

# **WIOA**

## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

**Draft - 2 Year Update**

**Strategic Workforce Development Plan for the**

**Capital Region**

**PYs 2021-2024**

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PYs 2021-2024

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This document represents the update to the 4-year Regional Plan of the four workforce development areas comprising the Capital Region. This region consists of the counties of Alpine, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba. This plan builds on previous work and is jointly submitted by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) and the four Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). The Regional Plan outlines strategies that assist adults and youth gain access to employment opportunities, including career pathways, within critical industry sectors identified within the greater Capital Area Regional Planning Unit (RPU), with special emphasis on targeting vulnerable populations to ensure equitable access to programs and services. The ultimate goal of these strategies is to support inclusive economic prosperity and income mobility for all community members. This will be completed through aligning the regional plan objectives in support of sector strategies that enhance WIOA outcomes and the State Workforce Development Plan goals while taking into consideration the temporary and permanent effects brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. State plan goals include producing a million “Middle Skill” industry valued and recognized postsecondary credentials while doubling the number of apprenticeships statewide. Strategic areas of focus include:

- Development of Partner Network
- Identification of Sector Partnerships and LMI/Workforce Analysis
- Development of Career Pathway Programs (Youth and Adult)
- Service Alignment/Resource Braiding
- Increase of Employer Work-based Training
- Continuous System Performance Review

The Capital Region RPU has developed the regional plan with a clear understanding of the State Policy Framework and its objectives. The State Policy Framework includes three overarching policy objectives:

1. Fostering Demand Driven Skills Attainment
2. Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians
3. Aligning, Coordinating and Integrating Programs and Services

The RPU has solidified its agreement for WIOA systems alignment through the signing of the “Memorandum of Understanding for the Capital Area Regional Planning Unit” or Cap Region MOU. The purpose of the Cap Region MOU is to establish mutually beneficial relationships in regards to regional coordination and systems alignment including the regional planning items outlined in WIOA Section 106 commonly referred to as the A-H requirements. The RPU further agreed to work towards meeting the objectives in the state plan and expanded the agreement to include the following seven additional elements of alignment:

1. Review and align local policies and procedures

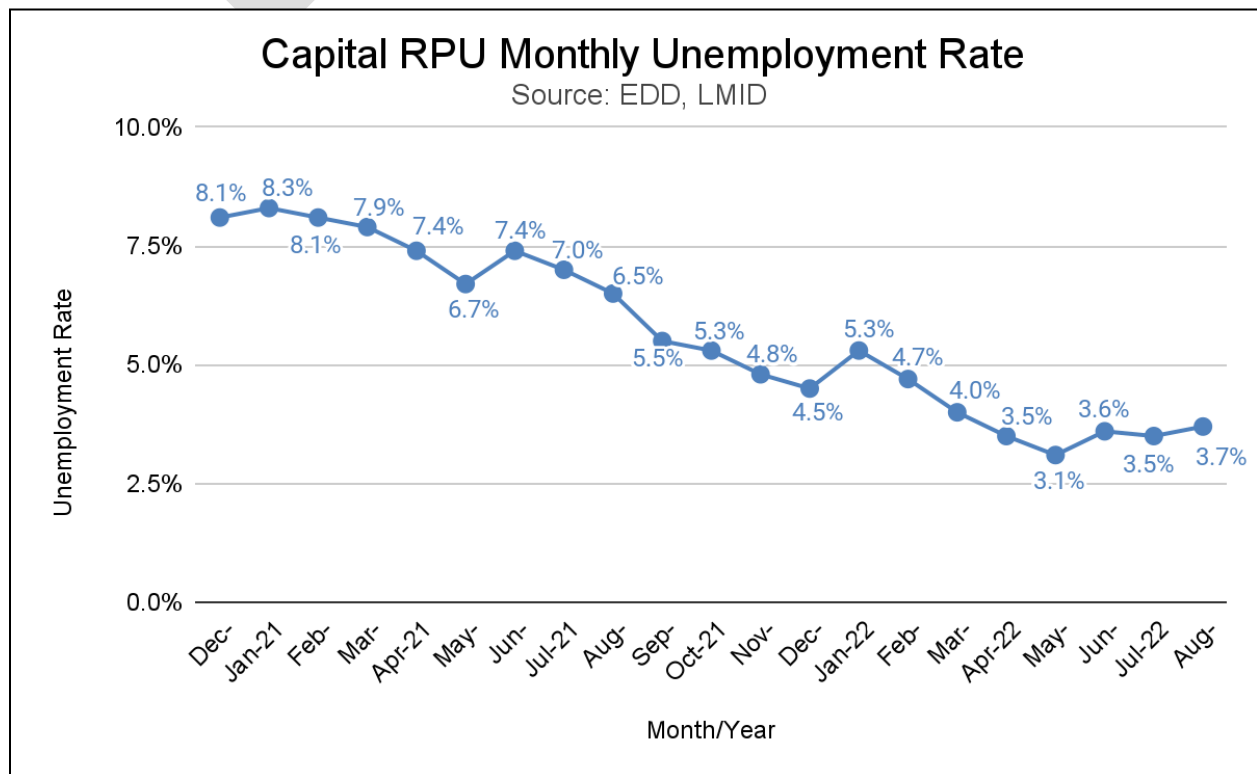
2. Investigate co-branding of initiatives
3. Coordinate outreach and business engagement strategies
4. Coordinate capacity building for Workforce Board Members, Chief Local Elected Officials, Partners and staff
5. Coordinate Staff and system partners' development activities
6. Coordinate regional business advisory groups and employer engagement strategies
7. Continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements

Representatives from the RPU membership meet to discuss these issues on a monthly basis facilitated by Valley Vision, the RPU's regional organizer.

### ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE CAPITAL AREA REGION

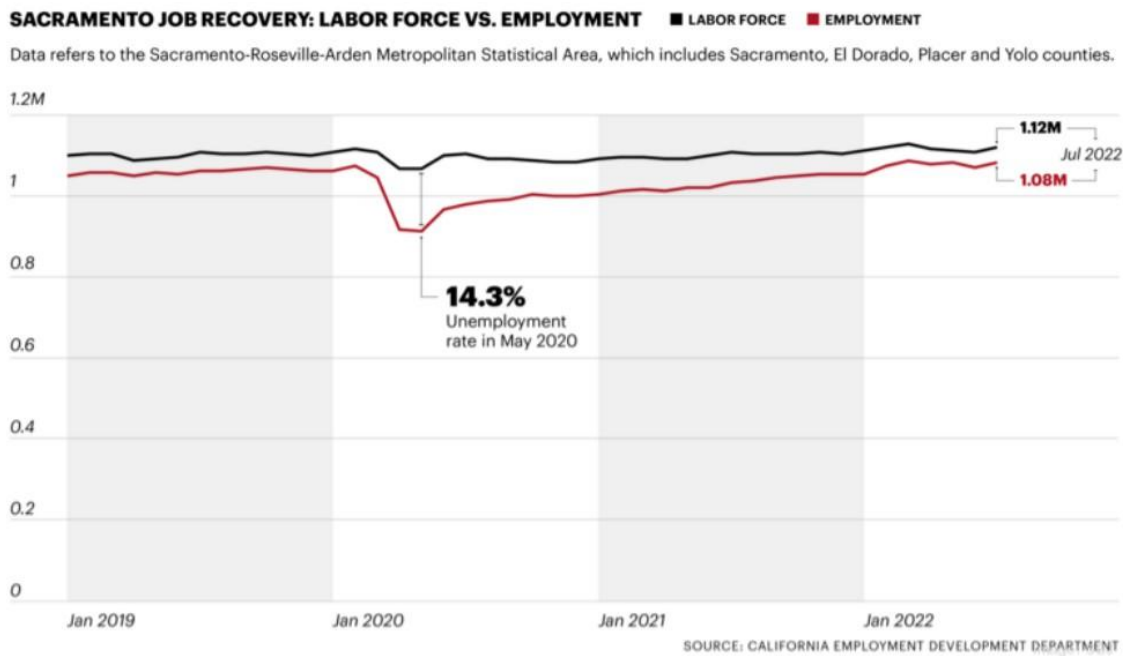
This section of the Regional Plan reflects the labor market data in the Capital RPU and guides the RPU in strategic planning and decision-making. The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on economies, populations, lifestyles, and cultures across the RPU, the state, the nation and the world. While employment has rebounded, the income of community members who have historically experienced barriers to employment continue to suffer from substandard living wages and lack of economic mobility. A sustained inclusive recovery depends on the ability of historically underinvested workers gaining the skills, access and support to obtain quality jobs with upward mobility that will be relevant with emerging technologies and industry adaptations in the future of work.

#### **Employment/Unemployment Landscape and Labor Market Participation**



The Capital RPU unemployment rate is 3.7% as of August 2022, slightly under the state average of 4.1%, and down from 8.1% in December 2020. Prior to the pandemic, the unemployment rate for the RPU was 3.5% in December 2019 and reached 14.4% at the height of the pandemic. This indicates the region’s unemployment rates have recovered to record-low unemployment rates similar to pre-pandemic levels. While there were a few spikes in the unemployment rate between December 2020 and August 2022, the overall unemployment rate had a sustained downward trend.

**Labor Market Participation**



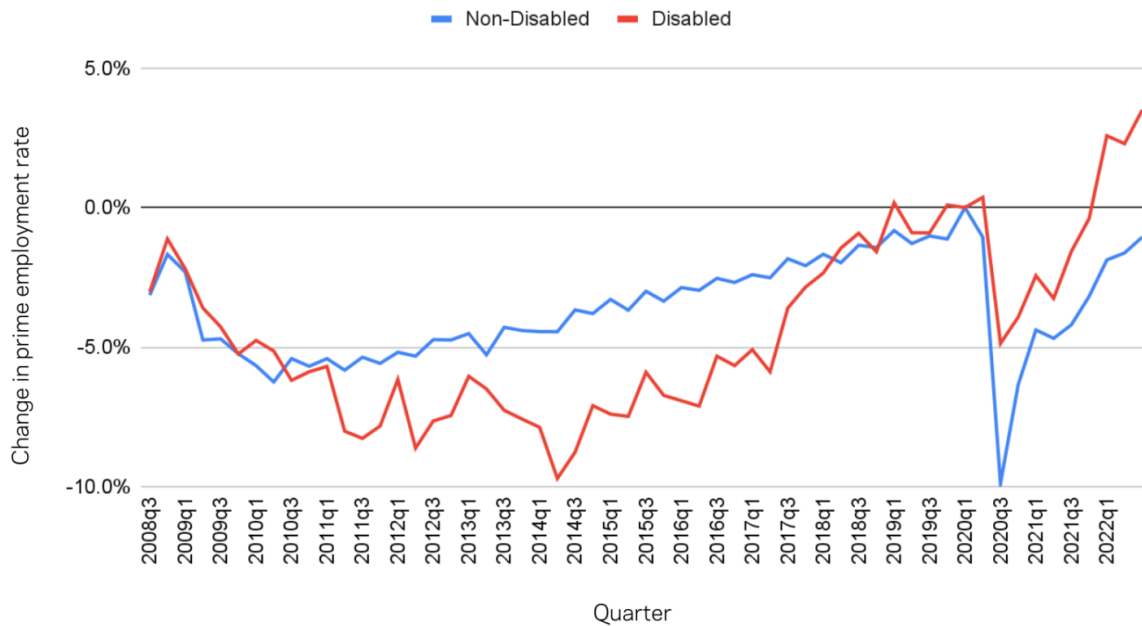
**Disengaged Workers** - Highlighted in a report by Lightcast, [Bridging the Gap in our Labor Force](#), the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the long-term trend of a declining U. S. labor force. Despite a record number of job openings, a large segment of the workforce remains disengaged. The national labor force participation rate (LFPR) has remained unchanged for the past two years because workers who left the workforce during the pandemic have not returned. In a January 2022 [article for CalMatters](#), California’s former EDD director Michael Bernick highlighted data indicating the number of employed workers had dropped by 919,800 below the number of workers employed in January 2020 prior to the pandemic. Per the Lightcast report, one of the reasons for this is the high cost of childcare, an issue that disproportionately affects low-wage workers. Support services such as childcare and transportation can provide critical assistance to individuals interested in rejoining the labor force and obtaining gainful employment.

