

PY 2017-2019 WIOA Multi-Year Regional Plan

**Northeast Pennsylvania
Consortium of Workforce Boards**

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1.1. Identification of the region.

Name of the Region. The Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium of Workforce Boards (or “Northeast Region”)

Local Workforce Development Areas in the Region.

- Lackawanna Workforce Development Area – Lackawanna County
- Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Area – Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties
- Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area – Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne Counties

Key Regional Committee Members and Organizational Affiliation.

- Virginia Turano, Lackawanna Workforce Development Board
- Patti Lenahan, Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board
- Joe Sebelin, Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board

Key Regional Committee Meeting Dates.

- 1/5/17 Meeting to discuss regional workforce strategies
- 2/22/17 Meeting to discuss regional workforce strategies
- 3/10/17 Release of Request for Proposals to procure Regional and Local Planning Consultant
- 4/6/17 Meeting to discuss regional workforce strategies
- 4/20/17 Conference call to discuss key elements for inclusion in the Regional Plan
- 5/10/17 Meeting held during Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA) Conference to further discuss needs and strategies
- 6/20/17 Meeting to discuss regional workforce strategies

1.2. Describe the collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the commonwealth).

Overview. The Northeast Region is comprised of the Lackawanna Workforce Development Area, Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Area, and Poconos Workforce Development Area. These Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) serve seven counties: Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne. Overall, the Region is home to 1,006,662 citizens¹.

¹ Population estimates per Claritas

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With a combined labor force of 495,600, the largest sector in the Northeast Region is Health Care and Social Assistance, which employs 65,756 workers, and represents 10% of the Gross Regional Product (GRP), with average earnings of \$49,900. The next largest sectors are Government (including education and law enforcement) which employs 56,950 and represents 12% of the GRP, with average earnings of \$71,029 and Retail Trade which employs 52,714 workers, represents 7% of the GRP, and has average earnings of \$29,392².

Location quotient (LQ) is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a region “unique” in comparison to the national average. An LQ of 1.0 means that a region has the same employment as the nation, while an LQ greater than 1.0 has a greater share of employment than the nation.

- In Lackawanna WDA the sectors with the largest LQs include Wood, Wood Processing and Publishing³ (LQ=1.40) and Health Care (LQ=1.37).
- In Luzerne-Schuylkill WDA the sectors with the largest LQs include Logistics and Transportation (LQ=2.53) and Wood, Wood Processing and Publishing (LQ=1.66).
- In the Pocono Counties WDA the sectors with the largest LQs include Bio-Medical (LQ=2.14) and Hospitality, Leisure and Entertainment (LQ=1.71).

Figure 1. Industry Cluster Statistics for the Northeast Region

Industry Cluster Statistics for North East Total Region												
	AFP	AM	BC	BM	BSV	ED	ENGY	HC	HLE	LT	REFI	WWP
2015 Employment	14,012	29,928	22,814	4,667	29,260	37,592	8,080	65,263	47,983	24,450	14,111	8,550
Employment Growth (2010-2015)	1,224	841	318	(514)	980	(1,763)	443	381	2,017	4,371	(962)	(1,099)
2010 Employment	12,788	29,087	22,496	5,181	28,280	39,355	7,637	64,882	45,966	20,079	15,073	9,649
Percent Growth (2010-2015)	9.6%	2.9%	1.4%	-9.9%	3.5%	-4.5%	5.8%	0.6%	4.4%	21.8%	-6.4%	-11.4%
Lackawanna County Location Quotient	1.05	0.96	0.88	1.25	0.67	1.07	0.56	1.37	0.88	1.35	0.84	1.40
Luzerne-Schuylkill Location Quotient	1.30	1.18	0.90	0.40	0.67	0.91	1.36	1.16	0.76	2.53	0.65	1.66
Pocono Counties Location Quotient	0.40	0.80	0.98	2.14	0.37	1.17	0.64	0.95	1.71	0.86	0.52	1.15

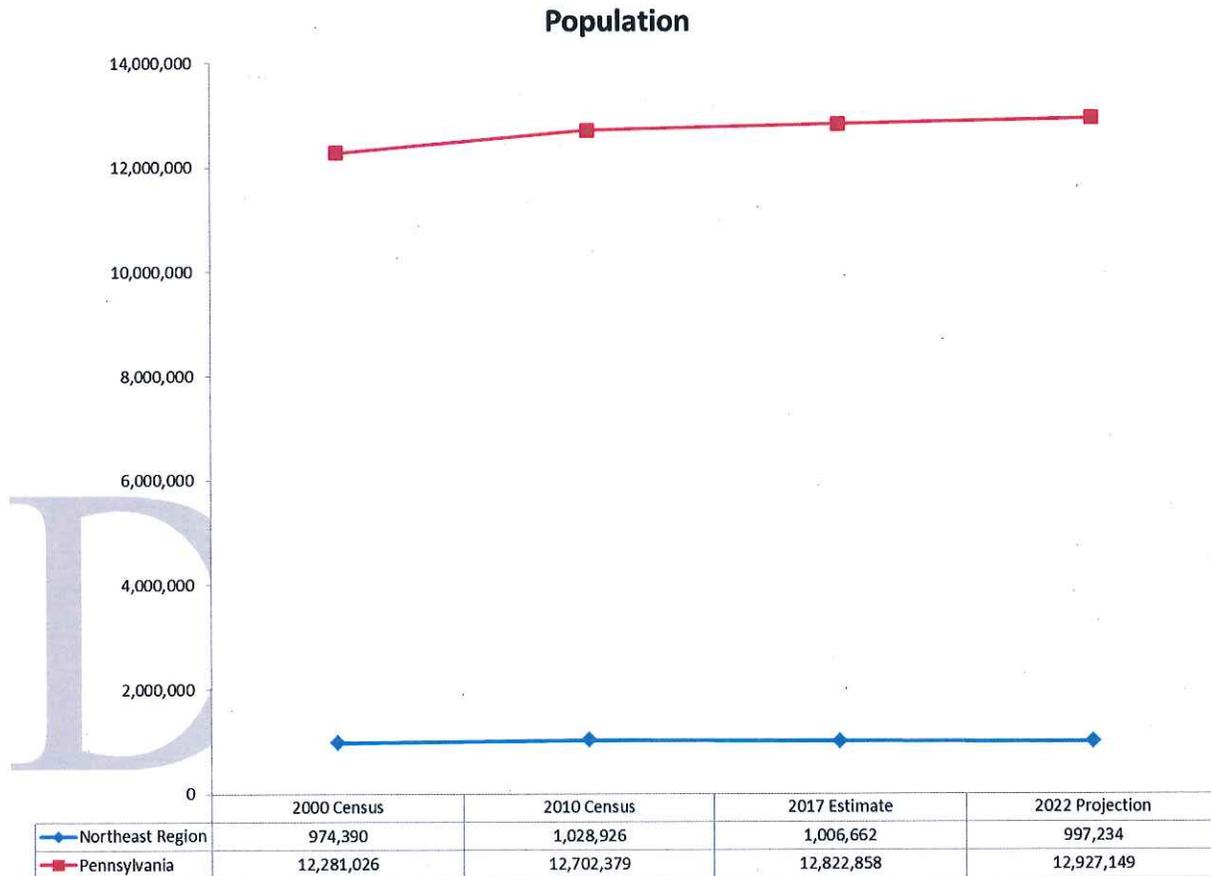
Population. The population in the Northeast Region has been decreasing since 2010, while Pennsylvania continues to increase. It appears the decrease in the Region is due to an aging population (see Figure 3 below), resulting in fewer births.

Figure 2 on the following page provides an overview of the population changes for the Region and the State.

² EMSI, 2017

³ The Wood, Wood Products and Publishing cluster incorporates a supply line from raw material to finished product. It includes logging and lumber production, through the production of paper, to publishing of magazines and newspapers. Industries within this cluster include sawmills, truss manufacturing, stationery product manufacturing, printing machinery and equipment manufacturing, book stores and greeting card publishers.

Figure 2. Population for the Northeast Region and Pennsylvania



Source: Claritas

As shown in **Figure 3**, the current median age of citizens in the Northeast Region is 44.0, which is older than the State’s median age of 40.9.

