

**TRI-COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)  
5-YEAR LOCAL AREA PLAN UPDATE  
FOR  
HANCOCK, PENOBSCOT and PISCATAQUIS COUNTIES**

In April of 2001, the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board issued its five-year local plan in accordance with State of Maine Workforce Investment Act Planning Guidelines. As a result of that submission, the Maine Jobs Council and the Governor approved the Tri-County Local Area Plan. This update will address any changes in the local area plan and address additional information requested by the Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Employment Services in their letter dated September 26, 2001.

**1. Local Area Needs, Labor Market Analysis, and Assessment of Workforce Investment Activities and Assets.**

*The analysis of the local labor market sets the stage for the Board's approach to mapping out strategies to achieve its vision over the next five years. The analysis of employer needs and the occupational outlook included in the Tri-County WIA Plan was fairly comprehensive, but there was no quantification of the workforce development assets in the local area or the unmet need that the system can strategically address.*

*Please provide a general description of the opportunities and obstacles facing both job seekers and employers. Related to this description, please provide a connection to meeting customer needs and the strategic goals identified by the Board.*

Over the last year, actual economic changes and the availability of new economic data (2000 U.S. Census Data and Workforce Profiles conducted by USM's Center for Business and Economic Research) in the Tri-County area shed additional light on workforce development issues in the region.

To begin, the Tri-County area has seen a loss of 1,713 jobs since January 2001. The majority of these job losses occurred in the manufacturing sector, which typically pays higher wages and better benefit packages than those in the service sector where the job growth in the region has been. Not only were good paying jobs lost, but many of those employed in these manufacturing sectors have low levels of education and training making it more difficult to transition to other employment in the region. The loss of spending power from this population has also had an indirect impact on many of the retail providers in the area as evidenced by the closing of many local stores throughout the region. Even today, as one walks through the largest retail establishment – the Bangor Mall, it is amazing to see the number of vacant storefronts. A condensed listing of some of the job losses by employer is listed below:

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Workers Affected</u>
Oshram Sylvania	Bangor	15
Dexter Shoe Company	Newport	92
IP Sawmills	Costigan and Passadumkeag	263
Pleasant River Lumber	Dover-Foxcroft	33
Garelick Farms	Bangor	26
Olamon Industries	Old Town	49
Beaver Wood Joint Venture	Chester	21
Jordan's Meats	Bangor	80
Envisionet	Orono	96
Guilford of Maine	Guilford	51
Bangor Daily News	Bangor	19
Ames Department Store	Newport	20
Dexter Shoe Company	Dexter	582
Saucony Shoe	Bangor	107
Millinocket Regional Hospital	Millinocket	20
Ansewn Shoe Company	Bangor	65

In addition, the 2000 U.S. Census data that is available sheds light on some trends in the Tri-County region. To begin, the population in the region is aging and the region is losing its younger families and youth. From 1990 to 2000, the three counties as well as the State saw median age increase an average of 5 years:

<u>County</u>	<u>1990 Median Age</u>	<u>2000 Median Age</u>
Hancock	35.8	40.7
Penobscot	32.5	37.2
Piscataquis	36.5	42.1
Maine	33.9	38.6

During the same period, Penobscot and Piscataquis counties experienced a large decline in population under 18 while Hancock County experienced a slight gain:

<u>County</u>	<u>1990 Pop. &lt; 18</u>	<u>2000 Pop. &lt; 18</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Hancock	11,335	11,543	+ 1.8%
Penobscot	35,611	33,100	- 7.1%
Piscataquis	4,880	4,034	-17.3%

An aging population and a loss of youth or little gain will pose policy implications in the future. Some of these issues will concern continued medical and elder care, sustainability of the existing

school structure, workforce availability and population attraction and youth retention to mention a few.

