All levels--Nurses, Managers, Directors, etc.
Union Packaging	30	Laborers, machine operators, supervisors, managers



Company	Number Laid Off	Positions
Filene's Basement	40	Sales Associates, Supervisors and Managers
Concord Steel	50	Welders, machine operators, maintenance, management

In terms of occupations experiencing cutbacks, these are occurring at all levels. We are seeing a definite increase in the number of professional, "white collar" workers being laid off, including nurses, managers and supervisors. We have also seen a steady stream of workers over the age of 55 who are looking for employment because their retirement funds have been cut or disappeared. We are also seeing CDL-licensed truck drivers who are unable to find employment following training.

### Hiring

There are a few bright spots in the local economy. We are seeing an uptick in hiring for skilled CNC machinists, welders, and machine operators at companies such as Container Research and NP Precision, both of which support the rotorcraft industry. In healthcare, we need Home Healthcare Aides and CNAs and in financial services we need mortgage loan processors and closers for refinancing.

Unfortunately, these openings are not counter-balancing the lay-offs, so we have net job losses. In addition, many of the positions that are being eliminated are higher skill, higher paying jobs and they are not being replaced with equivalent positions from other companies or industry sectors.

### Skill Gaps

Currently, we are seeing many more higher skill dislocated workers than in previous recessions. A number of these workers are qualified for replacement positions at other companies (i.e., nurses), but they may face a long period of unemployment because hiring is currently frozen.

We also have skilled workers who will need to transition into new industries or occupations because their jobs are less likely to return. Here, workers have strong transferable skills, such as project management and supervisory experience, but they lack the occupation-specific technical skills necessary to make the transition. We have a number of supervisors and managers, for example, who have been laid off. They have management skills, but lack content skills for new industries.

One major skill gap area for a significant number of dislocated workers is in basic technology. A number of dislocated workers have a long work history, but minimal computer skills, finding it difficult to even complete an online application. This is particularly true for a segment of the Veteran's population, as well as many of the over-55 workers.



Delaware County also has a significant population of individuals who lack the basic literacy, work readiness and technical skills to even enter into career path employment. This is a challenge for the County, as many of the available jobs in the area are “middle-skill” jobs requiring some post-secondary education or credential, but less than a 4-year degree. In Advanced Manufacturing, for example, we have a number of positions available for individuals with certifications in Applied Engineering. CNC Machinists are also in demand. However, we have difficulty finding individuals with the basic math and science skills to access the necessary training.

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

Developing a consistent pipeline of well-prepared workers with the skills Delaware County employers need is an important goal for the Delaware County Workforce Investment Board. To achieve this goal, we need to support a continuum of education and training opportunities that will address the needs of our priority industries while also providing our workforce with critical skills across a range of skill levels.

Our vision for ensuring these education and training supports is based on our strategic plan, the economic context in which we are operating and the guiding principles and vision of the Recovery Act.

**Sector-Based Partnerships to Support Career Pathways**

To ensure that workers are properly prepared for current and future jobs in the County, our education and training efforts are sector-based, designed to move workers into the demand industries and occupations in the county. These include those sectors identified in Question 1, as well as “green collar” and construction jobs, which we anticipate will increase as a result of Recovery Act investments and Federal and State priorities.

Partnerships are a key focus of our efforts. We have been partnering with the counties in our region (Philadelphia, Chester, Bucks and Montgomery) on a variety of projects through our Industry Partnerships and have career pathway efforts underway in areas such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare and IT. Within the past few days, we submitted an application to the State for a tri-county (Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia) partnership to support on-the-job training in rotorcraft, healthcare and computer forensics.

**Individualized Assessment and Career Planning to Support Good Job Matches**

Delaware County has long had a model career assessment and counseling process. We begin helping job seekers assess their interests, values, skills and potential barriers to employment in Core Services to aid them in finding the work and training opportunities where they will be most successful. This process continues with our Master’s level Career Counselors who use the CDM and other best practice tools to assist job seekers in developing an effective career plan.