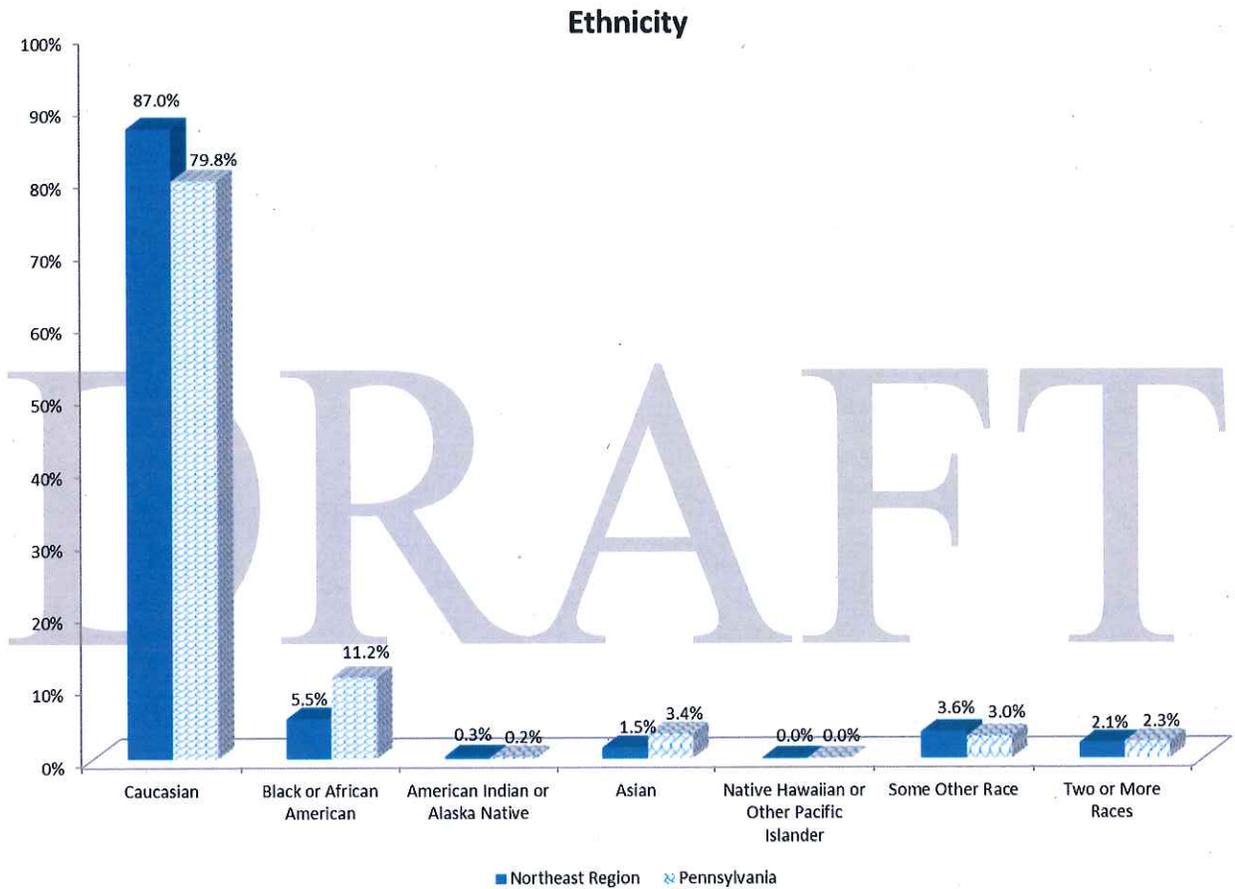
Figure 3. Age Information for Northeast Region and Pennsylvania

	Current Median Age	Average Age	Projected Median Age
Northeast Region	44.0	42.6	44.8
Pennsylvania	40.9	41.0	41.6

Source: Claritas

The majority of residents in both the Northeast Region and Pennsylvania are Caucasian. However, 11.2% of the State’s population identifies as Black or African American, as compared to 5.5% in the Region. **Figure 4** provides additional information.

Figure 4. Ethnicity for Northeast Region and Pennsylvania

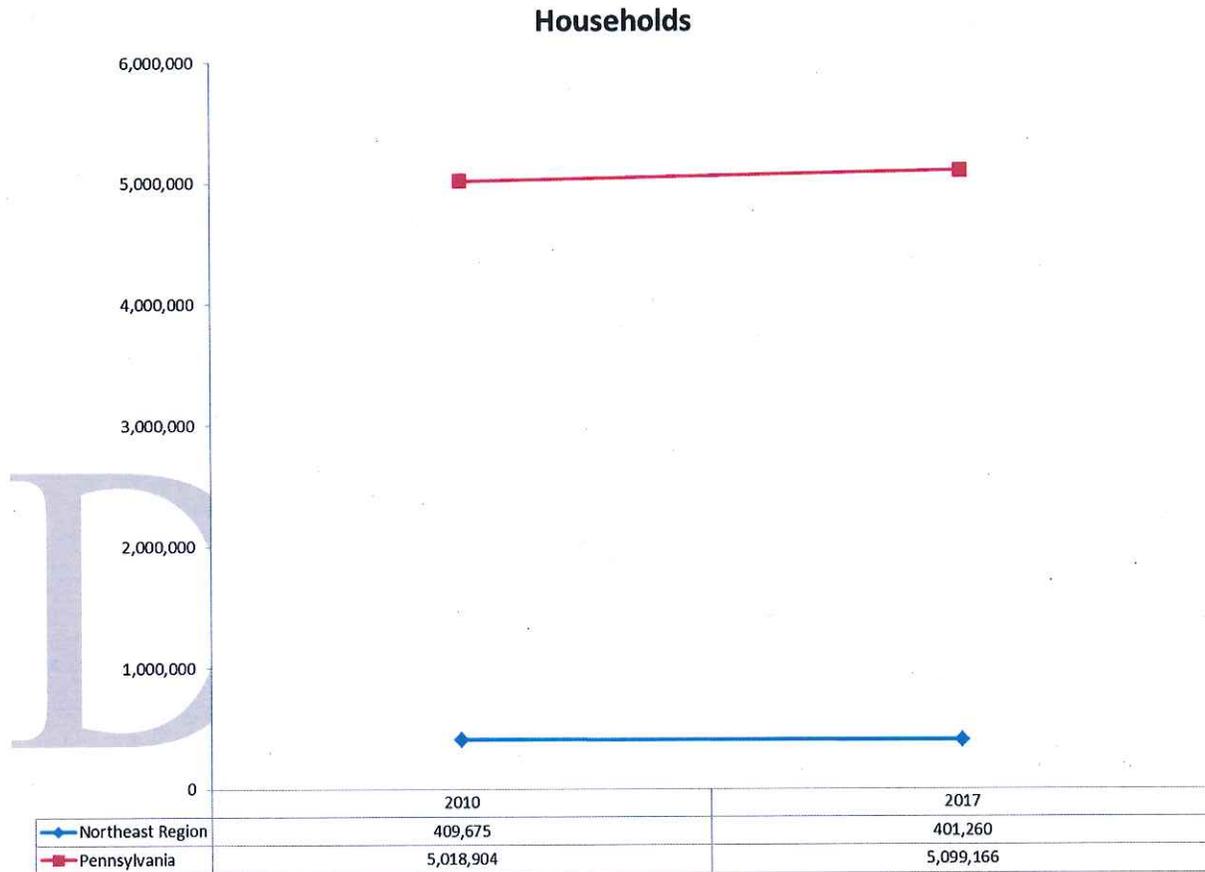


Source: Claritas

Households. Coinciding with the declining population, the number of households⁴ in the Northeast Region is also declining. **Figure 5** provides an overview of household information for the Region and for the State.

⁴ As defined by the US Census Bureau, a household is composed of one or more people who occupy a housing unit