In 2001, the University of Southern Maine Center for Business and Economic Research conducted Household and Employer surveys throughout the State to develop workforce profiles for specific counties/regions in the State. The surveys covered five major topic areas: Employment mobility and recruiting trends; Unemployment and underemployment; Employment costs, including both pay and benefits; Education, training and skills; and Commuting. A great deal of the data from these surveys discusses opportunities and concerns facing both the job seeker and employers in the region as requested by the State. In the Tri-County region, the area was broken up into four areas: Hancock County, Bangor Region, Piscataquis County – Western Penobscot County Region and North Central Maine. Below is a shortened synopsis of the USM data for each of the areas.

#### Hancock County:

- Hancock County is dominated by the trade and services industries, Finance-Insurance-Real Estate, Manufacturing and Construction also play an important role.
- **82% of all employers have less than 19 employees (60% - 1 to 9, 21% - 10 to 19).**
- 12.7% of survey respondents indicate they hold more than one job.
- **Hancock County employers report that scientific-technical and skilled manufacturing positions are the most difficult to fill, with positions vacant for an average of 12 weeks.** Professional and managerial positions take about 6 weeks.
- Employers who recruit employees from more than one hour away report few major obstacles. **However, housing availability and costs are becoming a growing concern.**
- The quality of life in the region is generally highly rated. Areas not receiving high ratings include transportation, utility costs and housing costs and availability.
- **Most important issues employers face in recruiting. Employers express greatest concern about finding employees, especially those with particular skills.** Finding employees with basic skills is not a primary concern. **Providing sufficient pay is also a concern.**
- Experience after permanent lay-off. 28% of the household survey respondents indicated that they have lost jobs to permanent lay-offs or business closings. Finding a new job was relatively easy with 70% finding a new position in less than 3 months. Nearly 80% of these people indicated the new job was at least as good as or better than the job they lost.
- 27% of the respondents indicate they are self-employed.
- **Wages by Job Classification. Most wage earners report receiving wages in excess of \$10.00 an hour, with more than one fifth receiving wages in excess of \$15.00 an hour.**
- **Salaries are generally greater than \$30,000 per year, with the most common salary range between \$30,000 and \$39,000.**
- The most common benefit offered by firms is vacations. 54% of firms responding to the employer survey indicated that they offer health insurance to full time employees; another 20% indicate they are considering adding health insurance.
- Child Care – About 27% of respondents indicate they require childcare in order to be able to work, but only 4% indicate that their employers provide financial assistance for childcare.

Of those who do require childcare, 76% indicate that it is somewhat to very hard to find adequate childcare.

- Few firms in Hancock County have unions.
- 64% of respondents indicate they use a computer at work.
- Computer Use: Employer Survey. About half of firms have less than 25% of their employees using computers, but fully one quarter have all their employees using computers. 56% of employers say getting employees with the required computer skills is easy or very easy.
- Employers report no major difficulties getting required skills (computer skills, interaction skills, reading skills, analytic/math skills, writing skills and communication skills)
- **Less than 45% of respondents run their own internal training program. By far the most common area of training is in company specific operations, with computer and technical subjects next with less than 20% of firms offering training in these areas.**
- Educational attainment. The workforce in the region is highly educated with more than 97% of the respondents indicating that they have completed high school or more.
- Commuting. The mean commute time is 22 minutes. There is a positive association between increasing commute times and increased pay.

#### Bangor Region:

- As one of the three metropolitan areas in Maine, the Bangor region is heavily concentrated in the retail and service industries, including transportation and utilities.
- **80% of all employers have less than 19 employees (64% 1 to 9, 16% 10 to 19). 12% of employers have over 100 employees (8% 100 to 249, 4% over 250)**
- 8.6% of survey respondents indicate they hold more than one job.
- **Employers report the most difficulty finding skilled trade and technician positions, with an average of 10 weeks to fill positions. Professional and management were the next most difficult. Skilled manufacturing positions were the quickest to fill, reflecting the region's strong manufacturing base.**
- Evaluation of recruiting problems. Employers reported housing availability, transportation and the quality of life were strong selling points for the region. **Offering salaries competitive with salaries elsewhere were seen as the largest problem, but not significant on the rating scale.**
- The quality of life in the region is generally highly rated. Areas not receiving high ratings include concern about the personal income tax, the availability of arts & culture, transportation, and utility costs.
- **Most important issues employers face in recruiting. Employers express greatest concern about finding employees, especially those with particular skills. Providing adequate pay to recruit employees was also a concern. Providing benefits and involving and training current employees were also concerns of employers.**
- Experience after permanent lay-off. 35% of the household survey respondents indicated that they have lost jobs to permanent lay-offs or business closings. Finding a new job was relatively easy with 57% finding a new position in less than 3 months. Nearly 70% of these people indicated the new job was at least as good as or better than the job they lost.
- 16% of the respondents indicate they are self-employed.

