



Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board
2012-2016 Local Plan

September 2012

EWIB 2012–2016 Local Workforce Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 requires that each state submit a Workforce Investment Act State Plan to the U.S. Department of Labor (US DOL) that outlines a five-year strategy for its workforce investment system. To complete that plan, CTDOL requires each local Workforce Board to do the same. Below is a summary of that plan.

THE EASTERN CT “REGIONAL” PICTURE

Two (2) major forces contribute to gaps between available jobs, projected industry growth, existent workforce, and available resources.

- First, the southern portion of our region (*the Norwich-New London metropolitan area*) was recently identified as the fourth hardest hit metropolitan area in the nation in terms of percentage of job losses from April 2010 to April 2011, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Second, despite educators struggle to keep up with the pace of change in the private sector, a skills mismatch exists between job applicants and the requirements of employers.
- Together, these two forces have strained the limited resources of the regional education and training systems by increasing the number of jobseekers requiring education and training and the available offerings to adapt quickly to meet industry needs.

REGIONAL VISION

The vision of economic and workforce development in Eastern CT is to protect and grow quality, high and mid-wage jobs in the region. This vision drives the *CTWorks-East* system toward a “*talent development*” approach rather than the traditional “*job training*” models of the past. By focusing on continuous skill and competency development in such areas as Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (*STEM*) we can prioritize scarce resources toward investments that stimulate economic activity as opposed to areas which react to it. The vision aligns and integrates education and training investments into a coherent strategy that results in a pipeline of skills that cross-cut numerous key industries. This “*competency clusters*” approach is embedded into the region’s Economic Development strategy.

REGIONAL STRATEGIC GOALS

The EWIB has identified four (4) strategic goals to achieve the regional economic and workforce development vision.

1. Continue to increase investments in STEM-related competencies.
2. Continue to utilize cost-effective training strategies to universally upgrade the skills of our entire workforce through a lifelong learning model. The EWIB continues to increase its investments in technology-based learning as a way to provide skills upgrades valued by employers at a significantly lower cost than traditional classroom training, and thus more broadly accessible.
3. Support the growth of regional businesses through investments in On-the-Job (*OJT*) and Incumbent Worker Training (*IWT*).
4. Assist the development of a K-16 talent pipeline for high skill/technical jobs in STEM areas. EWIB continues to invest in its youth pipeline strategy both for in and out of school youth as well as supporting programs aligned with this vision at the region’s two community colleges such as QVCC’s Manufacturing Center.

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD 2012 - 2016 PLANNING GUIDELINES

I. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

A. Workforce

1. Describe the profile of the area's workforce based upon consideration of educational levels, demographics, etc.

The Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Area (WIA) covers 41 municipalities in Eastern Connecticut. According to the Connecticut Department of Labor's "2011 Information for Workforce Investment Planning":

- The population of the Eastern WIA in 2010 was 443,841.
- The 2010 regional labor force was 244,360.
- In 2009, 23% of workers in the region were age 29 or younger, 56% were age 30-54, and 21% were age 55 or older.
- In 2009, 88% of workers in the Eastern WIA were white alone. Five percent (5%) were black alone, 5% were Asian alone, and 2% other.
- Although not classified as a "race" category as presented above, seven percent (7%) of regional workers in 2009 was of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.
- As of 2009, 7% of all workers age 30 or older in the Eastern WIA had not earned a high school diploma, 21% had a high school diploma or equivalent with no college, 24% had some college experience or an Associate degree, and 25% had a Bachelor's or advanced degree. Educational attainment data were not available for workers age 29 or younger (the remaining 23% of the workforce).

2. Describe the workforce investment needs of the following:

Although low net job creation in the Eastern region is projected in the coming years, workforce supply gaps will continue to emerge. The EWIB emphasizes a "Clusters of Competency" model for all individual members of the workforce. This model focuses efforts on key skills and competencies that are cross-platform requirements across a diverse set of industries versus a strategy that focuses exclusively on specific industries. Competencies identified as both current strengths and long-term drivers of the high-wage, knowledge economy of the region include engineering, measurement and manufacturing, defense and supply chain, and energy management.

a. Job Seekers

Many job seekers in the EWIB region need assistance gaining the credentials, skills and competencies demanded by employers. Job seekers need quality information about jobs, the dynamics of the labor market, available training and education opportunities, and links to other public and private services.

b. Dislocated Workers

As a subset of the “*jobseekers*” category, dislocated workers in the EWIB region have many of the same needs as job seekers, in addition to guidance in upgrading and/or repurposing their existing skills to quickly secure a job that pays a high replacement wage.

c. Incumbent Workers

Incumbent workers in the EWIB region need assistance managing their careers in a volatile economy. The EWIB can provide this assistance in a number of ways, including providing training for incumbent workers to constantly upgrade their skills and competencies. Training for incumbent workers can come from many sources: universities, community colleges, private training providers, in-house corporate training, online courses, and peer-to-peer networking.

d. Youth

Youth need support to ensure that they have the right mix of skills and competencies to find jobs in occupations on career pathways and to be immediately successful in those jobs. The concept of “*resume building*” (as opposed to *wealth building*) through valuable experience is the primary goal during these formative years.

B. Labor Market

1. Identify the current and projected occupational/employment opportunities in your area based on DOL data and regional sources.

Globally-driven knowledge industries in the EWIB region are projected to grow faster than the rest of the economy. Although net job creation in knowledge industries and their skilled occupations represents a small share of all jobs to be created, these jobs will require the constant application of new skills and knowledge to stay competitive with global trends. These jobs will remain critical to the rest of the economy, as they represent the position that stimulates other economic activities, as opposed to reacting to it. Simply put, these jobs have a large multiplier effect.

According to CT DOL WIA Occupational Projections for 2008-2018:

- The industry sectors with the largest projected change in employment from 2008-2018 are Health Care and Social Assistance (+3,565 jobs), Educational Services (+2,550), Accommodation and Food Services (+1,052), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+1,009), and Retail Trade (+997).
- The industry sectors with the largest percentage increases in employment from 2008-2018 are Management of Companies and Enterprises (+14.4%), Health Care and Social Assistance (+13.8%), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+13.1%), and Educational Services (+10.6%).