Figure 5. Number of Households in the Northeast Region and Pennsylvania

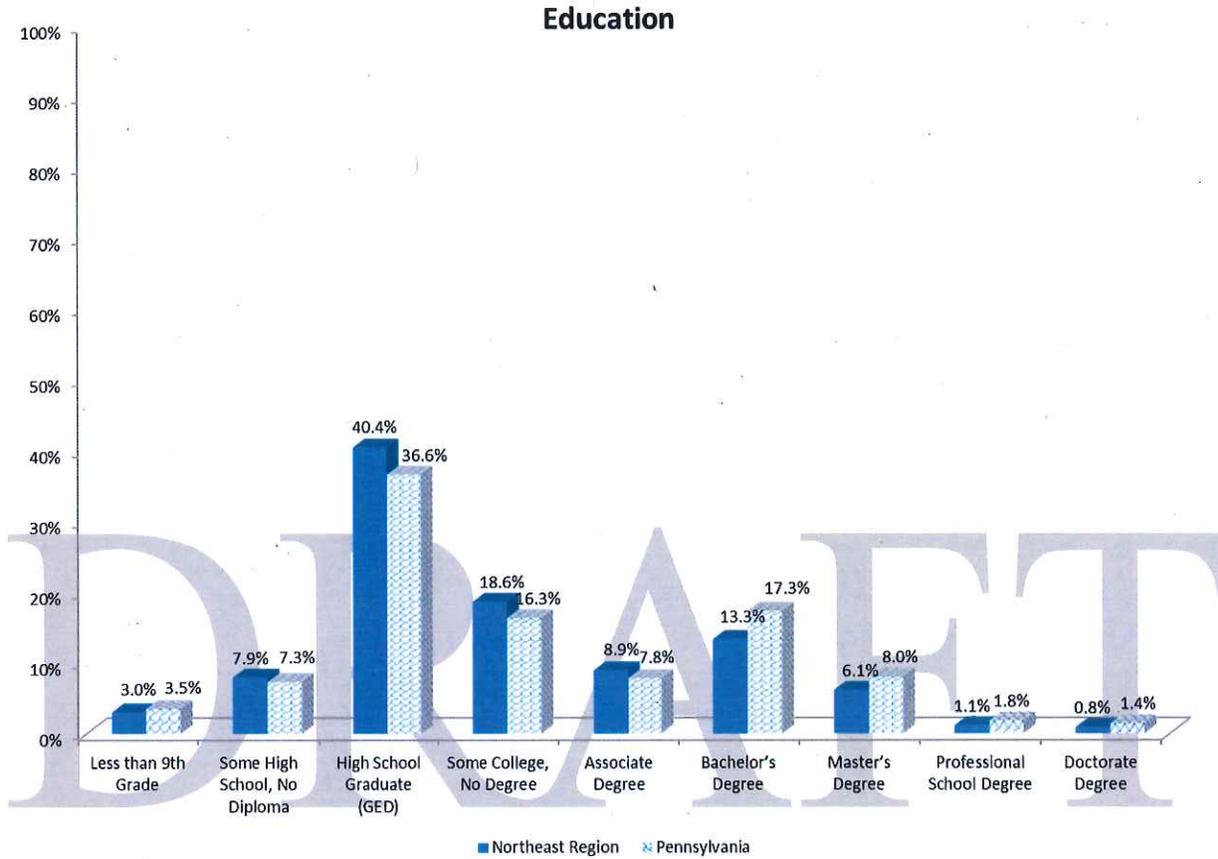


Source: Claritas

Education. Approximately one in five residents over the age of 25 in the Northeast Region (21.3%) have attained a Bachelor’s Degree or higher which is lower than the State (28.5%). One in ten residents (10.9%) in the Region did not complete high school, which is comparable to the State (10.8%).

Figure 6 on the following page shows the education levels for the Region and the State.

Figure 6. Education Levels for the Northeast Region and Pennsylvania



Source: Claritas

Income. In 2017, the average household income for the Region is estimated to be \$65,892, which is lower when compared to the State’s estimated average of \$77,812. Over the next five years, the average for the Northeast Region is projected to increase approximately 7%, to \$70,571 while Pennsylvania is projected to increase about 8%, to \$84,180.

Housing. Nearly three-fourths (72.6%) of the dwellings in the Region are estimated to be Owner-Occupied for the current year, which is higher when compared to the State (69.5%). One-third (30.6%) of the Northeast Region’s housing is estimated to have been built between 1939 or earlier, which is slightly higher than the State’s estimate of about one-fourth (25.7%).

Employment. As shown in Figure 7 there are more people in the Northeast Region who are not in the labor force (40.7%) as compared to the State (37.3%).

Figure 7. Employment Status of Individuals Over Age 16 in the NE Region and Pennsylvania

	Employed Citizens	Unemployed Citizens	Not In Labor Force
Northeast Region	54.1%	5.2%	40.7%
Pennsylvania	57.5%	5.0%	37.3%

Source: Claritas

A slightly higher percentage of workers in the Northeast Region hold Blue Collar occupations (25.4%) when compared to the State (21.3%). The highest percentage of workers in the Region and State are employed in Office and Administrative Support (14.5% and 13.8%, respectively) and Sales and Related Services (10.0% and 10.3%, respectively).

Figure 8. Occupational Classifications for the Northeast Region and Pennsylvania

	Blue Collar	White Collar	Service and Farm
Northeast Region	25.4%	55.5%	19.1%
Pennsylvania	21.3%	60.0%	18.1%

Source: Claritas

Commuting Patterns. Commuting patterns reveal how workers travel from their home counties to their work counties. The specific reasons for commuting may be unknown; however, it may be reasoned that workers travel to other areas for job opportunities that are not found within their home counties. Or, they may choose to live in their home counties due to housing, schools, or entertainment preferences.

Both the Luzerne-Schuylkill and Pocono Counties WDAs have a higher number of out-commuters, meaning more people are traveling outside these areas for work than are traveling in for employment. The Lackawanna WDA, on the other hand, has a higher number of in-commuters.

Overall, in the Northeast Region, 80.8% of the employed population drives alone to work with an average travel time of 28 minutes. These statistics are very similar to the State's averages of 76.5% driving alone to work with a travel time of 29 minutes.

Population with Barriers. Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and underemployment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage, or to find a job at all.

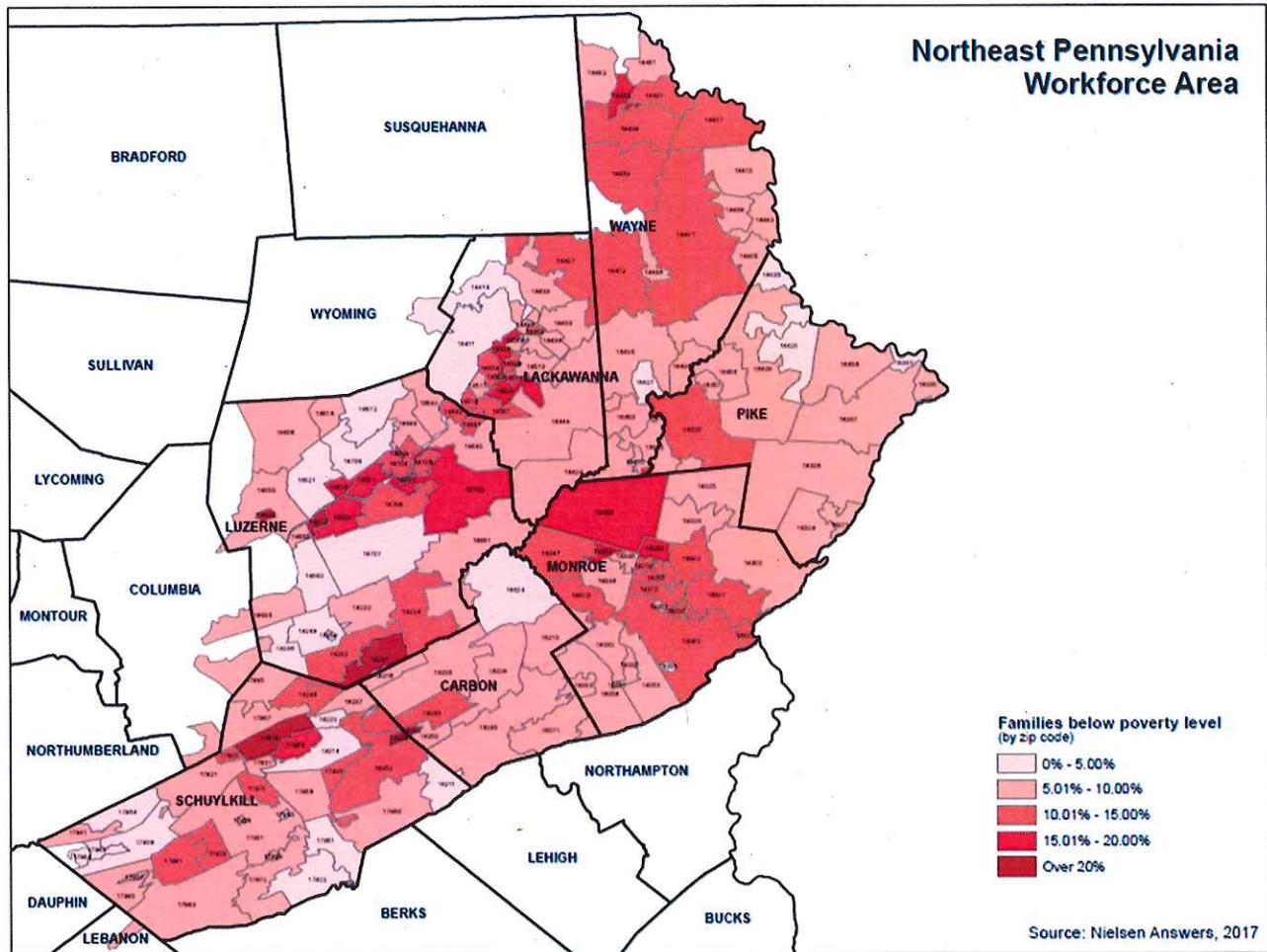
When looking at the Northeast Region, one in ten (10.1%) families are living in poverty. Additionally, as shown in the map in **Figure 9** on the following page, there are a number of pockets of high poverty in Luzerne County (Glen Lyon and part of Hazleton) and Schuylkill County (Shenandoah and Coaldale) where rates exceed 20%. Single parents are more likely to

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be living in poverty, with 13.0% of households in the Region considered single parent households.

