

Santa Barbara County

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plan

Program Years 2025-2028

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Executive Summary

The Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board (SBCWDB) – part of the South Central Coast Regional Planning Unit (SCC RPU), a 7,405-square mile area along California’s central coast that also includes the San Luis Obispo Workforce Development Board (SLOWDB) – is pleased to submit a WIOA Local Plan for Program Years 2025 – 2028 that aims to demonstrate local operational alignment with the strategic objectives outlined in the 2025 – 2028 Regional Plan, drive coordination with local partners, and highlights key service delivery strategies at the local level.

This Local Plan was developed pursuant to California Employment Development Department Workforce Services Directive (WSD) 24-09, issued on December 20, 2024, as required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and guides the Program Years 2025 – 2028, effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2029, and addresses all key topics outlined in the directive. This Local Plan is also closely aligned with the state policy objectives of high road workforce development; fostering demand-driven skills attainment; enabling upward mobility for all Californians; meeting climate and environmental goals; and aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs and services.

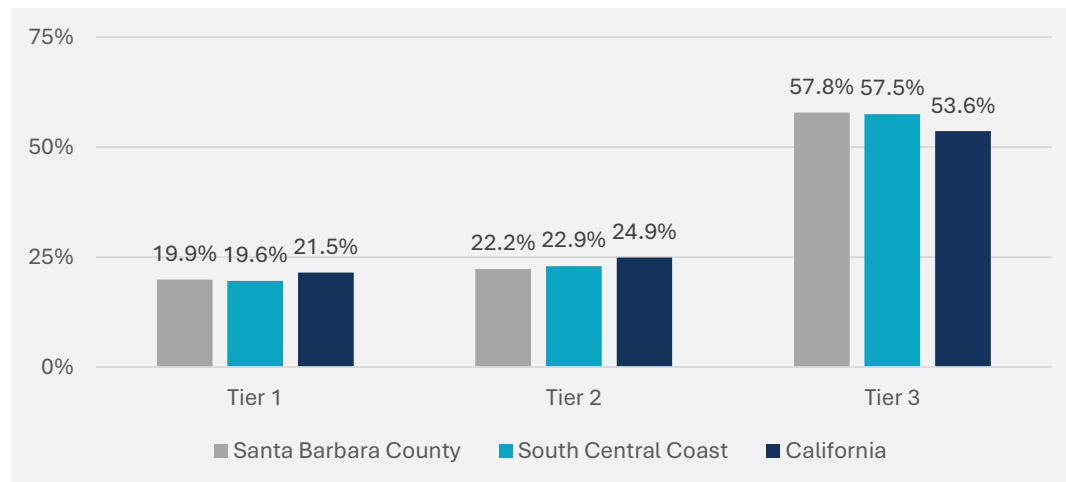
Regional Overview

This section of the Local Plan provides a brief overview of the regional labor force and resident population of Santa Barbara County, to further inform the SBCWDB's understanding of the key opportunities and challenges faced by the local workforce for use in its planning efforts.

Santa Barbara County, together with San Luis Obispo County, comprise the South Central Coast Regional Planning Unit (SCC RPU). The WIOA Regional Plan 2025-2028 prepared for the SCC RPU illuminated several key findings related to economic distress and job quality within the region, including:

- Slower regional recovery of employment from pandemic-induced losses as compared to California and the overall United States.¹
- One in five subregions in the SCC RPU exhibit severe economic distress, and two in five indicate lower levels of economic distress.²
- Continuing challenges to job quality, with nearly three in five jobs falling within the lowest wage occupational categories.³ (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Job Quality by Tier in Santa Barbara County, the South Central Coast RPU, and California (2024Q2)⁴



¹ Employment patterns in Santa Barbara County are consistent with the South Central Coast region, with five-year job growth of 2.1 percent falling below statewide growth (7.5 percent) and national growth (9.2 percent). Employment in Santa Barbara County remained 4 percent below pre-pandemic levels in 2023, consistent with the SCC RPU average. Source: California EDD. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (2019 – 2024).

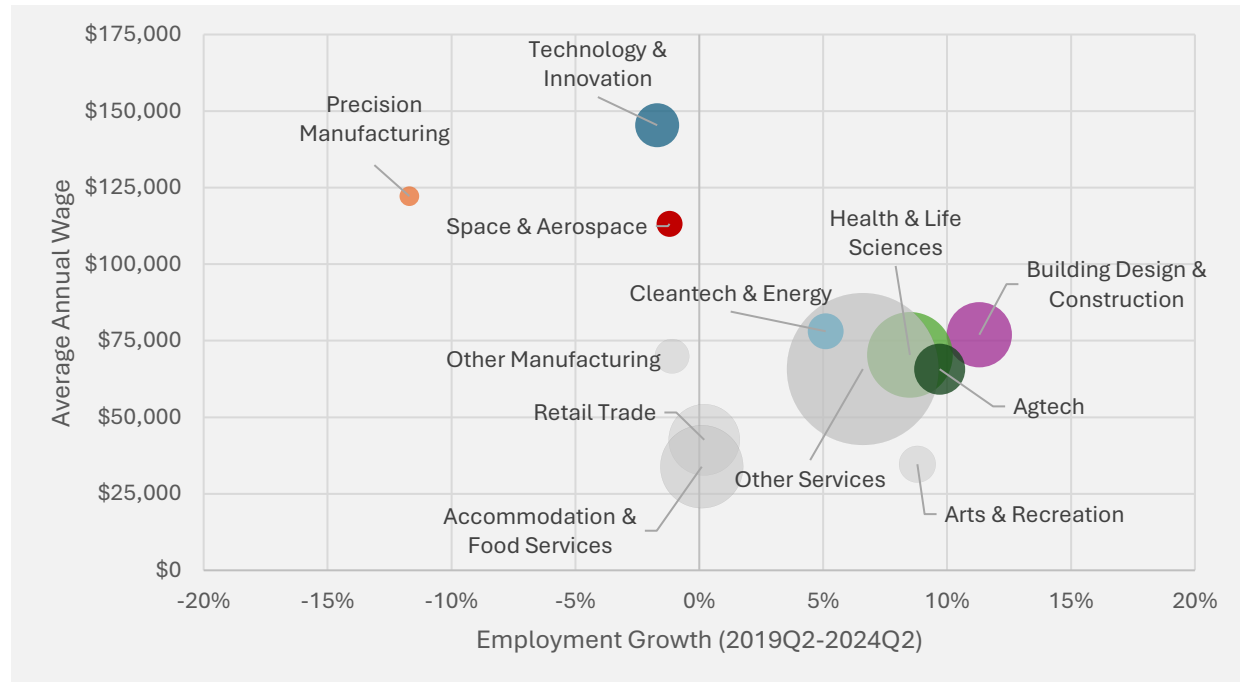
² Please see the South Central Coast Regional Planning Unit 2025-2028 Regional Plan for more information regarding the assessment of economic distress.

³ Tier 1 occupations are typically the highest-paying, highest-skilled occupations in the economy, garnering a median annual salary of \$115,600 in the SCC RPU region. Tier 2 occupations are middle-wage, middle-skill occupations commanding a median annual salary of \$70,200. Tier 3 occupations are the lowest-paying, lowest-skilled occupations, commanding a median annual salary of \$44,100.

⁴ 2024 Q2. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2024).