Recently, Delaware County added some important tools to the assessment process--the WorkKeys Work Readiness Credential and the KeyTrain/Career Ready 101 assessment and remediation program.

WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system that measures “real-world” skills employers have identified as being critical for career success. ACT, an international leader in assessment, developed WorkKeys.



While there are nine WorkKeys assessments, Delaware County is using only the three most common assessments-- Applied Mathematics, Locating Information and Reading for Information.

Once individuals have taken each of the three computer-based assessments, they receive a score that reflects their skill level. These scores are then matched to those required for various careers, providing individuals with key information about their readiness for employment in specific occupational areas. Individuals who score at certain levels on the assessments (3 or above) receive a Career Readiness Certificate through the WorkKeys system, with either a Bronze, Silver or Gold designation.

KeyTrain is online remediation software designed to help individuals prepare for and improve their scores in the three WorkKeys assessments being administered through the CareerLinks. The KeyTrain system includes targeted, self-paced instruction, pre- and post-assessments, a complete learning management system and an occupational job profiles database. These components can be used to help individuals learn, practice and demonstrate the skills they need to succeed in the jobs and careers they desire.

Career Ready 101 is a series of KeyTrain lessons designed to address work readiness skills, such as teamwork and career management. They include both self-paced, online tutorials, as well as ready-to-implement classroom lessons plans with handouts.

WorkKeys and KeyTrain/Career Ready 101 provide Delaware County with powerful tools to assess job seeker skill levels and provide targeted remediation so that job seekers can be successful in work and in education and training programs. They also provide us with an effective strategy for working with employers so we can refer to them those job candidates most qualified for their jobs.

We are in the process of developing a policy requiring customers to attain the WorkKeys credential. This will ensure that we are providing our job seekers with the foundational skills they need to be successful in a training program, prior to referring them to a specific provider. It will also allow us to facilitate better job and training matches, improve outcomes for both job seekers and employers.

### **Linking Foundational and Occupational Skills Training to Guide Low-Skill Residents on A Path to Middle Skill Jobs and Career Pathways**

Too often, our most disadvantaged residents--those who lack a high school diploma or GED, have minimal work experience and face multiple barriers to employment--are placed in short-term training programs that prepare them only for entry-level, dead-end employment. Our goal with the Recovery Act funding is to address this issue, providing low-skill job seekers with longer-term, foundational skills development opportunities that will provide them with the basics necessary for them to be successful in middle-skill job training programs, such as those for technical positions in healthcare and advanced manufacturing.

### **Expanded Access to Training Opportunities**



To meet the increased need for education and training, Delaware County is using a combination of ITAs, classroom-based cohort training and on-the-job training opportunities, including our summer youth employment program, described later in this plan.

Through our CareerLink staff and our use of the WorkKeys and KeyTrain/Career Ready 101 tools, we are continually evaluating the skill needs of our job seekers. Based on this feedback, we are developing a number of options to expand our training capacity.

We anticipate that as we continue to monitor emerging skill needs and issues, we will be developing additional education and training programs to meet these needs.

### **Network of Supportive Services**

For Delaware County residents to access the full range of education and training opportunities they will need to prepare for the next generation of jobs, they will also need to access an infrastructure of supports. This includes ensuring that individuals have transportation and child-care while they are in training. Extended unemployment benefits and needs-based payments may also be provided to allow workers to support themselves while they pursue additional education.

In accordance with State and federal policies, the County will address both the **fiscal and policy issues necessary** to provide individuals enrolled in training with the supports necessary to complete their education as part of the our commitment to building a skilled workforce.

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

In Delaware County, over 30% of the population is under 24 years of age. Around 10% of these individuals live below the poverty line. Recognizing that many of these young people face numerous barriers to employment and education, Delaware County's WIB and Youth Council are devoted to building a community-centered, holistic, integrated and comprehensive network of supports and services that empowers young people to develop to their full potential.