- **Wages by Job Classification.** Most wage earners report receiving wages in excess of \$7.00 an hour, with the most common between \$10.00 and \$12.99 an hour.
- **Salaries are generally greater than \$30,000 per year, with the most common salary for professional, management and supervisors at or above the \$40's.**
- The most common benefit offered by firms is health insurance. 66% of firms responding to the employer survey indicated that they offer health insurance to full time employees. A large number of firms are increasing benefits, including health insurance despite the rising costs.
- Child Care – About 15% of respondents indicate they require childcare in order to be able to work, but only 5% indicate that their employers provide financial assistance for childcare. Of those who do require childcare, 70% indicate that it is somewhat to very hard to find adequate childcare.
- Few firms in the Bangor region have unions, approximately 5.6%.
- 69% of respondents indicate they use a computer at work.
- Computer Use: Employer Survey. 41% of firms have less than 25% of their employees using computers, but more than 28% indicate that 100% of employees use computers. 75% of employers say getting employees with the required computer skills is very to somewhat easy.
- Employers report finding employees with adequate basic skills is often a problem, especially with mathematical/analytic and writing skills. 52% of employers indicate that they must do remedial training for more than half of new hires.
- **63% of respondents run their own internal training program. By far the most common area of training is in computer and technical subjects, with company-specific operations and information and customer service the next most common area.**
- Educational attainment. The workforce in the region is highly educated with more than 96% of the respondents indicating that they have completed high school or more. A third of the workforce is educated beyond the Associates degree level.
- Commuting. The mean commute time is 20.5 minutes. There is a positive association between wages and commuting time.

#### North Central Maine :

- Employment in the region is more concentrated in the manufacturing industries, particularly because of the forest products industry, than in the state as a whole.
- **85% of all employers have less than 19 employees (73% 1 to 9, 12% 10 to 19).**
- **Employees in this region tend to stay in their positions and with their current employers for long periods.**
- 11% of survey respondents indicate they hold more than one job.
- **Employers report the most difficulty filling professional positions, with an average of more than 14 weeks to fill the positions. Trade and technical positions and management positions were the next most difficult.**
- Evaluation of recruiting problems. **Offering competitive salaries to recruit employees from outside the region was clearly the largest problem. Employers who had recruited workers from outside the region reported that finding employment for spouses and ease of relocation were issues.**