- Strong employment growth in four REACH priority clusters^{5 6}, most notably in Building Design & Construction and Agtech (Figure 2).

Figure 2. REACH Industry Clusters in the South Central Coast Region (2019Q2-2024Q2)⁷⁸



Within Santa Barbara County alone,

- The Building Design & Construction industry cluster accounts for over 16,500 jobs, and commands average annual wages of \$78,875.
- The Agtech industry cluster accounts for over 9,600 jobs and commands average annual wages of \$66,738.
- The Health & Life Sciences industry cluster accounts for nearly 31,000 jobs and commands average annual wages of \$73,421.⁹

⁵ REACH is a Regional Economic Action Coalition uniting public, private, and civic leaders across the Central Coast of California. REACH was responsible for the South Central Coast's [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) and the [Uplift Central Coast initiative](#) in support of the California Jobs First directive.

⁶ The Regional Plan analysis was based on 12 industry clusters identified in the South Central Coast region, which include seven priority industry clusters identified by REACH in its "Strengthening Key Industries on California's Central Coast – Talent Pipeline Analysis + Recommendations" report: (1) Agriculture Technology (Agtech), (2) Building Design and Construction, (3) Cleantech and Energy, (4) Health and Life Sciences, (5) Precision Manufacturing, (6) Space and Aerospace, and (7) Technology and Innovation.

⁷ JobsEQ 2024 Q2. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 – 2024).

⁸ Non-REACH priority industry clusters are semi-opaque and gray, with bubble size proportional to 2024Q2 employment levels.

All REACH priority industry clusters generate average annual wages above the regional average in Santa Barbara County, but only three industry clusters generate average annual wages above the Santa Barbara County living wage of \$110,537:

- The **Technology & Innovation** industry cluster generates the highest average annual wages of all REACH industry clusters, at \$152,972.
- The **Precision Manufacturing** industry cluster generates average annual wages of \$132,749.
- The **Space & Aerospace** industry cluster generates average annual wages of \$115,261.¹⁰

One of the primary objectives identified within the Regional Plan is to support growth in regional priority clusters via cross-functional partnerships with Central Coast economic and workforce development agencies. This Local Plan describes efforts being undertaken in Santa Barbara County to advance these regional goals via deployed service delivery agreements and informal coordination efforts which are consistently delivered but may not be memorialized through a formal MOU.

Since the last Local Plan update, SBCWDB has participated in several initiatives designed to advance Regional Planning goals. These initiatives include the creation of an **AJCC GED Testing Center**, in partnership with Allan Hancock College. The AJCC GED Testing Center addresses a critical community need, supporting the achievement of educational goals for county residents while fostering the growth and development of the local and regional workforce.

Additionally, in 2024 SBCWDB partnered with the Santa Maria Valley Chamber to develop two workforce programs:

- The **“Build Your Workforce” program**, which connects businesses to SBCWDB resources that offer funding and support for hiring, upskilling, and providing paid work experience to job seekers.
- A program that focuses on **Paid Work Experience** opportunities for justice-involved individuals and includes a series of workshops aimed at educating businesses about these opportunities.

Other programs and initiatives led by the SBCWDB to support target populations include:

- **The Prison 2 Employment 2.0 (P2E 2.0) Program**, jointly led by SBCWDB and SLOWDB, provides intensive case management, job readiness service, paid work experience, supportive services, and transitional job opportunities, to justice-involved jobseekers.
- The **DOL Growth Opportunities Program**, led by SBCWDB, focuses on introducing and preparing justice-involved youth and/or youth at-risk of becoming justice-involved between

⁹ JobsEQ 2024 Q2. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 – 2024).

¹⁰ MIT Living Wage Calculator (2024).

the ages of 15-18 or 18-24, for the world of work and paths to equitable career opportunities through placement into paid work experience, education, and training.

- The **Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEP)**, provides High School and College Students with Disabilities, ages 16-21, with paid work experience and job-ready training opportunities.
- **The Pathway Home 2 (PH2) Program**, led by SBCWDB in partnership with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and local community colleges, was funded by a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) grant and provided currently incarcerated individuals with workforce services prior to release as well as reentry support, including job readiness training, paid work experience, supportive services, and vocational training.
- The **GO-Biz Local Immigrant Integration and Inclusion program** supported immigrants, refugees or asylees, unaccompanied minors, immigrant youth, and hard-to-reach immigrant populations by developing or expanding immigrant integration efforts, building community trust, and enhancing the organizational capacity of local governments to support immigrant populations in the region.

Efforts to support job quality in specific industries included:

- In partnership with the South Coast Chamber of Commerce, SBCWDB formed a **Steering Committee** to promote manufacturing career pathways.
- SBCWDB collaborated with SLOWDB and the Ventura County WDB to expand the skilled construction workforce through the **High Roads Construction Careers (HRCC) Resilient Workforce Fund (RWF)**. Over 100 program participants completed training through the HRCC RWF in 2024, and collaborations with unions facilitated permanent placements of some completers in 2024.
- **The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)**, led by SBCWDB, aims to strengthen the ability of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents to acquire necessary skills to stabilize or advance in agricultural jobs or obtain employment in new industries.
- The **Farmworker Advancement Program (FAP)** aims to support farmworkers, children of farmworkers, and agriculture employers. The FAP aims to position farmworkers to obtain access to good-quality jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and offer opportunities for career advancement; as well as paid work experience, upskilling, supportive services and provide wrap around services.
- **The Farm Worker Resource Center (FWRC) Program**, led by SBCWDB, aimed to address barriers, and increase access to services and referrals for farmworkers, farmworkers' families, employers, and farmers via a mobile one-stop shop providing countywide outreach, including mental health referrals, job readiness training, childcare assistance, and Mexican Consulate Pop-up sites.

Beginning in 2025, SBCWDB, in partnership with the Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO) and other stakeholders, plans to commence building a comprehensive roster of workforce providers via an **ecosystem mapping initiative**. This initiative will be designed to support SBCWDB's goal of maximizing the efficiency of service delivery efforts.

The following sections of the Local Plan summarize SBCWDB's ongoing efforts and plans related to WIOA core and partner coordination, which conform to the objectives outlined in the SCC RPU WIOA Regional Plan 2025-2028.

WIOA Core and Required Partner Coordination

How Local Boards and AJCC partners will coordinate the services and resources identified in their MOU, as outlined in WIOA Memorandums of Understanding (WSD18-12).

The SBCWDB Local Workforce Development Area operates one comprehensive AJCC center located in Santa Maria, and one affiliate AJCC center located in Santa Barbara, each offering access to the following partner core programs. Partners continue to coordinate the following services and resources:

- WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs – provided by SBCWDB via a Program Operator Sub-awardee)
- WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser – provided by the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance – provided by EDD
- Unemployment Compensation – provided by EDD

The County's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs program, led by the County of Santa Barbara Department of Social Services, is administered in a location adjacent to the Santa Maria comprehensive AJCC. The close proximity of these two partner offices facilitates close service and resource coordination, in addition to broader collaborative planning efforts.

The remaining core partners, WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (provided by the State of California Department of Rehabilitation, or DOR), and WIOA II Adult Education and Family Literacy (provided through the local community colleges), though not co-located, remain readily available, through the AJCC system referral practices.