**Immigrants and Refugees** - Additional data from the Lightcast report details since February 2020 the number of jobs in lower-skilled industries has increased. The majority of jobs in these

lower-skilled industries which remain unfilled do not require a college degree and are predominantly filled by foreign-born workers. According to Lightcast, foreign-born workers have made up an increasing share of the labor force since 1980. However, immigration has been trending downward since 2016 due to shifting immigration and refugee admittance policies, pandemic-related challenges, and worldwide competition for talent. This trend has negatively affected the U.S. labor market. Additionally, the U.S. birth rate is consistently low and the population under 20 years of age representing the future of the labor force shrunk by 2% between 2007 and 2020. The report emphasizes the importance of tackling immigration challenges to help address the labor workforce shortage. The recent increases in the admittance of refugees provides an opportunity to effectively skill, reskill and include these workers to meet the needs of the talent shortage.

### Disabled Workers -

#### Prime Employment Rate: Change from Q4 2019



Despite a recent dip, employment rates for workers with disabilities have improved in the last two years. However, they continue to be disproportionately unemployed compared to the non-disabled population with a relatively consistent gap of around 40 percent. While labor shortages have likely contributed to the willingness of employers to engage this talented population, an increase in remote work opportunities has also played a significant role. According to an [October 2022 report](#) by the Economic Innovation Group, pre-pandemic employment rates for people with disabilities were rising faster than non-disabled people. This positive trend has continued post-pandemic. Additionally, pre-pandemic workers with disabilities were more likely to work from home than non-disabled workers. The sustained

increase in remote work opportunities along with the tight labor market create momentum to narrow the employment gap for this workforce and address the needs of the current tight labor market.

**The Need for Increasing Digital Skills** - The need to improve digital and technology skills continues to be a foremost trend in ensuring all workers, and in particular historically underinvested populations, will meet the needs of changing industry dynamics. Research from [McKinsey](#) shows that tech drives the future of the workforce and the fastest-growing jobs demand tech skills. The World Economic Forum also predicts that 50 percent of all employees will need to reskill by 2025 in response to advancements in technology. However, low-income workers lack the technology-based skills and tools necessary to access in-demand jobs and training to prepare them for these jobs. [McKinsey](#) states that The American Opportunity Survey found 43 percent of lower-income Americans lack broadband access, 41 percent lack access to a laptop or computer, and 24 percent lack access to a smartphone. Given the need for tech-based skills, programs that equip community members with tech skills and the accessibility to broadband and technological equipment would serve as a critical career ladder resources to enable individuals to transition into higher-skilled, high-demand occupations.

Despite a significant number of open jobs in low-wage/low-skill industries, one of the solutions to the labor shortage put forth in a UC Riverside School of Business and Economic Forecasting [July 2022 report](#), is to encourage lower-skilled workers to enter higher-skilled career paths. Valley Vision's October 2022 [Livability Poll](#) survey of residents in the Capital Region found more than two-thirds of residents are interested in learning or improving their skills through education and training programs. The majority expressed a preference for short-term programs that last one year or less, and are hybrid or remote with flexible or weekend hours. The combination of the tight labor market and the need to upskill frontline workers will require flexibility in training modalities and delivery of programs, while providing support to ensure more vulnerable workers can access and advance along quality career pathways while supporting their basic needs.

## REGIONAL INDICATORS

The Capital Region RPU has selected Regional Indicators A and B for primary emphasis, not excluding activities relating to the remaining two regional indicators. The region is well poised to develop a baseline measure and goals to increase communication from industry employers to supply side partners. This addresses Regional Indicator A: *Region has a process to communicate industry workforce needs to supply-side partners*. To this end, the RPU has begun tracking data collected at industry sector convenings including the number of registrants, number of attendees, and type/category of workforce stakeholder in attendance. These metrics will demonstrate the reach of industry sector information throughout the regional workforce ecosystem and assist in developing specific strategies as needed for additional stakeholder engagement. Additionally, the RPU will be developing and tracking the number of connections made at convenings that resulted in pipeline expansion, alignment or development efforts through follow up surveys to convening participants.

