



Mother Lode Workforce Development Board

Program Year 2025-2028 Local Plan

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I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and guidance published by California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) and Employment Development Department (EDD), the Mother Lode Workforce Development Board (WDB) has developed a four-year Local Plan covering program years (PYs) 2025-2028. Following approval by state officials representing the Governor, the plan will be effective from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029.

A. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Passed by Congress with a wide bipartisan majority, WIOA was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in a global economy. WIOA represents the most recent version of federal workforce legislation providing funding to states and local areas to administer and operate workforce development programs. WIOA was preceded by the Job Training Partnership Act (active from 1982 to 2000) and the Workforce Investment Act (active from 2000 to 2015).

WIOA promotes accountability and transparency through negotiated performance goals that are publicly available, fosters regional collaboration within states through local workforce areas, and supports a nationwide network of job centers, which are branded within the state and locally as America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs).

While the PY 2025-28 Local Plan addresses collaboration among many organizations that derive their primary funding from a wide range of federal, state, and private programs, it is WIOA that requires the development and publication of the plan and that prescribes its core content.

B. Mother Lode Local Workforce Development Area

The State of California has designated the counties of Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa and Tuolumne as a Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) known as the Mother Lode Consortium (MLC). The four Counties have entered into a joint powers agreement (JPA), and established Mother Lode Job Training (MLJT) as the Consortium's operations entity, a stand-alone public agency responsible for administering workforce development programs under the direction and oversight of the Mother Lode Workforce Development Board (MLWDB). The joint powers agency was formed in 1983 and has provided workforce development services consistently throughout the Mother Lode service area for more than 40 years.

The abbreviations “MLWDB” and “WDB” are used interchangeably throughout this plan with “MLJT” to describe the agent leading the workforce system and providing WIOA services.

C. Mother Lode Workforce Development Board (MLWDB)

WIOA requires that a workforce development board (WDB) be established in each local workforce development area (LWDA). The area’s chief local elected officials appoint members to the WDB. Locally, MLJT’s Governing Board, comprised of one member of the Board of Supervisors from each of the four member counties, makes these appointments. Local workforce development boards are business-led and the majority of members must come from the business community. Required WDB members also include representatives from labor, education, economic development, and specific federally funded workforce programs. The chief local elected officials may also select representatives from other groups, such community-based organizations, to sit on the WDB.

WDBs drive the vision for the workforce system and maintain the critical role of leading and providing oversight for local WIOA programs. WDBs also play a critical role in promoting, sustaining, and growing regional economies. They are responsible for aligning investments in job training, integrating service delivery across programs, ensuring that workforce investments are industry-driven, and matching skilled workers with employers providing good jobs with upward mobility.

WIOA indicates that development of the local plan, along with the associated regional plan, is a primary responsibility of the workforce development board.

“MLWDB” and “WDB” are also used interchangeably to refer to the workforce development board and its members.

D. Local Plans and the WIOA Planning Structure

MLJT’s Local Plan is best understood within the context of a three-tiered planning structure envisioned by WIOA that requires development of plans at the state, regional, and local levels.

State Plans: Under WIOA, state plans communicate the vision for the statewide workforce development system. WIOA planning requirements aim to foster effective alignment of federal investments across job training and education programs, in order to coordinate service delivery among programs for shared customers, improve efficiency, and ensure that the workforce system connects individuals with high-quality job opportunities and employers. Cross-program planning promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each state. California’s PY 2024-2027 Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan represents agreement among the WIOA core program and other partners and serves as the framework for the development of public policy, fiscal investment, and operation of the state workforce and education systems.

Regional Plans: In states such as California, where Governors have established workforce planning regions encompassing one or more LWDA, regional plans are required. Local WDBs within the region participate in a planning process that describes elements such as: analysis of regional labor market data, development and implementation of sector initiatives for targeted industries and in-demand occupations; coordination of workforce services with regional economic development services and providers, and establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements. The four counties that comprise the Mother Lode LWDA have also been designated as the Middle Sierra Regional Planning Unit (RPU). Among California's fifteen workforce regions, Middle Sierra is one of only three single workforce area RPUs.

Local Plans: The local plan is intended to serve as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate the local area's industry-driven workforce development systems and provide a platform to achieve the local area's vision and strategic and operational goals. Features of the local plan include: coordination among economic development, education, and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training and education programs, implementation of quality-job-driven strategies and services through the local career center system, and delivery of education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have skills necessary to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers.

WIOA requires that local plans be incorporated into the regional plan. Therefore, the PY 2025-28 MLJT Local Plan is officially part of the PY 2025-28 Middle Sierra RPU Regional Plan.

E. California's Strategic Workforce Priorities

California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan describes the state's priorities for the public workforce system. Under the leadership of the Governor and the Secretary of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, California's vision for the future of workforce development is centered on the establishment and growth of a workforce system that promotes opportunity, job quality, and environmental sustainability for all Californians. The state is committed to developing a workforce system that enables economic growth and shared prosperity for employers and employees, especially those with barriers to employment, by investing in industry partnerships, job quality, and meaningful skills attainment. One area in which the CWDB pursues these aims is through its "High Road" programming. High Road refers to a "family of strategies" for achieving a participatory economy and society by aligning workforce, economic policy, and different interests with long-term goals of environmental sustainability, high-quality jobs, and a resilient economy. High Road emphasizes the complementary nature of these aims over the long term. In practice, High Road policy builds upon areas where the interest of employers (in trained and productive workers), workers and jobseekers (in good quality and accessible jobs), and environmental protection (for a sustainable future for all) overlap to create pathways to high-quality jobs while raising the profile of existing ones.

In consideration of the practical implementation of High Road principles in workforce development policy, the CWDB describes in the current State Plan four distinct “flavors” or styles of intervention. These interventions are directly relevant to High Road projects but also inform all of CWDB’s workforce efforts. They include: (1) lifting all workers to the “High Road;” (2) professionalizing precarious work (i.e., employment that is temporary, non-standard, and insecure, often with poor pay and no protection); (3) democratizing access to high-quality, middle-skill jobs; and (4) participatory planning for a low-carbon economy.

In accordance with the requirements of WIOA, both the MLJT PY 2025-28 Local Plan and the PY 2025-28 Middle RPU Regional Plan support the State Plan priorities by:

- Maintaining a dual focus on providing programs and services that meet the needs and support the goals of businesses and job seekers/workers.
- Concentrating on industry sectors which drive growth and prosperity within local labor markets and regional economies.
- Targeting jobs that offer career advancement opportunities and that lead to positions that pay family-sustaining wages and provide pathways to the middle class.
- Committing to the adoption and implementation of strategies and processes that support environmental sustainability and climate resilience through workforce development.

F. Development of The Program Years 2025-28 Local Plan

On behalf of the Mother Lode Workforce Development Board, MLJT’s management team led the development of the Plan. They held internal discussions and hosted a community and stakeholder forum to secure input on key issues concerning the content and focus of the Local and Regional Plans. This session is described in Attachment 1 to this Plan. Plan development also entailed a review of partnerships, services, and systems, along with an assessment of where improvements can be made. Completing the Plan took several months, after which it was made available for public review and comment, prior to being forwarded to the California Workforce Development Board, as part of the Regional Plan, for approval.

G. PY 2025-28 System Goals and Priorities

During the process used to develop the PY 2025-28 Local Plan, community members, local stakeholders, and system partners were invited to participate in a discussion regarding the direction of the local workforce system over the next four years. As a result of this discussion, the following priorities have been identified:

- Worker attraction and retention
- Pathways to careers in government
- Pathways in careers in childcare and early childhood education
- Pathways to careers in the skilled trades

- Pathways to remote jobs
- Early engagement in career exploration
- Career certification for high school students
- Identify and instruct in core employment skills
- Increase workers' proficiency in digital skills
- Address job retention as a business and job seeker strategy

Section V of this plan summarizes these and other issues, strategies, approaches, and key considerations that the WDB and the system partners will examine over the four-year course of this plan.

II. WIOA CORE AND REQUIRED PARTNER COORDINATION

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act includes requirements for Local Boards to establish a framework for collaboration among state and local programs that are financially supported by nineteen distinct federal fund sources. Six of these programs constitute the four “core partners”: the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs; the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program; the WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Act Program; and the WIOA Title IV State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. The core partners, together with thirteen other federally supported programs, make up the WIOA-mandated one-stop partners. The Mother Lode WDB has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the organizations managing each applicable federal program at the local level. The narrative that follows describes coordination with the WIOA core and other required program partners as prescribed by the Act.