Figure 9. Northeast Pennsylvania Poverty Level



According to the Urban Institute⁵, most individuals released from prison held some type of job prior to incarceration and want legal, stable employment upon release. Research also suggests that the higher the wage, the less likely it is that individuals will return to crime. However, most former prisoners experience difficulty finding a job after release. During the time spent in prison, many lose work skills and are given little opportunity to gain useful work experience.

Moreover, the availability of job training programs in prison has declined in recent years. A large proportion of former prisoners have low levels of educational attainment and work

⁵ Urban Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. They conduct research and offer evidenced based solutions to improve lives and strengthen communities (www.urban.org).

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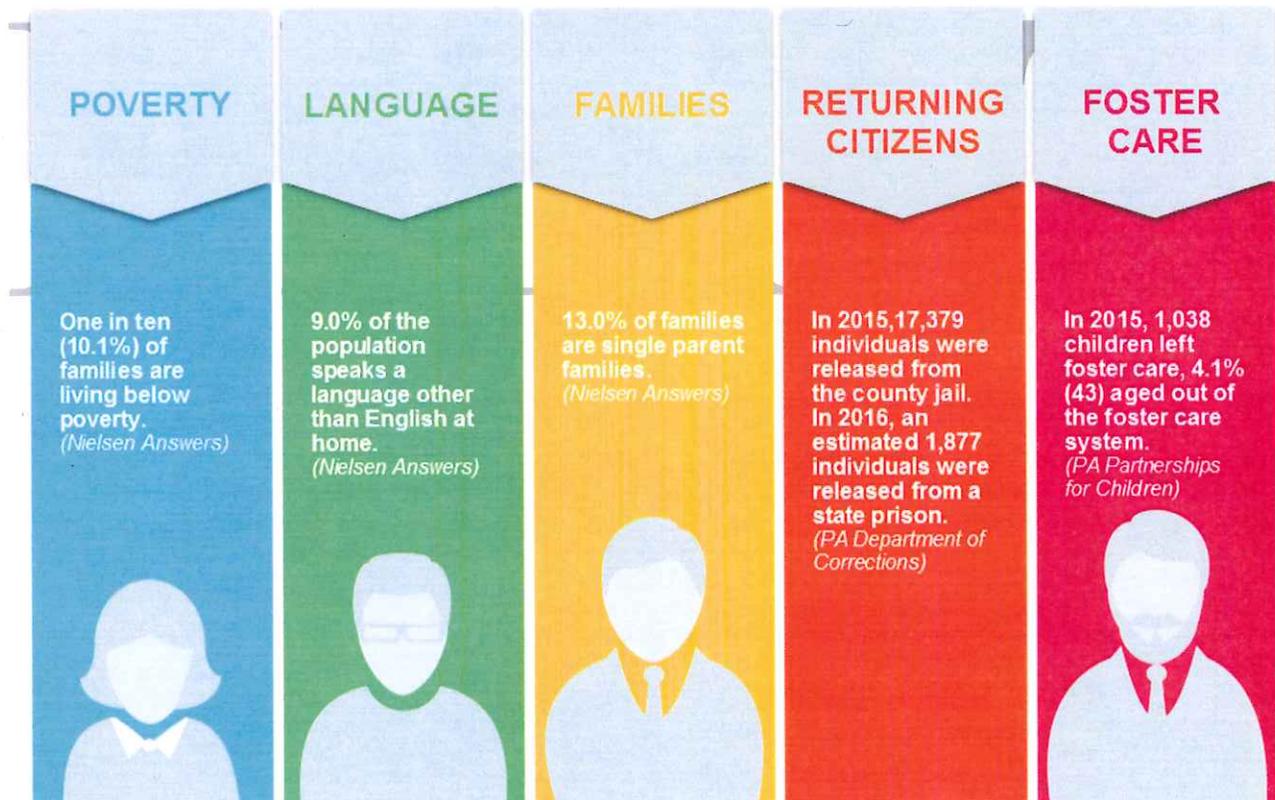
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experience, health problems, and other personal characteristics that make them hard to employ. Once in the community, not only are many employers reluctant to hire convicted felons, but many former prisoners are legally barred from certain occupations.

In the Northeast Region, in 2015 there were 17,379 individuals released from the county jail and in 2016 there were 1,877 individuals released from a state prison, if considering releases from county or federal prisons this number would only increase.

Research obtained from Children’s Rights⁶ has shown that youth who age out of foster care are less likely than youth in the general population to graduate from high school and are less likely to attend or graduate college. By age 26, approximately 80% of young people who aged out of foster care earned at least a high school degree or equivalency compared to 94% in the general population. By age 26, 4% of youth who aged out of foster care had earned a four-year college degree, while 36% of youth in the general population had done so. In the Northeast Region, approximately 43 children age out of foster care each year.

Figure 10. Overview of Population with Barriers in the Northeast Region



⁶ Children’s Rights is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the child welfare system to ensure the rights of children in foster care are upheld (www.childrensrights.org).

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According to the Division for Social Policy and Development⁷, in developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%. Persons with disabilities are frequently not considered potential members of the workforce. Perception, fear, myth and prejudice continue to limit understanding and acceptance of disability in workplaces everywhere. Myths abound, including that persons with disabilities are unable to work and that accommodating a person with a disability in the workplace is expensive. Contrary to these notions, many companies have found that persons with disabilities are more than capable.

When looking at the Northeast Region, 6.0% of those employed have a disability, while 14.5% of those unemployed have a disability. Unemployment is 108.0% higher for those with a disability (16.7%) as compared to those without a disability (8.0%).

There are also 14,891 students receiving services through the local Intermediate Units, with 56.2% of those students having a learning disability, 7.7% have an intellectual disability, 0.8% have a speech/language impairment, 10.5% have emotional disturbances, 16.7% have health implications, and 7.5% have autism.

According to Youth. Gov⁸, the high social and economic costs of teen pregnancy and child-bearing can have short- and long-term negative consequences for teen parents, their children, and their community. Through recent research, it has been recognized that pregnancy and childbirth have a significant impact on educational outcomes of teen parents. Specifically:

- By age 22, approximately 50% of teen mothers have received a high school diploma and only 30% have earned high school equivalency certificate, whereas 90% of women who did not give birth during adolescence receive a high school diploma.
- Approximately 10% of teen mothers complete a two- or four-year college program.
- Teen fathers have a 25 to 30% lower probability of graduating from high school than teenage boys who are not fathers.

Children who are born to teen mothers also experience a wide range of problems. For example, they are more likely to:

- have a higher risk for low birth weight and infant mortality;
- have lower levels of emotional support and cognitive stimulation;
- have fewer skills and be less prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten;
- have behavioral problems and chronic medical conditions;
- rely more heavily on publicly funded health care;
- have higher rates of foster care placement;
- be incarcerated at some time during adolescence;

⁷ The Division for Social Policy and Development is part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs which focuses on strengthening international cooperation for social development (www.un.org).

⁸ Youth.Gov is the U.S. government website that helps to create, maintain, and strengthen effective youth programs (www.youth.gov).

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- have lower school achievement and drop out of high school;
- give birth as a teen; and
- be unemployed or underemployed as a young adult.

These immediate and long-lasting effects continue for teen parents and their children even after adjusting for the factors that increased the teen's risk for pregnancy—e.g., growing up in poverty, having parents with low levels of education, growing up in a single-parent family, and having low attendance and performance in school.

Teen pregnancy costs US taxpayers about \$11 billion per year due to increased health care and foster care, increased incarceration rates among children of teen parents, and lost tax revenue because of lower educational attainment and income among teen mothers. Some recent cost studies estimate that the cost may be as high as \$28 billion per year or an average of \$5,500 for each teen parent. The majority of this cost is associated with teens who give birth before age 18.

In the Northeast Region, there were 5,100 children between the ages of 0 and 17 receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in 2016. Additionally, 1,718 youth had a juvenile disposition in 2015, and there were 1,182 births to mothers with less than a high school education.

