

***Santa Cruz County
Workforce Development Board
2025-2028 Local Plan***

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Local Plans

The Local Plan demonstrates operational alignment with the strategic objectives of the respective Regional Plan, drives coordination with local partners, and highlights key service delivery strategies. Service delivery is typically integrated at the local level, where resources are braided, and support is provided to participants through workforce system partners. Local Plans should address partnerships established under the previous Local and Regional Planning and Modification processes, including WIOA core and required program partners and state strategic partnerships. Local Boards are also encouraged to address any additional partnership efforts taking place at the local level, if applicable.

The Local Plan process is not meant to place an additional administrative burden on programs providing critical services to the public. Instead, it is intended to facilitate communication across systems to improve service coordination and identify unintended barriers to equitable access to economic stability and self-sufficiency. Accordingly, Local Boards and their partners have flexibility in determining each partnership's nature, scope, and depth based on local needs and priorities.

WIOA Core and Required Partner Coordination

Under WIOA, the ultimate vision is for core and required programs to operate as a unified system, strategically assessing and responding to the needs of workers and employers and aligning them with service strategies. This section of the Local Plan should address coordination with the following WIOA core and required program partners identified under WIOA Section 121:

- *WIOA Title II - Adult Education and Literacy*
- *WIOA Title III - Wagner-Peyser*
- *WIOA Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation*
- *Carl Perkins Career Technical Education*
- *Title V Older Americans Act*
- *Job Corps*
- *Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)*
- *Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)*
- *Veterans*
- *Youth Build*
- *Trade Adjustment Assistance Act*
- *Community Services Block Grant*
- *Housing and Urban Development*
- *Unemployment Compensation*
- *Second Chance*
- *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs*

The Local Plan should address the following:

- ***How Local Boards and AJCC partners will coordinate the services and resources identified in their MOU, as outlined in WIOA Memorandums of Understanding (WSD18-12).***

Staff of the Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board (SCCWDB) work with WIOA partners to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, with a particular emphasis on those with barriers to employment. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with its America's Job Center (AJCC) partners, the local workforce development system works in coordination with all required WIOA partners and other local key partners. The 2022 MOU partners are as follows:

- WIOA Title I.B: Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth Programs (WDB)
- WIOA Title II: Adult Education and Literacy (Santa Cruz Adult Education Consortium)
- WIOA Title III Employment Services; Veterans Services; Trade Adjustment Assistance Act; programs under state Unemployment Insurance (Employment Development Department)
- WIOA Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation (Department of Rehabilitation)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs (County of Santa Cruz, Department of Human Services)
- Title V of Older Americans Act (Peninsula Family Service)
- Postsecondary career and technical education under the Perkins Act (Cabrillo College)
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (Center for Employment Training)
- Employment & Training programs under Community Service Block Grant (Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.)
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-Administered Employment & Training Programs (Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz)
- Jobs Corps became party to the 2022 MOU via an addendum to the 2022 MOU. Job Corps is the largest free residential education and job training program for Young Adults aged 16-24. Interested individuals may go online to [jobcorps.gov](https://www.jobcorps.gov) to learn more about Job Corps and apply.
- Southern California American Indian Resource (SCAIR) was approved by the Department of Labor for an expansion of its Native NewWORKS Program services.

Changes to the MOU partners since 2022:

- Peninsula Family Services is no longer providing workforce services in Santa Cruz County.
- SER National, which was offering Employment & Training Services, Career Services and Training Services through their National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Grants, SER Jobs for Progress, a partner as of 2022, is no longer providing services in Santa Cruz County.

We have no new partners to the MOU since 2022. CET is now doing the work that SER National was doing in 2022. The MOU will be updated in 2025.

Other partners in the system, not a party to the MOU but actively working with the AJCCs include:

- Native American Programs - WASHOE Tribal TANF (a tenant of EDD).

The partners, as described in the MOU, serve those with barriers to employment through a number of strategies, including, but not limited to:

- WIOA - Employment and training resources and services for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth customers. Services include job search support; training services; supportive services; referral to other community resources for wrap-around support. Providing the full spectrum of WIOA youth services including job

preparedness opportunities. Services available at the comprehensive AJCC in Watsonville, affiliate office in Capitola and satellite center for WIOA Youth services in Freedom.