A. Coordination with AJCC Partners and WIOA Memoranda of Understanding

Mother Lode WDB has active, strong, and effective partnerships dating back more than 40 years with public and private agencies that administer the WIOA partner programs. In addition to the many day-to-day interactions that MLJT staff has with the one-stop partner agencies, the participation of the partners in the planning process that has led to the development of the PY 2025-29 Local Plan is a testament to their commitment to the local workforce development delivery system.

Overview of Local One-Stop System Partners

Following is a summary of the local/regional organizations representing federal one-stop partner programs with which the Mother Lode WDB has developed an MOU. Also described are important strategic partners who are not federally required, but provide services connected to the one-stop system.

Federal Partner Programs	MOU Partner
WIOA Title I Adult WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker WIOA Title I Youth	Mother Lode Workforce Development Board
WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy	Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools
WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser	Employment Development Department (EDD)
WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
Carl Perkins Career Technical Education	Columbia College
Title V Older Americans Act Senior Community Service Employment Program	SER – Jobs for Progress

Job Corps	San Jose Job Corps Center
Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)	California Indian Manpower Consortium
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Human Development • Central Valley Opportunity Center
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	Employment Development Department
YouthBuild	San Joaquin County Office of Education YouthBuild
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Employment Development Department
Community Services Block Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency • Calaveras Mariposa Community Action Agency
Housing and Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency • Calaveras Mariposa Community Action Agency
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Employment Development Department
Second Chance	<i>N/A – There is no Second Chance program grantee within the LWDA</i>
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CalWORKs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mariposa County Health and Human Services Agency • Tuolumne County Department of Social Services • Calaveras County Health and Human Services • Amador County Department of Health and Human Services

Memorandum of Understanding with System Partners

The Mother Lode WDB has a master MOU with the federally required partners. The MOU describes shared customers, shared services, and shared costs. The purpose of the MOU is to establish a cooperative working relationship between the parties, and to define their respective roles and responsibilities in achieving policy objectives. The MOU also serves to establish the framework for providing services to employers, employees, job seekers, and others needing workforce services. The responsibilities of the partners are defined as follows:

- The AJCC partners agree to participate in joint planning, plan development, and modification of activities to accomplish the following: continuous partnership building; continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements; responsiveness to local and economic conditions, including employer needs; and adherence to common data collection and reporting needs.
- Making service(s) applicable to the partner program available to customers through the one-stop delivery system.
- Participating in the operation of the one-stop system, consistent with the terms of the MOU and requirements of authorized laws.
- Participating in capacity building and staff development activities in order to ensure that all partners and staff are adequately cross-trained.
- Adherence to resource sharing, as applicable, in accordance with an infrastructure funding agreement.

Coordination with AJCC Partner Programs

The following information summarizes the ways in which MLJT and the local workforce system collaborate with organizations managing the federally mandated one-stop partner programs.

WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs: The three formula-funded programs are administered by the Mother Lode WDB and services are delivered through the Comprehensive America’s Job Center of California (AJCC) in Sonora (Tuolumne County) and three AJCC affiliates, which are located in Sutter Creek (Amador County), San Andreas (Calaveras County), and Mariposa (Mariposa County).

WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy: MLJT has a strong working relationship with the Title II partner, Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent receives Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding, which supports foundational educational programs and services, such as Adult Basic Education; earning a high diploma, GED, or other equivalency; or English-as-a-second language. MLJT regularly refers appropriate participants for GED services and literacy.

WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser: The California Employment Development Department administers and staffs the Wagner-Peyser Program, which provides connections to jobs. Many EDD services, such as RESEA workshops, are available online.

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation: The State Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) has staff co-located on a part-time basis at the Comprehensive AJCC. Coordination between WIOA Title I, WIOA Title IV, and other workforce system partners and programs includes a variety of efforts, including:

- Cross referrals of applicants and participants between the AJCC and DOR staff when an individual with a disability is determined to need the services of one or both organizations.
- Co-enrollment and co-case management of participants, including leveraging programs and resources.
- Collaboration in efforts to increase the availability of competitive integrated employment (CIE) opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, as outlined in the CIE local partnership agreement in which the WDB is listed as a community partner.
- The AJCCs designate a staff person as a Disability Resource Coordinator to work with the disability-serving organizations, including DOR.

MLJT receives specialized funding from DOR for the Student Training and Employment Program (STEP), the goal of which is to assist students with disabilities in gaining valuable work readiness skills and work experience opportunities.

Carl Perkins Career Technical Education: Columbia College is a recipient of Perkins CTE grant funds. The college uses Perkins funding to develop and deliver technical training

linked to occupations that are in demand in the region. Calaveras High School and Bret Harte also have Perkins CTE funding.

Title V Older Americans Act: SER – Jobs for Progress administers the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) for residents of Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne Counties. SER first matches eligible older job seekers with local nonprofits and public agencies to increase skills and build self-confidence, while earning a modest income. Based on their employment interests and goals, participants may also receive supportive services and skills training through an educational institution. Their SCSEP experience most often leads to permanent employment. WIOA-funded case managers and other partner staff refer individuals 55 years and older to the program, in cases where subsidized employment opportunities under SCSEP appear to be a good option for an individual's transition back into the labor market. Upon request, SER representatives provide services at the MLJT AJCCs.

Job Corps: The San Jose Job Corps Center serves individuals ages 16-24. As part of this residential program, participants receive academic instruction, vocational training, and job readiness training. Job Corps also provides job placement assistance and follow-up services. Youth from the four counties represented by MLJT are referred to Job Corps by the AJCCs. MLJT is exploring various opportunities to collaborate with Job Corps, including providing WIOA job placement assistance to young adults that are returning to MLJT communities following their completion of Job Corps programs.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG): Within the four counties served by MLJT, there are two organizations administering CSBG funds: Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency (ATCAA) and Calaveras Mariposa Community Action Agency (CMCAA). ATCAA is a community-based organization that administers CSBG-funded programs and provides housing assistance, financial literacy, childcare assistance, and family resources. It runs a food bank and homeless shelter services, along with case management. As a CSBG administrator, CMCAA functions, primarily, as a pass-through organization, providing funding to other organizations to deliver services. MLJT collaborates with ATCAA and CMCAA through referrals and co-case management, providing support services, training, and employment services.

Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166): California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc. provides employment and training and related services to Indian and Native American people who live within a large service area that includes much of California. California Indian Manpower Consortium Inc., (CIMC) is the Section 166 grantee covering the Mother Lode region. MLJT staff support CIMC by promoting its various programs, including workforce development, childcare and development, the Elders Nutrition program, National Caregiver Support Program, Native Entrepreneur Training Program, Census Data Services, Tribal Business Services, and the Tribal Business Export Development Program.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program (WIOA Section 167): California Human Development (CHD) is the WIOA Section 167 grantee for a portion of the Mother Lode

service area, serving Amador and Calaveras counties. Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC) provides services in Mariposa and Tuolumne counties.

CHD offers a wide range of workforce development programs for migrant and seasonal farm workers and their families, including training programs in welding and truck driving. Participants enrolled in training are eligible for supportive services such as assistance with rent, utilities, food, clothing, childcare, transportation, and training-related expenses. Participants may be co-enrolled in WIOA Title I and Section 167 program services.

The Central Valley Opportunity Center's (CVOC) services include vocational education, remedial education, English Language instruction, emergency supportive services (when funding is available), transportation, emergency food, childcare services, and community education services. Cross referrals are made between MLJT and CVOC.

Jobs for Veterans State Grants: MLJT collaborates with EDD to serve veterans, providing priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses. Once veterans complete an application, they are assigned to a case manager who conducts initial assessment and a determination of the career services needed to support job search and employment. Coordination with the Jobs for Veterans State Grant programs may be achieved through collaboration with EDD Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff, who are available to assist AJCC customers through remote access.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Act: MLJT staff has referred individuals to EDD who qualify for TAA services. Participants may be co-enrolled in WIOA Title I services and TAA, with WIOA covering the costs of career services and EDD coordinating payments to training providers, as TAA funds support training. While TAA is technically a required partner program, it is currently an unfunded initiative and, except for work that exhausts the final federal allocation of funds, services have been suspended.

Unemployment Insurance: The Unemployment Insurance program services are available by phone and online and. AJCC staff work with EDD to coordinate marketing and outreach to UI claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs: MLJT collaborates with county health and human service departments in all four counties to provide workforce development services including program eligibility, initial assessments, outreach, intake, orientations, labor exchange information, job search, paid work experiences, on-the-job training, vocational training, and labor market information as well as support services to assist participants in achieving self-sufficiency.

