

***Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board
Local Plan, 2021-2024***

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a. WIOA Core and Required Partner Coordination (This section applies to coordination with WIOA Core and Required partners outlined in WIOA Section 121)

The Workforce Santa Cruz County (WFSCC) system is a network that links public and private partners to strengthen the community by assisting individuals and businesses to reach their full economic potential. This is accomplished through the collaborative integration of employment, training, education and economic development services for job seekers, students, workers, and employers into a system that strives to be integrated, comprehensive, customer-focused, and performance-based.

2020 was an extremely difficult year for Santa Cruz County, in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting economic impact, and the CZU Lightning Complex Fire in August which displaced 70,000 Santa Cruz County residents. Job seekers, businesses, partners and staff have all personally felt the effects of these disasters. This local plan represents what is known at this time, but is likely to change as the pandemic and local conditions evolve in 2021 and beyond. The WFSCC system of partners remains committed to the Santa Cruz County community through these times and will continue to work together to serve job seekers and businesses through a period of great uncertainty.

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

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 AJCC partners, the local workforce development system works in coordination with all required WIOA partners and other local key partners. The 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)
- E&T programs under Community Service Block Grant (Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.)
- HUD-Administered Employment & Training Programs (Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz)

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

- Native American Programs - WASHOE Tribal TANF

In 2018, the Southern California American Indian Resource (SCAIR) was approved by the Department of Labor for an expansion of its Native NetWORKS Program services into a new six county region including Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura. The SCCWDB is actively working with SCAIR to realize their presence in Santa Cruz County.

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

- **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 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. AB 109 realignment services in conjunction with the Watsonville rehab and re-entry facility at Rountree.
- **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)** – Vocational training programs for green building construction skills, medical assistants, medical clerks, maintenance technicians, and welding fabrication.
- **Community Services Block Grant (Community Action Board)** - Day worker center; rental assistance; food distribution programs, youth employment readiness and job placement services, employment services for the re-entry community; work experience program for the homeless/unsheltered community, senior services, immigration legal services, emergency payments for services, and pandemic response; information and referrals to support the continuation of employment and educational goals for participants referred by the county’s CalWORKs program
- **Housing Authority** - Family self-sufficiency program that enables HUD-assisted families to increase their earned income and reduce their dependency on welfare assistance and rental subsidies.

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 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 (SCCOE). Partners meet regularly to discuss AJCC operations and to facilitate continuous improvement. The group has designed and implemented the Universal Referral form used by MOU partners in the AJCC to streamline the referral process and clarify an individual’s course of action.

Partner Round Table meetings also occur quarterly. Roundtables are used for networking, community partner presentations, and include discussion topics that partners agreed were important. 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 Career Center Operator developed (and regularly updates and disseminates) 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. In addition to Partner Round Table meetings, Hallmarks of Excellence trainings are offered quarterly and focus on continuous improvement plan items such as accessibility, labor market information, and human centered design.

In addition to the above meetings, the Business Engagement Practitioners group meets monthly. 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. The group was instrumental in developing the local business engagement strategy.

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

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 are 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. For example, 47% of WIOA Adult, 29% of Dislocated Worker, and 41% of Youth are co-enrolled in CalFresh. The figures are even higher for MediCal – 70% of WIOA Adults, 51% of Dislocated Workers and 80% of Youth are co-enrolled in that safety net program. The Human Services Department developed 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 Goodwill Central Coast and Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (CAB) to administer SmartHIRE, a subsidized employment program offering employers reimbursements to hire and train clients. Goodwill and CAB work with the employers to provide them with SmartHIRE employees. When additional training and skill development is warranted, the employee can move into an OJT 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 the use of 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 have been converted to a virtual format, including all of Cabrillo College's courses. For business customers, rapid response information and materials are being provided electronically via the internet as well as video meetings. Essential businesses were surveyed to identify their workforce needs and remote work opportunities that could be promoted with job seekers. Staff

are also working to help businesses take advantage of federal assistance programs. The WIOA supportive services policy was amended for a period of time so that WIOA participants were able to access \$500 in funding to help meet their technology needs for training. A new website is under development to expand virtual services to the public.

Migrant and seasonal farm worker communities have been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although in-person outreach paused with the shelter-in-place order that began in mid-March, 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 have been distributing masks and hand sanitizers to farmworkers, and educating them about Center for Disease Control guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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

Case managers identify during the assessment process 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 or tools.

Assisting customers with accessing supportive services has become even more important during the pandemic, with additional staff and resources directed toward this goal. The AJCC is one of the top three referral agencies to 211, which provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis. County staff have been diverted to serve as disaster workers, staffing food banks and emergency shelters, particularly during the 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 and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, as outlined in WSD17-01 - Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures.

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.

b. State Strategic Partner Coordination (This section applies to coordination with the state strategic planning partners that were added during the last Local Plan modification.)

