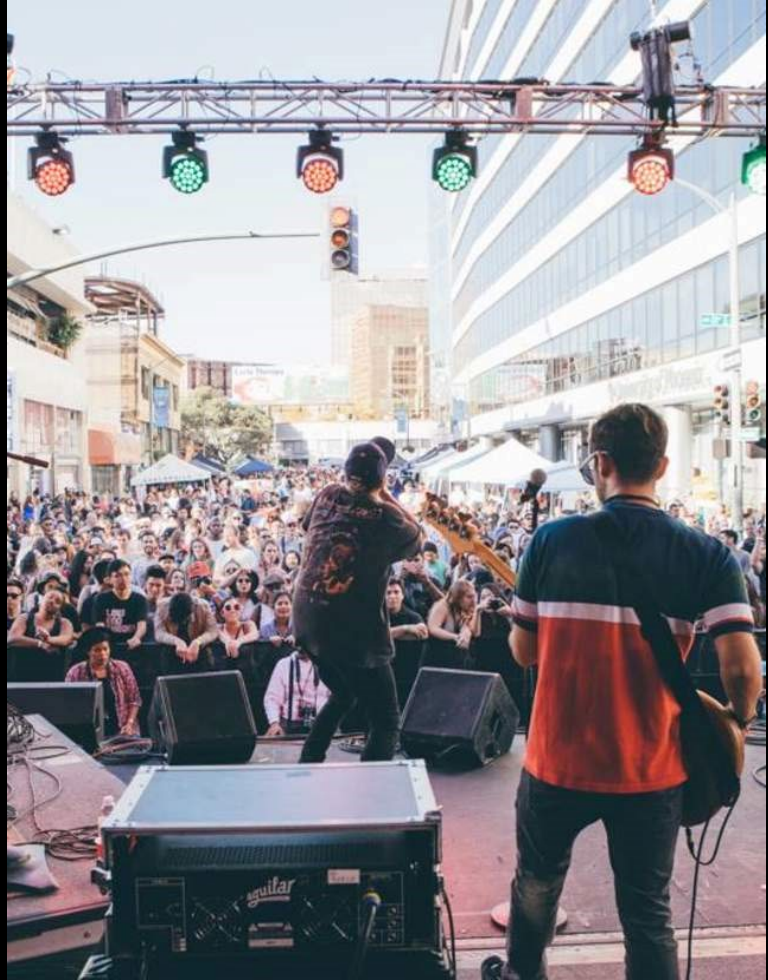
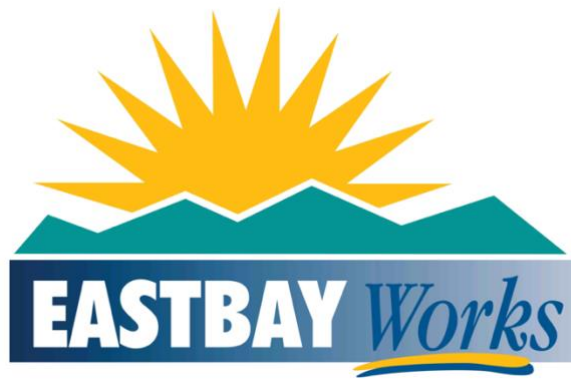




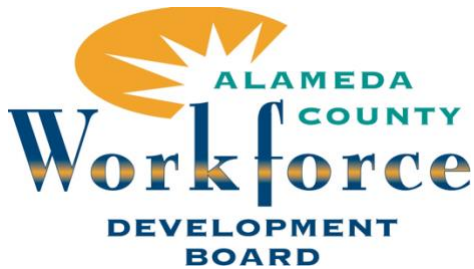
**2021-2024
Regional Plan
2-Year
Modification**



March 2023



East Bay Regional Planning Unit



Workforce
Development Board
Contra Costa County



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I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

With the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, Congress moved the national workforce system in a new direction in terms of how to approach economic and labor market demands. While establishment of local workforce areas over the last four decades has always taken into account local labor markets, WIOA recognizes that economies tend to be regional and may extend beyond political boundaries that define local areas. WIOA's recognition of regional economies gave rise to California's establishment of Regional Planning Units (RPUs), which represent groups of local workforce areas that work collaboratively to develop strategies reflecting regional economic needs of business and the workforce.

In accordance with federal and state guidance, the East Bay Regional Planning Unit (EBRPU) has developed a four-year Regional Plan to guide strategic initiatives throughout Program Years (PY) 2021-24, which covers June 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025. WIOA requires a Biennial Modification to the Regional Plan. This 2023 version of the Plan serves as the required update and, once approved by state officials, will become the official version of the PY 21-24 Regional Plan from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025.

About the Region and EASTBAY Works

The East Bay Region of California is a sub-region of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, one of the most productive and prosperous regions on the planet. The EBRPU is a partnership of member workforce development boards representing Alameda County and the City of Oakland, and Contra Costa County and the City of Richmond.

The partner workforce development boards have a long-standing regional partnership pre-dating WIOA, under the **EASTBAY Works** brand. Since 1997, the adoption of a common moniker has helped to create a unified brand that helps achieve many of California's goals for regionalism, as it establishes a singular identity that is recognizable to businesses and jobseekers and is used to promote workforce development services and initiatives.

It should be noted that EBRPU, East Bay region, East Bay partner Boards, and **EASTBAY Works** (EBW) are used interchangeably throughout the 2023 Biennial Modification to the PY 21-24 Regional Plan. Also of note are the following abbreviations for the local boards that are used throughout the Regional Plan: Alameda County Workforce Development Board (ACWDB); Oakland Workforce Development Board (OWDB); Richmond Workforce Development Board (RWDB); Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County (WDBCCC).

Development of the Regional Plan and Its 2023 Modification

The initial four-year plan developed for the East Bay region covered PY 2017-20, and was updated in 2019 in accordance with WIOA requirements. In response to guidance published by State officials in September 2020, EBW representatives began to prepare a new plan for PY 2021-24. Context for this planning was, however, unprecedented, as the COVID-19 pandemic was still in its early stages, prior to the widespread availability of vaccines and reopening of businesses and communities. The PY 21-24 EBRPU Regional Plan reflects the circumstances under which it was developed, highlighting the immediate and severe impacts of and limitations resulting from the pandemic, along with various uncertainties regarding the economy, labor market, and workforce participation. The 2023 Biennial Modification to the PY 21-24 plan, has been developed under far different circumstances than the original version. As such, EBRPU leadership has been able to address regional approaches and initiatives from a clearer vantage point, where reopening and recovery characterize the economic landscape.

II. ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE REGION

In late 2022, EBW commissioned a current analysis of key economic, demographic, and labor market data within the region. The resulting report has informed the 2023 Biennial Plan Modification's content addressing: employment and unemployment data; educational and skill levels of the workforce; current business needs; and relevant skill gaps; and analysis of industries and occupations with existing and emerging demand.

Development and Content of Labor Market Analysis

To support the biennial update to the EBRPU PY 21-24 Regional Plan, the *EBW Analytical Overview of the Region* was prepared by insytanalytics, in a January 2023. Key content of the report includes:

- *Demographics;*
- *Economy: COVID-19 impact and recovery; economic output; labor force and employment; industries, occupations, and skills; and core industries; and*
- *Emerging Sectors and Trends*

Select information from the report is included within this version of the Regional Plan. The full report, [EASTBAY Works Analytical Overview of the Region](#) includes extensive data summaries and illustrative graphics and is available on the EBW website, www.eastbayworks.com.