Our vision for ensuring that the County's young people are able to develop and achieve their career goals is one that operates from several broad principles, including:

- Providing youth with access to meaningful assessment tools that allow them to explore their interests, work values, and skills. Delaware County has recently adopted the WorkKeys Work Readiness Credential and KeyTrain's Career Ready 101 as key tools to assist in this process. These help young people assess their work skills as they relate to occupational competencies in 15,000 career areas and then provides them with remediation opportunities to develop their skills. This allows young people to address "problem" areas and ultimately prepares them to earn an employer-recognized, portable credential.
- Helping youth develop career and lifelong learning plans that are based on their interests, values and skills



and that connect them to appropriate education, training and experiences. Assessment and career counseling and planning are important service components in our CareerLinks and our WIA youth programs. The Career Ready 101 product allows young people to do extensive career exploration to develop a plan. We are also using our Regional Career Education Partnership (RCEP) to provide youth, parents and educators with career planning resources and information.

**Facilitating opportunities for youth to explore career options by providing them with information about local high priority industries and careers and employer expectations and connecting them to activities such as job shadows and internships.** Our RCEP activities have included Parent/Student Forums on STEM Careers, Educator Forums on Applied Engineering and Healthcare, and a Youth Leadership Academy for high school sophomores that allowed local youth to learn leadership skills from key community leaders in business, government, nonprofits and the media. In addition, our Youth Council sponsors a wide variety of activities for Health Careers month in November, including bringing employers to local middle and high classrooms, a Healthcare career fair and an Educators' Breakfast.

**Providing "hands-on" learning experiences that expose young people to the expectations and activities of the workplace.** Through our WIA-funded programs we are connecting youth to hands-on learning, such as that provided through our weatherization training program and through YouthBuild. We have also been building a web-based resource on STEM careers that provides teachers with access to hands-on lesson plans and resources. Our Educators Forums provide additional opportunities for teachers to develop these skills and information.

**Developing career pathways and connections between secondary and postsecondary opportunities.** We have 2+2+2 and dual enrollment programs operating in Applied Engineering and in healthcare careers. We are also working with local Educators to connect them with employers so that they learn about occupational expectations and can integrate this knowledge into their classrooms.

**Creating a continuum of services and programs that addresses the barriers faced by many Delaware County youth.** Recognizing that many young people face significant barriers to pursuing education and employment that are based on outside factors, we believe it's important to have a network of services that can address these issues. Transportation, childcare, financial aid, etc. are critical components.

**Creating programs to address the specialized needs of different youth populations.** We know that in many cases, young people need more specialized attention. Therefore we use our funding to develop programs and services that will work for various youth populations, including ESL and youth with disabilities. Our use of Recovery Act funds to serve Delaware County young people will incorporate this broad vision for serving youth.

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

Delaware County has five major priorities in its investment of Recovery Act funds. They are:

- 1 Quickly re-attaching dislocated workers to the labor market through intensive job search support and appropriate skills training. We will emphasize accelerated skill upgrades that maximize transferable skills and the



attainment of the WorkKeys Work Readiness Certificate as an employer-recognized, portable credential.

2 Providing remediation, occupational skills training and intensive job search support to improve the employability prospects of Delaware County residents who face significant barriers to employment. Our goal will be to facilitate these individuals along a path of education and training that will lead to the many middle-skill jobs available in the County. This will include helping them to earn the WorkKeys Work Readiness certificate, as well as occupational and industry-recognized credentials, particularly for middle-skill jobs.

3 Serving out-of-school youth, ages 18-24, by providing remediation, the opportunity to earn the WorkKeys Work Readiness certificate and access to summer employment, per Recovery Act Guidelines. Our intention is to use our WIA formula funds to serve primarily our younger in-school population and to use the Recovery Act funds as a springboard for reconnecting older, disengaged young people to employment and educational opportunities.

4 Increasing the capacity of the workforce system to meet increased demands from job seeker customers and the need for a greater continuum of education and training services.

Investing ARRA funds in a timely fashion and leveraging other funding (i.e., other ARRA programs, WIA Title I, TANF, Literacy funding) to maximize system resources and provide Delaware County residents with an effective range of appropriate services.