- The quality of life in the region is generally highly rated. Areas not receiving high ratings include concern about the personal income tax, the availability of arts & culture, transportation, and utility costs.
- **Most important issues employers face in recruiting. Employers expressed providing adequate pay and finding employees with particular skills the most important issues in building their workforce. Providing benefits and involving and training current employees were also concerns of employers.**
- Those who have lost jobs as a result of permanent layoff or business closing have had a hard time finding new employment. Over 60% report that it took a year or more to get employment after their last layoff. Once they find a job, over 70% of these people indicated the new job was at least as good as or better than the job they lost.
- 15% of the respondents indicate they are self-employed.
- **Wages by Job Classification. The most common wages paid are between \$9.00 and \$10.00 an hour with half making over \$10.00 an hour. This was true for both skilled manufacturing and service occupations. The only jobs paying less than \$7.00 an hour were in the retail and food service occupations.**
- **Salaries are not high in the region. 75% of respondents earned salaries less than \$40,00 a year with most in the \$30,000 to \$39,999 range.**
- The most common benefit offered for full-time and part-time employees by firms is vacations. Just over half of firms responding to the employer survey indicated that they offer health insurance to full time employees.
- Child Care – About 11% of respondents indicate they require childcare in order to be able to work, but only 3% indicate that their employers provide financial assistance for childcare. Of those who do require childcare, 67% indicate that it is somewhat to very hard to find adequate childcare.
- A union at work represents 33% of respondents.
- 60% of respondents indicate they use a computer at work.
- Computer Use: Employer Survey. 48% of firms have less than 50% of their employees using computers regularly, and 39% indicate employees use computers regularly. 60% of employers say getting employees with the required computer skills is relatively easy.
- Employers report finding employees with adequate basic skills is often a concern, especially with mathematical/analytic and computing skills. 58% of employers indicate that they must do remedial training for more than half of new hires.
- **54% of respondents run their own internal training program. By far the most common area of training is in computer and technical subjects, with company-specific operations the next most common areas.**
- Educational attainment. The workforce in the region is highly educated with more than 95% of the respondents indicating that they have completed high school or more. The proportion of bachelor's degree holders is higher than in the state as a whole.
- Commuting. The mean commute time is 19 minutes. Commute times rise with wages above \$7.00 an hour, but salary levels do not appear to affect commute times.

Piscataquis County-Western Penobscot County Region:

- Employment in the region is more concentrated in the manufacturing industries, particularly because of the forest products and textile industries.
- **89% of all employers have less than 19 employees (81% 1 to 9, 8% 10 to 19).**
- **Employees in this region tend to stay in their positions and with their current employers for long periods.**
- 8.1% of survey respondents indicate they hold more than one job.
- **Employers report the most difficulty filling managerial professional positions, with an average of more than 6 weeks to fill the positions.**
- Evaluation of recruiting problems. **Offering competitive salaries to recruit employees from outside the region was clearly the largest problem. Employers who had recruited workers from outside the region reported that finding employment for spouses was also an issue. There is also some concern about housing and transportation.**
- The quality of life in the region is generally highly rated. Areas not receiving high ratings include concern about the personal income tax, the availability of arts & culture, transportation, and utility costs.
- **Most important issues employers face in recruiting. Employers expressed providing adequate pay and finding employees with particular skills the most important issues in building their workforce. Finding employees in a timely way and finding employees with basic skills is also a concern .**
- Experience after permanent lay-off. 32.7% of the household survey respondents indicated that they have lost jobs to permanent lay-offs or business closings. Finding a new job was relatively easy with 54% finding a new position in less than 3 months. Nearly 70% of these people indicated the new job was at least as good as or better than the job they lost. Those who have lost jobs as a result of permanent layoff or business closing have had a hard time finding new employment. Over 60% report that it took a year or more to get employment after their last layoff. Once they find a job, 46.3% of these people indicated the new job was at least as good as or better than the job they lost.
- 16% of the respondents indicate they are self-employed.
- **Wages by Job Classification. The most common wages in this region are split in two equal categories: one-third is between \$7.00 and \$9.99 an hour and the other third between \$10.00 and \$12.99 an hour.**
- **Salaries are reasonably high in this region. The most common salary in the region is between \$50,000 and \$75,000. About half the report salaries are between \$30,000 and \$49,999.**
- Child Care – About 29% of respondents indicate they require childcare in order to be able to work, but only 3% indicate that their employers provide financial assistance for childcare. Of those who do require childcare, 81% indicate that it is somewhat to very hard to find adequate childcare.
- A union at work represents 15% of respondents.
- 54% of respondents indicate they use a computer at work.
- Computer Use: Employer Survey. 46% of firms have less than 25% of their employees using computers, but more than 20% indicate that 100% of employees use computers. More than 50% of employers say getting employees with computer skills is very to somewhat easy.

- Employers do not indicate concern with the skills of new employees. Over 50% of employers indicate that they must do remedial training for more than half of new hires.
- **Less than 35% of respondents run their own internal training program. By far the most common area of training with company-specific operations.**
- Educational attainment. The workforce in the region is highly educated with more than 92% of the respondents indicating that they have completed high school or more.
- Commuting. The mean commute time is 23 minutes. The majority of commute times are over 30 minutes, so there is a definite relationship between length of commute and wage levels.