About the Analysis

The economic and workforce analysis presented herein, and in greater detail in the full report, includes the latest data and trends on demographics, occupations, and industries within the East Bay. It is comprised of information vital to workforce development planning, such as income and poverty data, skills and educational levels, and employer demand.

As stated, The East Bay Region of California is a sub-region of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The analysis presented within this section treats the East Bay as a single area, recognizing that the East Bay's two counties have clear distinctions, with different opportunities and challenges. In 2019, Alameda County accounted for approximately 67 percent of the East Bay's jobs. A large share of those jobs were in traded sectors ranging from biotechnology, creative professional services, and information technology to advanced manufacturing and logistics. In contrast, Contra Costa County's economy, with only few significant office concentrations, is dominated by household-serving sectors, such as food services, healthcare, hospitality, and personal services. In addition, eastern Contra Costa County, which has some of the Bay Area's lowest-cost housing, is also relatively distant from the Bay Area's major employment centers.

Overview of Current East Bay Workforce and Labor Market

The East Bay population is highly educated and increasingly diverse, which makes the region an exceptional place for high-value, high-wage, and high-growth industries and jobs. There are stark disparities, however, in education, income, and exposure to barriers, such as poverty and disability. These educational disparities create significant obstacles for many of the East Bay's residents to access stable, high-quality jobs; an issue that will continue to worsen as technology shapes the skills required to access better-paid jobs. At the same time, the region faces important challenges, from population and labor force participation rates that are still below pre-pandemic levels to persistent inequality as the economy continues to recover.

Between 2022 and 2032, the white population of the region is predicted to decline by 18 percent (170,000) and the Black population by nine percent (25,000), while the Asian population is expected to increase by 15 percent (119,000) making Asians the largest racial group in the East Bay. Linguistic diversity is consistent with a relatively large foreign-born population in the East Bay Region. Nearly 30 percent of East Bay residents are foreign born. Furthermore, between 2022 and 2032, population loss is largely expected to occur among younger age cohorts. This indicates that the East Bay population is predicted to continue getting older in coming years putting added pressure on services such as healthcare and increasing demand for low-wage service jobs supporting the elderly.

The relatively high median income in the East Bay obscures large racial and ethnic gaps in household income. For instance, white households have a median income of \$123,347 while the median income of Hispanic or Latino households is \$82,011, and for Black households in Alameda County it is \$59,817. Women, including many women of color, people with a high school diploma or less, part-time workers, and the unemployed are disproportionately in poverty. While only 6.4 percent of white residents are in poverty, 15.2 percent of Black residents and 11.8 percent of Hispanic or Latino residents are in poverty.

Educational attainment is relatively high in the East Bay compared to the rest of California, however as with income, there are significant disparities by race and ethnicity. Among adults 25 years and older, 28 percent have earned a bachelor's degree compared to 22 percent of Californians and 20 percent have earned a graduate, professional, or doctorate degree compared to 14 percent of Californians.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a tremendous shock to the East Bay economy and lasting impacts are expected. From January 2020 to January 2021, the East Bay lost approximately 112,000 jobs, or nine percent of total jobs. The pandemic exacerbated both economic and health disparities in the region, particularly along racial, ethnic, and gender lines. These disparities have been evident in problems such as workforce job stability, access to opportunity, on-the-job coronavirus exposure, and physical and mental health outcomes.

East Bay industry is highly diversified with the number of jobs distributed similarly across the largest sectors. Educational and Health Services is the largest major sector with 204,500 jobs in September 2022, which makes up 17.4 percent of nonfarm employment in the region. When considering industry sub-sectors, however, manufacturing (9.7 percent), retail trade (9.3 percent), and accommodation and food service (8 percent) are largest in the East Bay.

The core industries (size, growth potential, middle wage jobs) for East Bay are: manufacturing, professional and scientific, healthcare, construction, and transportation and warehousing. These industries are positioned to generate substantial innovation, investment, and job and business growth over the coming years. In addition, substantial venture capital has gone to technologies associated with autonomous vehicles, cloud-based productivity software, semiconductors, artificial intelligence (AI), and cybersecurity. While these industries are much smaller, they have the potential for massive societal disruption and could play an outsized role in the East Bay's future economy.

While there are many promising signs and areas of opportunity in the region, a major challenge and contributor to the East Bay's cost of living is housing. Housing prices have risen sharply since the mid-1990s and, especially, following the Great Recession, as housing costs began to rise again after 2012. The median listing price for housing in Alameda County in June 2022 was \$1.02 million up from \$700,000 in December 2016.¹ In Contra Costa County, the median listing price in June 2022 was \$867,000. High housing costs are also cited by employers as one of the greatest challenges in attracting and retaining workers. Expensive housing can deter talented workers in professional fields from moving to or staying in the region.

Additionally, a recent wave of layoffs in the “tech” industry is likely to affect the East Bay region. Estimates suggest that by early December 2022, over 120,000 people had been laid off by Bay Area tech companies with more layoffs expected. Layoffs will create short- and medium-term problems for the East Bay economy, but it also could mean an opportunity for East Bay companies to hire talented workers who have been let go.

A. Analysis of Employment and Unemployment Data

In October 2022, there were nearly 1.39 million East Bay residents in the labor force compared to 1.42 million in February 2022. Since the start of the pandemic, labor force participation has been lower among younger workers and older workers as well as less-educated workers. In 2021, 70 percent of workers between 25-64 years old with a high school education or less participated in the labor force compared to 87 percent with a bachelor's degree or higher. Similarly, 85 percent of men were in the labor force compared to 75 percent of women and 74 percent of women with children. This large gender gap in the East Bay and elsewhere is partly due to caregiving responsibilities,

¹ St. Louis Fed

² Bureau of Labor Statistics

particularly among mothers.³ But it also reflects longer-term trends in women's labor force participation. Nationally, the largest differences in labor force participation because of the pandemic were by level of education.⁴

Persistently low labor force participation in the East Bay is consistent with national trends showing labor force participation below pre-pandemic levels by 1.3 percent.⁵ While the cause of persistently low labor force participation is still under investigation, there is some evidence that people out of the labor force or working part time have less desire to work since the start of the pandemic.⁶ This suggests that the persistent contraction in labor supply is not driven mostly by women responding to the demand for childcare, since the drop in desired work hours is evident across demographic groups. The largest declines in desired work hours are among people with less than a college degree, which may indicate that lower-educated workers are avoiding low-wage service jobs that put them at higher risk for illness even as the effects of the pandemic subside.

Consistent with a smaller labor force, fewer people are employed now than prior to the pandemic despite a low rate of unemployment in the region. In September 2022, there were 1.18 million people employed compared to 1.19 million in February 2020.⁷ Overall, there are roughly half-a-million people between the ages of 16 and 64 years old who are either unemployed or not in the labor force.

While labor force participation is still recovering, unemployment has returned to pre-pandemic levels. In October 2022, the unemployment rate was 3 percent, the same level of unemployment as February 2020, just before the onset of the pandemic.⁸ Although unemployment has risen slightly since May 2022 when it fell to a low of 2.6 percent, it remains far below its April 2020 peak of 14.6 percent. Since returning to pre-pandemic levels, unemployment in the East Bay has been consistently lower than California as a whole, which has hovered around 4 percent since May 2022.