The Region is also addressing Regional Indicator B: *Region has policies supporting equity and strives to improve job quality.* The outcome the region will seek is to increase access for underinvested, high barrier communities. This will be completed through measuring the year to year changes in the percentage of customers with significant barriers to employment receiving services. In the past year, 87.8% of the RPU's adult customers served have one or more significant barriers to employment. The RPU has been tracking the total number of customers served, the percentage with barriers to employment, the enter employment percentage, and the average wage at employment for the past 18 months. These efforts will continue including establishing benchmark goals in the subsequent two years.

While not formally selecting Regional Indicators C or D, the RPU has targeted initiatives to serve specific populations detailed further in this plan.

### **FOSTERING DEMAND-DRIVEN SKILLS ATTAINMENT**

#### **In Demand Industry Sectors**

#### **Capital RPU Top 25 Industries (2017-2021)**

<b>NAICS</b>	<b>Industry Name</b>	<b>2021 Annual Average Employment</b>	<b>Percent Change (2017 - 2021)</b>
7225	Full-Service Restaurants	73,834	-4.8%
6241	Individual and Family Services	46,464	18.3%
9211	Executive, Legislative, & Gen Government	43,201	5.8%
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools	42,630	-21.9%
9221	Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activi	27,475	-1.7%
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	21,930	32.2%
4451	Grocery Stores	21,402	7.1%
5613	Employment Services	20,936	-16.4%
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	20,327	18.4%
5617	Services to Buildings and Dwellings	19,325	43.4%
9261	Administration of Economic Programs	18,714	-7.7%
9241	Administration of Environmental Programs	18,530	7.3%
9231	Administration of Human Resource Program	17,557	17.4%
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	17,064	19.6%
4523	General Merchandise Stores, including Warehouse Clubs/Supercenters	16,253	16.4%
6211	Offices of Physicians	15,612	7.1%
2381	Building Foundation/Exterior Contractors	15,135	28.1%



5511	Management of Companies and Enterprises	13,943	8.3%
5415	Computer Systems Design and Rel Services	12,203	11.2%
5413	Architectural and Engineering Services	11,467	5.1%
5242	Insurance Agencies, Brokerages & Support	11,315	-0.4%
2383	Building Finishing Contractors	11,287	23.8%
5616	Investigation and Security Services	9,932	13.5%
7139	Other Amusement & Recreation Industries	9,858	-7.1%
4931	Warehousing and Storage	9,761	116.2%

Sacramento metro area employment (number in thousands)	Nov. 2022	Change from Nov. 2021 to Nov. 2022	
		Number	Percent
Total nonfarm	1,066.1	34.0	3.3
Mining and logging	0.7	0.0	0.0
Construction	75.5	0.6	0.8
Manufacturing	39.0	0.9	2.4
Trade, transportation, and utilities	174.1	3.3	1.9
Information	10.3	0.1	1.0
Financial activities	52.9	0.9	1.7
Professional and business services	141.7	3.6	2.6
Education and health services	181.6	11.1	6.5
Leisure and hospitality	104.9	6.9	7.0
Other services	35.9	2.0	5.9
Government	249.5	4.6	1.9

Source: U.S. BLS, Current Employment Statistics.

Industries experiencing the largest growth in the Capital Region are Leisure and Hospitality, Education and Health Services, Professional and Business Services (including information technology careers), Manufacturing, Government (Public Sector), Trade and Transportation and Utilities and Financial Activities.

The RPU in conjunction with Valley Vision, communicates industry workforce needs to supply side partners through employer advisories in critical sectors important to our regional economy including: Advanced Manufacturing; Health and Life Sciences; Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences; Energy, Construction and Utilities; Information and Communications

Technology; Hospitality, Culinary and Tourism; and Public Sector pathways. Valley Vision is the designated Regional Organizer for the Capital Region and a regional civic leadership organization focused on solving complex problems through research and convening multi-stakeholder initiatives. These advisories are open and marketed to all workforce stakeholders including education, nonprofit, governmental, and industry, and are a proven strategy to advance business and industry needs in the development of career pathways. The impact is to: align education and workforce investments with employer designated priority needs; inform the development of industry-led training and education curriculum, certificates and programs; assist in the development of work based learning opportunities including internships, apprenticeships and on the job training; and foster career awareness. These industry advisories boast a host of employer partners including Siemens (Manufacturing), Bayer Crop Science (Agriculture), Sutter Health (Healthcare), Intel (ICT), Villara Building Systems (Construction) and the State of California (Public Sector).

[Industry cluster/sector reports](#) are produced at the culmination of each advisory and shared broadly to increase alignment between supply-side partners. Additionally, information gained on emerging trends and the current and future projected needs of employers are utilized to inform the design, expansion or revision of pathway training programs. The advisories focus on creating additional onramps for historically underinvested populations through system alignment with community based and non-traditional partners. These sector studies provide an overview of occupations, industry trends, and skill requirements, as well as the top in-demand occupations in the cluster requiring postsecondary education or training, along with projected occupational demand, institutions providing related education and training, and identify workforce gaps. These materials from these advisories are widely utilized throughout the region by workforce boards, education, economic development, nonprofit, private industry and other partners to align career pipeline development to meet industry demand today and in the projected future.