Key partners that are not party to the AJCC MOU, include:

Adult Education: Amador County Unified School District, Calaveras County Office of Education, Mariposa County Unified School District and Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools offer Adult School programs. These programs focus on

helping adults to increase their basic education skills, attain a secondary school diploma or prepare for an equivalency exam. English language learners are able to improve reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English.

Conservation Corps: Greater Valley Conservation Corps (GVCC) operates a forestry focused training program aimed at youth and young adults ages 18-25. Because the GVCC eligibility criteria is similar to the WIOA Out of School Youth program, MLJT and GVCC collaborate on projects and have an established referral system. Eligible youth are referred to GVCC for work placement assistance as well as adult education, because GVCC's programs are coordinated with Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools to provide credit recovery and high school diploma instruction for those who need it. GVCC refers clients to MLJT for more in-depth workforce development, support services and training. GVCC also collaborates with MLJT, San Joaquin County Office of Education, Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools, the construction laborer's union, and San Francisco Public Utility District to operate a pre-apprenticeship program for the construction trades. A customized work readiness program for the construction industry is a model that can be replicated for workforce development programs throughout the State. The program introduces industry-specific, as well as cognitive, behavioral, and motivational techniques to assist all job seekers, including the reentry population and the hardest to serve, in overcoming various barriers to employment and job retention.

Justice System Agencies: MLJT is a recognized leader in the design, development, and delivery of services for incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and justice-involved individuals. To support its work in this area, MLJT has entered into MOUs with a wide range of justice organizations, including, but not limited to: Sheriff's Departments in all four counties; probation agencies in all counties; and various agencies and departments within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Center for a Non-Violent Community: The Center actively supports the right of all people to live their lives free from interpersonal violence. The organization fosters healthy relationships with self, partners, family, and peers. It values the feminist principals of self-empowerment over self-desertion and of shared decision-making over dominance. It is ardently dedicated to building a community which is interdependent, collaborative, respectful of diversity, and supportive of peaceful solutions to conflict.

Alliance for Community Transformation: The Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering social and economic change in Mariposa County. Its mission is to empower individuals and families by offering a range of services, from crisis intervention and mental health support to substance use counseling and family resources. The organization is committed to creating a healthier, more resilient community through advocacy, education, and direct service delivery. This commitment makes it a natural partner in workforce initiatives, as the Alliance brings a deep understanding of local challenges and a strong network of support systems that aid in stabilizing individuals and preparing them for successful employment.

B. Partners' Efforts to Collaborate on Co-Enrollment and Case Management

In accordance with State guidance, co-enrollment strategies are specifically described in the MOU executed between the WDB and the AJCC partners. The MOU also acknowledges that participants may be co-enrolled into workforce development, training and support programs offered by WIOA and other funding administered by MLJT, identifying processes to address opportunities for co-case management. Several AJCC partners have established structured relationships with the MLJT AJCC system. For example, the Amador Affiliate AJCC is co-branded as the Prosperity Center. In addition to WIOA programs and those of the one-stop partners, customers can access services provided by Amador College Connect, Columbia College, Central Sierra Economic Development District, and Independence High School adult education. Such co-location increases opportunities for co-enrollment of WIOA Title I participants in education programs funded by the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Perkins Career and Technical Education grants, and other public funds supporting higher education and training.

Whether partners are co-located at AJCC locations or operate from other sites, shared participants, once co-enrolled, benefit from the commitment of local stakeholders to collaborate on the deployment and tracking of services, thereby co-case managing participants. Case managers are likely to communicate frequently, both verbally and in writing, about a co-enrolled participants' progress, successes, challenges, and changing circumstances. This communication is the central feature of the system partners' approach to co-case management. For partner programs that utilize the CalJOBS system, co-case management is supported by the ability to share information online, when proper authorization by the participant is documented.

C. One-Stop System's Use of Technology and Other Remote Strategies

Mother Lode Job Training serves a large four-county area spanning approximately 5,280 square miles. Vast distances between population centers make service delivery challenging. However, the geographic distribution of AJCCs enables staff and partners to offer services to remote communities within each county.

A comprehensive center in Sonora (the largest city in MLJT's service area) serves all of Tuolumne County. Affiliate centers are located in the other three counties within MLJT's jurisdiction: Amador, Calaveras, and Mariposa. The affiliate centers provide the same services available through the comprehensive center in Sonora, albeit on a smaller scale and with fewer partners co-located onsite. In addition, the AJCCs have collaborated successfully with partner organizations to provide workforce development information and services from their facilities. Education agencies, county human service agencies, child support services agencies, and community-based organizations are among the partners

that contribute most effectively to promoting workforce services from non-AJCC facilities located in communities spread across the four counties.

MLJT's "boots on the ground" approach involves meeting participants where they are and recognizing the geographic and digital connectivity challenges across the region, which spans four large counties. MLJT establishes a presence in local communities by utilizing accessible spaces such as libraries, chambers of commerce, community centers, and high schools. This strategy includes hosting community events, offering dedicated off-site office hours, and implementing targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness of workforce development services. By bringing resources to these locations, MLJT aims to increase participation and ensure that even individuals in the most isolated communities have access to employment and training opportunities.

MLJT has moved many of its services online. Customers can interact with knowledgeable staff through social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and MLJT's website to receive direct referrals and general information, as well as start a WIOA pre-application to expedite services. The AJCCs have adapted to a virtual services model and can help customers no matter where they live. With this migration to online platforms, MLJT leadership recognizes the need to ensure that online services are as effective as those provided in-person.

With the increased availability of online and remote services, all areas also have better access to services from partners. Most partner agencies have transitioned to using technology for the exchange of information. Increasing internet access is imperative, and MLJT has been collaborating with partners and local businesses to expand access. For example, a list of free Wi-Fi spots has been developed by coordinating with internet service providers, local schools, fast food establishments, hospitals, and libraries. MLJT is collaborating with economic development, business, and government to support increased availability of broadband and technology tools for the region. Improvements in internet access, the availability of equipment for access, and the provision of skills training are ongoing.

D. Coordination of Workforce Activities and Support Services

When job seekers are enrolled in WIOA Title I services, they participate in a comprehensive assessment and are assigned a case manager. Working together, participants and case managers develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), which identifies services and training the job seeker will participate in to prepare for employment. The development of an IEP also includes identification of supportive services that are needed to enable participation in career services, training, and work activities. Use of WIOA funds for supportive services occurs only when funding from other sources (e.g., grants, partner programs, community-based resources) is not available. WIOA participants who are co-enrolled in partner programs may be able to access support from those programs. MLJT case managers work directly with partner agencies to determine the availability of support resources. For example, an individual enrolled in both WIOA Title I and Title IV services, may receive individualized career services and training from

MLJT and assistive technology support from DOR. Specific support services, such as housing assistance, may be available through select grants and funding sources. Various specialized state and federal grants administered by MLJT include unique provisions for types and levels of support.

WIOA-funded supportive services include, but are not limited to, childcare, transportation, counseling, bus passes, clothing (as required for the job), tools (as required by an employer and necessary for a job), physicals, license fees (GED fees, credentials), and books and supplies.

MLJT often utilizes specialized funding to provide support for individuals enrolled in WIOA Title I programs. For example, a grant from CAL FIRE provided room and board for individuals participating in a Forestry apprenticeship program, and a Pathways Home grant serving justice-involved individuals also provided housing support.

E. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

Mother Lode WDB ensures that all customers have access to the full range of workforce system services. The AJCCs are physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. WDB managers and staff have participated in extensive human-centered design training. With regard to ADA accessibility, MLJT's team was challenged as part of this training to go into the real world to test ideas on how to deliver solutions tailored to the needs of the people we serve. As a result, MLJT staff designed accessible workstations and installed one in each of the four AJCCs.

All applicants receive an orientation to MLJT's policy on equal opportunity, accessibility, and grievance and complaint procedures. Every center has undergone an accessibility evaluation and has met the criteria for AJCC certification. Accessibility is reviewed at every center through regular MLJT site inspections.

Assistive Technology and Other Forms of Support

Adaptive technology available to assist customers with disabilities includes TTY equipment, adjustable standing desks, voice to text, large screens, and screen magnification capabilities.

AJCC staff work closely with partners on making and receiving referrals to enhance the delivery of services for individuals with disabilities. DOR representatives support AJCC operations by providing ongoing assessment and evaluation of assistive technology resources. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and other forms support are available upon request. Surveys inform the AJCCs about ways in which centers can be improved for all customers, including jobs seekers with disabilities.