There are substantial differences in unemployment rates by race. In 2021, the annual unemployment rate was 7.2 percent in the East Bay. For white workers, unemployment was 7.3 percent and for Asian workers it was 5.8 percent. By contrast, Black workers had an unemployment rate of 9.4 percent. While unemployment has fallen by more than half in 2022, low unemployment rates don't necessarily lead to narrower gaps. For example,

³ Montes, Smith, and Leigh (2021). "Caregiving for Children and Parental Labor Force Participation During the Pandemic." Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/caregiving-for-children-and-parental-labor-force-participation-during-the-pandemic-20211105.html>

⁴ Goldin (2021). "Assessing Five Statements about the Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Women." National Bureau of Economic Research, White Paper. https://www.nber.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/GOLDIN_SEANWhitePaper.pdf

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>

⁶ Faberman, Mueller, and Sahin (2022). "Has the Willingness to Work Fallen During the Covid Pandemic?" Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. <https://www.chicagofed.org/publications/working-papers/2022/2022-08>

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics; California Employment Development Department

⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics

in 2019 unemployment in Alameda County was 3.9 percent and Black unemployment was 6.5 percent compared to 3.7 percent for white workers, a larger gap than in 2021. One reason is that the job gains between April 2020 and through 2021 were largely associated with an increase in low-wage jobs, while the number of middle- and high-wage jobs remained steady. As race and unemployment data become available for 2022, we are likely to see the same inequalities across racial and ethnic groups.

B. Analysis of the Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce, the Current Needs of Employers in the Region, and Relevant Skill Gaps

Educational attainment is an important factor in reducing the risk of being in poverty. Educational attainment is relatively high in the East Bay compared to the rest of California. Among adults 25 years and older, 28 percent have earned a bachelor's degree compared to 22 percent of Californians and 20 percent have earned a graduate, professional, or doctorate degree compared to 14 percent of Californians.⁹ East Bay residents are also less likely than other Californians to have less than a high school diploma (11 percent), no more than a high school diploma (17 percent), or some college but no degree (17 percent).

Earnings vary widely across levels of educational attainment in the East Bay from approximately \$32,000 a year for people 25 years and older with less than a high school diploma to around \$83,000 a year with a bachelor's degree and over \$100,000 a year with a graduate or professional degree.¹⁰ Educational attainment is highly racialized, thus contributing to the racial inequalities in income and poverty. Whereas 56 percent of East Bay residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, 30 percent of Black residents, including 26 percent of Black men, have the same level of educational attainment. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders (24 percent), Hispanic or Latinos (23 percent), American Indian or Alaskan Natives (19 percent), and people who identify as some other race (17 percent) are particularly less likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher. Additionally, 25 percent of American Indian or Alaska Natives, 29 percent of Hispanic or Latinos, and 35 percent of people who identify as some other race have less than a high school education. These groups are especially at risk of being in poverty, as educational attainment impacts access to well-paying jobs in the East Bay.

Among East Bay residents with bachelor's degrees or higher, 56 percent have a degree in a science and engineering or related field compared to 51 percent throughout California.¹¹ The East Bay therefore has an especially scientifically and technically capable workforce. However, science and engineering education is unevenly distributed among men (57 percent) and women (40 percent). Outside science and engineering, 23 percent of residents have a postsecondary degree in the arts and humanities and 17 percent in business.

⁹ US Census ACS 1-year estimate

¹⁰ US Census ACS 1-year estimate

¹¹ US Census ACS 1-year estimate

Another key indicator of the regional economy is demand for skills by regional employers and the supply of skills in the labor force. Skill demand can be measured by its prevalence in online job postings, while skill supply can be measured by its prevalence in workers' online profiles on websites such as LinkedIn. Among the top in-demand skills, there is generally more demand than supply. One exception is marketing, which is the top in-demand skill. Between December 2021 and November 2022, marketing was included in over 32,000 job postings, or six percent of all job postings during that period, but was included in nine percent of all worker profiles. Marketing is a more prevalent skill in the labor force than other high-demand skills, which may make it easier for employers to find qualified workers to do marketing. Other top skills are also more prevalent in job postings than job profiles. For example, computer science was in three percent of job postings and one percent of worker profiles. This suggests that employers may have a more difficult time finding qualified employees with computer science skills.

Education, training, and skill requirements pertaining to the region's target sectors is addressed below in subsection C, *Analysis of Industries and Occupations with Existing and Emerging Demand*.

C. Analysis of Industries and Occupations with Existing and Emerging Demand

The local workforce development boards in the East Bay region have selected manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation and warehousing as the region's target sectors, recognizing that other sectors, such as construction and information communications and technology, are also significant in the region. The full analysis, accessible through the hyperlink above, provides information on these and other emerging occupations.

The region's target industries, which are described below, are among those that drive economic output in the East Bay. These industries are positioned to generate substantial innovation, investment, and job and business growth over the coming years.

Manufacturing: The strength of manufacturing's recovery is especially positive for the region. Ninety percent of manufacturing jobs are located in Alameda County. Although only 10 percent of manufacturing jobs are in Contra Costa County, the industry is the largest contributor in terms of economic output (Gross Regional Product) in the county. Manufacturing generates an outsized impact on the East Bay's economic output and high-quality job opportunities. The industry is directly linked to the Bay Area's thriving innovation ecosystem. The manufacturing sector in the East Bay consists of biomedical, life sciences, chemicals, electronics, food and beverage, machinery, metals, and transportation equipment manufacturing.

There are nearly 114,000 manufacturing jobs, and, as of January 2021, manufacturing accounted for \$38.1 billion of the East Bay's Gross Regional Product and \$16.1 billion in

earnings.¹² Manufacturing is predicted to grow 29.1 percent between 2016 and 2026. The industry is critical for the East Bay's economic growth. The industry provides a higher share of entry-level, middle-wage jobs than other sectors with relatively low barriers to entry in terms of experience and educational levels required. Manufacturing businesses tend to provide robust on-the-job training and career pathway opportunities.

The average salary for manufacturing jobs in the East Bay is \$147,692, much higher than the \$95,117 national average for similarly sized regions. However, wages vary widely across the industry and given the relationship between educational attainment and wages, white and Asian workers are likely to be in the highest paying positions. There are disproportionate numbers of Asian (33.9 percent) and Hispanic or Latino (25.5 percent) workers in the industry, and disproportionately few white (31.7 percent) and Black (5.7 percent) workers. The industry is also highly gendered with men, making up 67.1 percent of workers.

The largest manufacturing sector is automobile manufacturing, which accounts for more than 23,000 jobs.¹³ This sector is continuing to grow. From November 2021 to November 2022, there were nearly 37,000 unique job postings by roughly 1,500 employers. Tesla (3,142) and Lucid Motors (3,098) each accounted for roughly three times the number of job posts as Abbott Laboratories (1,094), Siemens (742), and Thermo Fisher Scientific (612).

Advanced manufacturing is a large and growing part of the East Bay manufacturing sector. There are over 7,500 East Bay workers employed in semiconductor-related manufacturing.¹⁴ Another 5,343 are employed in surgical and medical instrument manufacturing. Together, the top ten advanced manufacturing industries employ nearly 27,000 people in the East Bay. The importance of advanced manufacturing is evident in job postings data. From August to October 2022, computer science was the most frequently sought-after skill. Other top skills include new product development, automation, electrical engineering, data analysis, and mechanical engineering.

Healthcare and Social Assistance: The majority of healthcare and social assistance jobs are located in Alameda County (63 percent in 2021), but this is also the largest sector in Contra Costa County, with more than 66,000 jobs.¹⁵ Gross Regional Product of the healthcare and social assistance industry has grown steadily since 2007 from \$9.02 billion to \$20.6 billion and \$16.8 billion in earnings in 2021.