- Adult Literacy (Santa Cruz Adult Education Consortium) - Instructional programs for the high school equivalency test; English as a Second Language courses.
- Employment Development Department - Employment Services (including but not limited to CalJOBS and labor exchange services, Unemployment Insurance services, California Training Benefits, and Rapid Response), Veterans Services, Labor Market Information, Employer Informational Services, and Trade Adjustment Act assistance. State Disability Insurance Program application and access point. Job Search Assistance Workshops. Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers services, including referrals to supportive services and training opportunities, job search assistance, information on employment rights, and more.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (Department of Rehabilitation) - Assistance to those with a documented disability, including guidance counseling, job placement assistance and job coaching. Pre-employment transition services for youth. Supportive services. Training funds, including on the job training.
- TANF (Human Services Department) – Cash aid for low-income families; connection to a wide range of wrap around services; and a variety of job assistance services including assessment, individualized employment plan development, supportive services information, workforce preparation workshops and job search assistance.
- Title V Older Americans Act (Peninsula Family Service) - Workforce preparation. Financial literacy assistance. Job search assistance. Supportive services information.
- Carl Perkins Career Technical Education (Cabrillo College) – Education and vocational training. Case management and emotional support. Tutoring. Financial literacy.
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (Center for Employment Training) -Information and referral system; UI application/access point; WIOA/MSFW Program eligibility determination; Skill and Career Assessments; CalJOBSSM assistance; WIOA basic and individualized career services; Individualized Employment Plan and Counseling; Skills Training and Short-term training programs; CPR Certifications; In-house supportive services, e.g. stipends; Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) courses; financial aid/ Pell Grants; instructional programs for High School Equivalency (GED); Human Development Sessions: e.g. financial literacy; life skills workshops; Testing site: Job Placement assistance services for participants; Follow-up assistance -post training.
- Community Services Block Grant (Community Action Board) - Day worker center; rental assistance for low-income families with children 0-17, disabled individuals and/or 60 years or older; youth employment readiness and job placement services, subsidized employment for CalWORKs eligible participants, immigration and legal advice/support services, emergency payments for services, information and referrals to support the continuation of employment and educational goals for participants referred by the county's CalWORKs program; Youth Homeless Response Team (YHRT) unaccompanied, unhoused youth ages 15-24; Watsonville Works! Work experience opportunities for homeless individuals.

- Housing Authority - Housing Plus for those in the Housing Choice Voucher and Low Income Public Housing Programs.

In addition to SCCWDB and its Committee meetings, in which required partners participate, WFSCC has many systematic means to support service alignment. This includes quarterly Career Center (One-Stop) Operator meetings attended by MOU partners plus service providers in the Career Centers, including the contracted WIOA service provider, Goodwill Central Coast, and other service providers such as Santa Cruz County Office of Education-Sueños Youth Employment Services (SCCOE). The Partners meet regularly to discuss AJCC operations, to facilitate continuous improvement, discuss cross training suggestions and opportunities, and take advantage of training opportunities provided by a consultant as well as local partner program services training opportunities. In the program year 24-25, the training focus is on labor market information. A result of this group's past coordination and efforts was designing and implementing the Universal Referral form used by MOU partners in the AJCC to streamline the referral process and clarify an individual's course of action.

As a part of the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) Continuous Improvement Plan, SCCWDB staff will be taking the lead on restarting the Roundtable Partner meetings. Roundtables will be used for networking, community partner presentations, and include discussion topics that partners agreed were important. In the past, meeting agendas have included items such as outreach, how to use the Universal Referral Form, EDD sponsored trainings topics, customer service training and how to use virtual services for intake and enrollment. The former Career Center Operator developed the Integrated Service Delivery Guide, which provides information for service providers on how to help individuals access community agency services, including agency contact information and specifics on how to refer individuals to each agency. The Community Engagement Coordinator is currently reviewing the Integrated Service Delivery Guide to be sure its kept current.

AJCC Continuous Improvement Plan trainings continue to be offered quarterly and focus on continuous improvement plan items such as accessibility, labor market information, and human centered design. The Career Center Operator schedules Continuous Improvement Plan meetings as often as she deems necessary. The AJCC lead staff helped develop the Continuous Improvement Plan targets and the priority of said targets. The One-Stop Operator convenes the group as often as the group wants or she deems necessary to check on the status of progress and to see if they have barriers to working toward the targets. Because they have been intricately involved in the AJCC Certification, partners are well versed in the priorities, targets and individual agency expectations to help meet those targets.

In addition to the above meetings, the Business Engagement Practitioners group meets every other month. Led by SCCWDB staff, it includes economic development and local WIOA MOU partners such as EDD, Department of Rehabilitation, Center for Employment Training, and services providers such as Goodwill Central Coast. The group discusses business engagement efforts in the County, shares best practices, and provides updates on outreach efforts to local businesses. Specifics include identifying potential partnerships and collaborations, determining which industry sectors to serve, and where to target

business outreach. The group has been instrumental in developing local business engagement strategies.

SCCWDB staff also participate in the Central Coast Business Response Team, that is comprised of Regional Workforce Development Boards (Santa Cruz County, Monterey County, San Benito County, San Luis Obispo County). This group prepares for, and responds to, regional rapid response events, including recently collaborating to respond to the Monterey Mushrooms layoff, as the workers lived across counties.

- ***How the Local Board and AJCC partners will work towards co-enrollment and common case management as a service delivery strategy, as outlined in Strategic Co-Enrollment – Unified Plan Partners (WSD19-09).***

SCCWDB understands that coordinated service delivery is important for the success of clients as well as for the efficient use of limited resources. The WFSCC system of partners is continuously striving toward a workforce system that is collaborative, well integrated, and seamless to the customer. The Human Services Department (HSD), in which the SCCWDB operations are housed, offers a wide range of programs and safety net services to help address the basic needs of individuals and families. Co-enrollments between and case management across other HSD programs and WIOA are common. In FY 23-24, for example, 75% of WIOA Adult, 62% of Dislocated Worker, and 81% of Youth are co-enrolled in CalFresh. The figures are even higher for Medi-Cal - 77% of WIOA Adults, 66% of Dislocated Workers and 83% of Youth are co-enrolled in that safety net program. These numbers are a marked increase from the report in the last local Plan Update submitted: 47% of WIOA Adult, 38% of Dislocated Worker, and 48% of Youth are co-enrolled in CalFresh. The figures are even higher for MediCal – 70% of WIOA Adults, 56% of Dislocated Workers and 82% of Youth are co-enrolled in that safety net program. The Human Services Department has a 20-page staff handbook on co-enrollments between WIOA and CalWORKs. The intended purpose of the handbook is to provide instructions and guidance to facilitate successful co-enrollments between HSD employment programs for leveraging resources for better participant outcomes. The handbook includes a description of eligibility requirements for both programs, as well as client flow maps, program requirements and policies, a checklist for determining if co-enrollment is appropriate, as well as specific steps to take. This handbook may be used as a template for other programs should they need to formalize their co-enrollment processes.