Ensuring Compliance

Compliance with WIOA Section 188 and the applicable provisions of ADA are tested and documented through the following processes.

- Physical accessibility is reviewed every two years by the EDD Equal Opportunity (EO) Monitoring Unit.
- Program accessibility is reviewed every two years by the EDD EO Monitoring Unit.
- A designated EO Coordinator works with the State in addressing accessibility issues as expressed by the public, customers, or staff.
- The EO Coordinator works closely with co-located partners on any similar public concerns.

Each business partner acting as a worksite provides written assurance of compliance with federal and state requirements for non-discrimination and equal opportunity as expressed in State Workforce Services Directive 17-01. Training providers are also required to meet ADA and EO criteria and offer accommodations, as appropriate.

Staff Training to Increase Knowledge and Effectiveness

MLJT has intentionally committed resources to strengthen the capacity of WIOA frontline staff and system partner representatives to serve job seekers with disabilities. Examples of this training include:

- WIOA Section 188 training
- Raising Disability Awareness and Creating an Environment that Encourages Disability Disclosure
- Disability Inclusion Summit
- CalWORKS Civil Rights training
- Human Centered Design
- Debunking the Three Biggest Myths about Disability Benefits and Work (Ticket to Work)

MLJT managers and staff have also participated in a cross-training panel discussion led by the State Coordination Subcommittee of the California Committee of Employment of People with Disabilities.

III. STATE STRATEGIC PARTNER COORDINATION

In 2018, the State completed and published a biennial modification to California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan for Program Years 2016-19. Within this modification, the California Workforce Development Board identified several new strategic partnerships with state-level agencies and initiatives. Guidance issued by the State Board in 2018 to Local Boards regarding two-year modifications to their PY 2017-20 Plans required that WDBs pursue these partnerships within their jurisdictions. In the 2019 modification to the Local Plan, Mother Lode WDB described these local level relationships, some of which were in an early stage of development. CWDB has added two new state strategic partner relationships to be addressed in PY 2025-28 Local Plans: one that concerns collaboration with veteran-serving organizations and the other that deals with coordination on environmental sustainability. Following is a summary of the evolution of these strategic partnerships as well as approaches under consideration to strengthen collaboration with local providers and programs.

A. Coordination with County Human Services Agencies and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Accessing CalFresh Employment and Training Services

In the Mother Lode local workforce development area, there is one CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET) program, which operates under the administration of the Tuolumne County Health and Human Services Agency and for which MLJT is contracted to provide services.

MLJT receives referrals from HHS Case Workers and reaches out to the individuals to discuss their needs and interests. Eligibility is determined at the time of outreach conversation. MLJT offers the following individualized CFET services:

- Job Search, resume building, interview skills, and digital literacy classes.
- Training opportunities, such as community college programs and online/hybrid programs.
- Supportive services, such as books, mileage reimbursement, and required tools, materials, and clothing.

B. Coordination with Local Child Support Agencies and Other Local Partners Serving Individuals Who Are Non-Custodial Parents

This strategic partnership reflects goals and objectives expressed in the State Plan. The WDB and Central Sierra Child Support Agency (CSCSA) have collaborated in providing services to a key target population: non-custodial parents (NCP) with child support orders, who are unemployed, underemployed, and/or payment delinquent. This population is diverse. Some individuals are completely disconnected from the labor market, having never worked a traditional job and possessing few marketable skills. Others may be formerly incarcerated individuals, including those who are recently released and,

therefore, unemployed. Still others may be English language learners, persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, or older workers. The common thread among them is their status with regard to child support payments, employment, and the ability to attain family supporting wages within the marketplace. Given the diversity of the population and the spectrum of support needs that exists, AJCC staff work individually with each non-custodial parent to determine appropriate career services, training, and needs for support.

CSCSA is able to utilize a range of motivational tools to support customers' participation. Among these are restoration of licenses; revisiting support orders to ensure they reflect the current circumstances of the NCP; deferring or lessening the requirement for payment during the time in which NCPs are engaged in workforce services, training, and job search; and, in specialized cases, under a compromise of arrears program, forgiving a portion of past due payments.

While coordination with CSCSA is ongoing, MLJT plans to reinvigorate the partnership with the agency through a collaborative project known as EAGER ("Employment Assessment - Getting Employees Ready"). The EAGER model has been successful in the past by helping parents secure jobs through targeted placement and training services. Together, MLJT and CSCSA aim to address significant barriers to employment. Renewing this partnership will focus on aligning resources to place participants in high-demand sectors, such as hospitality, construction, and healthcare, ultimately benefiting families and the local economy.

CSCSA serves Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne Counties. MLJT and Mariposa County DCSS have entered into a separate MOU regarding collaboration and a structured referral process is in place.

C. Coordination with Local Partnership Agreement Partners Established in Alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

The four counties served by Mother Lode Job Training are covered by two Local Partnership Agreements (LPAs) that promote expanded use of competitive integrated employment (CIE) for individuals with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (ID/DD). These are: the Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne Counties LPA and the Madera-Mariposa County LPA. Mother Lode Job Training (America's Job Center of California) is listed in both LPAs as a community partner.

For the Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne Counties LPA, in addition to MLJT, the parties to the agreement include the following state-defined core partners:

Department of Rehabilitation: Stockton Branch, San Joaquin Valley District, and Modesto Branch, San Joaquin Valley District.

Regional Center: Valley Mountain Regional Center - Stockton, Main Office; Modesto Branch Office, Stanislaus County; and San Andreas Branch Office, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne Counties.

Local Education Agency Core Partners: Amador County Office of Education, Calaveras County Office of Education, East Valley Education Center (NPS), Lodi Unified School District/SELPA, San Joaquin SELPA, Stanislaus Academy (NPS), Stanislaus SELPA, Stockton Unified School District/SELPA, and Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools.

For Madera-Mariposa LPA, which was executed in 2021, the parties to the agreement, in addition to MLJT, include the following state-defined core partners:

Department of Rehabilitation: San Joaquin Valley District participating branch offices: Fresno District Office, Fresno/Madera Counties; Merced Branch Office, Merced and Mariposa Counties; and Modesto Branch Office Stanislaus County/Tuolumne County (Mother Lode)

Regional Center: Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC) - Fresno Main Office, and Merced Branch Office, Merced County.

Local Education Agency Core Partners: Madera County Superintendent of Schools; Madera - Mariposa SELPA; Madera Unified School District; Golden Valley Unified School District; Chawanakee Unified School District; Yosemite Unified School District; Mariposa County Unified School District; Mariposa County Office of Education; Chowchilla Union High School District; Sherman Thomas Charter Schools; and Western Sierra Charter Schools.

MLJT leadership continues to work to identify strategies for more effective collaboration with the LPA partners and support for the CIE blueprint. As the PY 2025-28 Local Plan is implemented, MLJT will work with the partners to develop specific projects that can be piloted to support individuals with ID/DD in connecting to local job opportunities.

D. Coordination with Community-Based Organizations and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Who are English Language Learners, Foreign Born, and/or Refugees

The counties that comprise the Mother Lode LWDA do not have large immigrant, refugee, or English language learner (ELL) populations. Census data indicates the following percentages of foreign-born individuals within MLJT's service area:

Amador County	5.8%	Mariposa County	7.9%
Calaveras County	5.8%	Tuolumne County	5.1%

These rates are far lower than 26.7% for California as a whole. As such, there is not an extensive network of organizations that specifically focus on these populations. Columbia College offers English-as-a-second language (ESL) instruction for ELLs. California Human Development, the WIOA Section 167 program grantee for two MLJT counties, provides services in adjacent San Joaquin County. Central Valley Opportunity Center, which also serves two MLJT counties, is based in Merced. Locally, ATCAA provides various services for Spanish-speaking individuals. Some of ATCAA’s services for the ELL and immigrant community include:

- Promotores de Salud, which loosely translates to “promoters of health,” are volunteers who are trusted members and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served. This peer-to-peer program uses Spanish-speaking individuals to outreach to community members to promote mental health and overall wellness, to reduce the stigma, mistrust, and other barriers to accessing services, and to provide a safe and comfortable cultural context for sharing important information about community resources.
- A Spanish-Speaking Advisory Council, which was formed as a way for Spanish speaking parents enrolled in ATCAA’s Head Start program and the Columbia College ESL class to better access and influence community services. ATCAA staff and volunteers provide translation as needed.
- An outgrowth of the Advisory Council is a Mental Health Support Group, which was co-sponsored by ATCAA and the Center for a Non-Violent Community. This peer-support group is facilitated by a bilingual advocate on a bi-weekly basis.