There are more than 180,000 healthcare and social assistance jobs and the sector is predicted to grow by 23.3 percent between 2016 and 2026.¹⁶ The largest number of jobs are in Ambulatory Healthcare Services and Social Assistance. There are nearly 50,000 people employed as Home Health and Personal Care Aides, which is over a

¹² Lightcast 2022

¹³ Lightcast 2022

¹⁴ Lightcast 2022

¹⁵ Lightcast 2022

¹⁶ California Economic Development Department; Lightcast 2022

quarter of the industry and has median hourly earnings of only \$16.98. The size of this occupation accounts for the high demand for skills such as CPR, caregiving, meal planning and preparation, and companionship. Wages across the sector are relatively low with a few exceptions such as Registered Nurses, which account for 10.1 percent of employees. From November 2021 to November 2022, the median advertised hourly wage in job postings for Healthcare and Social Assistance jobs in the East Bay was \$24.09

Healthcare and social assistance is a highly gendered industry with 72.9 percent of jobs held by women. There are also disproportionate numbers of Asian (31.6 percent) and Black (14.8 percent) workers. Over three-quarters of job postings over the past year listed less than a bachelor's degree as a required or preferred education level, including 39 percent that did not list any education requirement or preference.¹⁷ While there are low barriers to entry in the industry, it is highly racialized and gendered with predominately low-wage jobs.

Transportation and Warehousing: There are approximately 44,000 Transportation and Warehousing jobs in the East Bay with nearly 80 percent of jobs in Alameda County.¹⁸ Although the sector is relatively small, it has been predicted to grow by 42.7 percent between 2016 and 2026. Over the past 12 months, there were nearly 11,000 unique job postings with FedEx and UPS as the top hiring companies. Warehousing and Truck Driving the top skills in demand.

The East Bay plays a critical role in the broader region's goods movement and logistics ecosystem supported by the Port of Oakland and regional Airports, the Port of Richmond, rail and highway connections, and extensive space for warehouses, vehicle storage, and other distribution facilities.

The Transportation and Warehousing industry is key to the Blue Economy. Technological change is at the heart of the growing Blue Economy, which is key to the East Bay's future economy. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, prior to the COVID-10 pandemic, the Blue Economy grew faster than the national economy.¹⁹ Between 2014 and 2018, economic output of America's seaports grew 17 percent and reached 26 percent of Gross Domestic Product.

The Port of Oakland is one of the ten busiest container ports in the United States by cargo volume. The seaport enables the East Bay's businesses (especially manufacturing businesses) to efficiently engage with a global supply chain. The Port of Richmond is another major support for the East Bay economy, providing bulk and liquid cargo transportation.

¹⁷ Lightcast 2022

¹⁸ California Employment Development Department 2022; Lightcast 2022

¹⁹ NOAA (2021) <https://aambpublicoceanservice.blob.core.windows.net/oceanserviceprod/economy/Blue-Economy%20Strategic-Plan.pdf>

The federal government is focused on growing the Blue Economy in key areas such as marine transportation, ocean exploration, seafood competitiveness, tourism and recreation, and coastal resilience.²⁰ These are opportunities for the East Bay economy to grow.

Transportation and Warehousing workers are disproportionately men (70.8 percent), Hispanic or Latino (31 percent), and Black (15 percent). Entry-level education requirements and wages are relatively low throughout the industry apart from management positions, which typically require a bachelor's degree.

²⁰ NOAA (2021)

III. REGIONAL INDICATORS

The California Workforce Development Board has established “regional indicators” to assess coordination and measure progress within California’s 15 RPUs. The indicators serve to track processes and activities utilized by regions, providing a foundation for regional approaches that align with the needs of businesses in key sectors.

Regions must choose at least one of the following indicators:

- Indicator A: The region has a process to communicate industry workforce needs to supply-side partners.
- Indicator B: The region has policies supporting equity and strives to improve job quality.
- Indicator C: The region has shared target populations of emphasis.
- Indicator D: The region deploys shared/pooled resources to provide services, training, and education to meet the target population's needs.

A. Regional Indicators and Associated Outcomes and Metrics

Given the long history of collaboration among the four local workforce development areas that operate under the EBW brand, the East Bay RPU has selected indicator D: *The region deploys shared/pooled resources to provide services, training, and education to meet the target population's needs.*

In accordance with guidelines provided in connection with Regional Plan Implementation grants administered by the State Board, regional outcomes and metrics have been established for Indicator D.

Outcomes

Outcomes concerning the regional indicator include the following objective, along with two goals.

Objective: The East Bay region shares and coordinates resources to provide ongoing professional development and capacity building training for funded service providers and workforce development system partners in support of meeting the needs of region’s target populations and other key customers.

Goal 1: The region will have systems in place to: a) deliver ongoing professional development and capacity building training to funded service providers and system partners; b) track funded service providers’ and partners’ participation in regional professional development and capacity building training; and c) evaluate effectiveness, relevance, and applicability of professional development and capacity building training.

Goal 2: Increase the capacity of the system's service delivery network to: a) connect with regional sector strategies; b) engage in inclusive outreach and recruitment; and c) deliver equitable and inclusive service strategies.

Metrics

Regional leadership has approved the following metrics, which focus on eight benchmarks against which the region will measure and track its progress on Indicator D outcomes.

1. Number of Training Topics: As a measure of appropriateness and necessity, the number of topics relevant to staff's needs on which training is provided annually.
2. Number of Training Sessions: As a measure of availability and access, the number of annual sessions during which staff can participate in training, whether in-person or through other modalities.
3. Number of Training Hours: As a measure of the investment in training to build staff skills and effectiveness, the total number of hours of training provided annually.
4. Number of Training Attendees: As a measure of impact on overall system capacity, the total number of contracted service providers' and workforce system partners' direct services staff who annually participate in training.
5. Percentage of Funded Service Providers Represented: As a measure of engagement, the percentage of service providers who staff attend annual training.
6. Training Participant Evaluation of "Overall Effectiveness of Training:" As a measure of customer satisfaction concerning training effectiveness, 80% of participants will rate training as effective.
7. Training Participant Evaluation on "Ability to Apply Information Learned:" As a measure of customer satisfaction regarding training relevance and utility of information provided, 80% of participants will indicate that they can apply information learned to their work.
8. Training Participant Evaluation on "Recommend Training to Others:" As a measure of customer satisfaction regarding training quality and applicability to workforce development system functions, 80% of participants will indicate that they would recommend training to others.

B. Impact of Indicators and Metrics on Service Delivery

Local workforce system leaders chose to concentrate their joint efforts on sharing resources for staff training, as this outcome holds significant promise to increase the effectiveness of local boards, service providers, partners, and their frontline staff who deal directly with customers. As outlined in the 2023 Local Plan Modifications developed by the East Bay partner Boards, training will cover a wide range of topics, each of which has the potential to improve the quality-of-service delivery as well as participant outcomes. Training will include, but not be limited to, sessions addressing the following areas:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): The need to update staff's DEI knowledge base and skills is ongoing. DEI topics that could benefit frontline and other workforce services staff may include: understanding DEI; diversity vs. inclusion; unconscious bias; microaggressions; intentional inclusion; culture and identity awareness; accessibility; and inclusive leadership.

Cultural Competency: Training will be provided to support staff's understanding of the general characteristics of cultural diversity, cultural norms, and cultural differences. Staff will understand the importance of respecting individual cultural experiences, learn to better communicate with others to understand and address potential barriers to service, and develop greater cultural sensitivity within the workplace. Staff will become more aware of their own cultural beliefs and culturally related behaviors, and potential power imbalances, privileges, or biases when providing services.