As another example of how the SCCWDB facilitates co-enrollment and the development of career pathways, HSD contracts with two community agencies to administer two subsidized employment programs: Community Action Board (CAB) of Santa Cruz County administers SmartHire and Goodwill administers the Expanded Subsidized Employment Program (ESE). SmartHire places clients in jobs with local employers, while ESE places clients with limited job history in positions in their stores to gain job skills. When additional training and skill development is warranted, the employee can move into an On-the-Job training as a WIOA or CalWORKS co-enrollment to improve employee retention. In these ways, SCCWDB is able to ensure wrap-around services and coordinated service delivery for program participants.

- ***How the Local Board and AJCC partners will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through technology and other means.***

The SCCWDB continuously works to make the AJCC delivery system as accessible as possible, including in remote areas. CalJOBS is available online, and customers without computers or smart phones can access computers at public libraries throughout the county, local area schools for youth/students, and local non-profits with computers for their clients. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SCCWDB and partners worked throughout 2020 to ensure that customers could continue to access services remotely. Most trainings and orientations were converted to a virtual format, and many remain with a virtual format option, including some of Cabrillo College's courses. Now that the pandemic is behind us, most services are also provided in person.

For business customers, rapid response information and materials were being provided electronically via the internet as well as video meetings. Now those services can be provided in person, at the option of the business customers. Essential businesses are surveyed to identify their workforce needs and remote work opportunities that could be promoted with job seekers. Staff continue to help businesses take advantage of federal assistance programs when available, and a new website was developed to expand virtual services to the public. SCCWDB is implementing continuous improvement to the new website, including using Human Centered Design to make the public facing Workforce Santa Cruz County (WFSCC) website more accessible to the community, and individuals using the site. SCCWDB staff are also developing community education and outreach approaches to point more community members to the public facing website so that they can learn about WFSCC services and resources.

Migrant and seasonal farm worker communities were particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although in-person outreach paused with the shelter-in-place order that began in mid-March of 2020, in-person outreach resumed at the beginning of September. Staff underwent extensive safety trainings before they started going out and continue to provide information about AJCC and EDD services including unemployment insurance, state disability and paid family leave programs, and workers' rights, among others. In addition, with the collaboration with the Agriculture Commissioner, outreach workers distributed masks and hand sanitizers and educated about Center for Disease Control guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As outreach workers continue to do outreach, they continue to carry supplies for farmworkers should they desire masks and hand sanitizers.

- ***How the Local Board and AJCC partners will coordinate workforce and education activities with the provision of appropriate supportive services.***

During the assessment process, case managers identify any supportive services that may be necessary to help participants succeed in training or other workforce activities. In addition to the SCCWDB and WIOA funded supportive services, participants may receive supportive services from the partner agencies and community-based organizations described earlier. Supportive services may include (but are not limited to) transportation

support, childcare, licensing and testing fees, and work-related expenses such as books, uniforms, and/or tools.

Assisting customers with accessing supportive services was even more important during the pandemic, with additional staff and resources directed toward this goal. The AJCC was one of the top three referral agencies to 211, which provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs as well as in times of crisis. County staff have been diverted to serve as disaster workers during the fires in 2020, and during the floods of 2022-23, staffing food banks and emergency shelters, particularly during the 2020 CZU-Lightning Complex Fire which resulted in 70,000 Santa Cruz residents being evacuated from their homes. The system of partners in Santa Cruz County have been working hard to ensure that the basic needs of individuals are being met, including rental assistance, food assistance, accessing federal pandemic relief, and other resources.

- ***How the Local Board and AJCC partners will comply with WIOA Section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical accessibility of facilities, programs and services, assistive technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, as outlined in Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures (WSD17-01).***

Annually, the SCCWDB undertakes a review and reports to the State EEO office about the physical and programmatic accessibility at the AJCC and its Capitola affiliate site and the WIOA youth facility. This thorough assessment process is undertaken in coordination with the Human Service Department's EEO/ADA Coordinator. Any requirements not fully met are given a time-specific corrective action plan.

Requirements of the annual assessment include having staff training in serving individuals with disabilities, ensuring that all staff are aware of the policies and practices to offer reasonable accommodations to ensure accessibility to programs and services, providing an accessible physical environment, appropriate signage, and numerous other accessibility requirements.

Partners to the AJCC through the MOU, such as the Department of Rehabilitation, also provide staff development for system partners and services that enable greater accessibility, including assistive technology (assessment and equipment), disability awareness training for employers and assistance to those with a documented disability.