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

Delaware County CareerLink traffic has increased by 40% since 2008 and the County is marshaling all of its resources to meet the needs of this influx of residents.

- We are providing expanded access to group workshops on job search-related topics, such as interviewing, resume-writing, etc. Some workshops are being run by CareerLink staff. We are also working with Pathways PA to provide workshops, some on new topics, such as completing online applications.
- We are currently in negotiations with a number of university and private sector programs to provide additional services to dislocated workers that can't be provided at the CareerLink due to staffing and space constraints. For example, Penn State Brandywine will be working with our higher-skilled dislocated workers and we are also considering a program to provide career counseling and job search services through Widener University. We are also looking into outsourcing job search support group services to provide ongoing coaching, networking and support as residents look for work over a more extended period of time.
- Delaware County is using technology to expand contacts with customers. We are using Constant Contact, an email newsletter service, to provide job seekers with updates, tips, information, etc. We are also forming a group on LinkedIn that job seekers can join for tips and networking. In addition, we are exploring using webinar and teleconferencing technology to facilitate online job seeker networking and social networking tools that would allow us to answer job seeker questions, provide links to valuable resources and connect job seekers to one another to provide additional support.
  - Pathways PA, one of our most successful community-based providers, will be onsite to help job seekers connect to supportive services, such as childcare, transportation, financial assistance, etc. They will be providing a "Benefits Specialist/Financial Educator" who will meet with new CareerLink customers during Orientation and schedule individual appointments to work with customers one-on-one as needed. The Benefits Specialist will assist customers in applying for benefits such as Food Stamps, LIHEAP and CHIP, as well as providing some financial counseling, such as



checking and advising on credit reports and assisting customers in addressing issues such as outstanding loans. They will also be a resource for referring customers to other community/supportive services.

- The CareerLink is adding staff to increase the number of PREP sessions being offered.
- Our Assessment staff are helping to provide resume feedback and job search support as part of their career counseling activities.

### Increasing Access to Education and Training

As discussed previously, Delaware County is pursuing a number of strategies for increasing access to education and training. These include:

- We are finding that many individuals with long-term work experience lack the basic technology skills to complete an online application or access most jobs, which require some level of computer proficiency. We are therefore working with Delaware County Community college, our 4-year institutions and other training providers to develop a variety of basic computer literacy programs. Some will be “stand-alone” modules, while others will be integrated into other classroom-based training opportunities.
- In addition to technology skills, we are also finding severe deficits in basic literacy and workplace readiness skills. Even dislocated workers with extensive work experience are demonstrating literacy deficits that require remediation and support for them to access employment. Therefore we are working closely with DCCC and other training providers to develop a broader array of literacy interventions that can work in conjunction with our KeyTrain/Career Ready 101 remediation program.
- Through the Delaware County Healthcare Consortium, which includes 60 local employers, we are identifying the skill sets necessary for success in long-term care facility positions. We then intend to work with DCCC and our 4-year institutions to develop appropriate classroom-based programs to prepare low-skill workers to access these jobs, as well as to transition or advance higher-skilled workers into these positions.
- To address some of the needs of higher-skilled workers, Penn State Brandywine is developing a training program for individuals who have been employed in professional positions. This program will help job seekers transfer into other industries where their skills may also be needed.
- OJT is an important strategy for developing skills. With Philadelphia and Montgomery County, we have submitted an application to the State to provide OJT for workers in healthcare, rotorcraft and computer forensics.

### Meeting the Needs of Employers

Delaware County partners with the Delco Commerce Center to provide Business Services through the CareerLinks. This multi-agency team includes BWDP, Vets, OET, DCCC, COSA and the CAO. Recently this team was redesigned to better evaluate outcomes and provide improved levels of service. We are monitoring Business Services team efforts on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis.

Delaware County has also applied for two VISTA volunteers who will be responsible for job development and assisting employers in using job bank services. In addition, we are considering providing webinar-based training for employers on topics such as how to use the CWDS system. This will expand our capacity to meet employer needs.