Trauma-Informed Approaches: Regional representatives will identify and facilitate training on working with trauma-exposed participants. This will include developing skills to promote conversation; learning how to respond to disclosure; integrating participants' safety when providing services, advocacy, outreach; and trauma-informed care. Local boards may collaborate with local behavioral health agencies with expertise in this area.

Digital Literacy Skills: To ensure that staff's skills remain up to date with new technology and that new staff are exposed to the digital technology applications they need to work effectively in their roles, training will be provided annually, and refresher courses will be provided on an ongoing basis.

Evidenced-Based Approaches to Working with Priority Populations: Increasingly national workforce development system stakeholders, along with organizations in allied disciplines, have been collecting and disseminating data-informed and evidence-based best practices through a wide range of training modalities. Training focused on effective practices for serving people with disabilities, older workers, English language learners, justice-involved individuals, and others vulnerable and underserved target populations will likely be among the sessions made available to workforce system staff.

IV. FOSTERING DEMAND-DRIVEN SKILLS ATTAINMENT

The EBRPU has played a key role in the development of sector initiatives aligned with growth and other significant industries in the East Bay region and elsewhere in the Greater Bay Area. Regional representatives have facilitated dialog among industry leaders, while also fostering communication between employers and the workforce development system and its partners. As a result, stronger linkages between workforce and training agencies have been developed with businesses in key sectors and new career pathway programs have been developed to prepare job seekers for careers in the region's most promising sectors.

A. In-Demand Industry Sectors for the Region

Within the analytical overview section of the Plan, the subsection titled *Analysis of Industries and Occupations with Existing and Emerging Demand*, indicates that the local workforce development boards of East Bay region have selected manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation and warehousing as the region's target sectors, recognizing that other sectors, such as construction and information, communications and technology, are also significant in the region. The 2023 [EASTBAY Works Analytical Overview of the Region](#) offers detailed information regarding the region's target sectors and other industries with current and emerging demand.

B. Sector and Other Industry-Focused Initiatives

The EBRPU is currently working closely with two mature partnerships in the manufacturing and health sectors: the [Association of Manufacturers Bay Area](#) (AMBayArea) and the [Bay Area Health Workforce Partnership](#) (BAHWP). As described below, EBW has an extensive history of engagement with both of these partnerships, providing financial and infrastructure support, networking, and thought leadership as the partnerships have convened industry and developed programs.

Key contributions of the regional workforce system to sector initiatives in manufacturing and healthcare include the development of career navigation tools and support for creation of training programs for in-demand occupations. In addition, the EBRPU helps to advance sector initiatives in the region by facilitating communication between Directors of these partnerships and career centers staff to share LMI data, answer questions, and discuss training opportunities.

Manufacturing Sector Partnership

AMBayArea includes approximately 60 dues-paying employer partners from the nine-county Bay Area, with many more businesses being engaged through events and communications. The primary focus of the collaborative is to ensure that manufacturing thrives in the Bay Area. The EBRPU has been engaged with and actively supported AMBayArea since its inception. AMBayArea has pursued an array of strategies and

activities focused on increasing awareness of and expanding access to career opportunities in advanced manufacturing, aligning available training activities with employer demand, and linking manufacturing employers with prospective employees.

With the support of the East Bay partner boards, AMBayArea has developed a Manufacturing Volunteer Match Program to connect manufacturers with students, parents, and educators, and increase public awareness of career opportunities in manufacturing. The program allows educators to post their requests for industry volunteers to meet with their students. The volunteer might be asked to present in the classroom, judge a science competition, mentor a robotics team, act on an advisory board, host a classroom visit to the company's facility, table at a career fair, etc.

The Volunteer Match Program is funded by the EBRPU, and conducted in partnership with the East Bay Workforce Development Boards, Bay Area community colleges, Bay Area LEEDS (Linking Education and Economic Development Strategies), and Bay Area K-12 schools.

As the Biennial Modification to the PY 21-24 Regional Plan was in development, AMBayArea leadership provided updates on the partnership's initiatives, including current efforts to outreach to formerly incarcerated individuals and plans to implement presentations on careers in manufacturing careers within the region's jails. Going into the remainder of the four-year period represented by the Plan, AMBayArea will continue to concentrate on working with local workforce system representatives, including front line staff, in developing their knowledge of manufacturing careers and in recruiting candidates for training and employment.

Healthcare Sector Partnership

The [Bay Area Health Workforce Partnership](#) (BAHWP) is an employer-led initiative carried out with the support of community and education leaders, which seeks to meet current and future workforce needs of healthcare employers, expand employment opportunities for local workers, and strengthen the regional economy. The BAHWP employs a range of strategies to achieve these goals, including: increasing and diversifying the pool of qualified healthcare workers; helping trained individuals to secure jobs to meet regional demands; aligning the needs and priorities of employers in health profession education and training programs; systematically increasing work-based learning opportunities for K-16 and health professions students; building a data-driven rationale for changing current systems, infrastructure development, and sustaining healthcare workforce initiatives; and developing and advocating for policy solutions that eliminate barriers to increase workforce and education capacity, investment, and sustainability.

The BAHWP also seeks to implement specific internship and training opportunities in the healthcare field. These include: identifying opportunities for youth internships with industry partners; support for growing healthcare training opportunities in behavioral health, medical assistant, dental assistant, phlebotomy, emergency medical technician,

and pandemic-related employment; and supporting outreach and recruitment for regional training opportunities. The BAHWP has begun to develop apprenticeship models, as well.

In a 2023 update, EBHWP reports that much of its current efforts are supply-side driven, as the partnership has been successful in securing several grants to train new workers for high-demand healthcare careers. Many of these grants have an equity focus, as they target individuals from groups that are under-represented in the industry and are underserved by the workforce system. Looking ahead, BAHWP and local boards in the region should work together to engage healthcare employers in discussions regarding both current and forecasted demand and subsequently collaborate on program development and securing additional grant funding for training.

To complement their work with BAHWP, the local boards of the East Bay are each involved in a wide range of healthcare initiatives, such as City of Oakland's Community Healthcare Sector Partnership, which focuses on many smaller employers, such as clinics. Local boards also work directly with healthcare employers of all sizes, as exemplified RWDB's relationship with Kaiser Permanente and the Kaiser School of Allied Health.

Other Industry-Focused Initiatives

The EBW partners are addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Information Communication Technology space through a State Workforce Board-funded Workforce Accelerator Fund initiative, the East Bay Youth Technology Apprenticeship. In collaboration with regional employers and community-based partners, the innovative model is creating pathways to quality jobs for opportunity youth from disadvantaged or low-income communities by scaling successful strategies and embedding them into the workforce system. The initiative is closing the digital divide while instilling digital literacy through paid work experience supported with tailored wrap-around supportive services. The partners are fundraising to sustain this successful pilot.

As referenced above, the Transportation and Warehousing sector and the Blue Economy are essential to the region's future. EBW partners have long-standing partnerships with the key employers in the sector and are exploring ways to deepen their collaboration and stay informed of trends and opportunities as technology continues to shape the future of goods movement and skills requirements in the workforce.

Throughout the East Bay, the four boards are connected to various pilots and emerging initiatives in ICT, construction, trade and logistics, gig work, and entrepreneurial skills training. The boards expect that new sector strategies and partnerships may be developed over the two years remaining in the current regional planning cycle

A recently initiated project supporting East Bay's target sectors is being implemented through a state-funded Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership (RERP) grant. Under this grant program, the region will collaborate with the community college system to

develop and enhance curricula and pathways. Three of the East Bay boards will focus on healthcare occupations, while ACWDB plans to concentrate on careers in manufacturing.