In reviewing this data, even though there are some differences in the regions in the Tri-County area, there are also some familiar themes. In this region, while there is a high level of people that have graduated from high school, few overall have obtained post-secondary degrees. And most employers state the level of basic skills that most people bring to the workplace is satisfactory. Many people want to further their education, but cite time and resources as the largest impediment. A large issue to some going to work is the unavailability of adequate childcare. And most people travel over 45 minutes to an hour each day getting to and from work.

Employers are continuously having difficulty finding skilled workers and are concerned about not being able to offer competitive wages to find the employees needed. Because the majority of employers in the region have less than 10 employees, many employers do not offer any in-house training other than those that are specific to the operations of the job. And since the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy, in this region we are still seeing market volatility with continuing lay-offs and various sectors yet seeing a recovery.....which leads in essence to a lack of jobs to select from for those that have been dislocated. And in the past year, we've lost a lot of the high-wage jobs that were discussed above.

So, in this region, while we have a high quality of life with little crime and vast recreational opportunities; we still continue to battle the lack of a highly skilled workforce, which often prevents us from bringing in high paying jobs. And when we do get a new business in the region, often the existing trained employees in the area fill these new positions, which causes backfill issues for the existing employers.

However, this region has been able to manage through this change and still be productive in attracting new businesses or assisting start-ups due to the strong collaboration between the workforce development system, State and Federal agencies, economic development system, educational system and private business sector. Because the Tri-County region is served by many of the same service providers in each county, strong relationships have developed by the above entities that allow us to be responsive to both the individual and employers needs as they arise. The CareerCenter, Department of Human Service, CAP agencies, the Eastern Maine Technical College, University of Maine, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, the Adult Education providers and many other agencies have been able to come together to offer integrated services as needed. We have developed strong referral mechanisms and operating agreements to ensure that our limited resources get the largest return on investment. The Tri-County LWIB will work to strengthen these partnerships and look at the larger issues affecting this region as will be discussed in the next section of this update.

**2. Describe how the LWIB will be involved in achieving the vision and goals, which will be identified in Phase III.**

*At the time the plan was submitted, the Board was undergoing a process for deciding on a set of strategic goals. Please provide a summary of the Tri-County Workforce Board's vision, statement of goals, action plans and benchmarks for the remainder of the 5-year Strategic Plan.*

Over the past year the Tri-County Workforce Board has worked with a facilitator to develop its mission, vision and goals. Below are the Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Action Steps that the Tri-County WIB will engage in over the next year.

**TRI-COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Tri-County Workforce Investment Board will direct the use of employment resources for the benefit of our citizens and current and future employers by:**

- **Nurturing Partnerships**
- **Working in conjunction with local economic development initiatives and**
- **Being mindful of the needs of the local economy**

**VISION STATEMENT**

**The Tri-County Workforce Investment area will have a skilled and diverse workforce, creating opportunities for employers and employees, maintaining a high quality of life sustainable over changing economic conditions.**

**GOAL STATEMENTS**

**Goal 1: The Tri-County Workforce Investment Board will target/identify skills needed and desired by businesses in the region.**

Each quarter a number of efforts will be undertaken to assimilate data to report to the board and take to the service providers to structure programs to respond to industry needs. These efforts may include but are not limited to:

- a. Business Focus groups completed by CareerCenter Employer Assistance Representatives.
- b. Updates by MDOL Labor Market Information Specialists
- c. Business and Chamber of Commerce visits
- d. Analysis of studies and surveys in the local area.

