

Southern Tier  
Region Local Workforce  
Development Board 2017 Regional  
Workforce Plan

## PY 2017 Southern Tier NY WIOA Regional Plan

### **a. Regional Service Strategies, including cooperative service delivery agreements.**

The Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) of the Southern Tier region are committed to providing seamless delivery of services to our customers, recognizing that continuous improvement is critical to the goal of a truly seamless delivery of services. The LWDBs of the Southern Tier agree to provide WIOA Career Services to all Adult and Dislocated Worker customers regardless of which American Job Center they visit to access services. Registration will be completed through the One Stop Operating System (OSOS) and all staff will input customer activities and regular case notes in a timely manner. This coordination of service delivery will assist businesses, jobseekers and employees in times of business growth as well as businesses downsizing or closing.

### **b. Sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations.**

The LWDBs of the Southern Tier will continue to work collaboratively with each other and the Regional Economic Development Council and its committees to align workforce strategies. The Southern Tier Regional Business Services team (which includes all Executive Directors) meets quarterly and discusses strategies for growth sectors along with current workforce events within each local area.

The Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council has identified advanced manufacturing as a priority sector. To provide assistance to the sector the Southern Tier LWDBs working with other regions and with funding from the American Apprenticeship Initiative are educating the business community on the value of recruiting specialized skilled workforce through apprenticeships. New apprenticeship have been written and approved by NYS. Outreach continues to regional training providers and businesses to develop appropriate curriculum needed by employers for the workforce of today. In addition the LWDBs are working with BOCES to develop pre-apprenticeship opportunities that include training, certifications and education about the local opportunities available in the Southern Tier. To date eight companies (28 apprentices) have currently registered apprenticeships in the Southern Tier. Three additional companies are pending. In addition there are five pre apprentices employed all in welding.

An existing and highly successful program is slated for regional recruitment effort. The Accelerated Machinist Program (AMP) is a multi-employer, sector initiative designed to directly impact the need for entry level machinists in the Manufacturing Sector. This program has had 100% placement for graduates for the past two years at wages in excess of \$40,000 (on average), was recently highlighted as a Best Practice by Congressman Reed's Manufacturing Summit, and was funded by the REDC for an additional cohort in 2018.

The Executive Directors of the LWDBs attend Southern Tier REDC meetings and participate on the Workforce Committee.

Due to the rural nature of the Southern Tier region it is difficult to provide training opportunities regionally but if participants can logistically attend they are able to participate in training opportunities in adjacent counties. The LWDBs continue to explore effective and efficient ways to share training opportunities across a broad geographic area.

**c. The collection and analysis of regional labor market data.**

The regional economy of the Southern Tier, including the eight counties of Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins, has been contracting since early 2010, but shows steady signs of stabilizing in the near future. As the number of total jobs has decreased, the numbers of available workers in the labor force of prime working age has also declined, leading to an increasing demand for labor, particularly in the advanced manufacturing, health services, transportation and warehousing and hospitality and food service sectors. This has created shortages of workers across most occupations in the region.

These sectors have been targeted by the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council's comprehensive strategy. In collaboration with the New York State Department of Labor's Southern Tier New York labor market analyst, the regional demand list was compiled to support these sectors. Part of the overarching goals of the Southern Tier strategy was to create opportunities for and increase labor participation rates of segments of the population that have experienced barriers to employment by actively engaging those who may have given up on actively seeking employment. Balancing the skills and abilities of the available workforce with the specific needs of individual employers in these sectors requires a diverse approach. Everything from work readiness training, including soft skills preparation, basic mathematical competency, computer and technological literacy to highly specialized technical training is currently in high demand.

While the sectors of advanced manufacturing, retail, and public administration have seen significant losses over the past five years, gains in the hospitality and food service sector have added 1,374 jobs to the Southern Tier economy. While the total amount of growth may be small, opportunities exist across the skilled trades, transportation and warehousing, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing due to the rapidly aging and retiring workforce.

Recently, the president of the local NRCC Carpenters Local 277 stated that easily 50 percent of the skilled trade's members of his union will retire within the next five years. A similar situation exists among skilled tradesmen in other skilled trades as well. While the growth of the health services sector is being fueled by the aging population of the Southern Tier, these demographic changes also affect the workforce of the sector. With over 30% of the population of the Southern Tier over the age of 55, growth and replacement need within the identified sectors will remain high for the foreseeable future. Demand for every occupation from home health aide to highly skilled Registered Nurses will increase. Already present in the Southern Tier are many distribution and warehouse centers. The recent opening of the Dick Sporting Goods Distribution Center in Conklin, NY has only increased demand for labor by this sector. The employment needs of businesses in the above highlighted sectors vary based on time of year, contract obtainment, retention, etc. Employment opportunities in all areas referenced above are posted continuously which is the reason for their inclusion in the Demand Occupation List.