Regional Commitment to Career Pathways

The East Bay partner Boards work consistently on developing strategies supporting growth and development of sector pathways in the region. One key area of this work is related to building systems and infrastructure to connect Career Center referrals to sector opportunities in a timely manner. The number and diversity of the network of EBW-related partners represents a unique resource. The multiple America's Job Center of California sites in the region serve as mechanisms for direct referrals to training and employment opportunities in manufacturing, healthcare, and other in-demand sectors.

An area of potential regional activity and coordination among EBW partners could be the collection of data on the outcomes of people referred to sector-related activities through the EBW network of service providers. Tracking this data (which includes information such as participant completions, certificates, job placements, etc.) could help identify how different elements of the region's sector-based partnerships are functioning, determine effectiveness and where changes need to be made. By incorporating data related to race and gender, the EBRPU could bring an equity lens to this effort, supporting each partnership in ensuring that women and communities of color are obtaining the same opportunities as other individuals in achieving access to sector-based training and employment.

C. Strategies to Communicate with Regional Employers

While the East Bay region spans two sizable, densely populated counties, overall, it is compact by California standards. The local boards within the region, therefore, share many businesses, which are actual or potential workforce system customers. Many workers commute across municipal and county boundaries, further highlighting the fact that businesses in the East Bay are regional employers.

When multiple workforce boards attempt to work together to promote their services to businesses that may need support in various locations, a common problem is disparate messaging and branding, which creates recognition problems and may cause confusion among business customers. The local boards of the East Bay recognized this problem many years ago and implemented a strategy that continues to support their efforts to communicate with regional employers. This strategy starts with the common EBW brand used by all four boards as the face of the local workforce development delivery system, along with co-branding as America's Job Centers of California, which link the regional system to the larger statewide network of workforce assistance centers. Business can access the EBW website to review services available for businesses and secure contact information for local business services representatives. To further promote consistent messaging and coordinated service delivery, Business Service Managers from the four local areas meet on a regular basis to discuss strategies for serving regional businesses. Service providers to businesses served by multiple boards may be funded through WIOA

Title I formula programs, regional grants, partner programs, or a combination of these resources.

V. ENABLING UPWARD MOBILITY FOR ALL CALIFORNIANS

Providing job seekers and workers in the East Bay opportunities to improve their economic status and achieve long-term financial stability is a driving principle of the EBRPU. All four local boards, along with service providers, workforce system partners, and training organizations are committed to creating a regional workforce system that promotes equity. Following are descriptions of workforce development programs, initiatives, and strategies that empower individuals, families, and communities.

A. Working with Businesses that Provide Quality Jobs

East Bay partner Boards will continue to prioritize business customers based on a several key factors, including whether the company is within one of the region's priority sectors; wages and wage progress potential; and opportunities for job and career advancement. While specific employer selection criteria are a matter of policy and, therefore, are determined at the local board level, it is central to the region's economic justice-based mission to align job seekers with organizations that will allow them to obtain their long-term career and financial goals.

Regional leadership is also aware that the CWDB has adopted the following definition of job quality and strives to meet these criteria whenever possible:

“Quality jobs provide family-sustaining wages, health benefits, a pension, worker advancement opportunities, and collective worker input and are stable, predictable, safe and free of discrimination. Quality jobs have the potential to transform workers’ lives and create resilient, thriving firms and communities and a more just and equitable economy.”

B. Shared Target Populations and Targeted Service Strategies

The local boards prioritize services to a wide range of vulnerable and underserved populations, including, but not limited to justice-involved individuals and opportunity youth. Below are examples highlighting current and potential regional strategies and initiatives to meet the unique needs of these priority populations. It should be noted that 2023 Biennial Modifications to PY 21-24 Local Plans developed by the four East Bay WDBs elaborate on services to other shared target populations, such as English language learners, foreign born individuals, refugees, non-custodial parents, CalFresh recipients, veterans, displaced workers, and others.

Justice-Involved Individuals

Justice-involved individuals face fundamental barriers to employment, including lack of access to housing or transportation, difficulties with document recovery, and behavioral health needs, which are often not addressed through traditional workforce development programs. There are 135 organizations within the region's network of publicly funded and

community-based providers serving the supervised population, 48 of which provide some level of workforce-related services. However, only a handful of organizations provide a continuum of workforce services paired with support services, and few provide earn and learn or on-the-job training opportunities. EBRPU is addressing this gap using Prison to Employment (P2E) funds, offering justice-involved individuals incentives to participate in workforce programs, strategies to remove barriers, and paths to a sustainable career.

The region is launching its second P2E project in 2023. EBRPU will continue to develop staff capacity to coordinate with crucial P2E partners, such as Probation and Community Correction Partnerships. The region is also building on our existing regional partnership with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Adult Parole Operations, and intends to expand reentry employer networks that are currently supported by various grants funded through federal, state, local, and philanthropic sources. The addition of new P2E funding to existing resources will infuse crucial support to help integrate these efforts into a seamless service delivery system that meets the needs of justice-involved populations.

Opportunity Youth

EBW recognizes the significant barriers that youth and young adults involved with the foster or justice system, along with those who are homeless, experience in connecting to workforce services, career pathways, and employment. East Bay partner Boards plan to increase engagement and services for this population by adopting innovative strategies to address barriers and enable these opportunity youth to connect with life-sustaining employment. Promising strategies include Summer Youth Employment Programs; the Workforce Accelerator Program-funded East Bay Youth Technology Apprenticeship IT & Web Development Program; Securing the State youth program expenditure waiver to serve high risk in-school youth (foster, homeless, justice-involved) and provide career assessment and planning, paid work experience, and incentives for completing milestones; Leveraging county Foster Youth Services, Probation and McKinney Vento funding to provide educational supports for in-school opportunity youth; Outreach and WIOA enrollment of youth soon to be released from incarceration; and low youth to case-manager ratios. Additional strategies include, weekly financial stipends and incentives and high-touch connections to partners offering specialized supportive services, such as, housing assistance, life coaching, professional mentorship, and mental health services.

C. Equity and Ensuring Equal Access to Training and Services

The EBRPU is engaged in a range of structural and systemic efforts intended to promote equity and economic justice in the region's workforce system. This is the focus of current regional plan implementation funding and of broader regional economic recovery planning activities. The goal is to integrate equity into the emerging strategies that boards will employ throughout the continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic required the redirection of resources to address the most urgent issues, it has also provided the chance to revisit existing strategies and explore new approaches. For example, ACWDB is conducting extended data analysis, which has revealed

underrepresentation of key target groups in various programs. These results have led to an outreach strategy at the zip code level to reach individuals in targeted communities. Based on initiatives of this type, local level best practices have the potential to be scaled regionally.

The EBRPU has a number of other promising local level initiatives to draw upon. In the area of equity in workforce strategies, the Oakland Workforce Development Board is working with the City of Oakland's Department of Race and Equity to develop and integrate equity-focused policies and practices into the local workforce system. On-the-job training is being used by a number of local boards as a strategy for enabling training participants with limited income and assets to support themselves while they engage in training. State ETP funds have been used by the RWDB to offer paid work experience to students with disabilities, and by WDBCCC to provide medical assistant training in a partnership with the BAHWP. The local boards in Oakland, and Richmond have developed their own equity strategies around First Source and Local Hire agreements in their jurisdictions. All four of the Local Boards are engaged in the P2E project, which builds upon AB109 realignment in both counties to bring paid work experience and customized supportive services to justice-involved individuals returning to the community.