SCCWDB direct service providers, Goodwill Central Coast (for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker) and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (for the Suenos WIOA Youth program) receive EEO staff training on an annual basis through SCCWDB in collaboration with the HSD staff development division.

State Strategic Partner Coordination

This section of the Local Plan should address the ongoing establishment of concrete goals through coordination efforts with established partnerships. The CWDB recognizes the need for robust stakeholder and community partnerships. Considerable effort should be made to develop meaningful relationships across local systems, including how AJCC partners coordinate to meet workforce needs, align with state zero emissions goals, and support a climate-neutral economy. Coordination with local agencies such as the Employment Training Panel, California Community Colleges Chancellors Office, and the Department of Industrial Relations-Division of Apprenticeship Standards are examples of the collaboratives that can help serve disadvantaged communities in an economy aiming for environmental sustainability.

The Local Plan should address the following:

- ***How the Local Board will coordinate with County Health and Human Services Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who access CalFresh Employment and Training services.***

The County of Santa Cruz's Human Services Department (HSD) administers the CalFresh and WIOA programs and in fiscal year 2017-18 moved the WIOA program under the same division as CalFresh, Employment and Benefits Services Division. Additionally, these programs share the same Division Director. This organizational structure provides opportunities for streamlined collaboration and a means to better connect CalFresh clients with workforce services. As mentioned previously, there is a high degree of co-enrollment between these programs - 75% of WIOA Adult, 62% of Dislocated Worker, and 81% of Youth are co-enrolled in CalFresh.

The CalFresh program along with the Santa Cruz Homeless Services Center (HSC) and the Downtown Streets Team continue to be a strong collaboration to provide CalFresh Employment and Training services, and Second Harvest Food Bank to conduct outreach. The HSC has one full-time case manager that provides one-on-one services and operates a small job search center that provides services similar to that of the AJCC. Second Harvest Food Bank conducts outreach throughout the County, connecting with the migrant farmworker population in the agricultural areas and the large immigrant community in south County.

Partners who serve CalFRESH recipients work closely together and meet on a regular basis through the Career Center Operator meetings and SCCWDB meetings. Additionally, there is an established "warm hand-off" referral process through the local Universal Referral form used by partner staff, and shared labor market information tools - the SantaCruz.careerconcourse.com and the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership, which were developed by the SCCWDB. Collaboration and communication between the CalFresh and WIOA programs have become more efficient with HSD's decision to move WIOA under the Employment and Benefit Services Division alongside CalFresh.

- ***How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Child Support Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who are non-custodial parents.***

The regional DCSS office oversees services in Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties with the Santa Cruz County office located in the City of Watsonville. Santa Cruz County DCSS

services include establishing court orders for paternity, child support and medical coverage; locating non-custodial parents and their assets to enforce court orders; maintaining accounts of payments paid and past due; modifying court orders when appropriate; enforcing court orders for child, family, and medical support; and spousal support in conjunction with child support. As of the end of December 2024, the caseload was over 4,500 individuals.

To serve both non-custodial and custodial parents, DCSS works with many organizations and public agencies in the community. DCSS works closely with the county jail to provide information on child support obligations; PAPÁS, a community-based organization that provides supportive services to fathers and encourages their involvement with their children and communities; and the County courts.

DCSS is included in invitations to the Career Center Operator meetings and partner meetings and has found that partner meetings are a good means to stay connected to the workforce system. Line staff have attended partner meetings so that they could become more familiar with the services that are available. DCSS has been added to the Integrated Service Delivery Guide, and referral information has been shared with their staff.

DCSS is invited to the community engagement and strategic planning sessions for the development of the WIOA Local Plan as well as for the SCCWDB's Strategic Plan.

- ***How the Local Board will coordinate with local Partnership Agreement partners, established in alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint, and other local, regional, and statewide partners who serve individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.***

Santa Cruz County is part of the San Jose District for Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), which also includes parts of Santa Clara County and Monterey County. The regional center serving Santa Cruz County is the San Andreas Regional Center. Much of the current partnership stems from an agreement outlined by the DOR and the State Board, which highlights four main policy priorities for the DOR. The four priorities are: services to youth, employer engagement, capacity building, and Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). SCCWDB works with the DOR to support all four of these priorities. Community Life, as an example, is a local provider which serves small numbers. Community Life operates a day program for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) and works closely with San Andreas Regional Center.

Through regular communication and coordination, SCCWDB and other local partners can continue to support the CIE Local Partnership Agreement. DOR continues to be a core partner of the SCCWDB, with senior management sitting on the SCCWDB and line staff attending Career Center Operator meetings. DOR provides trainings to partners through online video opportunities. DOR and SCCWDB have partnered on promoting DOR's annual employer recognition event as part of Disability Awareness Month, and DOR has also arranged for presentations at SCCWDB meetings. Recently, SCCWDB staff provided

a Workforce Development Services presentation to DOR staff so that they would be apprised of the most current services.

A WDB staff member attends the Santa Cruz County Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) meetings. The LPA was developed to create a more efficient and effective system wherein the three core and multiple community partners work collaboratively to increase competitive and integrated employment for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (ID/DD) in transition through high school and into adulthood. The LPA works on creating smooth pathways for individuals to access local community resources and opportunities for competitive integrated employment (CIE) and to be independent contributing members to their community.