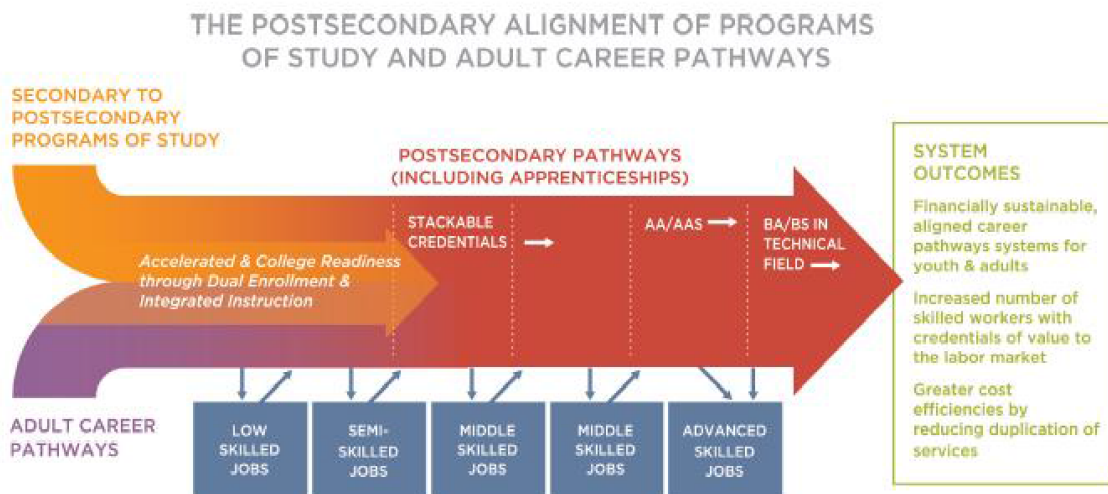
Common themes throughout sector advisories include the need for upskilling in interpersonal or professionalism skills with the highest requested skills in this category including communication, problem solving, and ability to work as a team. A [study](#) completed by Valley Vision and Burning Glass Technologies in 2020 studied the highest requested skills across job postings meeting a “quality of jobs threshold” requiring a minimum income of \$36,000 per year, reduced automation risk and a minimum of 500 openings. The highest requested skills in this category included Communication Skills, Organizational Skills, Teamwork/Collaboration, and Problem Solving in ranking order. Customer Service is an additional skill requested across many occupations related to the skills noted in this section. Since interpersonal skills are relatively un-automatable, a continued increased emphasis on building these inherently human traits creates a protective factor to prevent future layoffs and increased employment opportunities across a variety of industries.

Further, providing training in key managerial skills demonstrated a significant opportunity for front-line workers to move up the career ladder, improve employability, job quality and wages, as well as reduce automation risk. The most highly requested skills in this category include

Management Skills, Scheduling, Budgeting and Planning. Specific training programs offering these key managerial skills could provide immediate opportunities for advancement to less at-risk positions. These skills are also highly transferable, offering the opportunity for workers to move across industries if needed or desirable.

Valley Vision will continue to lead the Capital Area RPU as Regional Organizer and assist in identifying, as well as creating and implementing, regional sector pathways to meet regional industry needs. Through convening intensive workgroups and planning sessions with the regional workforce boards, businesses, labor, education, and economic development in the Capital Area RPU, Valley Vision serves as a hub for dialogue, information sharing, planning and development of resource strategies. The result is the development of career pathways that identify key competitive and emerging industry sectors in the RPU, the aligning, coordinating, and integrating of regional resources to support the development of industry-specific partnerships in those targeted priority industries, the aligning of public programs and funding streams, the identifying of resources to support sector initiatives, the integrating of education and training to accelerate learning when possible, and the development of common success indicators and tracking systems.

As illustrated in the diagram below, regional career pathways identified include intentional connections to employment opportunities providing labor market payoffs at each off-ramp, and are designed to allow for easy re-entry for participants for education/training continuum.



### **Regional Sector Pathways**

**The Digitization of Work** - Valley Vision receives support from the Capital Region Workforce Development Boards through regional implementation funds to bring together workforce partners, educators, and employers to identify high priority actions to prepare the workforce for changes in the workplace related to technological innovations like automation, artificial

intelligence, robotics, and the internet of things. As part of this work, Valley Vision in conjunction with the North Far North Center of Excellence conducted research and held employer forums which resulted in the [Automation Risk for Jobs in the Capital Region report](#) detailing the methodology, key findings, and recommendations. The findings continue to be used in cluster convenings and occupational demand analyses, in addition to guiding our sector pathways around this significant trend. Additionally, the Capital Region RPU supports the work of the [Capital Region Digital Inclusion Coalition](#) coordinated by Valley Vision. This Coalition is a collaborative effort of community members, industry, nonprofits, education, and technology solution providers to bridge the digital divide in our region. The boards work with Valley Vision and the Coalition to advance solutions in digital upskilling for traditional underserved communities. One solution mobilized was the formation of a digital inclusion portal for the region to allow for community members and case workers serving them to search for free or low cost technology devices and training in three different languages.

Inspired by a Brookings Institution report on the strengths and weaknesses of the Capital Region, in 2018, the Sacramento Coalition for Digital Inclusion (Coalition) was launched. A series of community discussions occurred to organize around the mission of digital equity which led to the creation of a Coalition with more than 40 members. The Coalition is led by a Steering Committee that includes the Workforce Boards, City of Sacramento, the Sacramento Public Library, Valley Vision, and workforce and education partners.