Increasing Equity Capacity

Among the East Bay local boards, there is unanimous commitment to increasing workforce system capacity in the area of equity and economic justice. While strategies are in place, there is broad acknowledgement that improving equity for system customers is an ongoing process. Peer-to-peer learning among EBW partner Board Directors is continuous and includes discussions with key stakeholders to explore equity in workforce strategies. Going forward, partner boards may also consider identifying various local and regional policies and programs from various disciplines that have shown positive outcomes. Such information could be used to identify measures to track dimensions of equity in practices and outcomes across the regional workforce system, and could include adopting policies at the local level to support equity and job quality standards, along with those that emphasize income mobility.

The boards' commitment to improving equity strategies can create spaces for difficult and necessary conversations among the boards and with stakeholders. These conversations, inquiries, and learning exchanges have the potential to move the region forward in the design and/or adoption of practices to support greater equity and better job quality for the system's customers. Strategic service alignment across the region could take place where opportunities present themselves.

Regional Equity Strategies

Across the four local workforce areas of the East Bay, a wide range of effective workforce strategies have been promoted to increase equity and opportunity for all individuals and communities. As outlined within the analytical overview section of this Plan, a focus on educational attainment, skills development, and job-specific training for occupations

providing good wages and strong advancement potential are part of a sound approach to income mobility and creating paths to the middle class. The following approaches exemplify strong companion strategies to a focus on high wage, high demand jobs.

Work/Wage-Based Training Models

Participation in unpaid training and education is often not an option for individuals with barriers to employment. Low wages in comparison to the high cost of living in the East Bay region means that workers cannot forego income and sustain themselves during their participation in extended education and training programs. Providing workers with wages while they are training enables them to focus on learning new skills while not having to sacrifice income for themselves and their families. While there are numerous work-based training models allowable under WIOA and partner programs that offer earn-and-learn opportunities, EBW is focusing on two strategies offering both short- and long-term benefits to trainees: on-the-job training (OJT) and apprenticeships.

On-the-job training allows for employers to be reimbursed for a portion of a worker's wages while they are engaged in training. The training period generally lasts about three months, but is based on skills to be acquired and a dollar cap that varies by local board. Employers may be reimbursed up to 50 percent of hourly wages. When workers participate in OJT, they have the opportunity to earn wages, acquire skills, and learn job-specific functions at their new place of employment. Under the OJT model, workers are guaranteed a minimum of 32 hours per week and must be paid wages at least reflecting the current industry standard. Employers hire the trainee as a regular employee.

Apprenticeship offers substantial opportunities to advance equity in the workforce by providing access to quality, family-sustaining jobs, and income mobility. It can allow individuals who are unable to forego income to continue to earn a salary while they learn a new profession, or to advance in their existing field. Apprenticeships can also offer women and persons of color the chance to overcome barriers by demonstrating their skills in the workplace, enabling them to be evaluated and hired on their merits, rather than being excluded based on their identification as part of a particular group.

Working with a wide range of partners, local workforce boards throughout California, including those in the East Bay, are beginning to accelerate their participation in the development and implementation of registered apprenticeships programs. For example, ACWDB has begun to publicize its commitment to enhance apprenticeship efforts, acknowledging that "apprenticeships are perhaps the most powerful, yet least understood model." The board is convening a local apprenticeship roundtable with the goal of increasing awareness and understanding of apprenticeships, identifying occupations for which apprenticeship programs are needed, developing and seeking approval of new apprenticeships, and implementing these programs in cooperation with employer sponsors.

First Source and Local Hiring

two of the local boards in the region have supported the development of, and are engaged with, local hire ordinances in their communities, which leverage the economic power of local government to expand opportunities for local residents to obtain employment with contractors on city-funded projects. The RichmondBuild pre-apprenticeship construction training program works closely with businesses that are subject to this ordinance to provide a pathway to construction employment for program graduates. Also in the construction sector, the Richmond and Contra Costa County Boards collaborate with providers of the Multi-Core Construction Curriculum (MC3) pre-apprenticeship training, which offers on-ramps into skilled trades in the building and construction sector.

The City of Richmond and the Port of Oakland whole have local hiring policies which mandate a certain percentage of those employed on government-funded construction projects be filled by qualified local residents. In Richmond, local hiring policies impact not only construction employment, but also retail, office, administrative, and other employment in the city.

Wrap-Around Support

A key to delivering supportive services with an equity lens is developing an equity-centered service delivery system, ensuring that services are as accessible as possible to those who need them and are allocated to different communities in proportion to the need. The Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC) model is an innovative approach to the no-wrong-door model of service delivery, which has been replicated in part by ACWDB. The OWDB has also used an equity analysis to identify the most impacted communities and aligned resources to meet support needs.

Regional workforce development efforts in the East Bay are predicated around an understanding that all workers have unique challenges and needs. Without vital services and resources, workers will not be successful in training, in their job search, and on the job. The following supportive services are some of the strategies that the region utilizes to empower job seekers and workers to participate in and successfully complete training and other workforce services: childcare; transportation; uniforms and work appropriate clothing; tools required for work; books; health and mental health services; costs to cover required medical tests (e.g., TB tests); legal services; emergency food; shelter; costs associated with obtaining required documentation or licensing (e.g., California state ID card, state testing, licensing fees); and parking permit fees for training purposes at community colleges or other training sites.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy education supports participants moving toward financial self-sufficiency. The WDBCCC provides financial literacy services to enable workforce system participants to learn how to improve their income, increase their savings, build assets, and strengthen their credit rating. Because financial literacy is fundamental to the success of so many program participants, other boards within the region may consider scaling this model to help their participants improve financial literacy skills.

VI. ALIGNING, COORDINATING, AND INTEGRATING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

As described in the introduction to the 2023 Regional Plan Modification, the local workforce development boards' of the East Bay developed a structure to support program alignment many years prior to WIOA and California's implementation of the RPU framework for regional coordination. This long history of collaboration is the basis of the region's adoption of the "regional indicator" that is focused on resource coordination. The information that follows highlights both examples of collaboration and opportunities for cost sharing.

A. Regional Coordination Strategies

The local workforce boards continue to build on past and current successes in aligning and integrating programs, services, and strategies. Below are approaches utilized to achieve coordination.

EASTBAY Works Memorandum of Understanding

While the four local boards have distinct MOUs with core, required, and other local partners, the EBW partnership operates under its own regional MOU which enables the implementation of regional initiatives that are supported, primarily, by specialized grants from the CWDB and the state Employment Development Department.

The EBW MOU outlines goals core objectives for the partnership, including:

- Streamlining processes, reducing duplication, and managing similar services;
- Receiving grants or other funding for regional planning, plan implementation, staff, workforce system training, and expansion of regional initiatives;
- Coordinating execution of regional projects through sharing in regional funding;
- Agreeing that the lead subgrantee (local board) will contract with the other local boards in separate services agreements for each WIOA Subgrant to allocate funds and implement multi-board programs more efficiently; and
- Establishing a "lead agent" framework for other regional projects to efficiently implement regional initiatives.

America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs)

The AJCCs of the East Bay region operate as independent entities, but contribute to regional strategies by sharing their information on the EBW website, which enables job seekers across the region to locate the services that are most accessible to them. The geographic distribution of the centers throughout the region's four local area Alameda and Contra Costa Counties unifies the region by providing access to one-stop services

for all of the region's residents. Additionally, all funded service providers are required to publish events to the EBW regional online events calendar hosted by the EBW website.