- ***How the Local Board will coordinate with community-based organizations and other local partners who serve individuals who are English language learners, foreign-born, and/or refugees.***

Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult Education (WASCAE) continues to be a member of the SCCWDB providing adult education services throughout Santa Cruz County. WASCAE operates as part of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. WASCAE provides a wide array of classes with course offerings including citizenship, English as a Second Language (ESL), and career Technical Education. The majority of locations are in south county, which has the highest need, at various Watsonville locations including the Green Valley Center at 294 Green Valley Road, and the Watsonville Downtown Center at 320 Rodriguez Street. Other county locations include the Santa Cruz Center at 319 La Fonda, Santa Cruz High School, Live Oak Family Center, and Pacific Elementary School in Davenport.

WASCAE offers career pathways aligned with SCCWDB priority sectors, in healthcare, office skills, and information technology. The healthcare pathway is the most robust with programs including Certified Nursing Assistant, Certified Medical Assistant, Administrative Medical Assistant, EKG, Dental Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Terminology, and Personal Care Assistant. WASCAE also has a healthcare bridge program that connects students to Cabrillo, the local community college, which has a variety of health/medical programs. To ensure a smooth transition for students who complete their secondary or career technical education, WASCAE counselors and Transition Specialist practice a warm handoff to other agencies such as the Center for Employment Training (CET), and other WIOA partners.

WASCAE staff work with the SCCWDB to ensure efforts are coordinated. The Assistant Director is a current SCCWDB Board Member. WASCAE staff leadership attend regularly scheduled One-Stop Operator meetings in order to collaborate and fulfill WIOA mandates, to ensure SCCWDB goals and objectives are being met, and to improve coordination with other network partners for the benefit of our shared clients. WASCAE counselors, Transition Specialist, and front office staff also communicate with WIOA network partners regularly regarding referrals and co-enrollments.

In 2021-22 and 2022-23, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors sponsored pre-apprenticeship training using American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds to provide

pre-apprenticeship training through the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) and the Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult School (WASCAE).

The Workforce Development Board (WDB) funded an apprenticeship program through the Tri-County Apprenticeship Preparation Program with grant funds providing five cohorts with 20 individuals each. The program served Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties. Through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, the WDB staff expanded the program for Santa Cruz County residents partnering with two local agencies to offer apprenticeship preparation services: Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) and the Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult School (WASCAE).

On May 16, 2022, WASCAE started its first round of apprenticeship preparation training with a cohort of 15. The training ended in July with seven students successfully completing the program. A second cohort of pre-apprenticeship trainees included 14 students all of whom graduated in May 2023.

In addition to WASCAE services, EDD contracts with the Center for Employment Training (CET) to provide Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker services. CET provides the following set of services at the co-located comprehensive AJCC, as well as at their own office. The co-location at the AJCC ensures the integration of services with the greater workforce system.

- Information and referral
 - Unemployment Insurance (UI) application/access point
 - WIOA/ migrant and seasonal farmworker (MSFW) Program eligibility determination
 - WIOA basic and individualized career services
 - Vocational training programs for green building construction skills, medical assistants, medical clerks, maintenance technicians, and welding fabrication.
 - In-house supportive services; Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) courses; financial aid/ Pell Grants; instructional programs for High School Equivalency (GED)
 - Human Development Sessions: financial literacy; life skills workshops
 - Job Placement assistance services for participants
 - Follow-up assistance – post training
- ***How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Veteran Affairs, community-based organizations, and other local partners who serve veterans.***

Through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with its America's Job Center (AJCC) partners, the local workforce development system works in coordination with all required WIOA partners and other local key partners, the local Board coordinates with its WIOA Title III partners, including Veterans Services.

The MOU partners, as described in the MOU, serve those with barriers to employment through a number of strategies and services, including EDD Veteran's Affairs, as well as the entire partner list providing services in the AJCC. Please see the list for the question regarding the MOU (*How Local Boards and AJCC partners will coordinate the services and resources identified in their MOU, as outlined in WIOA Memorandums of Understanding (WSD18-12).*

The Santa Cruz County Veterans Services Office is part of the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department, the County social services department, which also houses the Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board.

WFSCC uses a Universal Referral form and EDD Veteran's Services is one of the partners to which WFSCC can refer (and vice versa).

The SCCWDB is housed within the County social services agency, the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department, as is County of Santa Cruz Veteran's services, working closely to provide veterans with workforce development services. Current partnership efforts to better serve veterans include:

- Updating the County of Santa Cruz Veteran's Services webpage to better describe and facilitate veterans accessing WIOA services.
- Providing a list of non-WIOA services available to veterans on the WFSCC/WIOA website.

In keeping with the WIOA regulations, veterans, and their eligible spouses, receive priority of services. They also have a 24 hour hold on job listings in CalJOBS for veterans before they are released to other WIOA customers.

As part of the development of the Workforce Santa Cruz County Strategic Plan 2025-2030, there will be a community engagement focus group for veterans to provide their insights, experiences and suggestions for how we can better support workforce development in our County.