**Goal 2: The Tri-County Workforce Investment Board will conduct a marketing plan to let the community know our mission, vision and goals.**

The following efforts will be undertaken over the next 12 to 18 months:

- a. Completion of a Tri-County WIB Brochure and letterhead
- b. Sponsorship of the annual Bangor Chamber of Commerce Job Fair/Career Day as well as sponsoring local CareerCenter Job Fairs
- c. Completion of a number of newsletters/articles highlighting programs and events
- d. Development of a marketing presentation to give to public groups in the area
- e. Market our services and programs to the incumbent worker population

**Goal 3: The Tri-County Workforce Investment Board in conjunction with the Title I Service Provider will draft a concept paper that outlines a service progression delivery model in terms of three groups: Entrants, Transitioners and Advancers.**

This concept paper to be completed in the next year will outline a common language that can be shared with other systems in terms of service delivery and programs to facilitate collaborative working relationships by breaking down language barriers and constraints that currently exist.

**Goal 4: The Tri-County Workforce Investment Board will coordinate with other LWIBs to impact legislation, market ourselves and promote awareness.**

Over the next year, the Chair of the Board and a designated CLEO will participate in quarterly conference calls/meetings with other local representatives and designated Maine Jobs Council members to address statewide workforce issues.

The Board Chair and CLEO will report back to the Board quarterly and this information combined with quarterly business needs will be used to structure upcoming program policy and events.

**Goal 5: The Tri-County Workforce Investment Board will support initiatives that address resource gaps in the local area.**

This goal became a priority during the Mission/Vision/Goal discussion when it was noted that many local businesses need skilled workers, that the local area had many workers without the skills that businesses needed, and the lack of resources to address a number of these problems. Some of the problem areas cited were the cost of implementing new training programs at local training institutions, the lack of non-traditional training times offered for occupational skill training, the lack of business/public school interaction to make students aware of local area needs among others.

One program often discussed was the Governor's Training Initiative (GTI) as a program that should be supported and expanded and possibly changed to include the purchase of equipment.

**During the next year, the Tri-County Board will ask the GTI representative to present the GTI program, discuss funding (the board would certainly support/expand) and see what changes could be legislatively implemented to support local area needs.**

Each year a review of goal accomplishments will be reviewed and expanded or new goals will be established from the extensive listing developed this year. Again, the document created by the Tri-County WIB is a living document that will be referred to often and modified as necessary to meet the needs of the changing local economy. A more detailed listing of items that the Board will continually reference is listed below in themes areas that were developed:

## 1. **Economic Development**

- Encourage coordinated economic development for region and link to it.
- More partners involved in economic development.
- Something like "Rapid Response" for business openings / expansion
- Missing link – business growth / training / economic development
- "Expansion Alert" for training programs (the opposite of a WARN notice)
- Mechanism (email / other?) for economic development "staff" to let workforce development people know what's taking place.
- Mechanism to provide service to economic development (skills inventory / recruitment...)
- Create an opportunity to plan together / cycle of business training.
- Sustainable employment and wages for the region.

## 2. **Education**

- Business and workforce development persons go into the schools (K-12)
- Training providers need to be better connected to Career Center programs / resources.
- Early intervention for "non-college" bound high school students.
- K-12, MTCS and UMS work together as "one"
- Providing career fairs / job fairs (expansive company lists)
- Go into K-12 with Career Centers, business, education to present opportunities on work/careers (strategic approach).
- Work on resource gap (businesses need skilled workers; current workers without those skills; no resources to address/solve this problem.
  - NOTE: Flag under Economic Development also
- Encourage more work-based learning opportunities for current workers (for business and workers, tax incentives? Other?)
- Mechanisms to encourage everyone to access educational opportunities.

- Emphasis on Career Center’s responsibility to link to education.
- Use the Chamber’s “Bridges” model to get students into businesses.
- Promote post-secondary education opportunities.

### 3. **Business**

- Support the needs of existing businesses.
- Some specific contact with every business in Tri-County region by Career Centers (for example: Career Center info sent out with business tax mailings)
- Develop approach so that businesses see Career Centers as a viable resource.
- LWIB review and validation of the Career Center employer services component.
- Target and/or identify skills needed/wanted by businesses in region

NOTE: Channel existing information / data

### 4. **“Target” Population**

- Think about / approach services in 3 groups: (Service Progression)
  - Entrants
  - Transitioners
  - Advancers
- Strategies for keeping youth in the region/state.
- Targeting occupational opportunities because the training resources and business needs exist. (Career Center’s target resources vs. “open-ended menu”)
- Change our workforce development / education / training mode of doing business to promote three groups (⇒ Entrants ⇒ Transitioners ⇒ Advancers) having maximum access.