To effectively support this target population, MLJT will continue to assess local needs and to develop strategic partnerships with organizations that are uniquely capable of working with immigrant populations.

E. Coordination with Local Veteran Affairs, Community-Based Organizations, and Other Local Partners That Serve Veterans

More than two decades ago, the Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA) was signed into law to improve employment, training, and job placement services available to veterans. JVA mandates priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for participation in programs administered by the U.S. DOL. California has consistently ensured that the public workforce system focus on outreach and the delivery of services and support to veterans, and, in 2019, EDD issued a Workforce Services Directive on “*Priority of Services for Veterans and Eligible Spouses*,” which updated guidelines to correspond to requirements published in WIOA. The

guidance has been further updated in 2025. MLJT has adopted the full range of federal and state mandates by publishing its own policy on priority services for veterans.

As stated in Section II of this plan, *WIOA Core and Required Partner Coordination*, MLJT actively coordinates with the Jobs for Veterans State Grant program operated by EDD. In addition to maintaining a strong working relationship with EDD, coordination with other veterans-serving organizations is critical to MLJT's efforts to effectively serve this priority population. These organizations include:

- Mariposa County Veteran's Services
- Amador County Veteran's Services and Victory Village
- Calaveras County Veteran's Services
- Tuolumne County Veteran's Services

Over the course of program years 2025 through 2028, MLJT will look to strengthen relationships with existing partners, seek out new partnerships to improve services for veterans, and continuously assess opportunities to improve services and increase outcomes for this important target group.

F. Collaboration with the Strategic Planning Partners to Address Environmental Sustainability

MLJT and the local workforce development system have long been committed to effective stewardship of resources in all forms, and, various past and current projects have supported environmental sustainability and climate resilience. This is particularly true with respect to forestry and all aspects of forest management. Furthermore, MLJT leadership is aware of and has regularly tracked state initiatives and priorities, including those of the California Workforce Development Board, concerning environmental sustainability, carbon neutrality, and climate resilience. However, the PY 2025-28 Local Plan marks the first formal statement of intent by the Mother Lode WDB and MLJT to work in collaboration with system partners to address environmental sustainability through workforce development system programs and services.

Current Projects Supporting Environmental Sustainability

Among MLJT's existing work, much of which involves coordination with local partners, are the following projects:

Greater Sierra Forestry Corps: This project focuses on fuels treatment and reduction to lessen the risk of catastrophic wildfires. Training programs align with regional forestry and fire prevention workforce needs, addressing labor shortages in vegetation management, fuels reduction, and forest restoration.

Biomass Processing Facilities and Training: MLJT supported the launch of a new biomass processing facility, facilitating workforce training for value-added wood product

manufacturing. The facility's general manager now serves on the Mother Lode Workforce Development Board, ensuring alignment between industry needs and workforce strategies. In connection with this enterprise, MLJT has implemented a paid on-the-job training program, allowing job seekers to gain hands-on experience in manufacturing and processing.

Expansion of Biomass Sector Workforce Development: MLJT is actively working with other biomass startups in various stages of development. One facility will produce wood pellets for renewable energy and heating, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Another startup is focused on hydrogen production from biomass, supporting clean energy initiatives and job creation in the green economy.

Over the period covered by the Plan, MLJT intends to initiate additional work in this area through several key efforts including:

Research, Learning, and Adoption of Local Priorities

MLJT leadership intends to focus more intensively on, engage with, and participate in state-administered projects and programs that are tied to environmental and climate issues, thereby increasing the organization's knowledge and capacity in this area. Other efforts to improve system capacity will include participation of management, staff, and board members in state and regional conferences and in online seminars and training. Agency representatives will actively seek opportunities to gain insight from organizations able to share models and best practices for adapting workforce development services to meet work requirements associated with environmental sustainability. In particular, MLJT is interested in learning about efforts of the public workforce system and private industry to work together to promote environmental sustainability.

Coordination with Local Partners and Their Efforts

As expressed throughout this plan, MLJT's programs operate within a complex network of organizations, programs, and services. WDB representatives lead regular discussions among system partners and stakeholders. The exchange of information during such sessions provides those participating with details on the priorities and activities of their counterparts. Increasingly, issues pertaining to climate and the environment, and their impacts on jobs and the economy are topics discussed by the partners. WDB leadership will remain open to collaborating with partner-led programs and initiatives that support communities and industries in achieving environment-related goals.

Involvement in Regional Initiatives

MLJT leadership anticipates that regional priorities and projects are likely to drive local efforts to coordinate workforce development programs with strategies for environmental sustainability. For example, the California Jobs First Initiative seeks to create quality jobs and bolster their resilience to climate and global challenges impacting the state's diverse regional economies. The Sierra Jobs First (SJF) initiative, which covers seven counties,

including all four within the Mother Lode Consortium, promotes the concept that a resilient economy and a healthy environment are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are deeply interconnected. SJF places a significant weight on integrating climate action into every aspect of its 2024 Strategic Plan and has purposefully aligned the regional initiative with the larger, overarching California climate initiative. The California climate initiative seeks to drive economic prosperity and ensure that workforce actions are cohesive with environmental sustainability and climate resiliency. These actions are of particular importance for the Mother Lode region, where natural resources are invaluable to long-term economic sustainability.

IV. WIOA TITLE I COORDINATION

The following narrative addresses services, activities, and administrative requirements of MLJT under the WIOA Title I formula programs, along with strategies for staff preparation, training, and ongoing professional development to effectively respond to participant needs.

A. Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Digital Technology Skills

Over the period covered by this plan, MLJT intends to continue to make technical skills training available to staff on a regular basis. Sessions will cover updates that have been released for software applications and platforms used by staff to perform work-related tasks and duties. Any new software programs or systems will also be introduced during regularly scheduled training sessions. Digital skills/technology topics that are currently relevant to staff include:

- Microsoft 365 software
- Adobe software
- Proctoring online TABE assessments
- Best practices while working remotely (e.g., accessing files, sharing information)
- Personal branding and social media presence
- Protecting personally identifiable information (PII)
- Using Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and other videoconferencing platforms
- AI tools and technologies

Given the importance of CalJOBS to WIOA operations and data management, all staff have been trained in the use of the system and annually participate in training updates provided by EDD.

Because training is intended to provide instruction on new or revised products and applications, training topics will be in a constant state of update and revision.

MLJT plans to make use of a number of strategies to deliver training. Among these are:

Peer Trainers: There are several MLJT managers and staff who are highly experienced and skilled in digital technology. These individuals remain the organization's first choice to serve as trainers.

Independent Contractors: Such individuals could include representatives of industry groups, product representatives, or uniquely qualified consultants that specialize in the use of certain products.

College and Adult Education Instructors: Training provided by Columbia College and local education agencies is an option. Such providers offer an array of programs that could possibly be adapted to MLJT's needs.

Online Instruction and Tutorials: Metrix Learning and other online platforms are potential resources for training.

MLJT leadership anticipates that AI and other advanced technologies will become increasingly relevant for the workforce development system and that the need for training in this area will be ongoing.

B. Frontline Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Cultural Competency and Effectiveness in Working with Individuals and Groups that Have Been Exposed to Trauma

MLJT managers and staff have participated in training focused on the needs of various target groups including, but not limited to, disconnected youth, individuals with disabilities, English language learners, and formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals. Various sessions have touched upon cultural competency and others have included content dealing with the effects trauma on individuals and groups. MLJT is committed to ensuring that staff has all of the tools necessary to ensure that all customers have ready access to a full range of services that will enable their success in the labor market.

Training to Increase Cultural Competency

Developing cultural competency requires specific knowledge. Understanding the concepts of cultural competency and cultural humility are critical for workforce development system staff.

To promote cultural competency skills among staff, MLJT's EO Officer has developed training on accessibility and WIOA Section 188 requirements, which also addresses issues of cultural competency. Included in this training is information on:

Discrimination: Discrimination is the act of treating people unfairly or prejudicially based on their membership in a group or category, such as their race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation. Discrimination can be harmful and perpetuate inequality.

Unconscious Bias: Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

Strategies to Address Unconscious or Implicit Bias: Opportunities to have discussions with others (especially those from socially dissimilar groups) can be helpful. Sharing one's biases can help others feel more secure about exploring their own. It's important to have

these conversations in a safe space. Individuals must be open to alternative perspectives and viewpoints.