2. Describe the job skills necessary to obtain the current and projected employment opportunities.

Interviews conducted through the EWIB USDOL Regional Innovation Grant (RIG) planning process provided a detailed picture of the demand for workers and skills. Technical competencies most in demand were instrument and control technicians;

nuclear engineers and technicians (*in the Southern region*); power distribution workers; and skilled manufacturing workers with technical knowledge and flexibility (*particular those with crossover skills with IT, Life Sciences, and Aerospace*). The demand for skills and competencies sought by regional employers often occurs in the intersection of manufacturing and another discipline, such as engineering, biotech, or businesses. For example, sales and marketing people with technical acumen are in high demand as well as workers who can manage technical areas of their firm both related and unrelated to their own background as they advance. Some firms cited a need for technical support workers with the ability to install and repair equipment and to train customers.

Several required skills were identified through the interviews, including: Entrepreneurial Workers; Communications Skills; Data Analysis; Flexibility in Work Tasks and Deliverables; Self Starting; Decision Making Skills; Business Skills; and Leadership. Competencies identified as current strengths and long-term drivers of the high-wage and high growth knowledge economy were: Engineering, Measurement and Manufacturing; Defense (*e.g., aerospace, ship building*); Supply Chain and Logistics, and Energy Management.

C. Resources

1. **Provide a description of the resources including programs and services, to meet the workforce development needs of:**

Through four (4) *CTWorks-East* Career Centers and programs offered in collaboration with its partners, the EWIB offers a range of services to meet the workforce development needs of individuals and employers. By supplementing the Federal **Workforce Investment Act (WIA)** with numerous competitively acquired grants, the EWIB offers a comprehensive range of workforce development activities through statewide and regional organizations. *CTWorks-East* workforce development activities benefit job seekers, laid off workers, youth, incumbent workers, new entrants to the workforce, veterans, persons with disabilities, and employers. *CTWorks-East* enables customers to easily access the information and services they need through the One-Stop service delivery concept. The purpose of these activities is to promote and increase the employment, job retention, earnings, and occupational skills of participants. This, in turn, improves the quality of the workforce, reduces welfare dependency and unemployment, and improves the productivity competitiveness and quality of life in the region.

The bullets in the following sections provide examples of additional EWIB programs that more specifically target each of these customer categories.

a. **Employers**

All EWIB programs and services meet the workforce development needs of the region's employers by producing more skilled and competent workers. EWIB programs and services that specifically target employers include:

- **Business Services** - The EWIB has created an innovative public-private partnership of two strong sources of business contacts - the region's six (6)

Chambers of Commerce and the Connecticut Department of Labor, to meet the human resource challenges faced by regional businesses. The EWIB Business Services Team, consisting of two DOL employees and two employees representing the region's Chambers of Commerce, was created in response to the ever-increasing needs of the business sector customers. Business Services offer a core set of services, such as: Electronic Classified Advertising on CT Job Central Online system, On-site employer recruitments, Incumbent Worker Training, Screening and referral, and many more. The Business Services Team members are resources for information on grants, subsidies, or tax incentives that regional employers may be eligible for, as well as training for new and/or current employees at little or no cost.

- **Incumbent Worker Training** - The EWIB implements its Incumbent Worker Training (*IWT*) program targeting regional small businesses in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (*STEM*) and advanced manufacturing fields throughout the region, providing skill upgrades for workers. Working in partnership with the region's two Community Colleges, the EWIB continually explores new funding avenues for this highly successful, in-demand program. Incumbent Worker Training is designed to benefit business and industry by assisting in the skill development of existing employees, increasing employee productivity and the growth of the company.
- **E-Training for Small Employers** - The EWIB offers the region's smaller employers an opportunity to enroll their employees in the successful online learning program. Online training provides employees the opportunity to upgrade their skills through an effective and affordable distance learning program. There are over 5,000 courses available such as technology, business, marketing and management skills. Numerous industry credentials are also available as a result of the technology.
- **STEP UP** - The EWIB is successfully implementing the CT Jobs Bill STEP UP Programs ~ Small Manufacturer Training Program and the Subsidized Training and Employment Program for the 13 eligible communities.

b. Job-Seekers

Many EWIB programs and services target job seekers to prepare them to find and maintain jobs in occupations that offer good wages and the potential for advancement.

- **Technology Based Learning** - The EWIB has prioritized online training through its use of Metrix as a cost effective way for job seekers to upgrade their skills. In its ongoing efforts to increase the value of this resource, the EWIB has teamed up with Quinebaug Valley & Three Rivers Community Colleges to finalize articulation agreements that will ensure college credit for the online learning. Industry recognized certification testing is also available for designated courses.

- **Human Services Integration (HSI)** - Due to continued high unemployment in the region and residents who have lost their unemployment insurance benefits, *CTWorks-East* Centers now see more customers with basic human needs such as food and shelter that prevent them from being "job ready." Through its partnership with the Thames Valley Council for Community Action (*TVCCA*), the EWIB piloted the integration of the Community Action Agencies "*Human Services Initiative*" into the Career Centers. The EWIB has continued to fund two full time positions to provide these services as well as integrate the duties of the Disability Program Navigator (*DPN*) position when federal funding ended. The DPN provided information to customers regarding the services and agencies available to help people with disabilities "navigate" through the challenges of seeking employment.
- **Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)** - JFES is a program for adult recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (*TANF*) that helps them gain and maintain independence from federal and state financial assistance by providing employment, education, training services, and case management and the necessary skills needed to secure employment by the 21-month expiration of benefits. All participants receive assistance in preparing and looking for a job, transportation assistance, and help with payment for childcare.
- **JFES Intensive Employment-Focused ESL/GED Program** - Eastern region Adult Education agencies (*EASTCONN, New London Adult Education, and Norwich Adult Education*) provide the JFES ESL/GED Program. The program works with TANF recipients faced with barriers in their pursuit of education and employment, including learning disabilities, lack of basic skills, and English language deficiencies.
- **Regional Transportation Collaborative** - The purpose of this program is to assist with transportation for employment-related purposes, including transportation to and from employment. Another feature of the program called Car-Based Solutions provides flexible and individualized options for transportation to employment related activities. It can be used to obtain assistance with car insurance, registrations, car inspections, back taxes, and car repairs, among others. Car-Based Solutions is designed to increase incumbent workers' ability to maintain employment by providing them with reliable transportation, especially in areas where public transportation is unable to accommodate them.
- **Green Jobs Energy & Partnership Programs** - Several federally funded Green Jobs Grants offers training opportunities to Connecticut job seekers interested in "green careers" in energy efficiency, renewable energy and environmental protection that EWIB integrates into the *CTWorks* system.

c. Incumbent Workers

The EWIB offers several programs that assist incumbent workers to maintain their jobs and upgrade their skills and competencies to increase their employability and earning power, including:

- **Incumbent Worker Training** - The EWIB Incumbent Worker Training (*IWT*) program provides skills training for existing full-time employees of regional businesses. The IWT program results in the creation of new jobs, the retention of jobs that otherwise may have been eliminated, and an increase in wages for the trained workers. The EWIB also offers a special IWT program for green companies that want to upgrade the skills of their workers or train their workers in green technologies.

d. Dislocated Workers

Many of the programs and services listed above (*particularly those for job seekers*) serve dislocated workers. The following programs specifically serve dislocated workers.