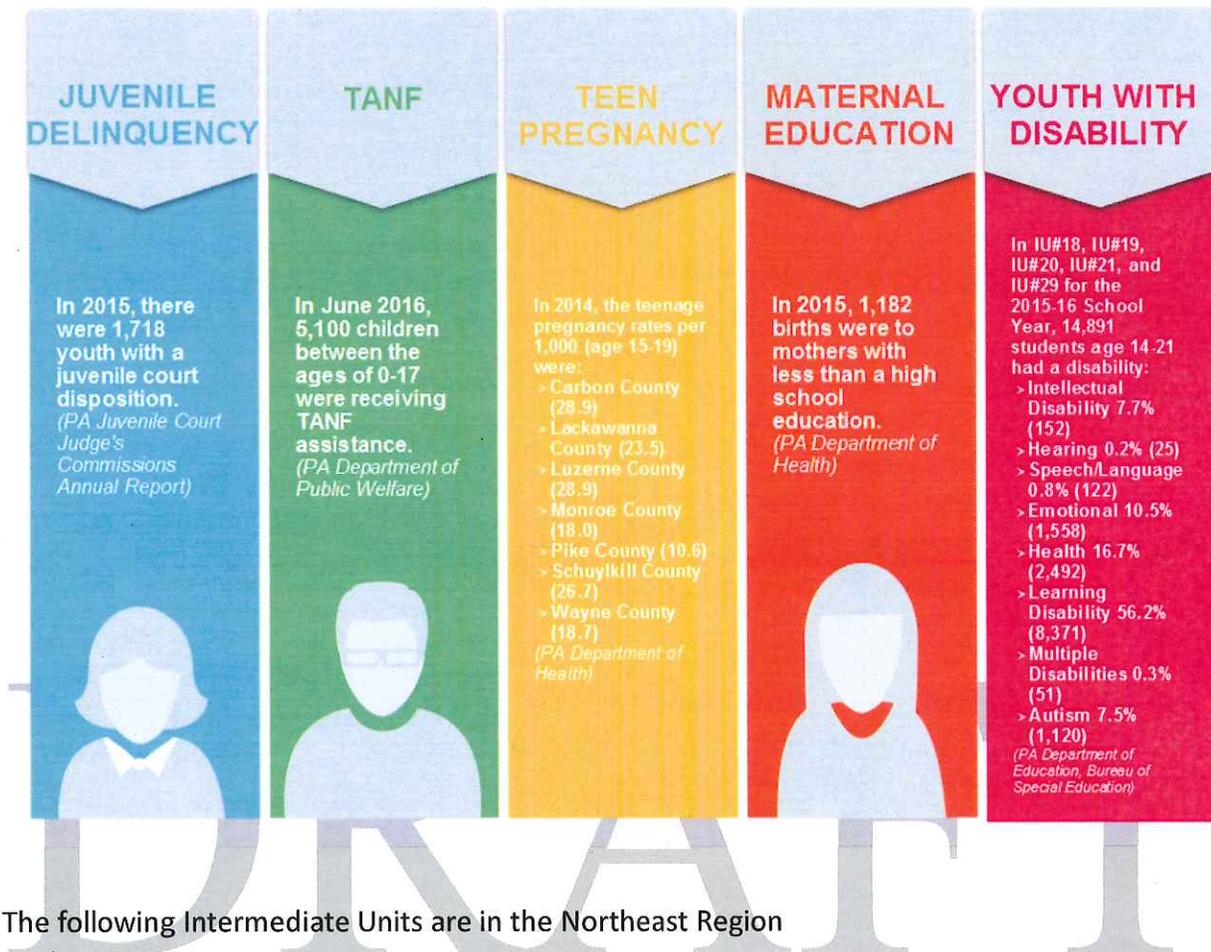
According to the Department of Health in 2014, the teenage pregnancy rate per 1,000 youth aged 15-19 for the Counties of Monroe (18.0) and Pike (10.6) were significantly lower when compared to the State (27.2).

However, teenage pregnancy rates for Carbon County (28.9), Luzerne County (28.9), Schuylkill County (26.7) and Wayne County (18.7) were comparable to the State (27.2).

Figure 11. Overview of Youth with Barriers in the Northeast Region

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The following Intermediate Units are in the Northeast Region

- IU#18 includes: Luzerne and Wyoming Counties
- IU#19 includes: Lackawanna, Susquehanna, and Wayne Counties
- IU#20 includes: Monroe, Northampton, and Pike Counties
- IU#21 includes: Carbon and Lehigh Counties
- IU#29 includes: Schuylkill County

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, meaningful and sustainable employment is the key to creating and maintaining housing stability. Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages relative to rent are frequent causes of homelessness and burden millions of families with the risk of becoming homeless. At the same time, individuals experiencing homelessness face obstacles to finding and maintaining employment.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care perform the PIT annually to determine the number of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Continuums of Care also must conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year (odd numbered years). In 2015, there were 840 individuals counted in the Northeast Region.

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The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines youth homelessness as:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations"
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters"
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.)
- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations".

In 2016, there were 918 students in the Northeast Region who met the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

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Figure 12. Additional Information Regarding Individuals with Barriers in the Northeast Region

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Labor Market Trends. The overall unemployment rate in the Northeast Region in 2016 was 6.2% with a labor force of 495,600. The unemployment rate during the first few months of 2017 has fluctuated between 5.3% and 6.0%.

Figure 13. Average Labor Force Statistics for 2016 and Seasonally Adjusted Statistics for 2017

Annual Average Labor Force Statistics, 2016

Annual Average	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2016	495,600	464,900	30,500	6.2%

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics, 2017

Month	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
January	488,000	461,900	26,100	5.3%
February	490,600	462,400	28,200	5.7%
March	490,300	462,300	28,100	5.7%
April	493,500	463,900	29,700	6.0%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

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Labor Market trends can be examined by looking at Long-Term Industry Projections as well as other labor market information. Regarding Long -Term Industry Projections from 2014-2024, the total employment in the Region is expected to grow by 5.8%. This growth rate is lower than the Commonwealth’s projection of 7.7%.

Construction is projected to experience the greatest percentage increase (16.5%) while Information is projected to experience the greatest decrease (-8.7%).

At 11,070 jobs, Education and Health Services accounts for almost half of the projected employment growth of 23,930 jobs.

Figure 14. Long-Term Industry Projections for the Northeast Region

Industry	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Employment Change (2014-2024)	
			Volume	Percent
Total Jobs	414,990	438,920	23,930	5.8%
Goods Producing Industries	60,210	60,840	630	1.0%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	2,330	2,260	-70	-3.0%
Construction	13,070	15,230	2,160	16.5%
Manufacturing	42,880	41,450	-1,430	-3.3%
Services-Providing	330,980	353,640	22,660	6.8%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	87,590	92,310	4,720	5.4%
Information	5,420	4,950	-470	-8.7%
Financial Activities	15,430	15,620	190	1.2%
Professional & Business Services	33,390	37,140	3,750	11.2%
Education & Health Services	95,730	106,800	11,070	11.6%
Leisure & Hospitality	42,890	46,270	3,380	7.9%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	16,940	17,500	560	3.3%
Federal, State & Local Government	29,800	29,200	-600	-2.0%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

As shown in Figure 15 on the following page, the occupations projecting the greatest volume growth are Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians and Support and Protective, Food, Building and Personal Service. Occupations in Farming, Fishing, and Forestry, as well as Production are expected to decline.

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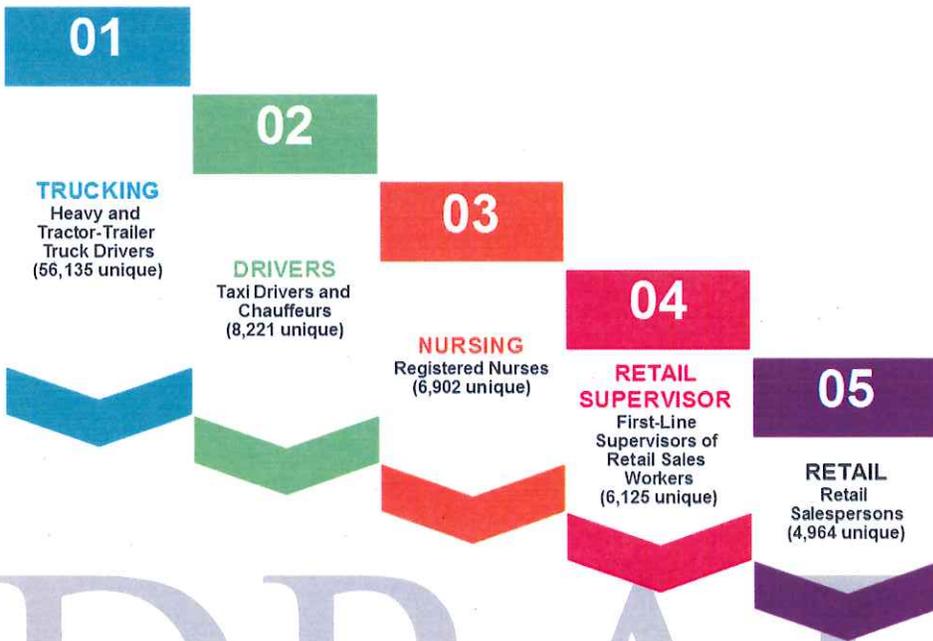
Figure 15. Long-Term Industry Projections for the Northeast Region (2014-2024)

Occupational Title	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Employment Change (2014-2024)		Total Openings
			Volume	Percent	
Total, All Occupations	414,990	438,920	23,930	5.8%	12,894
Management, Business & Finance	31,560	33,070	1,510	4.8%	872
Computer, Engineering & Science	11,520	12,170	650	5.6%	307
Education, Legal, Social Service, Arts & Media	38,800	41,010	2,210	5.7%	1,085
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	40,520	46,640	6,120	15.1%	1,518
Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service	78,010	84,170	6,160	7.9%	2,870
Sales & Related	44,500	45,130	630	1.4%	1,512
Office & Administrative Support	64,240	64,670	430	0.7%	1,541
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	2,180	2,100	-80	-3.7%	59
Construction & Extraction	16,030	17,750	1,720	10.7%	440
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	17,220	18,440	1,220	7.1%	537
Production	31,280	30,850	-430	-1.4%	823
Transportation & Material Moving	38,540	42,260	3,720	9.7%	1,309

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

During the current year, the most frequent job postings in the Northeast Region have been for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (56,135 postings). Information for other frequent postings is found in **Figure 16** on the following page.