Staff participating in the training are also directed to resources and references for further study on this important topic.

Training to Increase Staff Understanding of the Impacts of Trauma

Every day, AJCC staff work with individuals that have experienced significant trauma. The impacts of trauma are far reaching and affect every aspect of health and well-being. By implementing a trauma-informed approach to service delivery, staff can improve the effectiveness of services and the quality of participant outcomes. Topics that have or will be addressed through staff training include:

- Trauma-informed systems change for management
- Becoming trauma-informed
- Psychological safety in the workplace
- Next level trauma-informed leadership
- Trauma-informed approaches to community engagement
- Addressing community trauma
- Healing trauma in youth
- Trauma-informed care
- Traumatic stress
- Fostering resilience
- Self-advocacy skills

C. Coordination of Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities

Rapid Response activities are coordinated with EDD and other system partners to ensure that workers affected by business closures and other dislocation events have access to a broad range of resources to support their reemployment and, as needed, retraining. When possible, MLJT will attempt to avert layoffs through services and interventions, which are described below.

Lay-Off Aversion Activities

Business Services Representatives and Center Managers act as liaisons to assist employers in retaining skilled workers and to provide workers with a rapid transition to new employment, minimizing periods of unemployment. One form of assistance provided to business is “layoff aversion” services. MLJT works to identify at-risk businesses in advance of layoffs, assess their needs, and deliver solutions to address identified risks. MLJT also works to provide business solutions to employers that want to save jobs. Activities such as customized training, incumbent worker training, and EDD’s Work Share program are strategies that MLJT can utilize to assist companies in averting layoffs. Businesses are also referred to other resources to support their resilience. These include,

but are not limited to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Small Business Development Center, and the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, which is also known as GO-Biz.

Layoff aversion strategies rely on information and efforts such as: utilizing EconoVue to find hiring patterns and demand for skills development; job classifications and descriptions that identify critical skillset requirements; frequency of the hiring in each classification; number of vacant positions to be filled; and opportunities for upskilling. In addition, MLJT uses local intelligence to identify businesses in distress. This often includes information from civic and community leaders, as well as communications directly from business owners and managers.

Rapid Response Function

When a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notice is issued or other information becomes available signaling business closures or layoffs, MLJT staff immediately contacts the business to arrange deployment of services to affected workers. EDD representatives are often a critical partner in this process. Orientations that are scheduled with workers generally take place at the worksite. These events are used to provide workers with information on UI benefits, labor market and workforce system information, including the availability of WIOA and partner services through the AJCCs, and the availability of retraining programs.

When a Rapid Response activity takes place, MLJT's Rapid Response Team gathers pertinent information from published data sources to facilitate the rapid reemployment of potentially displaced workers into other employment opportunities. This minimizes the impact of the displacement on affected workers, their families, and the communities in which they live.

MLJT collaborates with the eight boards of the San Joaquin Valley in the quarterly meetings of the Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable (CVIER). CVIER meetings are focused on business services and strategies but often include discussions around rapid response and layoff aversion activities. When worker dislocation events occur, MLJT works with neighboring workforce areas to serve impacted individuals living across multiple counties.

D. Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

The Mother Lode WDB's one-stop/AJCC system includes one comprehensive one-stop center and three affiliate centers. In addition, strategic partner agency locations throughout the area provide access to the local workforce development delivery system through information and referrals, thereby serving as system "entry points." Throughout the four counties, libraries and other public agencies serve in this capacity, as part of MLJT's "boots on the ground" strategy, which is described in Section II of this plan.

Comprehensive America's Job Center of California

MLJT's comprehensive AJCC in Sonora has earned AJCC certification and has developed a structured continuous improvement plan to ensure that services are consistently being reviewed and strengthened to reflect evolving workforce and labor market needs. Partner programs are co-located on a full- or part-time basis at the comprehensive center. These include WIOA-mandated partners, local service agencies, economic development, and business-serving organizations.

Affiliate AJCCs

By collaborating with system partners in each county through referrals and leveraged resources and connecting to the comprehensive center, as needed, MLJT's affiliate centers deliver the full range of services available through the comprehensive AJCC. Managers and staff located at the comprehensive center are available to assist affiliate sites as center activities and service levels require. To respond effectively to hiring or downsizing by local businesses served by affiliates, staff from the comprehensive center may be temporarily stationed at other AJCCs to meet customers' needs.

Customers of the affiliate sites can also access services of the comprehensive AJCC through the MLJT website, videoconferencing, or teleconferencing sessions. Staff training and meetings are conducted online to enable access to professional development for affiliate center staff.

The three affiliate centers include the following:

- The Calaveras Affiliate AJCC provides services to residents and businesses in Calaveras County and is located in San Andreas. The AJCC is located in close proximity to various county services, including social services, probation, and behavioral health.
- The Amador Affiliate AJCC provides services to all of Amador County and is located in Sutter Creek. The Amador AJCC is co-located with Columbia College, Central Sierra Economic Development District, and Amador College Connect, thereby facilitating services for businesses and training and education for job seekers.
- The Mariposa Affiliate AJCC provides services to Mariposa County's local businesses and job seekers and is located in Mariposa. The center is centrally located. AJCC staff works closely with various county agencies and the Mariposa Chamber of Commerce, as well as with Yosemite National Park.

MLJT has implemented a variety of virtual services that include telephone and web-based orientation, career exploration, and access to partner services.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services

Through the AJCCs, Mother Lode WDB ensures all WIOA Title I basic career services are available to the public. These include:

- Determinations of eligibility;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation;
- Initial assessment;
- Labor exchange services;
- Referrals to system partners and community resources;
- Workforce and labor market employment information;
- Performance information and program cost information;
- Information on performance accountability measures;
- Information on the availability of supportive services or assistance;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- Information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs.

Individuals utilizing AJCC services begin by registering using the Virtual One-Stop (VOS) Greeter system.

For job seekers who meet eligibility requirements and need additional support, individualized career services are available, such as:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs, which may include: diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and in-depth interviews and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve employment goals;
- Group and/or individual counseling;
- Career planning;
- Short-term prevocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct;
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance;
- Adult education and literacy activities.

Training Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers

MLJT provides access to a wide range of training programs. These include the following modes of training authorized by WIOA:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment.
- On-the-job training
- Incumbent worker training
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs.
- Training programs operated by the private sector
- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Transitional jobs
- Adult education and literacy activities
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer

For many MLJT customers, use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for off-the-shelf, WIOA-approved courses/programs listed on the WDB's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) is the preferred method of training. Training services are provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice for both career goals and selection of eligible providers. The ETPL provides information about schools, labor market information, and programs' alignment with industry. After assessment and consultation with a case manager, customers seeking training services may select a training provider. Arrangements for payment of such services is provided through ITAs. At times, local board-approved training contractors are utilized.

MLJT continues to expand the use of work-based learning programs to increase opportunities to prepare job seekers for a wide range of jobs and careers. In addition to training modalities, such as on-the-job training, transitional jobs, and work experience, MLJT is making use of registered and other apprenticeships. These include an apprenticeship in forestry skills and one in culinary skills in Amador County. MLJT is participating in a federally funded grant program focused on the increased use of apprenticeship by local workforce development boards.

The precise services provided to job seekers enrolled in WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs reflect individual needs and are determined as a result of a comprehensive assessment process and preparation of an individual employment plan, which is developed in collaboration with program staff.

Priority of Service

WIOA establishes a priority requirement for adult employment and training activities. Priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation. Priority does not apply to the dislocated worker population.

MLJT gives priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services. Veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service for all DOL-

funded job training programs, including WIOA programs. Priority is provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
- Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Fourth, to persons who are below the Local Workforce Development Board approved self-sufficiency standard.
- Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

E. Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Youth Program

Mother Lode WDB's Title I WIOA Youth Programs meet all federal and state requirements. While WIOA funding for youth programs has significantly decreased over the last twenty years, MLJT continues to work with system partners and local stakeholders to ensure that a robust set of workforce development services is available to youth and young adults throughout the four-county area.

Delivery of WIOA Youth Program Services

MLJT directly provides Youth Program services. MLJT has more than forty years of experience providing employment and training services to youth and young adults. MLJT continues to innovate and implement effective services and activities focused on the needs of disconnected and other vulnerable youth, including those with multiple barriers to employment. The program includes services to in-school youth (25% of funding) and out-of-school youth (75% of funding).