During 2019, the Coalition built collaborative relationships, conducted assessments of needs through community engagement, and produced an initial report focused on three main components: 1) increasing digital access to affordable, reliable internet services, 2) providing access to reliable technology devices, and 3) equitable access to digital literacy/skills acquisition. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the work of the Coalition has become critical to address the digital divide that separates underserved communities from technology and skills building opportunities. Valley Vision has taken on the more formal role of Coalition manager and the RPU supports Valley Vision in sustaining and expanding the Coalition's scope throughout the Capital Region. The project focuses on specific outputs that target underserved community needs and create meaningful technology opportunities in the lives of our region's residents through the expansion of the Coalition and its three core tenets:

- [Broadband Access & Adoption](#) - Enhanced public computing labs and other public access points, and awareness of low-cost home subscription options (this also includes working with CBOs and providers to expand equitable, reliable, affordable access to the Internet)
- [Computing Devices](#) - Free laptop and desktop computers through surplus equipment refurbishing partnerships and other options
- [Digital Skills](#) - Increased learning opportunities for underserved youth, adults, and seniors through free, low cost, and relevant skills development programs

The RPU has invested into the initiative and its overall goal to develop standards to grow the regional digital literacy and align to the workforce needs of the region.

**Innovative Pathways to the Public Sector (IPPS)** - With the region encompassing the state's capital, public sector occupations provide quality jobs to populations throughout the RPU. To that end, the region supports IPPS, a coalition of stakeholders working together to improve awareness and inroads to public sector jobs for youth and adults in efforts and to provide employers a more diverse applicant pool. Valley Vision and representation from the RPU participate in the IPPS leadership group including strategic planning, awareness campaigns, as supporting research efforts, and engaging employers and other stakeholders to strengthen the sector. The desired impact is to increase interest in and access to public sector jobs while diversifying the pipeline of applicants.

**H RTP Construction Careers Initiative** - Valley Vision was brought in as a partner in a regional High-Road Training Construction Careers Initiative to lengthen and strengthen the talent pipeline for high road construction careers. This work includes enhancing alignment and partnership between labor unions, associations, employers, jurisdictions, higher education, K-12, and community-based nonprofits to ensure access to high road construction jobs for the region's diverse and often disinvested populations. Under the project, Valley Vision developed outreach and informational materials tailored to reach vulnerable and minority communities that are underrepresented in the building and construction trades. Additionally, Valley Vision is bringing an expanded network of stakeholders and partners together to reduce pipeline barriers and improve alignment to ensure the widest net for access into high road construction careers in high demand in our region. As part of this effort, Valley Vision conducted Community First Listening Sessions in three counties to hear directly from community members about the issues and challenges the face accessing training in construction and other high road careers. As a further iteration of this work, a second Climate Justice and Jobs Summit was produced with community voice as the central component and an audience of educators, workforce stakeholders, and policy makers to hear directly the challenges community members face accessing career steps to Clean Economy careers. Clean Economy careers are defined future focused, green-oriented careers with high wages and good benefits. These efforts are aligned with construction and other related initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve community health, and create economic resiliency.

**Sacramento Valley Manufacturing Alliance (SVMA)** - The RPU continues to support SVMA, an industry-led collaboration to build and sustain a robust manufacturing sector in the Sacramento Region by partnering with them on informing and supporting education and training providers about the current and projected needs of the region's manufacturing employers. Efforts include training the trainer about how to develop relevant curriculum and skills and upgrade training programs; work with high schools on career awareness; the development of pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships in manufacturing occupations; and collaboration with the Community Colleges and industry associations to develop customized training programs responding to industry needs, that can be modeled for additional pathways. The desired impact is to build a best in class, dynamic workforce pipeline of talented workers who are interested in and can fulfill the complex needs of 21st Century advanced manufacturing.

### **Communication with Employers**



Valley Vision works with the Capital Region Workforce Development Boards to streamline and strengthen employer participation and leadership in regional industry sector initiatives, and align education and workforce investments to the changing needs of the economy and workforce. This is accomplished by conducting continuous research on the changing economy and the region's opportunity industry clusters in collaboration with the California Community Colleges Centers of Excellence; identifying critical skills gaps in high demand occupations; providing timely information to education and workforce partners to guide responsive programs and investments; and mobilizing regional leaders and businesses to partner on effective and inclusive workforce development solutions. These efforts culminate in opportunity industry sector convenings and regularly produce [timely cluster resources](#) to inform education and workforce stakeholders.

Additionally, the RPU engages in region wide employer outreach and talent solutions. These efforts include utilizing the Capital Region Workforce Boards website as a hub for regional employer engagement via Google ad words and other marketing to drive to the contact form where employers are then connected to the appropriate boards and resources. This website is currently being revised to provide additional comprehensive talent solutions, including connecting with resources and hiring efforts of our education, nonprofit, and local jurisdictions. The RPU has collaborated on region-wide or multi-county recruitment fairs, in person and virtual, to meet the hiring needs of employers. The boards meet monthly which includes discussions on regional employer recruitment activities.



## **ENABLING UPWARD MOBILITY FOR ALL CALIFORNIANS**

### **High Road Workforce System**

The RPU prioritizes working with employers who offer self-sufficient career pathway opportunities to its job seeker customers as well as employers that are willing to work with job seeker customers on a long-term basis to develop the skills necessary to move to high-road employment. These customers often require lengthy pre-employment and pre-educational activities in order to even qualify for entry-level jobs, making a definition for job quality challenging. The RPU understands that these entry-level jobs are a necessary and valuable opportunity for many customers that desire high-road employment to obtain the basic skills and experience needed for advancement along a career pathway. Local boards within the planning unit have begun working toward a formal policy on job quality, and the RPU has begun discussions as well.