- **National Emergency Grants (NEG)** - The NEG program provides supplemental dislocated worker funds to States, Local Workforce Boards and other eligible entities in order to respond to the needs of dislocated workers and communities affected by major economic dislocations and other worker dislocation events. Dislocation events may include plant closures, large layoffs affecting 50 or more workers at a single site of employment, closures and realignments of military installations, multiple layoffs in a single local community that have significantly increased the total number of unemployed individuals in a community, emergencies or natural disasters, and other events as determined by the US Department of Labor. The NEG program [*only for those impacted workers from those specific businesses*] is available to assist these workers to enhance their skills or retrain in some areas to begin the process of re-entry in a highly competitive job market for jobs that offer comparable wages and fringe benefits. The EWIB has a current NEG Grant for former Mohegan Sun employees, and has secured and administered over a dozen of these for various companies.
- **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Grants** - The EWIB coordinates with Department of Labor staff in the service of dislocated workers who have been displaced due to foreign competition.

e. Youth

The EWIB offers several programs that specifically prepare youth for high-quality jobs on career pathways, including:

- **Summer Youth Employment Program** - This short-term summer work experience for income eligible youth ages 14-21 places youth in individual worksites or in teams for a project based experience. The worksites are developed to match youth's career interests and are related to career ladders. Youth work on average 15-25 hours per week, for approximately 6 weeks and earn no less than state minimum wage. The experience also develops

educational and work maturity skills. EWIB has been able to supplement state resources for the summer programs through support from several foundations (*People's United Community Foundation, Liberty Bank Foundation, Charter Oak Federal Credit Union, Community Foundation of Eastern CT, Dime Bank Foundation, and Dominion Resources*).

- **WIA In-School Youth Program: Careers of Our Lives (COOL) Directions** - EASTCONN/Northeast and Norwich Youth and Family Services/New London Office of Youth Affairs in the Southeast collaborate to engage and prepare in-school youth (*ages 16-19, a high school junior or senior who meet EWIB economic guidelines and have barriers to employment*) for work.
- **WIA Out-of-School Youth Program** - EASTCONN Adult Education, in collaboration with the Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA), and New London Adult Education Programs, delivers a comprehensive system of education, training, and individualized support to youth ages 16–21. Using a career pipeline approach, which consists of learning designed to improve earning potential, youth realize employment, enhanced education and employment opportunities, and improved quality of life. The program is based on a coordinated case management/education model.
- **CT Conservation Corps** - The EWIB operates a CT Conservation Corps pilot project designed to provide skill training and paid work experience to 18-25 year old unemployed residents, giving a preference to Veterans. Two crews assist the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection at Quaddick State Park and Natchaug State Forest. They also receive training, resulting in a variety of certifications such as OSHA 10 and CPR. Additionally, participants receive ongoing job referral and retention support services for six (6) months upon program completion.
- **Youth Pipeline Programs** - The EWIB has defined its Youth Pipeline Programs by the following consistent elements: 1) A selection of up front skill specific online courses validated by the targeted industry; 2) an employment internship in targeted demand occupations; and, 3) portfolio documentation of the experience for high school credit. The EWIB has implemented Childcare, Healthcare, Manufacturing, STEM, and Green Pipelines with a variety of youth funding. EWIB has also integrated the pipeline approach into its year-round WIA Youth Programs.

D. Analysis

1. **Based on the Board's analysis of the environmental scan, identify the gaps between the available jobs, projected industry growth, existent workforce and resources available to fill these gaps.**

Two (2) major forces contribute to gaps between available jobs, projected industry growth, existent workforce, and available resources. First, the Norwich-New London metropolitan area was the fourth hardest hit of any metropolitan area in the nation in terms of percentage of job losses from April 2010 to April 2011, according

to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Second, a skills mismatch exists between job applicants and the requirements of employers, as educators struggle to keep up with the pace of change in the private sector. Together, these two forces have strained the regional education and training systems by increasing the number of jobseekers in need of training services and requiring education and training offerings to adapt quickly to meet industry needs.

2. Outline the Board's recommendations to address any disparities.

The EWIB recommends and is implementing several strategies to address the training and skill upgrading budget challenges associated with high unemployment and skills mismatches, including:

- The EWIB prioritizes the broad implementation of online training through its use of Metrix as a cost effective way for job seekers to upgrade their skills. Metrix offers a vast catalogue of (5,000+) courses covering skills demanded by employers in industry sectors including desktop computing, business, information technology and health care. The EWIB's use of online learning allows it to serve more jobseekers with a wider range of training offerings at a low per-customer cost. The EWIB recommends expanding the use of online training, as appropriate.
- The EWIB recommends the development of workplace training opportunities such as On-the-Job training (*OJT*) and internships, as workplace training by nature is employer-driven and industry-relevant. The EWIB has expanded workplace training through: a) an H1-B Technical Skills Training grant that provides *OJT* to unemployed workers in high-growth, high-skill occupations in fields such as information technology, engineering, and advanced manufacturing; b) youth pipeline projects in several industries (*e.g., health, green*); and c) a new green skill building program for benched workers. The EWIB will continue to work with its industry partners to expand workplace training opportunities.
- The EWIB prioritizes expanding contextualized learning programs to accelerate the completion of training programs and increase the industry-relevance of training. The EWIB will implement an Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (*I-BEST*) program focused on various industries in partnership with EASTCONN, the regional educational service center (*RESC*) and New London Adult Education.

3. Describe what initiatives the Board will undertake to secure additional financial resources to address the gaps identified in the analysis. Identify specific sources of potential funding the Board will pursue and identify specific activities for which the additional funding would be used.