- ***How the Local Board will collaborate with the Strategic Planning partners to address environmental sustainability.***

The Board will continue to collaborate and to build new alliances with strategic planning partners to address environmental sustainability. A recent example of this: The Workforce Development Board (WDB) funded an apprenticeship program through the Tri-County Apprenticeship Preparation Program with grant funds providing five cohorts with 20 individuals each. The program served Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties. Through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, the WDB staff expanded the program for Santa Cruz County residents partnering with two local agencies to offer apprenticeship preparation services: Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) and the Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult School (WASCAE).

The pre-apprenticeship training, evolving from a Proposition 39 Clean Energy pre-apprenticeship program, train in basic construction skills and creation of structured pathways to apprenticeship programs in the building trades. Training includes certification in union recognized MC3 curriculum, OSHA 10 training, and AHA CPR/First Aid.

The SCCOE pre-apprenticeship training cohort started January 11, 2023, with 10 enrollees consisting of justice-involved individuals in the Rountree Medium Facility. Eight (8) total

graduated. The second SCCOE pre-apprenticeship cohort started at Rountree on August 28, and concluded on November 1, 2023. Four (4) total graduated.

On May 16, 2022, WASCAE started its first round of apprenticeship preparation training with a cohort of 15. The training ended in July with seven students successfully completing the program. A second cohort of pre-apprenticeship trainees included 14 students all of whom graduated in May 2023.

A recent example of building a new alliance to address environmental sustainability: The Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board is partnering and playing an advisory role on an Uplift Central Coast grant application with the City of Santa Cruz.

Green jobs are indicated in CalJOBS and the Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board will be adding this information to its local in demand Eligible Training Provider List for staff use when making training placements with WIOA customers.

WIOA Title I Coordination

This section of the Local Plan should describe strategies for staff preparation, training, and ongoing professional development to respond to participant needs effectively. It should also address the services, activities, and administrative requirements established for Local Boards under WIOA Title I.

The Local Plan should address the following:

- ***Training and/or professional development that will be provided to frontline staff to gain and expand proficiency in digital fluency and distance learning.***

The SCCWDB staff maintain a Staff and Partner Training Plan which aligns to the AJCC Continuous Improvement Plan goals. The following is a list of trainings (including those that help staff gain skills in digital fluency and distance learning) that have been planned or have taken place in the last year:

- WIOA Program Co-enrollments
- Disability Awareness & Etiquette
- LMID Training
- Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity
- EDD Programs Training
- Enhancing Skills and Support for Serving Veterans 2024
- SER National (farm worker program)
- Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult Education (WASCAE) Programs
- SCCWDB secured a James Irvine Foundation Workforce Capacity Fund grant to assist the SCCWDB with further developing human centered design capability, as well as equity approaches. This grant will start being implemented in 2025.

Through Regional Coordination between Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board staff, as well as WIOA service providers, have access to the WSB Statewide Training Unit's CalJOBS Training Webinar Series with trainings that include offerings such as CalJOBS 101: CalJOBS Customization

and Tips and Tricks, Go Green! CalJOBS Document Management, and WIOA Performance 101: Introduction to WIOA Performance.

- ***Training and/or professional development that will be provided to frontline staff to ensure cultural competencies and an understanding of the experiences of trauma exposed populations.***

SCCWDB is committed to continuous improvement of programs and services through providing staff and partners regular opportunities for professional development and growth. The COVID-19 pandemic certainly impacted the ability to provide staff training in 2020 as resources and staff time were already stretched thin in responding to the twin crises of the pandemic and economic fallout, in addition to the CZU Lightning Complex wildfire in August 2020. Moving forward in the post-pandemic SCCWDB staff maintain a Staff and Partner Training Plan which aligns to AJCC Continuous Improvement Plan goals. The Workforce Santa Cruz County Training Plan for PY 24/25 (including those that help staff gain skills in cultural competency) in the last year include:

- WIOA Program Co-enrollments
- Disability Awareness & Etiquette
- LMID Training
- Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity
- EDD Programs Training
- Enhancing Skills and Support for Serving Veterans 2024
- SER National (farm worker program)
- Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult Education (WASCAE) Programs
- SCCWDB secured a James Irvine Foundation Workforce Capacity Fund grant to assist the SCCWDB with further developing human centered design capability, as well as equity approaches. This grant will start being implemented in 2025.

Trainings that are scheduled in PY 24/25 include:

- WIOA Section 188: Civil Rights, Nondiscrimination
- Career Coaching Competencies in WIOA (provided by Goodwill Central Coast)

Through Regional Coordination between Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board staff, as well as WIOA service providers, have access to the WSB Statewide Training Unit's CalJOBS Training Webinar Series with trainings that include offerings such as CalJOBS 101: CalJOBS Customization and Tips and Tricks, Go Green! CalJOBS Document Management, and WIOA Performance 101: Introduction to WIOA Performance.

- ***How the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities, as outlined in Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities (WSD16-04).***

The WFSCC coordinates with the Central Coast Business Engagement Roundtable (CCBER) that meets quarterly to discuss the broad region needs for Rapid Response and

Layoff Aversion Activities. The CCBER includes Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. The Business Engagement Roundtable was established to support businesses in the region with their layoff and/or hiring needs along with incumbent worker training opportunities. At the quarterly meetings, the team hears from State EDD/TAA, California Workforce Development Board, California Labor Federation, DOL and the Employment Training Panel for services and grant opportunities.