### 5. **Marketing**

- Create awareness re: (technical) employment opportunities to tackle “perception” issues.
- Market ourselves (LWIB) ⇒ what we are ⇒ what we’re doing ⇒ what we plan to do.
- Coordinate with other LWIBs to impact legislation market ourselves and promote awareness.
- Marketing for Career Centers (general public, business) ⇒ choose a few services to emphasize.
- Career Centers / LWIB identify the critical services to respond to marketing.

### **3. Does the MOU process/approach section explain how MOUs will be the major vehicles for achieving the overall vision and goals for the LWIB for the area?**

*The Plan described the MOU development process underway but not yet complete. The anticipated timeframe for completing the MOUs with required partners was estimated to be July 2001. Please provide an update on the status of the MOU development with an emphasis on explaining how the development of MOUs is to be linked to the overall broad goals of the Board.*

Since the submission of the Local Area Plan, MOU development in the local area has been a slow process that should see completion with the required partners by June 2002. This local area has been involved with the other three local areas in Maine and the State in negotiating a "CareerCenter" MOU over the past year. We continue to work on this and will be meeting with the Department of Labor staff and the Title I Service Provider staff in April 2002 to negotiate and finalize an MOU for the CareerCenter investing partners.

The other required MOUs have been divided up by the four local area directors to negotiate with the other required partners. Once negotiated and reviewed, all four local area directors will sign a combined document which each area can further add to individually if it so desires. Those too should be completed and in place by June 2002.

In the Tri-County Workforce Investment area, the MOUs will support the Board's mission by nurturing partnerships amongst agencies and outlining the coordination of services as required by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

**4. Describe the design framework for the local youth program. How will this framework accomplish the vision and goals identified in your local area vision and goals in Phase III?**

*Please provide an update related to WIA youth programming. What specific goals has the Tri-County Board/Youth Council identified that relate to youth services?*

The Tri-County Youth Council, like the Board has been working on developing a Mission Statement and Goal Statements to be used as benchmarks during the next year to strengthen the youth programming and youth collaborations in the Tri-County region. Below, is the Tri-County Youth Council Mission Statement and Goal Statements that have been approved by the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board.

**TRI-COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD  
YOUTH COUNCIL  
MISSION STATEMENT**

The Tri-County Youth Council, in collaboration with the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board will develop a network of activities and services for our youth, to promote their success through secure connections with educational institutions, employers, resources and communities.

**GOAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE  
TRI-COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD  
YOUTH COUNCIL**

**Goal 1: The Tri-County WIB Youth Council will continuously expand and enhance the Youth Employment Network (YEN) through the following activities:**

- a. Add five new vendors each quarter to the YEN to provide program

element services

The benefits of this activity will be to enhance program delivery of services, connection to a larger array of services for youth, shared information on best practices, opportunities to assess gaps in services to youth, joint funding opportunities and cross training opportunities.

- b. Establish 80 Summer Work Experience slots.

The benefits of this activity will be to assist young people build the skills for their future, develop positive self-image in youth, prepare the workforce of the future, offer employers wages supplemented employees, offer employers the opportunity to custom train employees at a low cost, and integrate the CareerCenter's employer outreach program.

- c. Add five new referral agents each quarter to the YEN.

The benefits of adding referral agents to the YEN to include schools, churches, social service agencies and organizations will gain access to a full array of opportunities and services available for youth career development and support, and expands a centralized "mapping" list of options for youth.