These partners, as well as other required AJCC partners, will continue to be available in-person and virtually. Examples of referral methods will continue to include telephone, email, and texting, and may also include instant messaging, live chat via Zoom or Facetime.

For Business Services, both the Santa Barbara Workforce Board and EDD have established contact points that coordinate Rapid Response between agencies. The SBCWDB has successfully established an internet AJCC portal to foster collaboration among the partners as previously identified in the 2023 Two-Year Local Plan Modification.

AJCC partners also continue to participate in cross training for staff to continuously improve the quality of referrals and coordination of resources.

How the Local Board and AJCC partners will work towards co-enrollment and common case management as a service delivery strategy, as outlined in Strategic Co-Enrollment – Unified Plan Partners (WSD19-09).

The AJCC partners have a strong history of collaboration, working together to refer and serve clients by coordinating services across various programs, including joint participation in grant initiatives. Despite the lack of a shared data system among service providers, partner case managers remain committed to strengthening relationships through referrals and cooperative efforts to address client needs, and SBCWDB is exploring the feasibility of creating a shared data system to further streamline coordination efforts.

Partners will continue leveraging their existing data systems to support co-enrollment rates and program uptake. For example, WIOA service providers will document partner services that clients participate in by entering all relevant information into CaUOBS using case notes and activity codes.

Additionally, SBCWDB has successfully established a universal release of information form for WIOA Title I providers. This form allows the faster sharing and transfer of client information between service providers and thereby enhances the service delivery experience.

How the Local Board and AJCC partners will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through technology and other means.

Building upon the rapid expansion of virtual service delivery options catalyzed by the pandemic, SBCWDB has continued to increase the availability of virtual service delivery to reach historically underserved populations in the county's remote areas. SBCWDB has also fully restored the availability of in-person services to pre-pandemic levels to accommodate community preferences in service delivery, while maintaining its comprehensive library of on-demand online workshops available on the AJCC website.

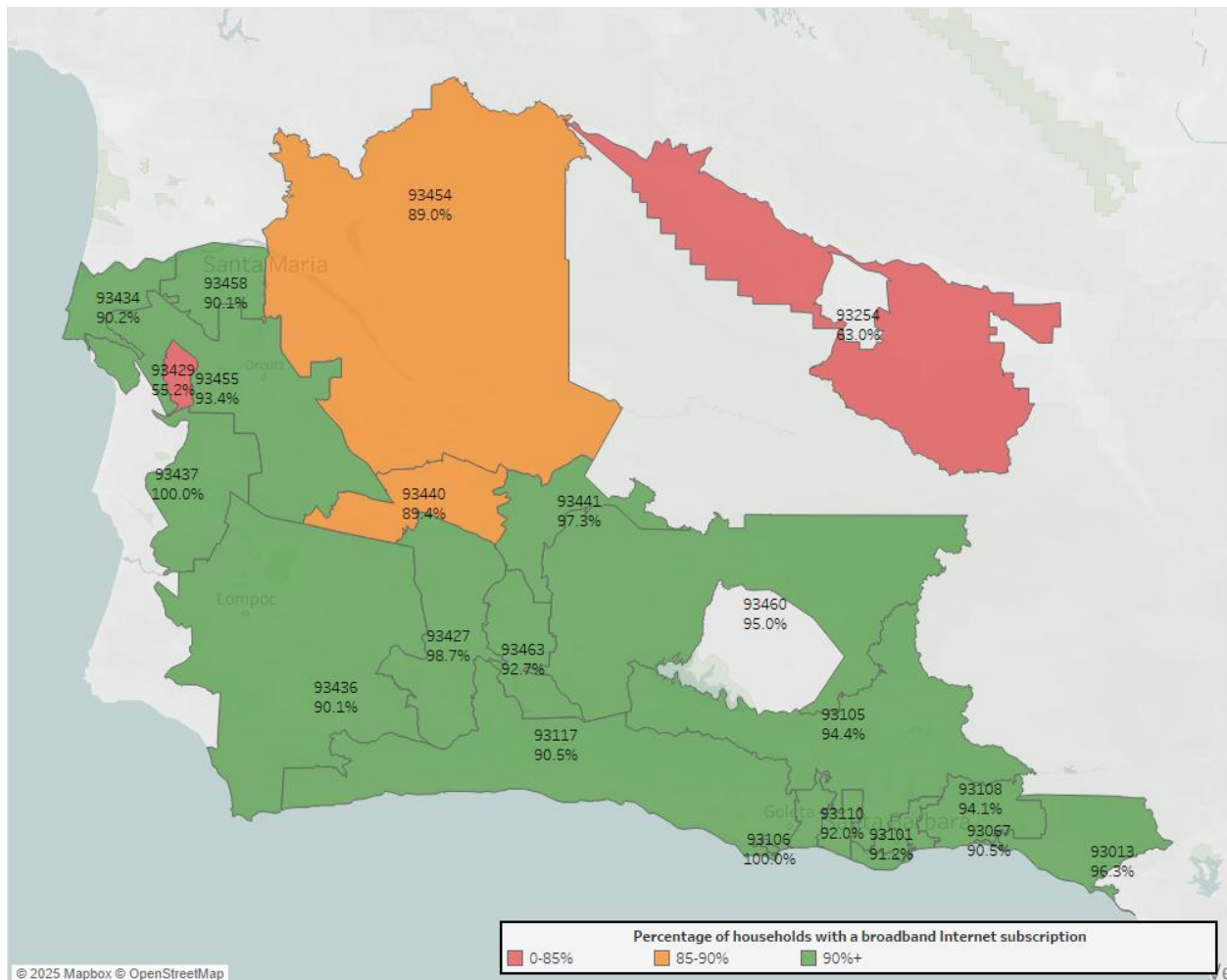
SBCWDB has also utilized Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership funding to continue providing basic computer skills workshops through the AJCCs at no cost to clients, and in underserved communities such as Lompoc and rural parts of Santa Maria. In addition, it has fully restored computer, printer, and fax machine access at its two locations. A mobile outreach and facilitation team will continue to offer these workshops in more remote areas of the county.

SBCWDB also participates in the Digital Equity Coalition for Santa Barbara County, which aligns efforts, convenes partners, and secures a fair share of state and federal funding for digital inclusion initiatives. The Digital Equity Coalition works to close the digital divide across all communities in Santa Barbara County by aligning resources, strategies, and partnerships.

Additionally, the FWRC provides workforce services as an extension of the AJCC through a mobile unit office. The mobile unit has been customized as an office on wheels with Internet access, desk space, and space to meet one-on-one with staff, where jobseekers can receive workforce services throughout the county, with an emphasis in remote areas in the county.

A critical first step to facilitating access to services is identifying regions with limited Internet access and prioritizing areas with the greatest connectivity needs. As shown in Figure 1 below, more than 90 percent of households have broadband Internet access in most zip codes in the county, but zip codes such as 93524 and 93429 have lower rates of broadband Internet access, with 63 percent and 55 percent of households having Internet access, respectively (Figure 3).¹¹

Figure 3. Santa Barbara County - Internet Access Map



¹¹ In the maps that follow, the unmapped coastal region corresponds to Vandenberg Space Force Base. Maps were constructed based on Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) assigned by the U.S. Census Bureau to allow for mapping, display, and geographic analyses of the USPS ZIP Codes dataset. Not all valid ZIP codes are represented by a ZCTA, and geographic areas meeting certain conditions may be left unassigned from ZCTA coverage. For more information, please see: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/zctas.html>

How the Local Board and AJCC partners will coordinate workforce and education activities with the provision of appropriate supportive services.