The EWIB is constantly exploring new funding opportunities to provide resources to meet gaps in service. The EWIB has established a relationship with the Southeast Funders Collaborative that provided funding to serve additional disadvantaged youth with a summer work experience. The EWIB will continue to pursue that source. The EWIB has actively pursued and won a variety of federal funding and

has partnered with other workforce boards in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island when appropriate. Federal sources are most often pursued to support systematic changes or implement pilot initiatives such as the recently successful CT STEM Jobs Grant.

II. *LINKAGE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

1. **What is the existing or proposed economic development strategy in your region as established by local and regional economic development agencies? Specifically describe strategies for the recruitment of new and expansion of existing businesses? What are the priorities? Identify the key industries that support your regional economy; identify emerging or growth industries.**

EWIB leadership serves on the Board of Directors of both regional Economic Development Agencies and contributed heavily to their strategy development. **The goals of the 2011 Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (*seCTer*) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) are:**

- Promote a regional collaboration around economic development that unites the region behind this common vision
- Ensure the continued strength of the existing economic base while seeking to diversify the economy through the development of the region's core competencies. This goal includes objectives related to the recruitment of new and expansion of existing businesses, such as:
 - Promote small business development and new entrepreneurship
 - Support creative strategies for business investment and market development
 - Support the vitality of the regional manufacturing base
 - Ensure the continued strength of the region's defense-related facilities and companies
 - Support the sustainable development of the region's tourism industry
 - Support the growth of the maritime cluster
 - Promote the region's arts and cultural organizations as an economic engine
 - Support new economic opportunities in the agricultural cluster
- Enhance the physical infrastructure needed to support the region's development
- Promote education and training opportunities that create and sustain careers
- Enhance the regional quality of life, in urban centers, rural areas and suburban communities

The goals of the 2011 Northeastern Connecticut Economic Partnership CEDS are:

- Foster a strong and innovative regional economy. This goal includes objectives related to the recruitment of new and expansion of existing businesses, such as:
 - Attract new businesses while retaining and expanding existing businesses
 - Encourage entrepreneurship
 - Build upon strong traditional and regionally emerging economic clusters that are or have the potential to be recognized by the State of Connecticut

- Maintain and strengthen our economic competitiveness
- Balance growth with the desire to protect the region's rural character and natural resources
- Improve the quality of life of residents
- Strengthen regional economic collaboration

The seCTer CEDS identifies six (6) industry groups or clusters that contribute most significantly to the economic base of the region: Defense, Tourism, Bioscience, Maritime Trades, Creative Technology and Agriculture. The Northeastern CEDS identified three industry clusters that already impact the regional economy and serve as targets for economic growth: Plastics, Agriculture, and Tourism. The EWIB RIG SWOT analysis identified five sectors in the regional economy that continue to perform well and are positioned in high-growth global industries: Defense, Aerospace/Electronics, Health Care/Biomedical, Energy Companies, and Engineering Firms.

The seCTer CEDS identifies Technology and Alternative Energy as emerging industry clusters. The Northeastern CEDS identifies Tourism and Entertainment as one of the emerging industries that will drive job growth and economic development in the future. The EWIB RIG SWOT analysis identified five "driver industries": Aerospace and Defense; Design & Engineering; Energy; Electronics Manufacturing, and Materials.

2. How does the industry cluster initiative impact your regional economy? Which clusters have high concentrations of companies in your region?

The Northeastern Connecticut Economic Partnership reviewed the State of Connecticut's industry clusters as part of its analysis of the region during the development of its CEDS. The Northeastern Connecticut Economic Partnership did this to see what synergies could be gained by working collaboratively with the State Industry Cluster Initiative.

The following table shows the 2011 location quotients (LQs) of the industries included in Connecticut's Industry Cluster Initiative, according to the US DOL Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). These location quotients compare the density of industry sectors in the two counties that comprise most of the Eastern Connecticut WIA to the reference economy of the State of Connecticut. A quotient greater than 1.00 indicates that a given sector or sub-industry has a higher employment concentration in Eastern Connecticut than it does in Connecticut as a whole.

CT Cluster	BLS Industry	Windham County LQ	New London County LQ
Bioscience	Research & development in biotechnology	ND	ND
Aerospace	Aerospace product and parts manufacturing	ND	ND
Software/IT	Computer systems design and related services	0.12	1.04
Metal Manufacturing	Fabricated metal product manufacturing	0.14	1.35

CT Cluster	BLS Industry	Windham County LQ	New London County LQ
Maritime	Ship and boat building	ND	ND
Plastics	Plastics product manufacturing	6.26	ND
Agricultural	Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	1.98	3.71
Insurance and Finance	Finance and insurance	0.23	0.26

ND = Not Disclosable

3. What are the specific workforce development needs associated with the economic development priorities identified in #1? For example, companies may be seeking services including recruitment/assessment/referral of job applicants.

In 2010, the EWIB, using a US DOL Regional Innovation Grant (RIG), performed a SWOT (*Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threats*) analysis of Workforce Demand in the region. This report examined the changing demographics of the region's workforce, wages, employment and changing growth patterns in its existing industries. The SWOT Analysis also examined external forces that will continue to have an impact on the regional economy into this century, including increasing globalization and global competitiveness; the stresses currently facing the national economy; and the ever exploding pace of technological change. From this SWOT analysis, the report identified skill sets that currently exist in the regional workplace and those that will be needed to position the economy for future technological advances both in existing industries and in emerging new industries.

The EWIB supports the "economic gardening" approach to economic development adopted by regional economic development entities. The economic gardening approach seeks to grow the local economy from within by focusing on growing and nurturing local businesses rather than trying to attract new employers from outside the area. The EWIB supports existing businesses in a variety of ways (*see section I.C.1.a.*), with an underlying priority on closing the skill gaps between job applicants and the requirements of employers, particularly in fields that require STEM competencies.

4. Identify how the Board will address the workforce development needs as they pertain to the economic development strategy of the area. Describe programs and services available to support economic development recruitment and expansion priorities.

In planning for the future of the regional economy and the recovery of the national economy, the EWIB undertook a study of Workforce Demand and the skill sets that currently exist in the regional workforce. The subsequent report identified "competency clusters" or skills that exist within the current workforce and that cross into multiple industries, both traditional and emerging. Competencies identified as current and long term drivers in the economy include engineering, measurement and manufacturing, defense and supply chain, energy management, software/IT/instrumentation and medical. These competencies and the skills sets they require - Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) ~ will need to be cultivated in the region's schools, colleges and workplaces as a basis for growing new industries in the region and for strengthening existing industry clusters.