The RPU prioritizes industry partnerships that deliver equity, sustainability and job quality. The critical juncture of the advancement of Clean Economy jobs is a particular area of emphasis for this planning unit, ensuring populations historically experiencing the negative impacts of climate change are positioned to benefit from the robust, quality job offerings in this expanding

sector. The RPU through HRCC grant engaged Valley Vision to expand awareness and identify barriers to participation in high road occupations aligned with the Clean Economy, particularly in the building trades. As part of this effort, three Community First Listening Sessions were held in counties within the planning unit. Additionally, the boards have supported Valley Vision in producing two Climate, Justice and Jobs Summit to further promote investment and stakeholder alignment at this vital intersection of quality careers. These Summits center on Community Voice and include a community panel of traditionally underserved residents to inform the design and delivery of high road pathways that are accessible and sustainable.

Furthermore, the RPU is partnering with Community Economic Resiliency Fund efforts as Valley Vision is the convener and fiscal agent for this innovative approach. The CERF Coalition has tremendous potential to further solidify high road partnerships and investments within our region.

### **Equity and Economic Justice**

The RPU continues to emphasize policies and services that focus on equity and job quality to underserved populations including disadvantaged youth, veterans, basic skills deficient, justice involved, ELL, disability, low-income, public assistance, homeless and dislocated workers. This emphasis is evidenced by the customers served in the system, with over 87.8% of adults having one or more significant barriers to employment, over 71% being low-income, and nearly 66% coming from a minority group. The RPU's focus is on regional initiatives that support economic prosperity and income mobility, and ensure equity and accessibility to all for a strong, sustained workforce. The RPU has not yet adopted a formal policy related to "equity", however, will be exploring the development and adoption of one as an accompaniment to the priority of service policies already in existence.

On the regulatory side, the WIOA regulations and State policy guidance requires "priority of service" for use of WIOA, Title I, Adult funds. In addition to giving priority to veterans and spouses of veterans, American Job Center systems are required to give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. All four boards in the RPU have approved and implemented priority of service policies that assist them locally and regionally in providing equitable access to education, training and employment opportunities to those most in need.

Additionally, on an annual basis, all boards in the RPU meet compliance under the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions found in Section 188 of the WIOA. Section 188 of the WIOA and its implemented regulations prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identify), national origin, including Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship status or participation in a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. Compliance with this section of the WIOA ensures that programs,

services, and employment practices are provided in a manner that ensures nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

### **Advancing Economic Prosperity of Shared Target Populations**

The RPU focuses efforts on low income populations and those with one or more barriers to employment. Over the past year, 40,256 individuals served by the region had one or more barriers to employment. Additionally, the RPU emphasizes addressing the needs of historically underinvested populations through specific initiatives including the following:

#### **Prison to Employment (P2E)**

The RPU's Prison to Employment (P2E) initiative provides justice-involved individuals with the services needed to assist them in finding gainful employment in quality, sustaining jobs. Under the initiative, the targeted justice-involved population includes subjects to probation, mandatory supervision, or post-release community supervision. These individuals experience significant barriers to employment including:

- Drug Abuse/ Addiction
- Mental Health Issues
- Homelessness
- Gaps in Employment
- Lack of Family Support
- Unreliable Transportation, No Driver's License, or Lack of Insurance
- Lack of Education, Training and/or Job/Readiness Skills
- Lack of Diploma/GED
- Lack of Certifications/Licenses to Support Living Wage/Wage Progression
- Inadequate Life Skills

Capital RPU partners under this initiative focus on “earn and learn activities” and direct placements in employment consistent with Implementation Plan objectives which emphasize rapid employment after re-entry as a primary means of mitigating recidivism. Establishing individualized pathways to success for this population is critical. The pathway includes the life/foundation skills to make good decisions, completing high school, reducing additional barriers they may have and providing an onramp to a career pathway. The overall strategy anticipates that rapid employment, sustained attendance, and the implicit incentives with this work-centric opportunity outweigh the draw to recidivate.

#### **High-Road Construction Careers Initiative (SB1)**

The RPU in partnership with the Sacramento Sierra Building and Construction Trades Council (SSBCTC), is funded under the CWDB's High-Road Construction Careers (SB1) initiative to prepare women, racial/ethnic minorities, justice involved disadvantaged youth and adults, veterans and other underrepresented subgroups for high quality career construction opportunities. The initiative focuses on delivering the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3)



pre-apprenticeship program that connects to registered apprenticeships and high-road careers in the construction trades. In addition, the initiative is connected to the development of Project Labor Agreements between SSBCTC and public sector entities where the RPU connects priority apprentices from disadvantaged neighborhoods to publicly-funded construction projects.

### **Disability Initiatives**

The RPU administers several disability initiatives to increase employment for these historically underemployed individuals. While most initiatives are administered locally in conjunction with the Department of Rehabilitation and other partners, this population receives shared target emphasis within the planning unit to reduce the gap in labor market participation between disabled and non-disabled populations.

## **ALIGNING, COORDINATING, AND INTEGRATING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

This section of the Regional Plan describes the RPU's commitment to regional coordination and integrating programs and services to better economize limited resources, to maximize effectiveness, and to achieve a greater return on investment, and community reach.

In August and September of 2016, the RPU solidified its agreement for WIOA systems alignment through the signing of the "Memorandum of Understanding for the Capital Area Regional Planning Unit" or Capital Region MOU. The purpose of the MOU is to establish mutually beneficial relationships in regards to regional coordination and systems alignment including the regional planning items outlined in WIOA Section 106 commonly referred to as the A-H requirements. The RPU further agreed to work towards meeting the objectives in the state plan as indicated above. The RPU expanded the agreement to include the following seven additional elements of alignment:

1. Review and align local policies and procedures
  2. Investigate co-branding of initiatives
  3. Coordinate outreach and business engagement strategies
  4. Coordinate capacity building for Workforce Board Members, Chief Local Elected Officials, Partners and staff
  5. Coordinate Staff and system partners' development activities
  6. Coordinate regional business advisory groups and employer engagement strategies
  7. Continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements
- Representatives from the RPU membership meet to discuss these issues on a monthly basis.