In the 2025-2028 Program Years, SBCWDB will continue to provide supportive services to individuals experiencing financial hardship, based on comprehensive individual assessments and the availability of WIOA funds. These services are designed to enable participation in workforce programs and activities, including securing and sustaining long-term employment in today's evolving job market.

At the time of enrollment, Adults and Dislocated Worker program participants work with staff to complete Objective Assessments and Individual Employment Plans, which are tools used to help individuals identify their strengths, challenges, career goals, and supportive service needs. Participants enrolled in training or education programs or who receive follow-up services under WIOA may be eligible for supportive services if comparable assistance is not available through other agencies. Supportive services may include expenses related to training and employment, and address barriers to successful participation in workforce initiatives.

Through strategic partnerships and guidance from the Local Board, WIOA workforce and education programs continue to provide an expansive range of supportive resources. These include subsidized childcare and dependent care, digital access support (such as Internet subsidies and technology devices), transportation assistance (e.g., bus passes, gas cards, mileage reimbursement, and automobile insurance), and coverage for books, uniforms, and specialized course equipment. Additionally, support for mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and access to assistive technology for individuals with disabilities remain a priority.

How the Local Board and AJCC partners will comply with WIOA Section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, assistive technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, as outlined in Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures (WSD17-01).

The Santa Maria comprehensive AJCC One-Stop Center continues to provide subleasing and co-location space for California Employment Development Department (CA EDD) programs. As in prior Program Years, the County of Santa Barbara conducted an architectural accessibility assessment to ensure continued property compliance with all state-mandated accessibility design standards. The Satellite AJCC One-Stop Center in Santa Barbara continues to be located in a CA EDD-operated building, and the CA EDD assumes all responsibility for fulfilling state-mandated accessibility design standards.

SBCWDB staff continue to be stationed at both AJCC One-Stop Centers, ensuring that appropriate notices, signage, technology, and materials are available to support individuals with disabilities. To maintain compliance and service quality, annual monitoring reviews are conducted for:

- The subrecipient serving as the AJCC One-Stop Operator and/or WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker program operator.
- The subrecipient operating the WIOA Title I Youth program.
- Eligible Training Providers headquartered in the Santa Barbara Local Area and approved by SBCWDB, as outlined in EDD Directive WSD 21-03.

If any compliance requirements are unmet, SBCWDB issues a corrective action plan with specified deadlines for resolution. These annual reviews also evaluate whether subrecipient staff received the required training to effectively serve individuals with disabilities, as specified in subaward agreements. The reviews ensure that all staff are informed about policies and practices that support reasonable accommodations, guaranteeing accessibility to all programs and services.

The SBCWDB works closely with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) with representatives that sit on the SBCWDB Full Workforce Board and Youth Committee. The DOR provides valuable support for the SBCWDB's programming through strategic guidance, fostering learning opportunities, and contribute to the initiatives of the workforce development board's goals.

State Strategic Partner Coordination

How the Local Board will coordinate with County Health and Human Services Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who access CalFresh Employment and Training services.

In 2025, the SBCWDB WIOA Title I programs, CalFresh, and CalWORKs (TANF) continue to be sited within the jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services (SBCDSS), and the SBCDSS remains the fiscal agent for WIOA Title I programs. The continuation of this integrated structure fosters seamless collaboration and coordination among programs, and monthly management and leadership meetings, as well as joint training and staff development opportunities for personnel across departments, continue to occur.

To further enhance service integration, cross-training opportunities remain a priority. WIOA staff continue to regularly participate in SBCDSS unit meetings to discuss program offerings, share best practices, and align strategies. This ongoing engagement ensures that frontline staff across agencies are well-equipped to support participants effectively.

How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Child Support Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who are non-custodial parents.

SBCWDB continues to coordinate closely with the Child Support Services of Santa Barbara County (CSS) and plans to further strengthen the operational relationship between these two entities in the 2025-2028 Program Years. As previously identified in the 2023 Local Plan update, SBCWDB, CSS, AJCC One-Stop Operators, and WIOA service providers have created an overarching referral process to connect current and future CSS program users with the wide array of services offered by SBCWDB and WIOA service providers. Additional operational enhancements include the creation of a release form to support information sharing between County organizations, which reduces barriers to coordinating user progress and any required employment and training verifications.

Furthermore, in partnership with the Child Support Services office and Public Defenders office, SBCWDB staff and workforce partners participate in Parenting Court. These monthly court hearings at the Lompoc Courthouse provide access to resources for parents which include workforce services, mental health services and legal help.

How the Local Board will coordinate with local Partnership Agreement partners, established in alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint, and other local, regional, and statewide partners who serve individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

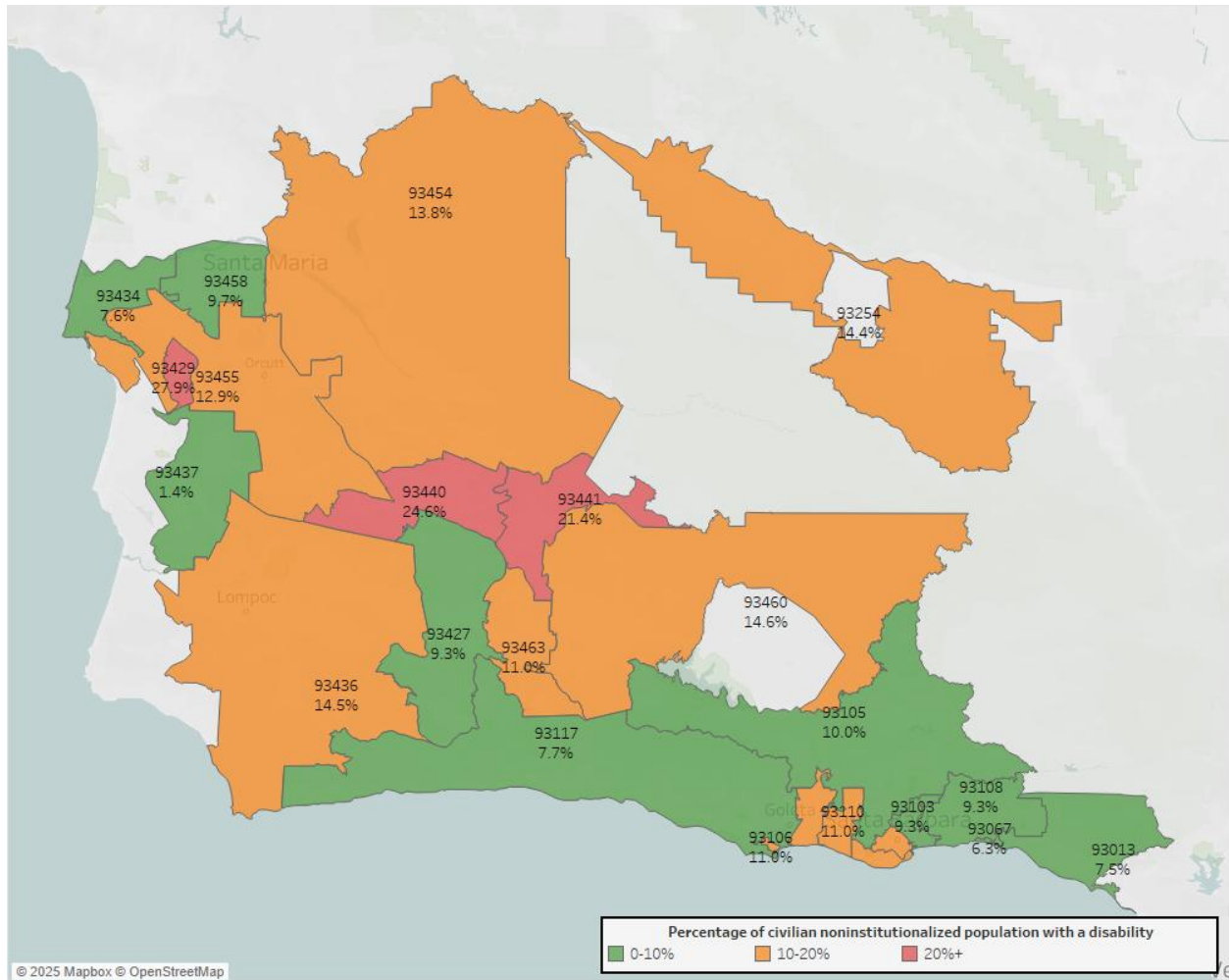
State of California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) staff are a non-co-located partner that provides staff training and facilitates current or potential service user inquiries.¹² The SBCWDB and DOR remain in close coordination regarding potential grant and funding opportunities, including a grant proposal from SBCWDB to leverage WIOA funds for shared users in the Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEP) program model.