Coordination with Regional Economic Development

East Bay partner Boards recognize economic development as an essential partner within the workforce development ecosystem of the region. An important component of the EBRPU's coordination with regional economic development efforts is the representation of the Business Services Manager of each of the four East Bay local workforce boards on the East Bay Economic Development Alliance (EDA) Economic Development Directors' table. This relationship allows for cooperative conversations about regional business climate, business openings and closings, and other collaborative opportunities between economic development and workforce development. A key service of the EDA is its development of annual economic outlook reports that provide data and analysis on the current and emerging trends impacting the region's economy and its workforce.

Each local board within the region has its own relationships with economic development organizations and functions. The efforts of one board to coordinate workforce and economic development often inform strategies used by other boards. The OWDB is uniquely situated for collaboration with local economic development initiatives, as it is situated inside the City of Oakland's Office of Workforce and Economic Development. This structure enables the OWDB to closely align its policies and programs with the economic development agenda of the city and to influence city policy related to workforce training and development.

In addition to collaboration with EDA and local economic development in Oakland, the EBRPU benefits from a strong relationship between the WDBCCC and the East Bay Leadership Council (EBLC), as well as the Contra Costa Economic Partnership (CCEP), both of which are based in Contra Costa County. The EBLC is a public policy advocacy organization that has as its mission to increase the economic vitality and quality of life in the East Bay. Membership includes many of the region's largest employers. The WDBCCC collaborates with the CCEP in leading the Equitable Economic Recovery Task Force, which is focused on creating an equitable recovery and opportunities for those who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic-induced recession.

The region's participation in a Bay Area grant funded by California's Community Economic Resiliency Fund (CERF) program is the most current example of collaboration with economic development to achieve the goals it shares with the workforce development system. The Bay Area High Road Transition Collaborative (BA-HRTC), which includes representation by EBW leadership, will lead the planning phase of the CERF grant. BA-HRTC members will work together to re-envision regional economic development planning in ways that are centered around the values of equity, high-road employment, and sustainability and climate resilience, that are shaped by workers and impacted community/members themselves. Goals established for the planning phase include several efforts that correspond with strategies expressed in this Plan, including, but not limited to, investments in high road training partnerships that create economic

mobility opportunities for local workers. The East Bay partner Boards will monitor the progress of the BA-HRTC to assess where opportunities become available to support, participate in, and scale initiatives and efforts made possible through CERF funding.

Promising Models for Strengthening Collaboration

Among the promising practices for cooperative service delivery that have been implemented in the region is the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC). The CCWC is an innovative public-nonprofit partnership of twelve education and workforce development organizations that currently operate within Contra Costa County. The CCWC was developed in response to an identified need for regional collaboration and system alignment to move beyond strategies that prioritize low-wage, immediate employment opportunities and work toward development of pathways to sustainable, well-paid employment for diverse job seekers.

The CCWC leverages WIOA dollars and resources already available in the County to provide services that connect participants to education and training opportunities. These services attempt to enhance essential employability skills and assist in the development and pursuit of educational and career goals that lead to income mobility and quality jobs.

Alameda County has adopted similar strategies and there is potential for all four boards within the region to take advantage of comparable models and ones that help to expand the workforce development system network beyond traditional boundaries to encompass a wide range of disciplines that reach individuals with multi-faceted and diverse needs.

B. Regional Administrative Cost Arrangements

Regional grants and other funding have created opportunities for the local boards within the region to share and leverage funding that benefits all local workforce areas and the region as a whole.

Budgeting for Coordination

An annual EBW budget supports regional communications and functions, including the previously referenced website with a virtual service locator and a regional events calendar. The budget contains line items for resource development, strategic planning, and other items that are determined necessary when the annual budget is created. In addition, EBW administers the HOTJOBS email listserv that links more than 350 workforce, education, and training professionals and provides a conduit for information sharing in the field. The four local boards may also share costs of regional research and planning efforts, while they continue to explore opportunities for administrative cost sharing.

The regional budget also supports the Regional Organizer position. The RO is key to managing all regional initiatives, resource development, and grant reporting, and serves as a central point of contact and coordination between the workforce development

system, regional industry partnerships and other system partners. The RO facilitates meetings at various levels for local boards in the region (e.g., Directors, Program Managers, Business Services Managers, Career Center Managers and the service network) to identify best practices, troubleshoot obstacles, build capacity, enhance the EBW brand, and identify opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

Strategic Initiatives

Activities carried out under specialized grant programs provide the clearest examples of strategic initiatives under which local boards share costs and participate in centralized administration. Such programs include a Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership (RERP) grant program; state-funded Prison to Employment (P2E) grants; a series of Regional Plan Implementation (RPI) grants, which have been made available to regions since 2018 and which were preceded by regionally unifying “SlingShot” grants. Other discretionary grant programs in which two or more East Bay partner Boards participate also benefit from centralized administration and sharing of costs to support service delivery across multiple local workforce development areas.

Apart from participation in grant programs, strategic initiatives, such as comprehensive training that is planned for direct services staff of contracted providers and partners, exemplify the benefits of cost sharing across the region.

VII. PRIORITIES AND KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE EASTBAYWORKS REGION

As part of the process used to develop the original PY 21-24 Plan for the East Bay region, workforce leaders and their Regional Organizer held public input sessions via videoconference to gather ideas and recommendations from individuals representing workforce system stakeholder organizations and the community at large. Feedback from these sessions was embedded into the Plan. During the development of the 2023 biennial update to the Plan, the local boards once again came together to seek input from workforce system partners, stakeholders, and members of the community. Based on a public forum held to inform the update to the Regional Plan, several themes were identified. The topics enumerated below capture these themes and are now slated for further examination, exploration, development, and/or enhancement over the remaining period of the Regional Plan.

The Directors of the four local boards that comprise EBW will work with their WDB members, elected officials, business leaders, the Regional Organizer, and local partners and stakeholders to set an agenda for review of these priorities and, following such review, determine where, when, and how any related action should be taken.

1. Changing attitudes about work, careers, and the labor market, particularly among younger workers, have become more evident in the wake of the pandemic. Workforce system stakeholders need to take stock of differing values that exist within the current multi-generational workforce and help job seekers and businesses to better understand the ways in which varying views effect workforce priorities, workers' preferences, work styles, and more.
2. The digital divide and lack of digital equity significantly affect many groups and individuals within the region. The workforce system partners should work together and collaborate with government, the private sector, and other disciplines to formulate strategies to eradicate lack of digital access.
3. The regional workforce system should seek to build career pathways that create opportunities for income mobility across a wide range of growth sectors, including target sectors outlined in the Regional Plan and in sectors with emerging growth and significance.
4. Trauma and a range of issues that impact emotional well-being are among the most significant lingering effects of the pandemic for many East Bay residents, and workforce system partners should consider opportunities to collaborate with public and community-based mental health organizations and providers.
5. Local workforce development boards and workforce system partners should implement strategies to effectively inform businesses of services available to

them, including work-based and hybrid learning programs in which businesses are directly involved in hosting/providing all or part of the training.

6. EBW may benefit from developing messaging that highlights and differentiates the value and content of its services from other programs and resources.
7. Given the limitations of WIOA on who can be served and the services that can be provided, local workforce boards throughout the East Bay region should examine opportunities to expand partnerships and linkages with organizations and programs that serve individuals and provide services that WIOA does not.
8. Many East Bay residents looked to non-traditional employment models, such as gig jobs, during the pandemic and remain interested in opportunities to create their own work opportunities. Workforce system partners should examine opportunities to increase the availability of entrepreneurial skills training.

VIII. APPENDICES

- A. Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary (Attachment 1)
- B. Public comments received that disagree with the Regional Plan (Attachment 2)
- C. Signature Page (Attachment 3)