Figure 16. Frequent Job Postings in the Northeast Region



Source: EMSI, 2017

Opportunity Occupations. Opportunity Occupations are employment opportunities that are generally considered accessible to someone without a Bachelor’s Degree, and that pays at least the national annual median wage, adjusted for differences in local consumption prices. There are several in the Northeast Region that only require a high school diploma.

Figure 17. Opportunity Occupations in the Northeast Region

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SOC	Description	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2016 - 2021 Change	2016 - 2021 % Change	Annual Openings	COL Adjusted Avg. Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
11-3071	Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	366	394	28	8%	15	\$43.22	High school diploma or equivalent
15-1152	Computer Network Support Specialists	333	346	13	4%	7	\$26.60	Associate's degree
19-4051	Nuclear Technicians	169	176	7	4%	9	\$36.50	Associate's degree
29-2021	Dental Hygienists	541	568	27	5%	15	\$26.98	Associate's degree
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	165	172	7	4%	5	\$31.90	Associate's degree
33-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Correctional Officers	188	190	2	1%	6	\$34.54	High school diploma or equivalent
41-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers	807	815	8	1%	14	\$28.74	High school diploma or equivalent
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	3,557	3,607	50	1%	89	\$28.30	High school diploma or equivalent
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	1,235	1,251	16	1%	29	\$30.26	High school diploma or equivalent
49-9012	Control and Valve Installers and Repairers, Except Mechanical Door	65	74	9	14%	5	\$26.99	High school diploma or equivalent
51-8011	Nuclear Power Reactor Operators	79	83	4	5%	4	\$40.10	High school diploma or equivalent
51-8013	Power Plant Operators	109	112	3	3%	5	\$29.74	High school diploma or equivalent
53-1031	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	833	870	37	4%	35	\$28.63	High school diploma or equivalent
53-2012	Commercial Pilots	112	135	23	21%	8	\$40.39	High school diploma or equivalent

Source: EMSI, 2017

One way to measure the skill gap is to compare the current educational attainment with the projected employment growth by educational level.

As shown in **Figure 18**, there are projected to be 74,790 jobs that require a Bachelor's Degree or higher in the Region in 2024. Data from **Figure 19** shows that there are currently 153,419 individuals that have achieved this educational level. Therefore, it appears that there are more than enough potential workers to meet the projected demand.

At the same time, **Figure 18** shows that there are expected to be 308,310 jobs that will require some level of on-the-job training, long-term training, or postsecondary education or experience. As shown in **Figure 19**, within Region there are currently 134,293 persons who have some level of college with no degree and another 290,909 that have achieved a high school diploma. Thus, these two groups may be able to fulfill the projected demand if they are able secure the required skills via additional education and/or training.

Figure 18. Employment Growth Rates by Educational Attainment Level for the NE Region

Educational Grouping	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Percent Change (2014-24)
On-the-job training	210,470	220,860	4.9%
Long-term training	18,500	19,970	7.9%
PS education or experience	62,890	67,480	7.3%
Associate degree	5,830	6,330	8.6%
Bachelor's degree	56,980	60,720	6.6%

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Advanced degree	12,710	14,070	10.7%
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Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Figure 19. Estimated Population Age 25+ by Educational Attainment for the Northeast Region

2017 Est. Pop Age 25+ by Edu. Attainment	720,883	
Less than 9th grade	21,730	3.01%
Some High School, no diploma	56,596	7.85%
High School Graduate (or GED)	290,909	40.35%
Some College, no degree	134,293	18.63%
Associate Degree	63,936	8.87%
Bachelor's Degree	95,767	13.28%
Master's Degree	44,150	6.12%
Professional School Degree	7,928	1.10%
Doctorate Degree	5,574	0.77%

Source: Claritas based on 2017 estimates

Looking at on-line postings provides insight into skills and certifications that employers are seeking. The top requested hard skills in the Northeast Region include recruitment, training and driving. The top soft skills are scheduling, leadership, and leading. The most requested certifications are Commercial Driver's License, Registered Nurse, and Licensed Practical Nurse.

Figure 20. Top Hard Skills for Northeast Region

Top Hard Skills	
Skill	Postings with Skill
Recruitment	76,013
Training	58,883
Driving	53,261
Management	51,539
Sales	50,438
Customer Service	45,415
Insurance	42,807
Retailing	40,772
Cargos	32,642
Health Care	29,184

Source: EMSI, 2017

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Figure 21. Top Soft Skills for Northeast Region

Top Soft Skills

Skill	Postings with Skill
Scheduling (Project Management)	64,532
Leadership	16,424
Leading	14,840
Learning	8,511
Listening	5,953
Ethics	5,662
Cleanliness	5,501
Coordinating	5,298
Mental Health	3,670
Creativity	2,990

Source: EMSI, 2017

Figure 22. Top Certifications for Northeast Region

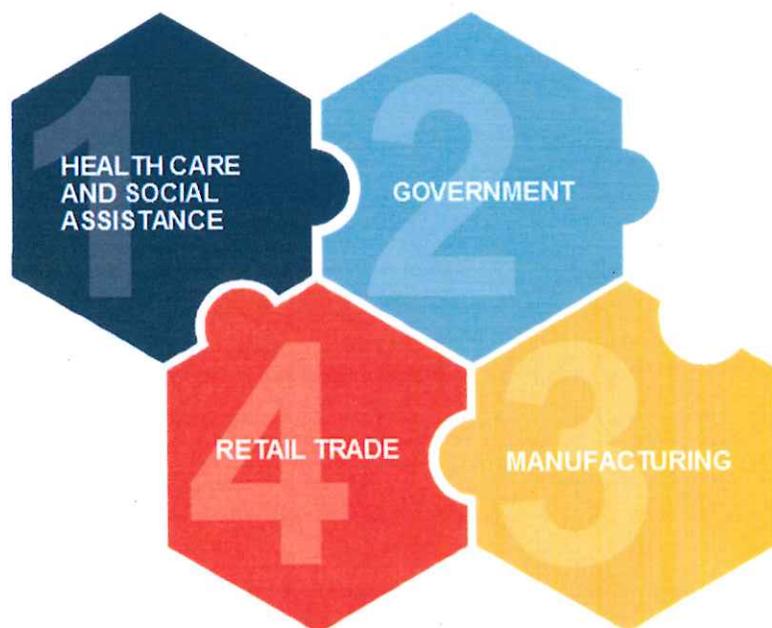
Top Certifications

Certification	Postings with Certification
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	78,248
Registered Nurse	13,505
Licensed Practical Nurse	6,054
Nurse Practitioner	2,537
Board Certified	1,997
Certified Nursing Assistant	1,626
Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,309
Certified Global Meeting Planner	1,169
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	1,154
Certified Benefits Professional	1,070

Source: EMSI, 2017

Key Sectors. The following sectors account for the largest amount of jobs in the Northeast Region.

Figure 23. Key Sectors in the Northeast Region



Health Care and Social Assistance

- Employs the highest number of jobs and is projected to continue to grow (currently employs 24% above the national average and pays almost \$5,000 less on average)
- Registered Nurses is a top occupation in the Region and a top job posting
- Employs the highest paying occupations
- Personal Care Aides, Registered Nurses and Home Health Aides are among the fastest growing occupations
- Registered Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Licensed Practical Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse, and Certified Nursing Assistant are among the top certifications requested by employers
- With the exception of Lackawanna, individuals in these jobs are likely to commute outside of their county of residency and/or region for employment

Government

- One of the largest employing industries in the Region and is projected to decline over the next several years (currently employs 13% below the national average, although average pay is approximately \$1,000 more)
- Teaching, Military and Law Enforcement occupations make up the majority of employment opportunities in this sector
- Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education, and Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education are declining occupations
- Accounts for the largest amount of the Region's imports and exports

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- Monroe, Lackawanna, and Luzerne are likely to have residents filling teaching occupations, while the other counties and the Region overall have more commuters
- There are more qualified candidates graduating from education programs than are needed to meet the regional demand

Retail Trade

- Has been remained stagnant but is projected decline over the next few years, (currently employs 19% above the national average, with wages approximately \$5,000 less)
- Retail Salespersons, Cashiers and Stock Clerks and Order Fillers are among the largest occupations
- Retail Salespersons, First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, Customer Service Representatives, Cashiers and Stock Clerks and Order Fillers are among the top posted positions
- Sales, Customer service, and retailing are among the top skills employers look for
- General Warehousing and Storage is a growing industry
- While this industry tends to hire large numbers of employees and positions are accessible to those with minimal education, they do not offer family sustaining wages

Manufacturing

- Wages are, on average, \$13,000 less when compared to the nation
- Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand is a growing occupation
- Most entry level occupations require a high school diploma or equivalent
- Manufacturing has the greatest economic impact on the Region
- Several types of manufacturing are available within the Region

There is employer demand within the following industries where regional training opportunities either do not exist or are currently not meeting the employer demand: Retail, Home Health, Allied Health, Sales and Marketing, Food Service/Food Preparation, and Floriculture/Floristry.