DOR and SBCWDB also continue to coordinate monthly partner convenings to ensure that the appropriate staff are included and to use the opportunity to educate and inform all partners on serving individuals with disabilities, helping them to understand DOR services and eligibility categories. WIOA Title I cross-training will continue to be offered at these convenings. SBCWDB will continue to work with the DOR to develop CIE strategies for those individuals who can benefit from such opportunities.

A critical first step to ensuring equitable access to disability services in the county is to identify regions with higher needs for supportive services. As shown below, zip codes with higher concentration of disabled individuals include zip codes 93440, 93429, and 93441, with 24.6 percent, 27.9 percent, and 21.4 percent of individuals recorded as having a disability, respectively (Figure 4). SBCWDB will ensure that these subregions with high disability prevalence have adequate access to disability support services.

¹² While DOR staff are not co-located at any AJCCs, opportunities to do so may be explored in the future.

Figure 4. Santa Barbara County - Disability Map



How the Local Board will coordinate with community-based organizations and other local partners who serve individuals who are English language learners, foreign-born, and/or refugees.

SBCWDB and WIOA Title I programs operate at a site within the jurisdiction of the SBCDSS, whose program users may often be Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals, given that in Santa Barbara County, 40.5 percent of people aged 5 years and older speak English less than “very well” (representing nearly 68,000 residents).¹³

To address any potential communication barriers, contractors continue to provide translation services to LEP individuals and facilitate service delivery. The county has a number of educational institutions that provide English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to further address language disparities, including Santa Barbara City College and Allan Hancock College, among others.

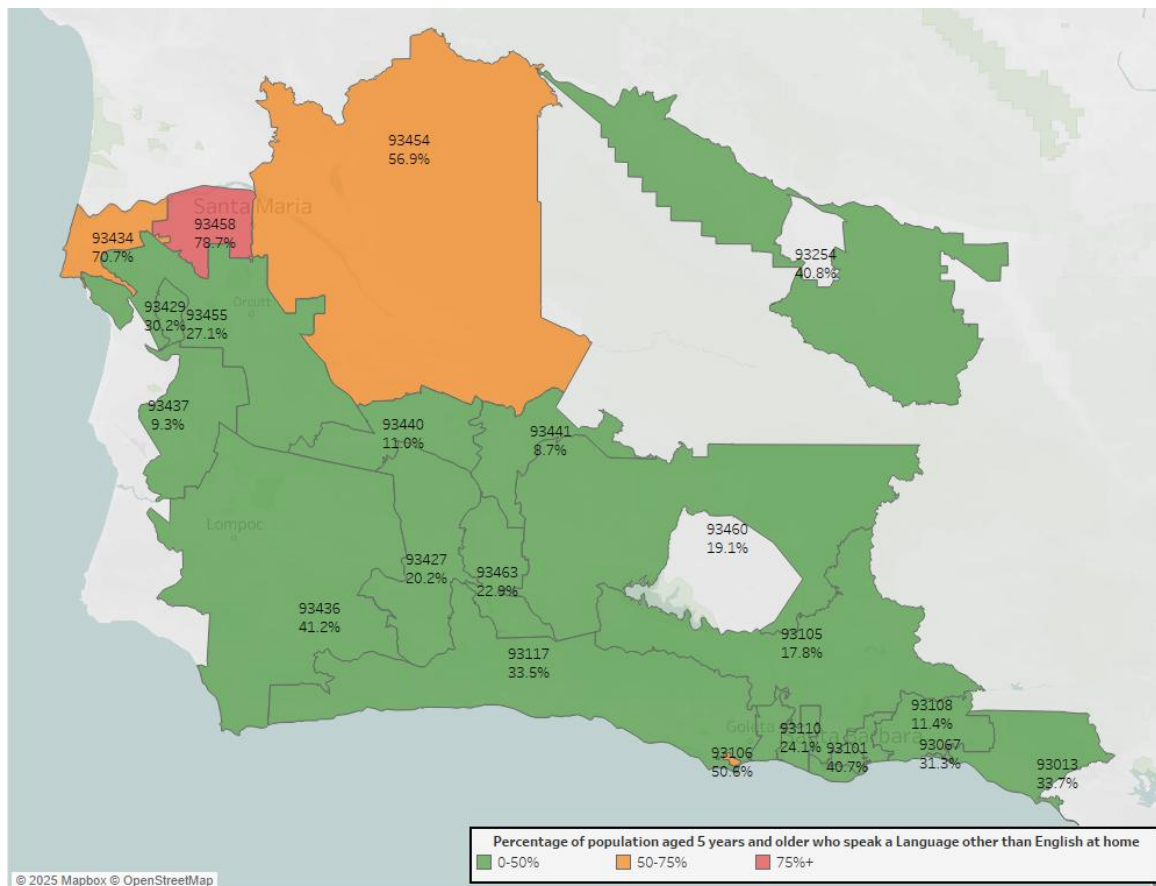
¹³ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2023).

As previously outlined, SBCWDB offers workforce services specifically aimed at English Language Learners, immigrant populations, and farmworkers, particularly those who primarily speak Spanish or indigenous languages, including various dialects of Mixteco. SBCWDB prioritizes hiring bilingual staff fluent in both Spanish and English, as well as two staff members proficient in Mixteco, who provide services through the FWRC, FAP, NFJP, and Go-Biz grants. Furthermore, to enhance accessibility to resources, SBCWDB has established a partnership with a local community-based organization, Herencia Indígena, to provide translation services at the AJCCs.

Approximately one in five county residents are born outside of the United States.¹⁴ To better serve this significant population of county residents, SBCWDB continues to forge additional working partnerships and referral processes with regional service providers.