The County has developed strong, industry-based partnerships to meet business needs, most notably through the regional Industry Partnerships, but also through other strategic connections, such as working with the DVIRC's Regional Industry Leadership Committee and the Chamber of Commerce.

Currently, we are in the process of conducting information and outreach sessions with employers to educate them about the WorkKeys Work Readiness Certification. This certification provides employers with concrete "proof" that job applicants and workers possess the necessary foundational skills in *Reading for Information*, *Locating Information* and *Applied Math* to qualify for work with that employer. Scores on the WorkKeys Work Readiness Certificate correlate to some 15,000 occupations and can be used both to screen applicants as well as to make decisions about referring incumbent workers to training and promotional opportunities. The CareerLinks will provide both WorkKeys certification and remediation to improve scores--a major benefit to employers who are seeking top quality candidates, especially in rough economic times.

We have also submitted an application with Philadelphia and Montgomery counties to provide OJT support for rotorcraft, healthcare and computer forensics.

### Meeting the Needs of Under-Skilled Adults

Meeting the needs of under-skilled adults is an important priority for the County. This begins with our outstanding career assessment process, which includes assessments of interests and work values, as well as skill assessments.

As mentioned previously, Delaware County has recently purchased the KeyTrain assessment and remediation program, along with its Career Ready 101 workplace readiness services. Through this program, customers are able to assess their skills in *Reading for Information*, *Locating Information* and *Applied Math*--the three components of the WorkKeys Work Readiness credential. (WorkKeys is a certification developed by ACT that measures real-world work skills and is correlated to over 15,000 occupations). KeyTrain determines if the customer needs remediation to pass the WorkKeys test and then provides each customer with a customized online training plan that customers can work through to improve their skills. Through the Career Ready 101 component, they are also able to assess and remediate key workplace readiness skills such as teambuilding, communications and career management/job search.

Once customers have completed the necessary KeyTrain modules, they are able to take the WorkKeys Work Readiness Certification tests. Those who pass are awarded a Bronze, Silver or Gold Certificate, a portable credential that can be used to demonstrate workplace proficiency to employers.

WorkKeys and KeyTrain is required for all New Directions customers. We are also considering requiring it prior to issuing ITAs to ensure that customers will have the necessary baseline skills for success prior to enrolling in any occupational skills training.

Delaware County offers extensive supports and opportunities for under-skilled adults, including providing access to ABE, GED and ESL services, basic technology training, and a wide array of supportive services, such as transportation vouchers and child care. As previously discussed, we will also have a Benefits Specialist/Financial Educator on-site to assist these customers in accessing necessary benefits and financial resources. In addition,



PathwaysPA will be providing a series of *Ready to Work* workshops onsite. This will be an 8-week program that provides 96 hours of instruction in reading comprehension, 48 hours of basic math instruction and 40 hours of computer instruction.

### Creating Career Pathways

Delaware County has been using a career pathways approach to skill development for several years. We are increasingly recognizing the need to provide individuals with key foundational skills as a part of this process. As discussed in the section above on increasing access to education and training, our residents will be able to take part in a variety of programs designed to provide them with both basic literacy and workplace skills, as well as the occupational skills training necessary to access Delaware County's demand industries and occupations.

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

Delaware County, like most areas of the country, must address a number of issues in service delivery, including meeting present and future industry needs and responding to a huge in flux of dislocated workers with a wide range of skills and abilities. To ensure that both business and job seeker needs are met, the County is instituting a number of innovative service strategies that further build upon the service delivery approaches described in our 2006 strategic plan.