Services provided to Youth Program participants include all 14 WIOA Youth elements prescribed by WIOA, including:

Tutoring, Study Skills Training, and Instruction Leading to Secondary School Completion: Education and educational support activities support completion of a high school diploma or recognized equivalent.

Alternative Education: These services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education or who have dropped out of school.

Paid Work Experience: This structured work-based learning experience provides opportunities for career exploration and skills development.

Occupational Skills Training: This organized program of study provides specific skills and leads to proficiency in an occupational field. Training may be delivered through didactic instruction in a classroom or online setting, or through work-based learning options including pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training programs.

Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation: This integrated education and training model combines workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills.

Leadership Development Opportunities: These services encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors.

Supportive Services: Enable a youth or young adult to participate in WIOA activities.

Adult Mentoring: This formal relationship between a youth and an adult mentor focuses on structured activities through which the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement.

Follow-Up Services: These services are provided following program exit and ensure youth succeed in employment or education.

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling: Individualized counseling is provided to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling.

Financial Literacy Education: Youth participating in these services gain knowledge and skills they need to achieve long-term financial stability.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training: Youth learn the basics of starting and operating a small business and develop entrepreneurial skills.

Services that Provide Labor Market Information: These services offer employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities: Services assist youth in preparing for and transitioning to postsecondary education and training.

Highlights of MLJT's WIOA Youth Program services include:

- Paid work experience is a key program element. MLJT collaborates with local businesses to provide work-based learning opportunities to Youth. Youth learn not

only job-specific skills but have the opportunity to put their soft skills training to work by demonstrating workplace attitudes and behaviors that businesses most value.

- Partner organizations braid services to support successful program completion. Among these organizations are adult education providers and Columbia College, which provide instruction in high school diploma attainment, preparing for the GED exam, and various other credit recovery services.
- Because MLJT is the service provider for youth programs, participants receive many services at the AJCC, which exposes them directly to extensive information and resources. Youth use the center for job search, career exploration, and other services that prepare them for employment and careers.
- MLJT seeks specialized grant funds to supplement WIOA Title I formula funds to provide more services to a greater number of youth and young adults. This includes programs such as a K16 grant, CAL FIRE grant, Behavioral Health grant, High Road Construction Careers (HRCC) grant, High Road Training Partnership (HRTP) grant, Student Training and Employment Program (STEP) grant, and a DOR-AJCC Collaboration grant.
- Staff work closely with schools, community-based organizations, and public agencies to outreach to youth. This includes efforts such as recruiting youth at Juvenile Hall to inform them of WIOA resources that are available upon their release.

Services for Youth with Disabilities

All of the programs and services described above are available to youth with disabilities. When a young person with a disability seeks services from MLJT, assessments are administered and an Individual Service Strategy is developed to identify past educational attainment, skills levels, interests, barriers, and unique or specialized needs. Depending on the results of the assessment and service planning process, staff may engage colleagues from DOR, special education, or other partners to assist in securing services and, as necessary, accommodations, to facilitate the youth/young adult's participation in the WIOA Youth program.

MLJT is committed to its role as a community partner with the organizations that have entered into two Local Partnership Agreements that will increase CIE opportunities for job seekers with disabilities, including youth.

Local agencies that comprise the local disability service network include many that serve youth and young adults. MLJT collaborates with high school transition programs, Workability programs, WATCH Resources, Inc., DOR, Valley Mountain Regional Center, Thumbs Up!, ARC, Calaveras Mentoring, Greater Valley Conservation Corps, and the YES Partnership in providing services and support to individuals with disabilities.

Digital Skills Training For WIOA Youth Program Participants

Strategies for increasing the digital literacy skills of youth participants have long been focused on increasing their access to training. As such, MLJT has developed an in-person, six-part digital literacy skills training program. This program is available to youth and all other WIOA participants.

F. Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds and the Competitive Process Used to Award Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities

The State of California has designated the counties of Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne as a local workforce development area, which is known as the Mother Lode Consortium. The four counties have entered into a joint powers agreement, which established Mother Lode Job Training agency as an independent public entity responsible for administration of local workforce development programs. WIOA programs are governed by Mother Lode Workforce Development Board, which has entered into agreement with the chief local elected official representing the LWDA. Pursuant to this agreement, included among the roles of MLJT, is that of “fiscal agent” as defined by WIOA. Furthermore, the by-laws of MLWDB document a process whereby funds are allotted upon approval of the local board, providing the Executive Director signatory authority.

The Mother Lode WDB has elected not to contract out WIOA Title I Programs. Rather, it has opted to continue as the service provider for the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs. In accordance with WIOA requirements, the WDB procures the services of the AJCC/One-Stop Operator using an open and competitive request for proposals process. Procurement takes place every three years, resulting in the selection of a provider, as described below.

G. How the Local Board Fulfills the Duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider or Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers

Mother Lode WDB is in compliance with all federal requirements and state guidance regarding the AJCC Operator (referred to by WIOA as the one-stop operator) and career services provider functions.

Fulfilling the AJCC Operator Function

One-Stop Operator services have been competitively procured in 2023 and a contract has been executed with Beaudette Consulting, Inc.

The One-Stop Operator has two distinct roles:

1. Coordinating the service delivery of required AJCC partners and service providers; and
2. Ensuring the implementation of partner responsibilities and contributions agreed upon in executed MOUs.

Specific services provided by the OSO include the following:

- In conjunction with oversight by the Workforce Development Board and designated administrative staff, the OSO coordinates the implementation of negotiated MOUs and Cost Sharing Agreements with all mandated partners;
- The OSO convenes and facilitates quarterly WIOA partner meetings that focus on systems alignment, process improvement, and building value-added collaboration among system partners; and
- The OSO serves as a liaison between MLJT and the system partners and, as such, attends meetings of WDB or its Executive Committee to receive direction and to report on progress no less than three times annually.

Specifically excluded from the OSO functions are the following responsibilities and tasks: convening system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan; preparing and submitting the local plan; oversight of its own work; managing or significantly participating in the competitive selection process for one-stop operators; selecting or terminating one-stop operator, career services, and youth providers; negotiating local performance accountability measures; and developing and submitting a budget for activities of the local board.

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services Provider

The Mother Lode Workforce Development Board has received approval from the California Workforce Development Board and EDD to function as, and fulfill the duties of, the career services provider for the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs. The WDB, through its AJCCs, has been providing these services for decades. In 2021, MLJT received approval from the California Workforce Development Board to continue functioning in the capacity of career services provider. The application cited the workforce development knowledge, skills, and experience of the MLJT team as the primary rationale for the requested renewal of state approval. In 2025, MLJT submitted a new application to the state to serve as the career services provider and expects to function in this capacity during the period covered by this plan.

V. PROGRAM YEARS 2025-28 SYSTEM PRIORITIES

As the Local Plan concerns not just the work of the WIOA Title I programs administered by MLJT, but all the organizations, programs, and services that comprise the local workforce development system, MLJT leadership sought input from a range of system partners and stakeholders. As described in Attachment I, a public input session was held to gather input on key issues affecting the delivery of workforce and related services to job seekers and businesses.

The priorities described below capture key issues, observations, ideas, and recommendations expressed during the community input sessions. These ten priority areas will be addressed by MLJT and partner representatives throughout the four-year period covered by this plan.

A. Worker Attraction and Retention

While workforce development in urban environments and other settings that are more populous than the Mother Lode region is generally focused on training existing residents, local workforce strategies must include collaboration among workforce development, economic development, government, and business stakeholders to both attract talent to the region and to retain existing talent, especially that of young individuals. Strategies to build the workforce should emphasize the benefits of life and work in Mother Lode region, and should promote career opportunities as a means of attracting workers to the region and retaining young residents who may be apt to leave the area in pursuit of opportunities in larger communities. In connection with other priorities outlined in the Local Plan, the workforce system partners should consider ways in which they can contribute to worker attraction and retention in the region.

B. Pathways to Careers in Government and the Public Sector

Taking into consideration jobs at the federal, state, and local levels, government is the largest sector within the Mother Lode region. However, pathways to jobs in public agencies are not always clear. There are some jobs for which a four-year college degree is generally required, but there are many more government jobs that require less formal education and for which individuals can qualify based on past work experience, demonstrated skills, and short-term training. Given the prevalence of opportunities for employment at all levels of government, the workforce system partners should give greater attention to strategies to attract candidates to fields for which public agencies are hiring and to the development of programs that will prepare individuals for these jobs. Such programs may include training at the adult education and community college level, as well as work-based learning strategies, including apprenticeships and on-the-job training models.