The Workforce Development Boards' review statistical analyses provided by the NYSDOL Labor Market Analyst and anecdotal data provided by local employers concerning available jobs unfilled due to a lack of trained job seekers. The Local Workforce Development Board's review and discuss the reports provided to confirm that the proposed In-Demand Occupation List meets the needs of the local business community.

For many employment opportunities in the Southern Tier Region, a minimum of a high school diploma or high school equivalency is required. For positions within the health care field, the required certification or license is required for each of the positions noted above. For advanced manufacturing, the required certification for positions listed is needed and in many cases some relevant experience. For hospitality and food service, many customer service positions require a high school diploma or high school equivalency, however many management positions may require an associate degree. For transportation, the required license is needed. For skilled trades, the required certification is needed and in many cases some relevant experience, or acceptance into an apprenticeship program. For public administration, an associate or bachelor's degree is required. For engineers, associates, bachelor's degree, or advanced degree is required. The region has been experiencing growth in the hospitality and food service sector. Most occupations in this sector do not require educational attainment beyond high school and can provide excellent advancement opportunities. Successful preparation for these positions requires a high degree of work place readiness and soft skills.

As of November 2017, the Southern Tier unemployment rate was 5.3%, the labor force stood at 289,300, the number of employed was 273,900 and the number of unemployed persons was 15,400. The Southern Tier Labor force has increased from 286,100 in November 2016 to 289,300 in 2017 due to an increase in the 20-24 year age group (4,056) as well as an increase in the number of individuals leaving the sidelines to join the active labor force. Of note, as of November 2017, Tompkins County claimed one of the lower unemployment rates in New York State at 4.3%.

The region lost 9,488 jobs total over the last five years. The losses are not consistent across the region, being concentrated primarily in Chemung and Broome Counties.

Of the adult population (age 25+) just over 91% have attained a high school diploma or higher. However, the 8.1% that do not have a high school diploma represent an estimated 26,170 residents in the Southern Tier and concentrations of poverty and low educational attainment exist in each of the region's counties. Major barriers such as access to transportation, childcare, substance abuse disorders and a lack of relevant skills still exist throughout the region.

Several sources were used to identify employment and population trends in the Southern Tier, including the Regional NYSDOL Economist, statistics from the 2015 US Census, and anecdotal data from regional employers.

**d. The establishment of a regional spending plan that includes administrative cost arrangements between LWDBs and the pooling of funds where applicable.**

The Southern Tier Region Workforce Development Boards have agreed to host an exploration meeting to discuss strategic opportunities for identifying and sharing specific administrative costs that may be available; specifically, discussing areas such as procurement or AP/AR processes that might be able to be shared across the region. At this preliminary juncture, issues such as existing collective bargaining agreements, WIOA permissibility, and existing staffing have been identified as issues in need of conversation before any suggestions are brought before the respective Workforce Development Boards and/or Chief Elected Officials.

**e. The coordination of supportive services.**

The Southern Tier Region Workforce Development Boards focus their collective effort on key industry sectors vital to the sub-regional economics of the respective Workforce Development Board, while exploring areas for future regional initiatives such as Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare. The Workforce Development Boards in the Southern Tier are moving to share key training and supportive service costs in support of business need across county lines.

**f. The coordination of services with Economic Development partners.**

The LWDBs of the Southern Tier Region strive to align our initiatives and strategies to the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council. We work closely with our local economic development organizations, Industrial Development Agencies and our local chambers of commerce. That coordination comes in many shapes and sizes as across the region there are many organizations that are inclusive of the above entities. Across the region collaboration includes joint employer recruitment activities, reciprocal board representation, co-location, joint planning, business attraction strategies, collaboration, etc...

In addition, when economic development agencies bring in site selection teams to view potential sites, LWDB Directors and/or their staff is available to meet with the teams to provide information on the local and regional workforce and training opportunities available through the LWDBs and their partners.

**g. An agreement concerning performance accountability measure negotiation and reporting.**

The Workforce Development Boards in the Southern Tier agree to review quarterly performance reports to identify issues of performance and to develop performance improvement plans that benefit not only each individual LWDB's performance, but the region's as a whole. Once performance improvement plans have been developed, this information will be shared with workforce staff to give them a better understanding of how the delivery of services may impact performance. The boards will discuss performance measure negotiations prior to negotiations with NYSDOL, to ensure coordination and collaboration between the LWDBs.