The WFSCC system also continues to have a strong collaboration with all other employment and training agencies to help affected individuals desiring new employment to find it as soon as possible. The SCCWDB collaborates with its partners to provide Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion services, using several strategies. SCCWDB contracts with the Central Coast Small Business Development Center to administer the business closure “Early Alert” information system and the Retain Your Employees program. These programs operate in coordination with the SCCWDB’s Business Services Team (contracted to Goodwill Central Coast) to identify business at risk of closure or relocation or staff reduction and to provide counseling, resource referral and support to avert potential layoffs.

The SCCWDB coordinates with EDD to provide businesses and employees with Rapid Response and Dislocated Worker services for both WARN and smaller sized layoffs. Based on the employees impacted, the SCCWDB coordinates Rapid Response activities with organized labor and Trade Adjustment Act services, as appropriate.

Due to the 2020 pandemic, Rapid Response materials are now available online in both English and Spanish to affected individuals. Pre-pandemic, and post-pandemic for those willing to have the Rapid Response Team in person, the team goes to affected job sites to offer Unemployment Insurance benefits information; resume, interview, and job search assistance; outplacement and transition services; vocational and skill assessments; and labor market information.

The Business Services Committee of SCCWDB annually assesses business services outcomes to recommend any strategic changes to make services more effective. The SCCWDB applies for additional Rapid Response and/or Governor's discretionary funds when needed to meet identified business service needs. The SCCWDB also supports its regional partners when they apply for additional funding. Businesses are able to access information about Rapid Response and other services in the document, “Guide to Workforce Service for Employers in Santa Cruz County.” (<https://tinyurl.com/y6po7ztn>)

- **A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the Local Area.**

Note – This includes how the Local Board will ensure that priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other income low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as outlined in WIOA Adult Program Priority of Service (WSD24-06). Additional priority groups may need to be considered to serve the local area better. The Economic and Workforce Analysis section of the State Plan

identifies workforce targets such as low-wage or high-unemployment industries that could be relevant to the local area's needs.

As alluded to in the description of partner roles and MOU services, the full menu of workforce development services and resources is available to job seekers and businesses in Santa Cruz County. SCCWDB contracts with Goodwill Central Coast (GCC) to provide WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services in Santa Cruz County. Services are provided in two locations which includes both the full service One-Stop AJCC career center in Watsonville as well as one affiliate career center in Capitola. During the COVID-19 pandemic, job seekers were able to access one-on-one services virtually through an online platform. Beginning in March 2022, services began to be held in person by appointment and services are now provided through walk-in as well.

WIOA funding is targeted to support and prepare job seekers with barriers to employment, including the priority of service categories of low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and recipients of public assistance. The AJCC service provider is required through contract and local WDB approved policy to implement the priority of services requirements (16-01 Priority of Service Policy) and collaborates closely with partners to ensure outreach to target populations and to support their access to services. The provider is very accommodating to individual needs and barriers and can provide in person intake and assessment, or remote intake and assessment, depending on the preference and needs of the individual.

The following is an overview of the career services provided through the AJCC:

- Orientation – Customers are provided with an overview of services and information on how to access AJCC and other community resources through English and Spanish language online videos.
- Assessment – Assessments help define customers' skills, interests, aptitudes, experience, and abilities to help in setting career goals. Assessments also assist in identifying barriers to employment that need to be addressed to aid the customer along the path to success.
- Eligibility Determination – Assists in determining an individual's eligibility and suitability for workforce programs and supportive services.
- Information and Referrals – Customers are provided with information on services in the greater workforce system, including supportive services and employment opportunities. Information on labor market conditions and training opportunities (including the ETPL) is also available.
- Individual Case Management – Staff work with individual participants to develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) that address their employment goals, any barriers to their success, supportive services needed, and the sequence of services. Individual case management also assists participants with identifying potential career paths within their chosen industry.
- Individual Training Accounts – WIOA funds of up to \$10,000 per participant are available to assist with the costs of in-demand occupational skills training. Training may include vocational training; English as a Second language courses; adult education and literacy activities; skills upgrades and retraining; On-the-Job training; customized training for employers.

- Supportive Services – As described previously, supportive services help participants to successfully participate in and complete workforce and training services. Supportive services are available through WIOA as well as many partner organizations, and may include transportation support, childcare, licensing and testing fees, and work-related expenses.
- Job Search Support – These services include (but are not limited to) workshops in resumes, interviews, job applications, and others; computer, telephone, and printer access; individualized counseling; employment leads onsite hiring events and career fairs.
- Follow Up Services – Staff continue to communicate regularly with enrolled participants for up to 12 months, to assist with any barriers that may have arisen with new employment.
- Financial Literacy Training – Offered through Goodwill Central Coast.

Some of the strengths of the Santa Cruz County workforce development system include a high Individual Training Account (ITA) cap which would allow a customer to complete an associate degree in an in-demand occupation; a large and generally educated labor pool; resources to offset the costs of hiring new employees; and strong local partnerships. Opportunities for growth within the system include better matching of job seekers with local employment openings and strengthening employer connections with community college programs to develop new trainings based on industry needs.