The EWIB Incumbent Worker Training program specifically targets STEM employers in order to develop the STEM workforce talent needed by regional employers in driver industries and emerging industries. The US DOL STEM H1-B OJT Grant that the EWIB shares with the Workforce Alliance also supports regional business needs for economic development.

5. Identify the economic development professionals and organizations involved in the development of this component of the plan.

The economic development organizations involved in the development of the economic development strategies include: the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) and the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (*seCTer*) [*Southeastern Connecticut*], and the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG), the Windham Region Council of Governments (WINCOG) and the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance [*Northeastern Connecticut*].

6. Describe how the Board will establish and maintain relationships and lines of communication with the economic development entities in its region.

The EWIB maintains longstanding relationships with both *seCTer* and the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance. The *seCTer* Acting Executive Director serves on the EWIB Board of Directors. The EWIB Executive Director serves on the *seCTer* Board of Directors. A *CTWorks-East* Business Service Representative serves as a member of the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance Board. Staff persons at multiple levels of the EWIB also maintain regular, informal contact with staff from the two economic development entities. EWIB has also contracted with both of the regional economic development agencies to provide dedicated support promoting a recent H1-B STEM On the Job Training Grant.

The EWIB played an active role in the development of the most recent Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (*CEDS*) completed by *seCTer* and the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance (*and expects to play an active role in the development of future CEDS*):

- The EWIB Executive Director and Director of Strategic Development both served on the Steering Committee that developed the most recent Northeastern Connecticut Economic Partnership (*now known as the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance*) *CEDS*.
- At the January 2011 meeting of the Southeastern Connecticut *CEDS* Strategy Committee, the EWIB presented a unique way to categorize the underlying skills needed for specific occupations. The EWIB is working with local schools and universities to develop and enhance existing skills in students and workers in preparation for their successful employment in both current and pioneering 21st Century jobs.

III. VISION AND GOALS

1. Describe the area's strategic economic and workforce development vision for the next two years based upon Sections I and II of your plan.

The vision of economic and workforce development in Eastern CT for the next two (2) years is to protect and grow high-quality, high-wage/mid-wage jobs in the region, with emphasis on industries and occupations reliant upon competencies in science, technology, engineering, and math.

2. Identify the strategic goals developed to achieve that vision and identify how they relate to the priorities identified in the CETC Annual Plan.

The EWIB has identified four strategic goals to achieve the regional economic and workforce development vision.

1. **Continue to increase investments in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) competencies** – This aligns with the CETC Annual Plan priorities to “...promote career opportunities in occupations and industries that rely upon/value knowledge and skills in science, technology, education and math” and to “identify targeted industry sectors (and, implicitly, related occupations and skills) on which to focus state economic development and jobs creation strategy (and) coordinate all relevant (including workforce-related) investments, programs, and policies accordingly.”
2. **Continue to utilize cost-effective training strategies to universally upgrade the skills of our entire workforce through a lifelong learning model** – The EWIB continues to increase its investments in technology-based learning as a way to provide skills upgrades valued by employers at a significantly lower cost than traditional classroom training, and thus more broadly accessible. This aligns with the CETC Annual Plan priority to “maximize impact and provide more individuals with foundation skills.”
3. **Support the growth of regional businesses through investments in On-the-Job (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)** – The EWIB targets STEM occupations for OJT and IWT. This aligns with the CETC Annual Plan priorities to emphasize “job training investment in incumbent worker training targeting selected industries/occupations” and “job training investment in workplace-based training and learning strategies as an effective practice.”
4. **Assist the development of a K-16 talent pipeline for high skill/technical jobs in STEM areas.** – EWIB continues to invest in its youth pipeline strategy both for in and out of school youth as well as supporting programs aligned with this vision at the region’s two community colleges such as QVCC’s Manufacturing Center. This aligns with CETC’s 3rd goal “Future Talent All CT youth will be ready for career and postsecondary success as contributors to a vibrant and competitive state economy.”

3. For each strategic goal, describe the specific objectives/action steps to achieve the goal and the corresponding deliverables and target dates. Also identify the Board Committee with oversight responsibility for the goal. See the attached template for providing this information.

Strategic Goal	Objectives/Action Steps	Deliverables	Target Dates	EWIB Committee(s)	Measures
1. Invest in STEM-related competencies	a. Pursue and/or partner in grant opportunities that advance STEM competencies	Grant awards	Ongoing	Performance, Accountability & Planning (PAP)	- # of grants received - \$\$\$ received
	b. Sustain STEM industry workshops and specialized guidance & prioritize STEM companies & competencies for OJT/IWT	Workshops Individuals completing training	Ongoing	PAP	- # workshops - %workshop attendees entering STEM training - # completing training
2. Expand cost-effective training for more residents	a. Implement additional Metrix learning sites in the region	New locations	2013	PAP, Youth Council	- # locations - # people taking courses
	b. Promote the Articulation Agreement developed with QVCC & TRCC to ease transfer of credits to community colleges & expand the capacity to test for certifications	Use of the Articulation Agreement for credit trained proctors	2013	PAP, Youth Council	- # credits transferred - # Proctors trained - # tests administered
	c. Continue delivery of technology workshops to bridge the "digital divide" issues	Technology workshops	Ongoing	PAP	- # workshops - # people attending workshops
3. Support regional business growth	a. Encourage worker skill training with OJT and IWT	Individuals completing training	Ongoing	PAP	- # people completing training
	b. Support the manufacturing training initiatives in the region through training resources & collaborative grants	Individuals trained Grants secured	Ongoing	PAP	- Grants secured
4. K-16 Talent Pipeline in STEM areas	a. Continue support of Youth Pipeline models with WIA funding	Individuals completing pipeline	Ongoing	Youth Council	- # youth completing pipeline
	b. Expand the use of contextualized learning programs	Improve basic & industry skills	Ongoing	Youth Council	- # youth completing a credential

4. Identify the measures to be used to track progress toward these goals.

See table on page above.