The following table shows the number of students graduating regional training programs for areas with 300 or more openings. With the exception of Registered Nurses and Business Administration, there are not enough candidates completing regional training programs to meet employment demand.

Figure 24. Education Program Completions as Compared to Occupational Openings

CIP Code	Program	Regional Completions (2015)	Regional Openings (2015)	Median Hourly Earnings	Regional Jobs (2015)	Regional Jobs (2016)
52.1803	Retailing and Retail Operations	0	1,574	\$11.49	40,414	40,356
51.0000	Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General	73	1,473	\$24.21	37,967	38,303
52.1804	Selling Skills and Sales Operations	0	1,101	\$13.29	24,670	24,866

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CIP Code	Program	Regional Completions (2015)	Regional Openings (2015)	Median Hourly Earnings	Regional Jobs (2015)	Regional Jobs (2016)
12.0500	Cooking and Related Culinary Arts, General	25	794	\$11.54	16,450	16,871
12.0507	Food Service, Waiter/Waitress, and Dining Room Management/Manager	0	738	\$9.10	10,982	11,107
12.0505	Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant	2	723	\$9.30	16,721	16,867
52.1801	Sales, Distribution, and Marketing Operations, General	0	712	\$14.06	19,364	19,335
12.0508	Institutional Food Workers	0	637	\$9.34	15,108	15,250
01.0608	Floriculture/Floristry Operations and Management	0	625	\$12.18	17,983	17,900
52.0408	General Office Occupations and Clerical Services	0	614	\$15.56	19,771	19,853
51.2602	Home Health Aide/Home Attendant	0	586	\$10.72	9,946	10,354
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	885	501	\$37.08	12,130	12,306
51.3899	Registered Nursing, Nursing Admin., Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing, Other	7	484	\$31.03	12,080	12,246
51.3822	Women's Health Nurse/Nursing	0	482	\$31.11	12,049	12,214
51.3816	Emergency Room/Trauma Nursing	0	479	\$30.76	11,989	12,153
51.3819	Palliative Care Nursing	0	479	\$30.76	11,989	12,153
51.3821	Geriatric Nurse/Nursing	0	479	\$30.76	11,989	12,153
52.0406	Receptionist	0	476	\$13.42	10,535	10,729
51.1199	Health/Medical Preparatory Programs, Other	0	466	\$34.67	11,023	11,171
51.1105	Pre-Nursing Studies	1	465	\$26.26	11,263	11,414
52.0101	Business/Commerce, General	103	437	\$39.98	10,554	10,709
52.9999	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services, Other	0	432	\$23.28	13,161	13,230
13.0101	Education, General	14	419	\$29.47	16,387	16,224
51.3818	Nursing Practice	44	406	\$29.61	9,273	9,426
49.0205	Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor	194	400	\$17.61	14,079	14,151
52.0212	Retail Management	0	389	\$32.80	11,331	11,408
51.3805	Family Practice Nurse/Nursing	35	384	\$31.76	8,710	8,854
51.3808	Nursing Science	0	376	\$29.42	8,484	8,629
51.3812	Perioperative/Operating Room and Surgical Nurse/Nursing	0	375	\$29.62	8,478	8,621

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CIP Code	Program	Regional Completions (2015)	Regional Openings (2015)	Median Hourly Earnings	Regional Jobs (2015)	Regional Jobs (2016)
51.3809	Pediatric Nurse/Nursing	0	373	\$29.18	8,424	8,567
46.0000	Construction Trades, General	0	372	\$20.75	12,862	12,766
19.0501	Foods, Nutrition, and Wellness Studies, General	0	372	\$11.12	6,925	7,211
51.3803	Adult Health Nurse/Nursing	1	371	\$29.02	8,393	8,536
51.3806	Maternal/Child Health and Neonatal Nurse/Nursing	0	371	\$29.02	8,393	8,536
51.3810	Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse/Nursing	0	371	\$29.02	8,393	8,536
51.3811	Public Health/Community Nurse/Nursing	0	371	\$29.02	8,393	8,536
51.3813	Clinical Nurse Specialist	0	371	\$29.02	8,393	8,536
51.3814	Critical Care Nursing	0	371	\$29.02	8,393	8,536
51.3815	Occupational and Environmental Health Nursing	0	371	\$29.02	8,393	8,536
51.3820	Clinical Nurse Leader	0	371	\$29.02	8,393	8,536
52.0411	Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation	0	361	\$14.03	7,088	7,268
51.3801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	546	355	\$28.48	8,140	8,274
51.3999	Practical Nursing, Vocational Nursing and Nursing Assistants, Other	44	355	\$28.48	8,140	8,274
44.0000	Human Services, General	64	331	\$19.56	8,059	8,176
44.0401	Public Administration	4	320	\$41.11	7,630	7,760
13.1207	Montessori Teacher Education	0	319	\$27.89	12,704	12,540
13.1208	Waldorf/Steiner Teacher Education	0	319	\$27.89	12,704	12,540

Industry Partnerships. Based on the analysis of the skills and educational levels of the existing and emerging labor force in the Northeast Region, as compared to the area's current and projected occupational demands, the Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium of Workforce Boards has identified five primary Industry Partnerships that drive its workforce development activities: **advanced materials /diversified manufacturing, food production, logistics and transportation, healthcare, and energy.**

1.3. Based on the analysis of the regional labor market and economic conditions, describe the region's workforce and economic development-oriented vision and goals.

The Northeast Region knows that growth in a regional economy comes from a combination of economic development, workforce development, and community development; and it understands that workforce development is instrumental in reducing the number of people who are unemployed.

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Its vision is to ensure a world-class trained, readily available workforce, which is the impetus for the enticing of new business ventures and the growing or retooling of existing industry, addressing the needs of all local workers is primary to stimulate progress within Northeastern Pennsylvania. To support this vision, it has established the following goals that consider the workforce and economic development priorities within the Region, including the coordination of services and providers.

- Increase the skill level of the Region's labor force through an innovative, integrated workforce infrastructure system that links labor demand and supply to meet the current and future workforce needs of the Region's businesses
- Utilize the expertise of educational institutions and training providers within the Region to develop training programs and services which are based upon clearly defined opportunities and needs, and supported by research within specific industry sectors
- Enhance linkages between workforce development and economic development delivery organizations with private industry in a collaborative manner that promotes high skill and high wage jobs

1.4. Describe the regional service strategies aimed at achieving the vision and goals established for the region.

The Northeast Region relies on both workforce development and economic development initiatives to engage businesses throughout the seven-county area. The role of workforce development is to support the expansion and development of local talent and to assist employers with their workforce needs. Economic development is closely related in that it helps communities with business attraction, supports programs for workforce development, and promotes small business development and new business startups.

The Northeast Region's strategies and activities are overseen by the three local boards of the Northeast Consortium of Workforce Boards as discussed in the **response to 1.1**. They have well-established working relationships, and are also closely aligned with the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board that is responsible for similar activities for Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, and Wyoming Counties.

To promote regional workforce efforts, the group meets bi-monthly. Formal agendas and minutes are recorded to document activities, progress, and outcomes. Some examples of regional best practices that have been implemented include alignment of Individual Training Account (ITA) levels, standardized operational forms, and a consistent approach to PA CareerLink® customer service. The Boards also work collaboratively to secure ancillary grants to further leverage and supplement regional sector initiatives.

Within the Northeast Region, each PA CareerLink® has a Business Services Team (BST) that works directly with employers. They identify needs and match them to qualified candidates to fill open positions. As needed, they help employers maximize job postings on the JobGateway® system. Additionally, they establish on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, or incumbent worker training programs to help businesses develop workers.

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BSTs also use labor market information to help businesses determine appropriate compensation levels and related benefits packages to remain competitive in the Northeast Region. Further, to avoid duplication of efforts, BST staff members communicate and collaborate with the partner organizations that are a part of the PA CareerLink® system. Moreover, each local area's BST members convene at least one each quarter on a regional basis to share best practices and identify emerging trends and needs.