- ***A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the Local Area, as outlined in WIOA Youth Program Requirements (WSD17-07). Note – This includes any strategies for increasing the digital literacy and fluency of youth participants, including those with disabilities.***

The SCCWDB contracts with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE)'s Sueños program to provide education and employment and training services to WIOA eligible youth between the ages of 16-24 that are low-income and have other barriers to successfully attaining a high school diploma or its equivalency, entering a post-secondary education program, or being gainfully employed. The Sueños offers a physical space (during non-pandemic times) including an equipped resource room, job search workshops, job club, labor market information, staff assisted services, training, and supportive services.

The design of services allows the system to address the needs of Out-of-School (OSY) youth, as well as meet the WIOA requirement to spend 75% of the youth allocation on OSY. The 14 WIOA youth program elements are provided and include but not limited to: study skills trainings, alternative secondary school services, evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies, paid and un-paid work experience, internships and job shadowing, workforce preparation activities, leadership development opportunities, supportive services, adult mentoring, financial literacy skills training, services that provide labor market information, follow-up services, and postsecondary preparation and transition activities.

Approximately twenty percent of the total budget funds are dedicated to work experience, wages, and incentives for youth, with the balance of the budget being used to support a variety of occupational skills training. COE provides trainings in customer service and hospitality, agriculture (including farm/field technologies) and entrepreneurship. Youth in need of digital literacy skills are provided training in that area as well, and youth who do not have access to technology at home can borrow a laptop.

SCCWDB has availed itself to the Out of School (OSY) waiver, reducing the requirement to serve 75% OSY, to 50%. With an approved waiver, SCCWDB now serves more In School Youth (ISY) with barriers, including youth experiencing homelessness, justice involved, disabled and foster youth.

COE encourages young people to explore potential career pathways, and tailors its approach to the individual youth. In turn, participants have been more successful in their Work Experience placements, employment, and transition to post-secondary education.

In working with individuals with disabilities, COE focuses on proven approaches such as work based learning, employer engagement and exploration of career pathways. With work-based learning, participants are given opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills through the exploration of jobs, work readiness activities, internships, and paid work experience. The COE has seen success with this model as it has assisted individuals with disabilities prepare for employment and transition to post-secondary education. COE works with partner agencies, such as Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education to tap into their expertise regarding best practices with individuals with disabilities as well as referring individuals to other resources that may be helpful. Youth with disabilities also benefit from the arrangement between SCCWDB and DOR: The plan is to leverage the different resources available for customers. Whether an individual comes through WIOA Adult/DW/Youth or the DOR door, the customer will receive information about what other resources are available that can also support success. With co-enrollment, customers receive additional services for which they may be eligible.

The strengths of Santa Cruz County's youth workforce services include a robust system of education and training offerings; colocation of other youth vocational training programs within Sequoia High School; established relationships with businesses in hospitality, agriculture, and technology; and a strong relationship with the CalWORKs program for co-enrollments and complimentary services. Challenges that continue to be addressed are outreach to out of school youth and continued development of new employer and sponsorship relationships. SCCWDB recently approved a Youth Individual Training Account (ITA) policy which allows youth access to ITAs (separate from the WIOA Adult ITA waitlist). Youth will not have to wait to enroll in an approved vocational training of their choice. Additionally, no less than five (maybe more given the cost of training) youth can receive a training scholarship (there is a \$50,000 allocation for year one),

- ***The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official (CEO) or the Governor and the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.***

The Human Services Department (HSD) as the grant recipient and as the administrative fiscal agent for the Santa Cruz County Local Workforce Development Area, through the Santa Cruz County Auditor's office, is responsible for disbursing grant funds. The SCCWDB follows the County's Procurement Policy and federal and state guidelines for awarding contracts and grant funds. The SCCWDB uses an open and competitive process to secure providers of services and activities under Title I of WIOA. Potential bidders are notified through a formal notification process which may include the publication of the notice to potential bidders in local newspapers as well as mailings to a bidders list of former, current, and other potential service providers. The process includes a Request for Qualifications step to establish provider eligibility, Requests for Proposals or Bid issuance, a formal review process of responses, and final recommendation of providers to appropriate WDB Committee, Executive Committee and, finally, to the SCCWDB for all providers and contracts for Youth and Adult/Dislocated Worker services, and for final contract approval by the County Board of Supervisors. The SCCWDB's Procurement Policy has appeals process that meets Federal, State and County guidelines.

- ***A description of how the Local Board fulfills the duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider as outlined in Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers (WSD22-13). This should include the name(s) and role(s) of all entities with whom the Local Board contracts.***

SCCWDB competitively selects contractors to fulfill the duties of the AJCC Career Center Operator and Career Services Providers. Current contractors are as follows:

- WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services: Goodwill Central Coast
- WIOA Youth Services: Sueños (Santa Cruz County Office of Education)
- Lay-off Aversion: Cabrillo College Small Business Development Center
- Career Center Operator: Racy Ming and Associates

3. *Appendices:*

- Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary*
- Public comments received that disagree with the Local Plan*
- Signature Page*

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments

**Public Comments That Disagree with the
Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board's
2025-2028 Local Plan**

Signature Page

Instructions – The local CEO and Local Board chair must sign and date this form.

By signing below, the local CEO and Local Board chair request approval of Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board's 2025-2028 Local Plan.

Local Workforce Development
Board Chair

Local Chief Elected Official

Signature

Signature

Rob Morse

Name

Name

Santa Cruz County Workforce
Development Board Chair

Title

Title

Date

Date