IV. WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**A. Role in Vision/Goals/Strategies****1. Describe what the Board views as its role as it relates to achieving the region's economic and workforce development vision and goals and how this role will be carried out.**

The EWIB sees its role in achieving the region's vision as being to facilitate the collaborative development of a technologically advanced, fully employed workforce that promotes sustained economic growth while contributing to a standard of living that can be enjoyed by all residents of Eastern Connecticut.

2. Describe how the Board will engage a broad array of economic and workforce development entities in the achievement of the vision and goals.

The EWIB Board of Directors includes leaders from each of the following economic and workforce development entities:

- Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (*SECCOG*)
- Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (*seCTer*)
- Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (*DECD*)

The EWIB also communicates regularly with these and other economic and workforce development entities including the Northeastern CT Council of Governments and the Northeast Economic Alliance, and they are both represented on EWIB's Incumbent Worker Training Review team. EWIB staff serves on seCTer's Economic Development Subcommittee. The EWIB also sends bimonthly reports to all Chief Elected Officials in the region highlighting initiatives and activities.

3. Describe the role of the Board in each strategy outlined in Section III above.

The EWIB will play a central role in implementing each of the strategic goals, objectives, and action steps in the table on Page 15. The EWIB will work with partners (*e.g., economic development, community college, employers*) to implement certain strategies, as appropriate.

B. Planning Process**1. Describe how the Board consulted with and provided an opportunity for public input on the local plan.**

As the EWIB has done in the past, it will place a legal notice in the regional newspapers notifying the public that the Plan is available on the EWIB website or a copy will be sent upon request to entities or members of the public that might wish to comment on the Plan.

2. Submit, as an attachment, any comments received as part of the public input process.

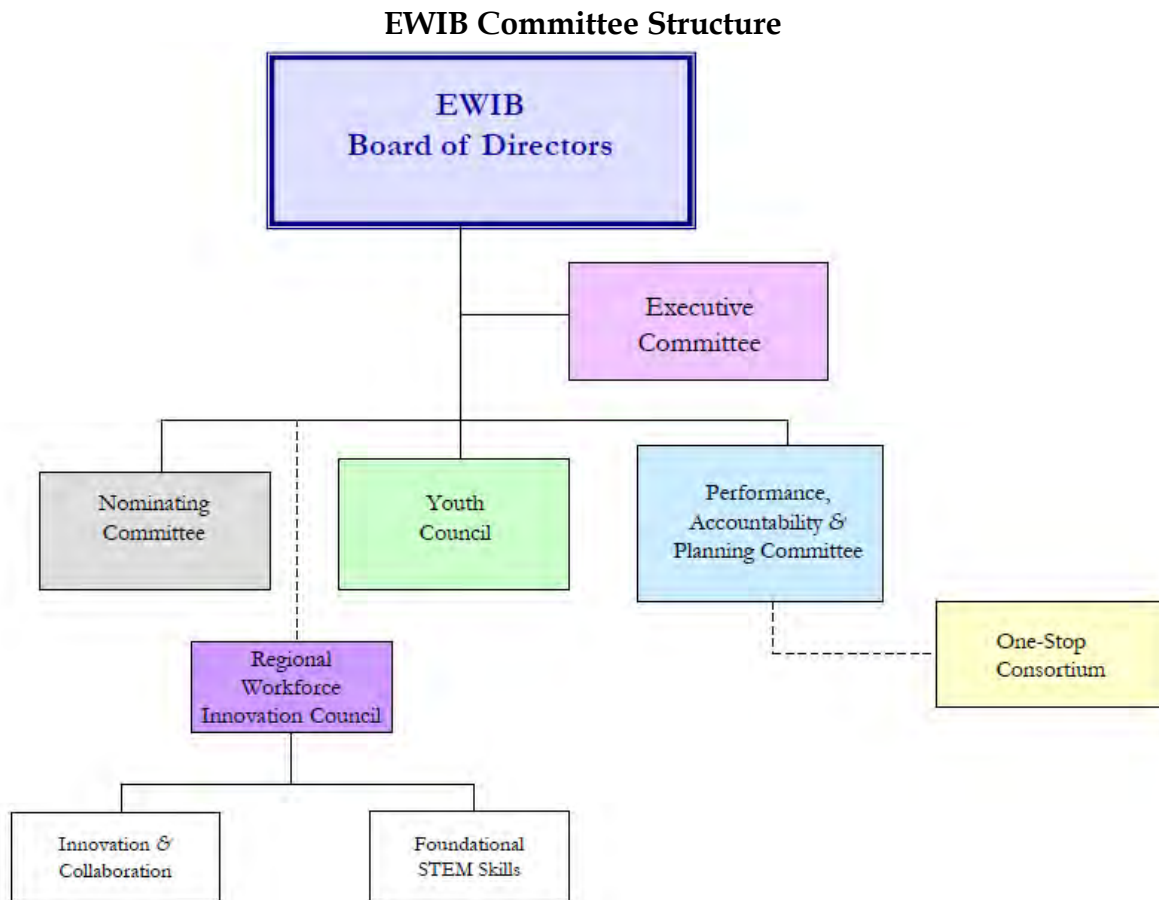
The public input process has not been completed at the time of submission of this plan.

C. Additional Functions

1. Describe what the Board views as its primary role as it relates to the region's economic and workforce development activities and how this role will be carried out.

See the response to IV A 1 above.