- As discussed previously, Delaware County has made a major investment in the WorkKeys Work Readiness Credential and the KeyTrain remediation program. These tools are being used to provide job seekers with the foundational skills necessary for success in a variety of occupations, leading to career pathways employment, and a portable certificate to demonstrate competency. They also provide employers with valuable applicant screening, evaluation and remediation opportunities.
- As part of implementing our WorkKeys/Keytrain initiative, we are doing extensive outreach to employers, using a 3-tiered approach. We are first focusing on those employers that have current job openings in the CWDS system. Then we are contacting employers who are in CWDS and have posted jobs in the past. Finally, we intend to do outreach to those employers that have not used the CWDS system. Each employer is receiving an email that includes attachments about both KeyTrain and WorkKeys and how the WorkKeys credential will save them time and money in the hiring process. We are then following up with phone calls. Employers are invited to attend small group sessions to learn more about WorkKeys/KeyTrain or to have our staff go to their site to make a presentation. In the past 3 months we've done 4 small group employer orientations and around 10 one-on-one sessions.
- Delaware County has an outstanding career assessment process that begins in Core Services. It is administered by Master's level career counselors and is based upon best practices in career counseling, as well as the requirements of employers.
  - We are exploring a variety of ways to use technology to expand and enhance services. We will be using Constant Contact, an email newsletter service, to send regular emails to both job seekers and employers on tips, resources, news, etc. related to their specific needs. We are also planning to create a group on LinkedIn
- to connect with job seekers and provide online support and will be exploring the possibility of creating our



own network site using tools such as Ning. In addition, we are looking into using webinar technology to provide training and support services to both job seekers and employers. For example, we could do a web-based training on using the Internet for job search or teach employers how to use the CWDS system, right from their desktops.

- We are working with the United Way to identify potential volunteer opportunities for dislocated workers as a way for them to keep skills current and deal with gaps in their resumes. These volunteer openings will be shared with job seekers through the CareerLink and through our Constant Contact email set-up.
- As described earlier, Pathways PA will be staffing our CareerLink with a Benefits Specialist/Financial Educator and will be providing the *Ready to Work* series of workshops.
- Although Delaware County's contracts with educational providers including a requirement for job placement and job search support, in this difficult economy, we recognize that our customers need all the assistance they can get. Therefore, we will be requiring all individuals who complete an ARRA-funded training program to return to the CareerLink for additional job search support services to be provided either by CareerLink staff or through one of the partnership programs we are developing.
- We are finding that our initial contacts with job seekers when they are first laid off are not always successful in engaging job seekers in the job search. They are often in shock or believe that they will be finding work quickly and therefore don't need the services of the CareerLinks. Sometimes they will return for our services later, but this is not always the case. Therefore we are exploring strategies for contacting and working with long-term UI claimants to provide them with appropriate services.
- We are seeking two VISTA workers to do job placement and job development to supplement our other staff.
- With Philadelphia and Montgomery County, we have submitted a proposal to provide OJT activities to support rotorcraft, healthcare and computer forensics.
- We are exploring the possibility of outsourcing some of our business services activities as a way to expand our capacity to work with our employers.

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

WIA Title I funds and other workforce funding sources have often been insufficient to meet the needs of Delaware County residents, particularly our longer-term unemployed and low-skill workers. Delaware County's intention is to use formula funds and Recovery Act funds to expand our ability to serve all residents in need with the necessary services. In particular, we want to focus on providing longer-term, more intensive training services and supports to EARN customers (long-term public assistance recipients) and low-skill job seekers, where the focus has previously been on "quick hit" training that will put them into entry-level, dead-end jobs. These are populations that have traditionally been under-served and we see the Recovery Act funding providing an opportunity to do more with these individuals to truly prepare them for middle-skill jobs.

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



Delaware County is targeting its use of Recovery Act funds on serving older youth, ages 18-24, who are out of school and have minimal skills and little work experience. These young adults are our population most in need, experiencing the highest unemployment rates and the least ability to access work in an incredibly competitive job market.

Our goal with these young people will be to provide them with meaningful work experience that allows them to document a significant period of employment. We are also focusing on remediating basic and workplace readiness skills to provide them with the foundation necessary to access post-secondary occupational skills training for career path employment.