C. Pathways in Childcare and Early Childhood Education

Investments in programs and strategies to build the workforce in childcare and early childhood education offer multiple advantages for the community. First of all, this career track is desirable for many job seekers and can serve as a path to careers as teaching assistants and teachers at the K-12 institutions or other careers in education. In addition, there is a tremendous need for childcare among workers in the Mother Lode region and a lack of suitable childcare options limits the ability of individuals and families to work full-time or at all. Greater investments in training childcare and early childhood education workers should be a priority for education and workforce partners.

D. Pathways to the Skilled Trades

Commercial and residential construction, infrastructure projects, and maintenance of existing facilities and operations require a large skilled trades workforce in the region. While there are existing programs, including those administered by organized labor, that prepare job seekers for careers in the building and construction trades, greater investments are needed, including increasing the number of training opportunities and expanding efforts to attract workers to these careers.

E. Pathways to Remote Jobs

The regional workforce is one that could qualify for remote work opportunities if candidates have the skills and credentials that businesses employing remote workers are looking for. The WDB and workforce system partners should consider how technology, customer service, research, and other skills can be developed by residents to increase opportunities to secure well-paid remote jobs. Development of curricula specifically aimed at producing such workers should be considered by local education and training agencies and their workforce development counterparts.

F. Early Engagement on Career Exploration

Many young individuals have very little knowledge of or information about the labor market by the time they reach high school, when they should be beginning to prepare for careers through either academic studies leading to postsecondary education or other vocational preparation, such as participation in work-based learning or career and technical education (CTE) programs. The workforce system partners should consider opportunities to collaborate with local K-12 education agencies to develop age-appropriate career information content that could be instructed at the grade school, middle school, and high school levels. Such instruction would serve to build students' increasing awareness of jobs and careers, along with their understanding of requirements and activities associated with various careers in many industries. Content would inform students about

industries that are mainstays of the regional economy and about sectors that are gaining significance with local labor markets throughout MLJT's expansive four county region.

G. Career Certification for High School Students

Recognizing that many young workers plan to look for work and begin careers without pursuing a postsecondary degree or credential, the years during which they attend high school are ideal for preparing students to begin careers. While there are opportunities for youth to become engaged in classes across various career tracks, the secondary education system, in coordination with business and workforce system partners, should examine opportunities to develop CTE programs that will result in certification for specific jobs and groups of jobs as entry points into careers that are in demand, including those that are identified with the PY 2025-28 Middle Sierra RPU Regional Plan.

H. Identify and Instruct in Core Employment Skills

There are skills that are widely desired by businesses across many industries, and some skills are often considered universally needed for all jobs. System stakeholders call out foundational skills (i.e., so-called "soft skills," such as promptness, team work, acceptance of supervision, critical thinking, problem solving); basic skills (English and math skills); communication skills (verbal, written, and appropriate to the workplace); digital literacy (ability to use basic technology tools and systems); financial literacy; and job retention skills as among the general skills most valued by companies of all types and sizes. Business and industry leaders continue to stress that individuals with these skills are the most desirable, are the easiest to train, and are generally the best fit. Workforce system partners throughout the region should work to identify a full complement of core employability skills and devise strategies for assessing job seekers and training them in these skill areas.

I. Increase Workers' Proficiency in Digital Skills and Ability to Use Advanced Technology

In a labor market where the demand for talent often outstrips availability, many businesses are willing to train workers lacking job specific skills. However, job seekers will compete more successfully for work and experience greater success on the job, when they have strong basic skills, including literacy and numeracy skills, as well as digital literacy and proficiency in various software and web-based applications.

There is also across-the-board recognition that advanced technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), is changing jobs in multiple industries at a more accelerated rate than ever before. MLJT leadership, education, business, and community partners must continue to assess how technology is changing jobs and

needs to develop strategies and programs that will enable workers and businesses to keep pace with these changes.

J. Address Job Retention as A Business and Job Seeker Strategy

Businesses are experiencing rapid turnover of workers at unprecedented levels. The cost of such turnover is significant, considering investments that businesses make to recruit, hire, orient, and train new workers. However, as workforce system professionals are essential in connecting workers to jobs, they are uniquely positioned to advise both job seekers and business representatives on the advantages of job retention and strategies to promote workers' longevity with companies that hire them.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

The following items are included as part of the Local Plan.

- Attachment 1: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary
- Attachment 2: Public Comments Received that Disagree with the PY 25-28 Local Plan
- Attachment 3: Signature Page

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

To facilitate the engagement of stakeholders in planning for the local workforce development delivery system and in the development of the PY 2025-2028 Mother Lode WDB Local Plan and Middle Sierra RPU Regional Plan, MLJT hosted a community and stakeholder forum focused on topics affecting strategies and services across the local workforce development system. The theme for the session was *“Opportunities and Challenges for the Workforce Development System.”*

Questions/topics addressed included, but were not limited to:

- Considering the regional economy and industries that are contributing to growth and prosperity, what opportunities exist to help workers develop necessary skills and otherwise prepare for jobs with current and projected demand?
- What strategies should workforce system agencies employ to better understand generational and evolving needs of workers?
- What are the greatest obstacles for individuals looking to prepare for “good jobs?” Are there strategies that the workforce system could use to minimize or eliminate these obstacles?
- As businesses continue to face recruitment and hiring challenges, are there strategies that the workforce system could implement to lessen these difficulties?
- Other comments on workforce development opportunities and challenges.

The session was held in a hybrid format, in person and via videoconference, on December 16, 2024.

The table below summarizes participation in the community and stakeholder engagement process to develop the Mother Lode WDB PY 2025-28 Local Plan and the Middle Sierra RPU Regional Plan.

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email invitation and Social Media posts sent out November 18 th 2024: Local and Regional Community Event to be held at MLJT in person and virtually on December 16, 2024, from 1:30-3:00pm. CBOs, Partners, Community, Business	AARP Alpine County Government Amador County Chamber of Commerce Amador County Government Amador Economic Development Area 12 Agency on Aging ATCAA (Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency) California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)	Emily Brown, Cindy Chandler, Diane Griffin, Robbie Bergstrom, Lori Martinez, Bill Redford, Staci Johnston,	Comments captured on pages 37-40

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
	California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) California Employment Development Department (EDD) Calaveras County Government Calaveras County Office of Education Catholic Charities Center for a Non-Violent Community Changing Echoes Inc. CIMC (California Indian Manpower Consortium) Columbia College (Yosemite Community College District) CVOC (Central Valley Opportunity Center) DRAIL (Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living) EDD (California Employment Development Department) Force Energy Geo Group (Private Correctional & Rehabilitation Services) Habitat for Humanity Tuolumne County Harrah’s Casino ICES (Infant/Child Enrichment Services) Ironstone Vineyards Job Corps Kene Me-Wu Family Healing Center LGBTQ Alliance (Tri-County LGBTQ Alliance) MACT Health Board Mariposa County Government Mariposa County Health and Human Services Mariposa County Unified School District Mother Lode Job Training (MLJT) Non-Violent Community (Center for a Non-Violent Community) SERs Jobs for Progress California	Margo Ilonummi, Jenn Guhl, Kristin Millhoff, Karen Warburton, Mark Bonini, Tim Hildabrand, Staci Johnston, Ashley Padilla, Dan Hawks, JT Chevallier, Frank Leschinsky, Jaron Brandon, Kathy Gallino, Erin Gandolfo- Brune, Chris McCoy, Joseph Bors, Suzan ICES, Mat Galvan, Sham Wilk, Peniel Wilk- Whitmer, Rose Day, Brioni Poole	

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
	Sierra Focus Media SJCOE (San Joaquin County Office of Education) Sonora Area Foundation Sonora High School Sierra Business Council SPI (Sierra Pacific Industries) Stockton Catholic Charities Tuolumne County Government Tuolumne County Libraries Union Democrat Unite Here Local 19 (Labor Union) Watch Resources Yosemite Community College District (Columbia College)		

**PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THAT DISAGREE WITH
THE PY 2025 - 28 LOCAL PLAN**

1.	From:	Date:
Comment:		

2.	From:	Date:
Comment:		

Placeholder: comment pending completion of public comment period:

SIGNATURE PAGE

The following signatures represent approval of the PY 2025-28 Local Plan by Mother Lode Workforce Development Board and the Chief Elected Official for the Mother Lode Local Workforce Area.

For the **Mother Lode Workforce Development Board**

Tyler Newton, Chair	Date

For the **Mother Lode Consortium Board of Directors**

Benjamin Stopper, Chair	Date