2. Attach a diagram of the Board's committee structure and describe each committee's function.



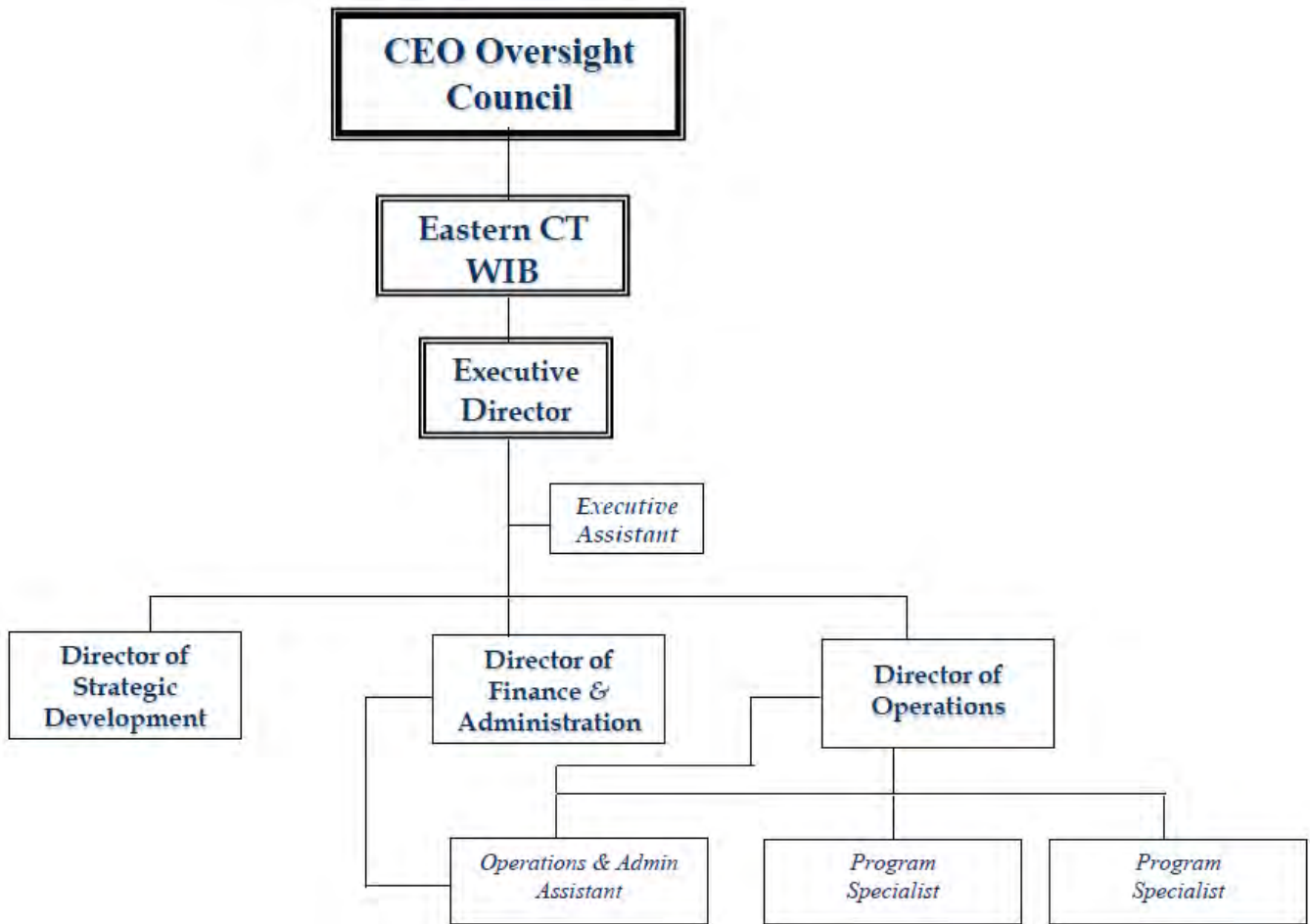
- **Executive Committee** - The EWIB Executive Committee consists of the officers, the Chairs of all committees, and the Chair(s) of the Youth Council. The Executive Committee is authorized to act on behalf of the entire board of directors when necessary and appropriate and permitted by applicable law; oversee personnel-related matters; develop the proposed budget; oversee matters relating to financing; and complete the corporation's annual strategic plan for submission to the Office of Workforce Competitiveness.
- **Nominating Committee** - The Nominating Committee consist of 3-5 members of the board of directors. The Nominating Committee oversees the nomination of

the slate of officers and oversees the forwarding of private and public nominees for board membership to the Council for review and approval at such date prior to the annual meeting of the Council each year that the Council shall specify.

- **Youth Council** - The EWIB Youth Council is made up of Board Members, partners, and stakeholders from the community who all share a mission: to promote, advocate for, and support collaborative opportunities that enable all the region's youth to acquire the necessary skills to transition into the workforce, further their education and training and pursue their careers to become productive, responsible citizens. They devise a strategic plan for action and oversee youth initiatives, programs and training opportunities.
- **Performance, Accountability & Planning Committee** - This committee has the lead responsibility on behalf of the board of directors for: examining approved courses and ensuring these courses meet projected regional workforce needs; assessing partner performance; assessing the "*value added*" for customers; reviewing regional performance *vs.* established benchmarks; overseeing the development of grant applications; overseeing the preparation of the annual plan for Executive Committee review; and general coordination of the various planning activities that frame the corporation's program of work. This committee also functions as the Labor Market & Worker Training Committee, and as such reviews the need for, and oversees the development of, training that occurs outside of individual training accounts, oversees individual training account-related issues, including the designation or removal of "*Eligible Provider*" status, and oversees employer services issues.
- **Regional Workforce Innovation Council** - This Council continues the work initiated through the Governor's Commission for Economic Diversification to: 1) create a central regional infrastructure to coordinate the numerous STEM activities occurring in the region; 2) assist the development of a K-16 talent pipeline for high skill/technical jobs in STEM areas; and 3) build replicable models that move to scale effective programs that meet the workforce needs of STEM-related businesses. The Council's activities include: a) guiding and facilitating the dissemination of best practices across the region to increase student interest and achievements in STEM subjects; b) creating a peer-to-peer (*employer/professional*) recruitment mechanism and an ongoing forum for other STEM-related efforts that need employer participation; c) assessing the regional STEM marketing dynamics (*i.e., messaging, audiences, distribution*); d) monitoring and addressing short-term occupational shortages in STEM related areas such as Engineering; and e) fostering continuous improvement within the framework of the Results Based Accountability (*RBA*) model.

B. Board Support

1. Provide a diagram depicting the staff support to the Board.



2. Describe how administrative support will be provided to the Board. Include the number and type of staff that are directly funded by the Board.

Administrative staffing to the Board is provided by the Executive Director and the Executive Assistant, with more limited support from the three (3) Directors – Strategic Development, Finance & Administration, and Operations. With the Executive Director, the three (3) Directors provide support to the individual Committees and the Chief Elected Officials Council as provided by funding approved by the Board.

V. ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

1. Please provide a description of the one-stop delivery system to be established or designated in your local area, including:
 - A description of procedures your local Board will use to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers and participants.

The EWIB undertakes the following to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of the services in the *CTWorks-East* system:

- Procurement of contractors is done every two (2) years. Contracts are written for one (1) year with a second year given based on performance.
- A rolling procurement of workshops for *CTWorks-East* Centers ensures that core services match current needs.
- Staff conducts yearly monitoring of all contracts and reports outcomes to the Board.
- A monthly Partner Meeting is held with all supervisors, including DOL, to ensure coordination, share information, and troubleshoots issues.