We anticipate being able to serve in excess of 100 young adults. Our plan is to expend all of our funds during PY09 by supporting employment for eligible youth through March, 2010 or until our funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first. We anticipate that our cost per participant will be approximately \$12,800/youth. This is based on several factors. Our primary goal is to help this population of job seekers who are most in need make long-term attachments to the workforce. We are doing so by offering extended employment--through March 2010--as well as the opportunity to remediate workplace literacy skills and earn an employer-recognized work readiness credential. We plan to pay our youth \$8/hour, so each young person who participates will earn approximately \$7,800 if they stay employed through the entire cycle.

Youth will participate in a combination of employment readiness development and on-the-job work experience. Job sites will come from local municipalities, nonprofits and private sector employers in our target industries.

For the employment readiness aspect of the program, youth will be using KeyTrain's Career Ready 101 assessment and remediation program. This tool provides supports in two key areas:

- Remediation in the *WorkKeys Work Readiness Credential* skill areas of *Reading for Information*, *Locating Information* and *Applied Math*.
- Workplace readiness skill development in critical areas such as communication, teambuilding, and job search.

Youth skills will be assessed when they enter the program and they will be provided with a customized learning plan to help them develop their skills in the CareerReady 101 online training program. In addition, they will participate in classroom activities to support what they are learning online and to reinforce what they are learning in the workplace.

As youth move through the Career Ready modules, their performance is assessed and they must demonstrate competency in one level in order to move to the next. Those young people who demonstrate the ability to earn the WorkKeys Work Readiness credential, an employer-approved credential developed by ACT, will be given the opportunity test on WorkKeys and to earn the credential as part of the summer employment experience.

For on-site work experiences, many youth will be working for local municipalities and nonprofits. We are also seeking providers to provide work experiences that meet the following criteria:

- Focus on career exploration, pathways and internships in high growth and emerging industry areas (i.e., healthcare, green jobs, applied engineering, etc.)



- Deliver innovative models to promote post-secondary readiness and exposure to college.
- Offer pre-apprenticeship experiences and/or clear connections to registered apprenticeship programs.
- Are connected to green jobs.
- Encourage youth to stay in school

For older youth, the focus will be primarily on gaining work experience and developing workplace readiness skills. For younger youth, programs that emphasize career exploration in priority industries, internships, post-secondary readiness and staying in school will be emphasized.

Youth will participate in programming for 35 hours per week. For most, the majority of time will be spent at the work-site with approximately 5-6 hours spent on the workplace learning/classroom component. For younger youth, it is expected that the hours of classroom time will be increased as a supplement to the on-site work experience.

Since we are focusing the majority of funding on older and out-of-school youth, we will be providing appropriate supports, transportation and child care, etc. In addition, we will be looking at how to coordinate the summer employment experience with WIA Title I Adult funding and other financial resources following completion of summer employment to support those young people planning to further their education.

To ensure that youth are connected to post-employment opportunities such as permanent employment in a career path job or further education, a 60-day follow-up period will be incorporated into provider contracts. A 20% performance hold-back will be used as an incentive to contractors to ensure that youth are appropriately placed following the summer employment experience.

9. **What policies and strategies does the LWIA have in place to ensure that, pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-288) (38 USC 4215), priority of service is provided to veterans (and certain spouses) who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor?**

Delaware County has a priority of service policy in place that provides Veterans and eligible spouses with multiple opportunities to identify their status and receive priority. From the moment they have contact with the CareerLink and at multiple points along the way, they are asked about their status. During Orientation, they are told of Veteran's benefits and referred to the Veterans Representative as soon as they self-identify.

The Veteran's Representative speaks with all Vets and eligible spouses and provides them with both verbal and written information on the availability of benefits, timelines for accessing benefits and their priority of service rights. In addition, each week the Veteran's Representative reviews the UI lists to identify Veterans who may not have accessed services to send a letter notifying them of their rights and inviting them into the CareerLink. There is also a display in the public access area informing Veterans that they should inquire about services if they have not yet self-identified. The Veteran's Representative has also been doing outreach with employers to discuss employment of veterans.

Additionally, because our Veteran's population have, in many cases, received extensive technical training in their individual Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), this population will be assessed extensively to identify correlations to



academic achievement/skills achievement to meet employers' needs. Frequently, these Veterans do not recognize the transferability of their skills, many of which are STEM proficiencies, into the private sector.