How the Local Board will coordinate with County Health and Human Services Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who access Cal Fresh E&T 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 - 47% of WIOA Adult, 29% of Dislocated Worker, and 41% of Youth are co-enrolled in CalFresh.

The CalFresh program contracts with the Santa Cruz Homeless Services Center (HSC) and the Downtown Streets Team 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 also 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 a 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 Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz County DCSS services include establishing court orders for paternity, child support and medical coverage; locating non-custodial parents and their assets in order 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 February 2021, their current caseload is over 4,800 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.

After discussions with the SCCWDB two years ago, DCSS initiated a discussion with the court system regarding mandating job search assistance activities with the AJCC. A few clients were instructed to do so, but these orders have been paused since the pandemic began.

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. Some of their line staff have also 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. The SCCWDB and DCSS senior management participate on the Dynamic Economy subcommittee of Vision Santa Cruz, whose goal is to implement the County's Strategic Plan. This committee provides opportunities to discuss program services, client needs, and ways to braid services for better client outcomes. Thus, there are multiple means through which SCCWDB and DCSS staff and leadership are able to maximize coordination of service delivery.

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

Santa Cruz County is part of the San Jose District for the 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. Community for Life and Services for the Brain Injury (SBI) are two local providers who serve small numbers. Community for Life operates a day program for those with individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities (ID/DD) and works closely with San Andreas Regional Center.

Through regular communication and coordination, SCCWDB and other local partners are able to 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 plans to provide trainings to partners were put on hold due to the pandemic. 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.

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) provides adult education services throughout Santa Cruz County and is a member of the SCCWDB. WASCAE operates as part of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. With 31 locations, WASCAE provides a wide array of classes with course offerings including citizenship, English as a Second Language (ESL), and vocational training. In an effort to reach more potential students, WASCAE added two new locations in the spring of 2019 to provide ESL classes – one north of Santa Cruz city and one south of the city.

WASCAE currently offers pathways aligned with SCCWDB priority sectors, in healthcare, office skills, information technology, and hospitality and tourism. The healthcare pathway is the most robust with programs including Certified Medical Assistant, Certified Nursing Assistant, EKG, Dental Assistant and Pharmacy Technician. WASCAE also has a healthcare bridge program that connects students to the local community college, Cabrillo College, which has a robust health/medical curriculum. To ensure a smooth transition for students who transfer to colleges to complete their vocational studies, WASCAE has a "Transition Specialist" position on its team.

WASCAE staff work with the SCCWDB to ensure efforts are coordinated. The SCCWDB and WASCAE leadership maintain regular communication through the SCCWDB meetings and the Career Center Operator meetings; in addition, line staff communicate regularly regarding referrals and co-enrollments.

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

c. WIOA Title I Coordination

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

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. Nonetheless, SCCWDB staff maintain a Staff and Partner Training Plan which aligns to Hallmarks of Excellence goals. The following is a list of trainings (including those that help staff gain skills in digital fluency and cultural competency) that have been planned or have taken place in the last year:

- Ensuring AJCC Access for People with Disabilities
- Overview of the ADA and Myths and Misconceptions Around Employment for People with Disabilities
- How Human Centered Design is Used to Improve Program and Community Outcomes
- Strategies for Effective Virtual Training and Facilitation Delivery
- Overview of Santa Cruz County labor market information and data usage
- Emotional Intelligence

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

The WFSCC system is a strong collaborative with all other employment and training agencies to help affected individuals desiring new employment to find it as soon as possible. The SCCWDB works with its partners to provide Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion services, using a number of 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.

Because of the 2020 pandemic, Rapid Response materials are now available online in both English and Spanish to affected individuals. Pre-pandemic, the Rapid Response team would go 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. 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 low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as outlined in [WSD15-14 - WIOA Adult Program Priority of Service](#).

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. WDSOC 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 are still able to access one-on-one services virtually through an online platform.

WIOA funded are targeted to support and prepare job seeker 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 works closely with partners to ensure outreach to target populations and to support their access to services.

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.

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 Eligible Training Provider List (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 (ITA) – 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 ITA cap which would allow a customer to complete an associate’s 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 [WSD17-07- WIOA Youth Program Requirements](#). This includes any strategies the Local Board has on how to increase the digital literacy and fluency of youth participants, including youth with disabilities.

The SCCWDB contracts with the Santa Cruz County of 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, evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies, paid work experience, internships and job shadowing, workforce preparation activities, support services, adult mentoring, and financial literacy skills training.

Approximately twenty five percent of the total budget funds 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.

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.

The strengths of Santa Cruz'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.

The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official 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 includes 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 an 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 [WSD19-13](#) - Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers. This should include the name(s) and role(s) of any entities that the Local Board contracts with.

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: Winter Works LLC (Amanda Winter)

3. Appendices:

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