A copy of each Memorandum of Understanding between your local Board and each of the One-Stop partners concerning the operation of the One-Stop system in the local area.

A list of the current MOUs is attached to this Plan. Copies of individual MOUs are available at CTDOL with Michelle Costello.

- 2. A description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and Chief Elected Official to be used to measure the performance of the local area, the local fiscal agent (where applicable), eligible providers, and the local One-Stop delivery system.**

The EWIB is operating under the prior year performance standards. The EWIB has not received the PY 2012-2013 standards to-date.

- 3. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. This information must include a description of the local Individual Training Account (ITA) system, with procedures for ensuring that exceptions to the use of ITAs, if any, are justified under WIA Section 134(d)(4)(G)(ii) and 20 CFR 663.430.**

Adults and Dislocated Workers have an extensive calendar of workshops, including many computer workshops such as Computer Basics, Email for Beginners, Online Job Applications, Professional Networking Online, and Job Search Using the Internet. All customers have access to EWIB online learning licenses through Metrix. *CTWorks-East* customers also have access to four specialty career path workshops – Green Jobs; Health Careers; Introduction to Energy; and Breaking into the High Tech Workforce / STEM.

Access to more intensive services, including training, is available through a workshop – Get Back to Work with *CTWorks*. After this workshop, participants are scheduled for a one-on-one appointment with the WIA Workforce Advisor. Participant eligibility is determined, most in need status is determined, and how to apply for training is explained. The EWIB Performance, Accountability, & Planning (PAP) Committee recently increased the amount of the Individual Training Account to \$4,500 for STEM related training and \$3,500 for non-STEM training, to also include support services.

For WIA Adults and Dislocated Workers, the EWIB also supports On-the-Job Training when appropriate, and coordinates that with STEP UP and the new STEM H1-B OJT

Grant. Another exception to the ITA policy is the use of Customized Training. The EWIB may allow a customized training if there is a lack of an ITA to meet the training need and customized training would better fit a customer's need.

4. A description of how the local Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response activities.

The EWIB coordinates local workforce activities with statewide rapid response activities through the Director of Strategic Development and the Adult Services Regional Director. When a separate rapid response session is held with an employer, an EWIB staff member attends. The Adult Regional Director assigns the staff person to participate in the Early Intervention Session. That person co-presents with statewide Rapid Response staff. Coordination of materials to be distribution has been made. Customers are encouraged to come into *CTWorks-East*.

5. A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth activities in the local area, including identification of successful providers of such activities (and the criteria and procedures used by your Board to identify successful and unsuccessful providers).

Identifying successful youth providers is very similar to the process given above for adults. The EWIB issues an RFP every two years for in- and out-of-school youth services. Monitoring occurs each year. If the program is in compliance, the contract is renewed for the second year. EASTCONN is the current primary youth contractor. They subcontract with New London Office of Youth Affairs and Norwich Youth & Family Services for In School programs and with Thames Valley Council for Community Action and New London Adult Education for Out of School Services. Out-of-School youth services include high school completion options, employability competencies, job search assistance, internships, and assistance with getting into advanced training. The In-School Programs contain access to the ten WIA-required program elements based on the needs of the student.

6. Identification of the fiscal agent, or entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the CEO or the Governor.

The EWIB is the fiscal agent as determined by the CEO agreement.

7. A description of the competitive process to be used by the Board to award grants and contracts, including the process to be used to procure training services that are made as exceptions to the ITA process referenced in WIA Section 134(d)(4)(G).

As stated in the Adult section above, the EWIB undertakes a formal procurement process every two years. An RFP is issued, legal notice is placed, notice is provided to the bidders list, the PAP Committee reviews the responses after staff ensures that the submission meets the minimum qualifications, and selection recommendations are passed to the full Board, which takes action. This is the process that would also be undertaken if an exception to the ITA process was needed.

8. A description of the criteria used by the Governor and the local Board, under 20 CFR 663.600, to determine whether funds allocated to the local area for adult employment

and training activities under WIA Sections 133(b)(2)(A) or (3) are limited, and the process by which any priority will be applied by the One-Stop Operator.

Since training funding is limited in the region, the EWIB uses a "Most in Need" determination for all training applicants. Determination of priority 1, 2, or 3 is based on elements such as the education level of the applicant, current relevancy of the degree if they hold one, length of time the applicant has been unemployed, and whether or not the person has current transferable skills.

9. In view of declining resources, please describe how the Board will integrate WIA, TANF and any other funding to support the operations of the one-stop system.

EWIB does integrate WIA, TANF, specialty grant funding, & State of CT Department of Education funding to support the costs of operating the four (4) *CTWorks-East* Career Centers. A cost allocation plan exists with the Department of Labor.

10. A description of coordination of efforts across LWIBs: Examples of OJT efforts, apprenticeship, Reemployment of Long-Term Unemployed etc.

The five (5) regional Connecticut Workforce Investment Boards (*WIBs*) coordinate in many ways. The CT Workforce Development Council is a statewide collaborative in which the Executive Directors of the five (5) *WIBs* come together to work on initiatives. Program implementation staff also meets several times each year to coordinate activities and share best practices. Reciprocal agreements exist between bordering *WIBs* to facilitate serving customers. During ARRA funding, the *WIBs* worked to standardize OJT and ITA amounts to better serve dislocated workers who have statewide eligibility.

11. In order to increase jobseeker and employer awareness of workforce development resources available across the country, the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (*ETA*) strongly encourages states and local workforce investment areas to implement the American Job Center brand in accordance with state plans. Please describe some ways the local workforce investment area may begin using the American Job Center brand immediately.

NOTE: USDOL strongly encourages the use of the American Job Center brand. In the future, the Department intends to work closely with states and localities to move to a requirement to use the brand.

The EWIB will implement the use of the USDOL *ETA* American Job Center brand for the four (4) *CTWorks-East* Centers and EWIB materials following its September 25, 2012 Board meeting. The logo suggested language will appear on the EWIB website, stationary, and printed materials. The reference will be changed on outside printed materials as they are reprinted, due to cost considerations.

VI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please show evidence of sign-off on the plan submission by the Chief Elected Official(s) identified in your local area's Chief Elected Officials agreement and the Board Chair.

The Plan was approved at EWIB's Board meeting on September 25, 2012.