Furthermore, to ensure superior levels of service for English language learners, foreign-born, and/or refugees, SBCWDB has identified areas of high need for English language fluency skills, i.e., zip codes with high concentrations of limited English proficiency. Zip codes with limited English fluency include zip codes 93434, 93458, and 93454, and are concentrated in the northern region of the county (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Santa Barbara County – English Fluency Map



¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2023).

How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Veteran Affairs, community-based organizations, and other local partners who serve veterans.

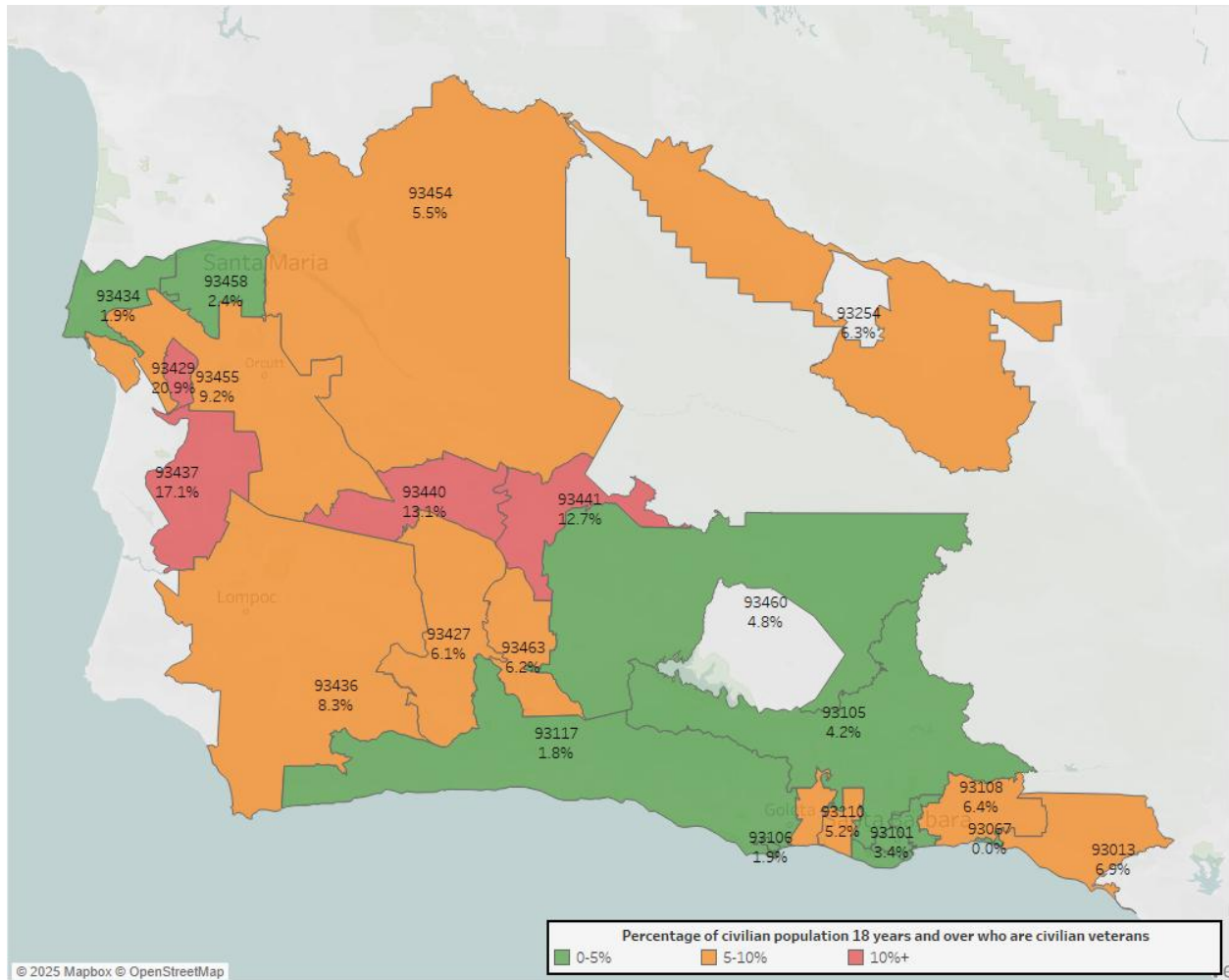
SBCWDB coordinates closely with Local Veteran Affairs, community-based organizations, and other local partners to ensure veterans receive comprehensive services and support. SBCWDB collaborates with these agencies to identify and address the specific needs of veterans within the county's workforce development system. This includes aligning resources and services, such as job training, career counseling, and placement services, to meet the unique needs of veterans transitioning to civilian employment.

In addition, a critical step toward ensuring equitable access to veteran services in Santa Barbara County involves identifying subregions with high veteran populations and limited access to resources. The eastern region of the county has a higher density of veterans. This includes zip codes such as 93437, 93429, and 93440 (Figure 6).

In January 2021, the SBCWDB Executive Directive was selected to participate in the Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) Honorary Commander program, which is designed to foster a strong, mutually beneficial relationship between the base and local communities. The program aims to enhance public understanding of VSFB's mission and serve as a platform for exchanging ideas, experiences and friendship between community leaders and the military community.

SBCWDB actively participates in local veteran initiatives, including the annual Santa Barbara County Veteran's Stand Down. In this event, SBCWDB and its program operators provide vital support by offering services to homeless veterans, such as food, shelter, clothing, employment assistance, and health screenings. Additionally, SBCWDB is involved in the Santa Barbara County Veteran's Collaborative, which fosters greater collaboration among public and private veteran-serving organizations to enhance services and support for Veterans.

Figure 6. Santa Barbara County - Veterans Map



How the Local Board will collaborate with the Strategic Planning partners to address environmental sustainability.

SBCWDB works to align workforce development programs with local and state sustainability goals, ensuring that training opportunities are available to prepare individuals for jobs that support environmental sustainability.

Santa Barbara City College (SBCC), in partnership with the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara (CFSB), the City of Santa Barbara, and the Economic Development Collaborative, launched The Ocean Collective in 2024, which aims to foster economic growth and to contribute to the long-term sustainability and resilience of the Central Coast via the development of robust career pathways in the Blue Economy; the establishment of strong partnerships with local and regional academic institutions, industry, and community organizations to provide mentoring, instruction, internships, and job placement; and the construction of a facility adjacent to Santa Barbara Harbor to support commercial fishing, maritime education, recreation, innovation, and economic

resilience along the Central Coast.¹⁵ SBCWDB intends to provide informal guidance to SBCC and The Ocean Collective to support development of the Blue Ocean curricula, to the extent possible.

SBCWDB and SLOWDB are also collaborating to explore career pathways to higher-wage jobs in the South Central Coast region – which may include Blue Economy jobs – via a separate research effort funded by the RERP. The results of this research will be released separately later in 2025.

¹⁵ The Blue Economy encompasses sustainable fishing, aquaculture, coastal conservation, and renewable ocean technologies.

WIOA Title I Coordination

Training and/or professional development that will be provided to frontline staff to gain and expand proficiency in digital fluency and distance learning.