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

As discussed previously, Delaware County's goal in utilizing Recovery Act funds will be to serve some of our hardest to serve, most disadvantaged populations, as well as the increased numbers of high-skill dislocated workers we're seeing in our CareerLinks. We are actively conducting outreach with these populations and developing programs and services to meet their specialized needs.

Our public access area and Core Services programs are the gateways into all CareerLink services. We are increasing staffing to provide greater support and referral opportunities. We are also working closely with our CareerLink partners to conduct outreach activities that will make more residents aware of the supports and services available through the CareerLinks.

We also have developed and are in the process of developing a variety of specialized programs and services, as described throughout our plan.

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

The Delaware County WIB and Youth Council is releasing a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) to procure the services of providers to implement the summer youth employment program. This will be announced through our website, public notices to the newspaper, etc. In addition, we are considering expanded press releases along with use of local cable TV system.

This RFP will follow normal procurement and contracting processes, including review by a subcommittee of the Youth Council and awarding of contracts based on evaluation with our RFP performance rubric.

The WIB will also assist in identifying employment opportunities through municipalities and nonprofits.

### **Implementing the Provision for Awarding Contracts to Institutions of Higher Education and Other Eligible Training Providers**

We are working closely with our community college, 4-year institutions and other training providers to develop specialized programs and services, including classroom-based, cohort training. We are reviewing unsolicited Requests for Proposals and where they meet our needs, we are following normal procedures for procurement and contracting. In some cases we will also be issuing additional RFPs to address needs identified through our ongoing data collection and analysis of local needs.



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

The Delaware County WIB, in keeping with its fiscal oversight responsibilities, will be closely monitoring expenditures and activities under the Recovery Act to ensure that the ARRA funds are spent concurrently with our basic WIA allocation. As indicated throughout our plan, our goal is to use Recovery Act funding to expand and enhance services provided to under-served populations and an increased number of job seekers coming into our CareerLinks. Therefore it is critical that we maximize the use of all of our funding sources.

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

The Delaware County WIB employs internal monitoring and auditing staff and has contracted for services with external consulting firms with significant experience in monitoring and oversight of workforce development funds. To effectively oversee our use of Recovery Act funds, we will be expanding these services accordingly and will provide oversight in accordance with DOL and State guidelines. We will also be meeting on a regular basis with both internal staff and external consultants to ensure that our expenditures and usage are in alignment with all regulations and the intent and spirit of ARRA.

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

The Delaware County WIB is keenly aware of the need to closely monitor our use of funds to ensure accountability. Therefore we will be requiring regular reports from our CareerLinks and our education, training and service partners to be reviewed by the WIB.

To track our progress, Delaware County will be using the following indicators:

- WIA Performance measures
- Attainment of the WorkKeys Work Readiness Credential
- Literacy improvements
- Numbers of individuals enrolled in and receiving various services, including KeyTrain/ Career Ready 101 remediation, job search, ITAs, classroom-based training, etc.
- Wait times for services
- Expenditures, to ensure that ARRA, WIA Title I and other funds are spent concurrently and effectively

For youth summer employment, we will be tracking:

- Youth Placement in unsubsidized employment or a qualifying educational program following participation in the summer employment program—85%
- Enrollment -- Number of eligible enrollments into CWDS in timely manner
- Attendance
- Work Readiness Skill Attainment—Youth has shown progress in pre/post performance on the Career Ready 101/KeyTrain work readiness programming.
- Number/Types of Worksites
- Worksite Quality



**pennsylvania**

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY

**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Information**

[www.recovery.pa.gov](http://www.recovery.pa.gov)

June 5, 2009

This plan was reviewed and approved by the DCWIB Executive Committee who provided tentative plan approval on May 15, 2009 to expedite submission of the plan to the State. The amended plan will be submitted to the full Board for approval at its next Board Meeting on June 25, 2009. It will then be posted on the County's website.