Central to alignment efforts is Valley Vision. Due to Valley Vision's central role in regional planning matters, its expertise in conducting objective research and findings, and its ability to convene and coordinate multi-stakeholder initiatives, multiple regional partners have jointly engaged Valley Vision to lead joint planning efforts. SETA, Los Rios Community College District, economic development and private industry have all jointly invested in Valley Vision to lead planning efforts. Valley Vision is able to coordinate these multiple and often overlapping

planning efforts in a more efficient manner that reduces the time commitment from partners and private industry.

The RPU and Valley Vision continue to identify and deploy shared/pooled resources such as regional industry cluster/sector studies, regional business services strategies, regional policies/protocols, and to the extent practicable, regional MOUs and agreements. The RPU's strategy to engage Valley Vision as the Regional Organizer allows for improved coordination of policies, strategies and initiatives across the region. In addition, Valley Vision's central role on initiatives that cross funding silos and programs enables the Boards to better align and integrate supply-side partners and improve the system-wide responsiveness to business needs. Through the CART Team, the RPU continues to track professional development training for workforce and partner staff, with an emphasis on activities that improve remote services to customers.

In addition to the four workforce boards, other regional partners include the State of California, Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and the Employment Development Department (EDD)—Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, Trade Assistance Act, County CalWORKs and child support departments, local economic development agencies, county offices of education, the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC), Job Corps, as well as representatives of Indian and Native American, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and older worker programs, and numerous community based organizations and other partners. Many of the regional partners are simultaneously conducting concurrent planning efforts, and workforce board members, partners and staff are participating in these regional planning efforts. For example, the community college's "Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy" and "Strong Workforce" initiatives, and the CAERC's AB 86 Comprehensive Regional Plan both involve regional planning on workforce development, with the goal of alignment and consistency with other planning efforts. CAERC is comprised of 15 members, inclusive of four community colleges, and 11 K-12 school districts, as well as 23 partner organizations.

Currently, no formal administrative cost arrangements exist between the four local areas of the region. However, through its Regional Implementation Planning grant, the RPU has secured Valley Vision to assist with various facets of the regional plan. The region already splits costs in some areas such as the procurement of training providers and access to online training licenses. For recent regional awards like P2E and SB1, the Boards have designated Golden Sierra to be the grant administrator and fiscal agent.

Should a formal decision be made to share administrative costs in some manner, a process will be established to evaluate the cost sharing arrangements. Standardized procurement procedures would be used in the selection of consultants, facilitators and/or trainers.

## STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### **Outreach Efforts**

The Capital Region Workforce Boards facilitated two Public Input Meetings to solicit input from local workforce development stakeholders (education, labor, business, economic development and community-based organizations) on the update to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local and Regional Plans. Attendees were informed that the plan modification to be developed would be intended to respond to current and foreseen challenges faced by the local workforce system, that it would provide a framework for continued regional cooperation and investment, that it would encourage continuous improvement of integrated services to clients, and finally that it would respond to policy direction in workforce legislation.

The stakeholder meetings were facilitated over zoom and were held on the following dates and times:

Wednesday, November 16, 2022 (6:00 PM - 7:30 PM)

Wednesday December 7th, 2022 (9:00 AM -10:30 AM)

Public Notices were posted in local and regional publications and published on the workforce boards' websites. In addition, an email notification was widely disseminated to regional and local area stakeholders including the required list as mandated by the state's policy guidance, and other representatives from the business and organized labor communities, the K-12 system, the community college system, adult education, private postsecondary institutions, and community based organizations. Special care was taken to ensure that organizations representing historically disadvantaged populations, such as County Departments of Human Assistance, the California Human Development, Department of Rehabilitation, the local American Association of Retired Persons, Vietnam Veterans of California, the California Indian Manpower Consortium, Alta Regional, NorCal Center on Deafness, to name a few, received a notification of the postings. Partners were also invited to submit written comments via email to our regional convener.

### **Public Input Meetings**

The meetings included a presentation on economic landscapes, an overview of the workforce development system, current state and regional goals and priorities, and offered questions designed to solicit input from the attendees on how to improve services to job seekers and business communities. Attendees included stakeholders and partners from education, labor, business, economic development and community-based organizations, including those serving specialized populations.

The overarching input and discussion concerned additional and innovative ways to reach customers who could benefit from WIOA programs and create more awareness about

workforce board services and offerings. One such model championed was ambassador programs that include residents from the communities that these programs are trying to reach. Other suggestions included connecting and developing relationships with additional community-based organizations, CTE programs, and other public programs, and utilizing social media platforms to promote programs and services and share success stories.

Additional input from the meetings highlighted the need for:

- Support for residents going through training that cannot afford to lose a source of income such as stipends, paid internships, and other subsidized programs
- Earn and learn opportunities that are similar to an apprenticeship model
- The development of additional employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- Additional collaboration and career pathway development with higher education to provide individuals with advancement opportunities
- Support to assist additional community based organizations in getting involved in WIOA program service delivery
- Expand partnerships with employers and community based organizations by communicating the benefits of partnering with workforce boards and service providers
- Additional employer engagement in informing training programs
- Mental health supports
- Mentorship to help vulnerable individuals
- Case management that allows for more personalized support for residents
- Transportation services
- Utilizing social media platforms to promote programs and services and share success stories