The Region's economic development activities complement and support its workforce development initiatives. Specifically, business financing, government contracting assistance, international trade assistance, non-profit assistance, transportation planning, research and information and local government services are coordinated across the Region through the Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP). The Northeast Region PREP partners include:

- Local Development District: The Northeast Pennsylvania Alliance (Lead Organization)
- Small Business Development Centers at the University of Scranton and Wilkes University
- The Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center located in Hanover Township
- The Manufacturers Resource Center headquartered in Bethlehem
- The Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturing and Employers Association located in Pottsville
- Local Industrial Development Organizations: Berwick Industrial Development Association, CAN-DO Inc. (Hazleton), Carbon County Economic Development Corporation, Monroe County Industrial Development Authority, the Pike County Economic Development Authority, Schuylkill County Economic Development Corporation, Scranton-Lackawanna Industrial Building Company, and the Wayne Economic Development Corporation.

These PREP partners provide a powerful network of regional experts to help business owners address challenges facing their companies. Additionally, the network also helps businesses access critical state and federal resources, such as loans, grants, technical assistance, and other support. PREP partners provide services to local businesses and also to individual residents who may be interested in business start-up and management. Of key significance, many of the PREP partners serve on Local Workforce Development Boards in the Northeast Region.

1.5. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

The Northeast Region has attempted to conduct two meetings with its economic development partners and key industries as part of its Next Generation (Next Gen) Sector Partnership efforts. However, due to the large geographic footprint of the region, it has been very difficult to get business representatives to actively participate in, or even attend the sessions.

The Northeast Region has listened to the concerns voiced by the sector representatives about travel time and the appearance of duplicative efforts with the Industry Partnerships. As a

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result, the Consortium has determined that it needs to change its approach if it is to truly get industry participation and buy-in.

At this time, it has determined that the best method is to continue to focus its sectoral efforts on its successful Industry Partnerships. As regional opportunities arise, the Consortium will convene groups to discuss the strategies and actions that are required to address specific needs. The Region believes that by taking incremental steps, and building upon the strong foundation of its existing Industry Partnerships, it will be able to gather the momentum that is required to gain commitment from sector representatives for Next Gen activities.

1.6. Describe how the region will connect employer labor force requirements and occupational demands with the region's labor force, including individuals with barriers to employment.

The Northeast Region continues to utilize the State-approved High-Priority Occupational List and Eligible Training Provider List to connect jobseekers, including those with barriers to employment, with occupational demands across the region. Industry Partnership grants identified workforce needs in **advanced materials/diversified manufacturing, healthcare, food processing, logistics and transportation, and energy.**

The services provided through the PA CareerLink® centers and satellite locations are designed to assist individuals who are actively seeking employment, or who are interested in improving their current skills. Overall, the Northeast Region strives to ensure that at least 51% of enrolled participants are individuals with barriers to employment, such as veterans, recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and out-of-school youth. The following strategies promote the achievement of this goal.

Title I staff within the PA CareerLink® system work closely with Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs). Priority of service is given to veterans at PA CareerLink® offices (a veteran or qualified spouse receives priority access to services and training opportunities).

Individuals on public assistance and low income individuals are identified at reception in the PA CareerLink® centers. They are informed of their right to receive priority of service. Strong partnerships are established among title I Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN) providers to integrate services and offerings.

PA CareerLink® staff identify individuals who are basic skills deficient through an intake process, then refer them as needed to literacy programs, including high school equivalency review classes, English as a Second Language (ESL), and remediation courses. Co-enrollment with title II Adult Basic Education and title I services is encouraged for individuals with basic skill deficiencies.

Of key significance, the Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium's regional strategies go beyond its borders. The three Northeast Region WDBs (Lackawanna, Luzerne-Schuylkill, and the Pocono Counties) recently partnered with the Northern Tier Region to secure a Strategic Innovation Grant to fund two rounds of training under its NEPA Pre-Apprenticeship Initiative to train up to

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50 young adults, dislocated workers, and underemployed adults. The purpose of the NEPA Pre-Apprenticeship Initiative is to provide qualified applicants to fill the openings in the Trades and Manufacturing Apprenticeships.

Trainees are exposed to career pathways, the PA CareerLink® centers and all of their valuable employment and training resources, career and technical education, and other opportunities to increase skill levels. During the 8-12 week program that is comprised of five pre-apprenticeship training classes, individuals learn the necessary math, computer, work readiness, and basic construction skills to prepare them for the apprenticeship exam, and to enter into an Apprenticeship Program. Stackable credentials are also offered to assist with employment, forklift, flagger, and ladder safety training.

The Northeast Pennsylvania Consortium will continue to discuss additional opportunities for expanding services on a regional basis and to leverage the best practices learned through the collective impact model in the local areas.

1.7 Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services for the region.

As discussed, the Northeast Region includes three local workforce boards covering seven counties. Taking into consideration the geographical nuances that impact overall regionalization efforts, they work cooperatively to coordinate and collaborate their strategies, services, and delivery methods to maximize services for businesses and job seekers.

Using information from the 2015 Northeast Pennsylvania Regional Skills Gap Analysis prepared by NC3T (National Center for Career and Technical Colleges) under the Northeast PA Jobs 1st Initiative, the Boards identified primary supportive service needs. They established coordinated spending caps, similar priority of service policies, and key sector initiatives (i.e., industry partnerships, community-based grants, sector partnership grants, and other regionally-awarded grants) to promote consistency and provide systemic stability.

Access to public transportation is a principal impediment for many of the Region's jobseekers. Overall, the Northeast Region encompasses nearly 4,400 square miles that is connected by both Interstate highways and rural roads. However, there is virtually no public transportation connectivity between the local areas. Commuting is largely in personal, motorized vehicles with public and private transit providing a much smaller share.

The public bus transportation services that are available in the more urban areas of the Northeast Region are not well coordinated with the needs of business and industry. Services are restricted to traditional day-time hours with limited service on Saturdays, and no service on Sundays. Moreover, many individuals in the Region seek employment in the bordering States of New York and New Jersey. However, public transportation to these areas consists of a daily bus run from Wilkes Barre through Scranton, through the Poconos, and onto New York City.

The Northeast Region is very interested in improving public transportation options. For example, many of its counties are linked to Commuter Services of Pennsylvania, an organization

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that works to reduce traffic congestion by helping commuters find alternatives other than driving alone and by reaching out to employers so they can help their workforce find those options.

Additionally, NEPA Alliance, the Lead Organization for the Northeast Region's PREP, coordinates the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) that works in conjunction with the PA Department of Transportation and County officials to coordinate transportation planning and programming. TAP projects are intended to build pedestrian and bicycle facilities, improve access to public transportation, create safe routes to schools, preserve historic transportation structures, provide environmental mitigation, create trails projects that serve a transportation purpose, all while promoting safety and mobility. The Executive Directors of the three local workforce boards attend NEPA Alliance meetings, and Mr. Joseph Sebelin, Executive Director of the Pocono Counties Workforce Board is a member of the NEPA Alliance Board where transportation topics are explored and discussed.

Finally, at an Employer Forum meeting held in the fall of 2016, the local Transportation Authority offered information regarding Commuter Spending Accounts (CSA) to assist workers with transportation hurdles. CSAs enable individuals through their employers to utilize pre-tax dollars to pay for public transportation and parking expenses incurred getting to and from work. Examples of eligible expenses include bus passes and parking fees, including parking meter fees. The Northeast Region will explore establishing a strategic working relationship with the listed entities so that it continues to improve transportation options for its residents.

- 1.8. (Planning Regions Only) Describe how the region established administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region.**

When securing regional grants, the Boards utilize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) arrangement to identify the specific breakdown of the funding that is received. Under this method, the Lead Applicant is designated as the Fiscal Agent that receives the administrative dollars. The remaining funding is allocated among the Boards as stipulated in the MOU.

If, prior to the last quarter of the funding period, a Board has not expended its allocated portion, then its balance is re-allocated to one or more of the other areas, typically on a first-come, first-serve basis.

- 1.9. (Planning Regions Only) Describe the agreement between the local boards that describes how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Department on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in section 116(c), for each of the local areas within the planning region.**

A review of the Common Measures Performance Goals and Performance Levels for the past three years, indicates that the Boards that comprise the Northeast Regional Planning Area have had similar performance goals, as well as similar results.

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The highest deviation rate was for the Average Quarterly Earnings, which is to be expected since the Lackawanna and Luzerne/Schuylkill local areas include more urban labor markets as compared to the rural nature of the Pocono Counties.

Additionally, the variation in the Youth outcomes were also significant; primarily due to both the differences within the regional labor markets, as well as program design differences.

Using these historical outcomes, the Boards plan to negotiate regional performance goals in a manner which will result in a deviation of no more than +/- 15% from each other's negotiated performance goals. The submission of this Regional Plan will serve as a MOU to coordinate the performance level negotiations to achieve this goal.

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