SBCWDB continues to provide extensive classroom training opportunities as part of the formal onboarding process to supplement the staff development and training internally mandated by agreements between SBCWDB and WIOA Title I program operators. Additional online training opportunities continue to remain available through Workforce GPS, which provides best practices and other training lessons via online webinars. SBCDWB also continues to encourage frontline staff to utilize California Workforce Association (CWA) resources, among other resources.

Training and/or professional development that will be provided to frontline staff to ensure cultural competencies and an understanding of the experiences of trauma- exposed populations.

SBCWDB continues to mandate that all new program operators complete a 12-week Workforce and Career Development Certification upon activation, in addition to ongoing training requirements to facilitate programmatic goals. These ongoing training requirements include cultural competency and awareness training and training on service delivery to trauma-exposed populations.

SBCWDB's partner, Herencia Indigena, provides SBCWDB staff and program operator staff with Cultural Awareness Training, which provides an overview of traditions and beliefs of indigenous populations and fosters cultural awareness discussion to review differences that staff might encounter when serving customers.

SBCWDB and program operator staff also continue to participate in Human Center Design training that involves the process of learning how to create solutions that are specifically tailored to meet the needs, preferences and experiences of jobseekers. This training focuses on understanding and empathizing with jobseekers to ensure solutions are both practical and meaningful.

Lastly, SBCWDB and program operator staff continue to participate in California Workforce Association (CWA) EDD and CWDB conferences that support cultural competencies and serving jobseekers with barriers to employment.

How the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities, as outlined in Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities (WSD16-04).

SBCWDB continues to provide comprehensive Rapid Response (RR) services throughout the County to enable displaced or laid-off workers to return to the local labor force as quickly as possible. Layoff Aversion is an integral part of the County's Rapid Response offerings and requires both a deep understanding of current industry and economic trends in the region to identify

potential company layoffs and close working relationships with company executives to implement solutions for displaced workers.

SBCWDB will continue leveraging WIOA-funded business engagement activities, ensuring companies are supported with resources tailored to local industry needs. As part of Rapid Response services, SBCWDB will:

- **Connect displaced workers with hiring employers:** Actively screen other businesses hiring for similar roles to minimize downtime for affected workers.
- **Collaborate regionally:** Work with neighboring counties to uncover new employment opportunities and provide transition support to impacted employers and employees.
- **Engage strategically during business transitions:** Rapid Response services are available to support local businesses experiencing growth, decline, mergers, relocations, reorganizations, or closures.

A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the Local Area. *Note: This includes how the Local Board will ensure that priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other income low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as outlined in WIOA Adult Program Priority of Service (WSD24-06). Additional priority groups may need to be considered to serve the local area better. The Economic and Workforce Analysis section of the State Plan identifies workforce targets such as low-wage or high-unemployment industries that could be relevant to the local area's needs.*

In 2025, SBCWDB continues to receive funding under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to provide comprehensive employment and training services for Adult and Dislocated Workers. These services include:

- Job search and placement assistance
- Access to labor market information and career counseling
- Initial skills and needs assessments
- Customized training opportunities in in-demand industry sectors via programs listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)
- Follow-up services to ensure participants achieve long-term employment success

SBCWDB passed through WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding to Equus Career Services (“Equus”) ending June 30, 2022, and to Managed Career Solutions (“MCS”) starting July 1, 2023. These are for-profit entities, and SBCWDB’s subrecipients serving as AJCC One-Stop Operators, and the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Operators. A competitive procurement process is currently underway to identify the next sub-awardee to serve as the One-Stop Operator and to operate the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.

Through the One-Stop Operators, SBCWDB delivers services that prepare individuals and job seekers with the skills profiles needed to meet industry demand, emphasizing occupational skills training focused on priority industry sectors identified in the 2025-2028 Regional Plan for the South Central Coast region and broader career readiness and communication skills.

In addition to the aforementioned services, the County's AJCCs continue to provide basic and individualized career services, as follows:

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Services – Basic Services

- Eligibility determination
- Outreach, intake, and orientation
- Initial assessment of skill levels and supportive service needs
- Job search assistance (self-directed)
- Job search assistance (staff-assisted)
- Placement assistance (includes "Referred to Employment) (staff-assisted)
- Career Counseling (includes "staff-assisted career guidance")
- Providing info on in-demand sectors, occupations, or nontraditional employment)
- Provision of referrals and associated coordination of activities with other programs and services
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information
- Provision of information on job vacancies
- Provision of information on job skills necessary to fill vacancies
- Provision of information on local demand occupations, with earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs
- Provision of performance and program cost information for providers of education and training
- Provision of information on local performance
- Provision of information on the availability of supportive services or assistance
- Referral to supportive services
- Provision of information and meaningful assistance filing for Unemployment Insurance benefits
- Assistance establishing eligibility for financial aid

WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Services – Individualized Career Services

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments
- Development of Individual Employment Plan
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling
- Career planning
- Short-term prevocational services

- Internships and work experiences (including transitional jobs)
- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance
- English-language acquisition and integrated education and training programs
- Follow up services
- Training services

Basic services provided may be funded by WIOA Title I and/or Wagner Peyser funding, while individualized career services are provided based on eligibility determinations pursuant to WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker program requirements.

In compliance with WIOA Title I Adult Program mandates, SBCWDB ensures that priority of service is consistently applied. Program operator staff receive extensive training on priority requirements, which dictate that:

- SBCWDB should strive for 75% of newly enrolled adults receiving career or training services must belong to a priority service category, including:
 - Recipients of public assistance
 - Low-income individuals
 - Individuals who are basic skills deficient

Priority must be given to low-income individuals (including recipients of public assistance) and individuals who are deficient in basic skills in the provision of individualized career services as defined in WIOA section 3(5).

In alignment with Department of Labor (DOL) regulations, veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, under which WIOA programs fall. When multiple priority categories apply, the following order is observed:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who also meet WIOA priority criteria (public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, or basic skills deficient)
2. Non-veterans meeting WIOA priority criteria
3. Veterans and eligible spouses who do not meet WIOA priority criteria
4. Non-veterans who do not meet WIOA priority criteria

A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the Local Area, as outlined in WIOA Youth Program Requirements (WSD17-07).

Note: This includes any strategies for increasing the digital literacy and fluency of youth participants, including those with disabilities.

In order to receive services as an out-of-school (OS) youth, an individual must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Not attend any secondary or postsecondary school (not including Title II Adult Education, YouthBuild, Job Corps, high school equivalency programs, non-credit bearing postsecondary classes, dropout reengagement programs, or charter schools with federal and state workforce partnerships.
2. Age 16-24 years old.

In order to receive services as an in-school (IS) youth, an individual must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Attend school, including secondary and postsecondary school.
2. Age 14-21 years old (A youth with disabilities who is in an individualized education program at the age of 22 may be enrolled as an IS youth).

Goodwill Industries of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties continues to operate the WIOA Title I Youth Program for Santa Barbara County, bringing extensive experience in serving youth, particularly those with disabilities. In addition to its role in Santa Barbara County, Goodwill continues to operate the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Student Services Paid Work Experience Program for both Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, providing critical paid work experience opportunities for youth with disabilities.

Goodwill and any future program operator will deliver the following WIOA Youth Program design elements for every participant:

1. Objective Assessment:

- Comprehensive evaluation of academic levels, occupational skills, and service needs, including the evaluation of strengths and barriers to employment.

2. Individual Service Strategy (ISS):

- A personalized plan based on the objective assessment, outlining career pathways aligned with local labor market demands.

3. Key Program Components:

- Attainment of Secondary Credentials: Support for achieving a high school diploma, GED, or recognized postsecondary credential.

- Postsecondary Education Preparation: Guidance and training designed to prepare youth for college and vocational programs.
- Academic and Occupational Linkages: Strong integration of academic instruction with occupational education, facilitating the acquisition of industry-recognized credentials.
- Unsubsidized Employment Preparation: Training focused on preparing youth for long-term employment opportunities, including connections to employers in priority industry sectors.

Goodwill and any future program operator will continue to provide a full spectrum of WIOA-required youth services, ensuring youth participants have access to the resources needed to succeed in today's workforce:

- **Tutoring and Study Skills Training:** Academic support to improve literacy, numeracy, and overall educational performance.
- **Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery Services:** Programs designed to re-engage youth who have left traditional schooling, including flexible education pathways.
- **Occupational Skills Training:** Training in in-demand sectors, aligned with regional workforce needs and SCCRP priorities.
- **Leadership Development Opportunities:** Activities that encourage civic engagement, responsibility, and positive social behaviors.
- **Supportive Services:** Including transportation, childcare, housing assistance, and access to mental health services to remove barriers to participation.
- **Mentoring:** Adult mentoring lasting at least 12 months, supporting personal and professional development.
- **Guidance and Career Counseling:** Personalized career guidance focused on developing career pathways and achieving employment goals.
- **Financial Literacy Education:** Training in managing personal finances, budgeting, and understanding financial aid opportunities.
- **Entrepreneurial Skills Training:** Equipping youth with the knowledge and skills to explore self-employment opportunities and understand the fundamentals of running a business.
- **Labor Market and Employment Information:** Access to up-to-date information about regional labor market trends, high-demand occupations, and employment opportunities.
- **Postsecondary Education Preparation:** Support in transitioning to higher education, including assistance with applications, financial aid, and academic readiness programs.

SBCWDB will maintain a robust monitoring framework to ensure that all WIOA Title I Youth Program services are delivered effectively and meet federal, state, and local performance standards. Regular monitoring activities will include on-site visits and performance evaluations, participant feedback collection to inform continuous improvement, and data-driven reporting to track outcomes, including credential attainment, employment rates, and median earnings.

The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official (CEO) or the Governor and the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

SBCWDB continues to oversee the disbursement of WIOA Title I funds through a transparent and compliant process that ensures fiscal accountability and programmatic integrity. The disbursement of grants, including payment of invoices, subgrants, and awarded contracts, follows structured procedures determined by the Chief Elected Official (CEO) and involves the following key entities:

1. **Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services (SBCDSS) Fiscal Unit** – Serving as the fiscal agent for WIOA funds.
2. **Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board (SBCWDB)** – Overseeing programmatic compliance.
3. **Santa Barbara County Auditor/Controller (SBCA/C)** – Ensuring compliance with countywide fiscal policies and processing payments.

Disbursements occur following the completion of required procurement processes, as detailed below, and in alignment with sub-grant agreements and contracts. The following steps outline the payment approval workflow:

1. Invoice Review for Program Compliance:

- SBCWDB management reviews invoices to ensure they meet all programmatic requirements and authorizes payment.

2. Fiscal Compliance Review:

- SBCDSS fiscal unit management reviews invoices for fiscal compliance and approves payments accordingly.

3. Executive Director Approval:

- The SBCWDB Executive Director conducts a final review and approval of all invoices.

4. Entry into Financial System:

- SBCDSS fiscal unit staff enter approved invoices into FIN (the County of Santa Barbara's financial system).

- An SBCDSS fiscal unit supervisor then approves these entries within FIN.

5. Electronic Payment Processing:

- SBCA/C staff and supervisors process the invoices in FIN for electronic payment to sub-awardees and contractors.

To award sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities, SBCWDB follows procurement policies and procedures jointly developed with the County of Santa Barbara and the fiscal agent, SBCDSS, in compliance with federal, state, and local procurement guidelines, including the Federal Uniform Administrative Guidance (2 CFR § 200.320).

As previously identified in the 2021-2024 Local Plan, SBCWDB continues to adhere to all procurement compliance directives for both micro-purchase thresholds (\$10,000) and simplified acquisition thresholds (\$250,000). To procure and award contracts for WIOA Title I activities greater than the simplified acquisition thresholds, SBCWDB continues to use the competitive processes outlined in the Federal Uniform Administrative Guidance (2 CFR § 200.320).

A description of how the Local Board fulfills the duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider as outlined in Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers (WSD22-13). This should include the name(s) and role(s) of all entities with whom the Local Board contracts.

SBCWDB continues to fulfill its responsibilities as the AJCC Operator and Career Services Provider through a transparent and competitive procurement process. This process involves issuing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that result in service agreements approved by SBCWDB and awarded by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

The development of comprehensive plans entails building broad and inclusive partnerships with regional and local entities in a variety of sectors. This includes engaging with employers, labor organizations, and community-based organizations as well as WIOA core, required, and strategic program partners. Utilizing input from the communities themselves ensures the inclusion of person-centered approaches to addressing multifaceted barriers to employment.

Stakeholders participating in the planning processes include, but are not limited to, employers, labor organizations, education partners, human services and housing partners, as well as community-based organizations that provide services to target populations such as the following: justice-involved, English language learners, refugees, immigrants, youth, older adults, veterans, people with disabilities, and any other entities supporting historically unserved or underserved communities.

The following table summarizes the SBCWDB's efforts to achieve meaningful stakeholder involvement and community engagement in developing the 2025-2028 WIOA Local Plan.

Table 1: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

| Mode of Outreach | Target of Outreach | Summary of Attendance | Comments |
|---|---|--|--|
| Pathways to Success: Early College & Employer Engagement Event (in-person) hosted by Allan Hancock College in collaboration with the SBCWDB, 3/4/25 | Santa Barbara stakeholders involved in and/or interested in regional and local education and workforce development planning efforts | Santa Barbara County industry professionals, CTE Advisory Committee members, high school educators, and community partners | Presentation outlining draft research findings were presented in-person, and feedback obtained from participants was integrated into the local and regional plans. |
| SBCWDB Board Meeting (virtual and in-person), 3/28/25 | SBCWDB members and public | SBCWDB members | Meeting information posted on SBCWDB website. Virtual presentation of key findings from the local and regional plans delivered via Zoom. No comments were received on the draft plans. |
| SBCWDB Newsletter | SBC key stakeholders | SBC key stakeholders | Informing stakeholders of availability of plans for review and comment. |
| SBCWDB Website | General public | General public | Draft Local Plan published on WDB website for a 30-day public comment period prior to filing. |

Public Comments Disagreeing with the Local Plan

The draft WIOA Local Plan was published on the SBCWDB website for a 30-day public comment period prior to filing. No public comments were received that disagreed with the Local Plan.

Signature Page

By signing below, the Local Board Chairs request approval of the Santa Barbara County 2025-2028 Local Plan.

Local Board Chair



Signature

Glenn Morris

Name

Santa Barbara County Workforce
Development Board Chair

Title

4/25/2025

Date

Local Chief Elected Official

Signature

Name

Title

Date