- d. Conduct one outreach activity per quarter that may include the following activities:

- \*Job/Career Fairs

- \*On-line linkages with other web pages and providers to LWIB Web Site

- \*Electronic distribution of YEN promotional materials

- \*Offer regularly scheduled orientations and guided tours of the CareerCenters by youth

**Goal 2: The Tri-County WIB Youth Council working with the Youth Service Provider and youth employees will conduct Youth-to-Youth Forums throughout the Service Area to document young peoples needs and concerns.**

- a. Youth will be hired and trained to conduct youth-to-youth forums.
- b. At a minimum, one youth-to-youth forum will be completed each quarter commencing in July 2002.
- c. Youth will also explore other surveys/research completed in the service area regarding needs of youth.
- d. Youth will compile findings and report to youth providers at a conference convened by the Tri-County Youth Council.
- e. The Tri-County Youth Council will work to formulate collaborations with other youth providers to address a finding(s).

**Goal 3: The Tri-County WIB Youth Council working with the Youth Service Provider and CareerCenter Staff will conduct one monthly “Sponsor Day” activity.**

A Sponsor Day activity can include items such as young people and/or teacher visits to the local CareerCenters to promote services offered or can consist of Youth Council member/CareerCenter staff visits to schools or community organizations to promote CareerCenter Youth Services available.

Again, like the Tri-County WIB’s mission, vision and goal statements, the Youth Council’s mission and goal statements are also a “living document” that will be reviewed annual to assess goal achievement and/or to modify goals as necessary. Additionally, other goals will be developed annually to address some of the issues not selected under the Youth Council Themes areas listed below:

### **Youth Council Goal Setting Themes**

#### **EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION**

- Sponsored Apprenticeship Programs
- Quality Jobs and Education
- Increase Alternative Education Programs
- The need to restructure education so that people can get degrees at night/weekends and other non-traditional hours.
- More jobs of interest (Arts/Graphic Design or Technical Based)
- Increase awareness of financial aid and assistance to better education
- Opportunities for experience (jobs/careers)

#### **MARKETING/OUTREACH**

- Community Audit of the Youth Programs/Resources in the Tri-County Area
- Get Labor Market/CareerCenter Information into the school systems
- Expand our Youth Education Network (YEN) through marketing
- Reach out to more rural areas
- Create a website to increase awareness
- Marketing information and Community Awareness on the Youth Council – who are we?
- Credibility among youth – Listening to youth – Youth-friendly services
- Linkages with other agencies, employees and educational institutions
- Create an integrated delivery model – system of delivery – general population targeted groups. Focus in and on.

## SUPPORT SERVICE MECHANISMS

- A more variety of diverse recreation activities
- Transportation
- Affordable Housing

During the past year, both the Youth Council and the Board have recognized that we must work strongly with local educational institutions, community based organizations and business to educate the young people here as to the value of post-secondary education, what business needs and expectations in the local area are, and find ways to keep youth and their families here in our region and slow the out-migration that we are currently experiencing. We believe that the further development of our Youth Employment Network and a strong connection to the school systems and youth forums will allow us to undertake some collaborative efforts aimed at keeping our young people here.

**5. Strategic Alliances: What will be the process used to develop the local vision and goals, including participants in the process? Describe how the LWIB will encourage involvement of a broad range of individuals, agencies and programs beyond the State certified membership to achieve the vision and goals.**

*The plan discussed the development of a website for the local area, CareerCenter marketing and speaking engagements. Please provide an update to explain how these initiatives have encouraged involvement from among customer groups, agencies and programs.*

The web site for the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board is still in the development process. The Board has hired "Media Works", a model youth initiative started by the Training and Development Corporation that works with disadvantaged youth to learn computer applications and business entrepreneurship. We are in hopes that the website will be on-line in June 2002. Until that site is developed, the local area plan and any requests can be made via the Eastern Maine Development Corporation website. In addition, the Eastern Maine Development Corporation has just started an on-line newsletter that will be e-mailed throughout the region that will include information and links on WIA activities in the area such as our recent work in Dexter, Maine and the Dexter Community Transition Center Open House where Senator Susan Collins was our quest speaker.

In the past year, the Executive Director of the WIB and CareerCenter staff in the region have done speaking engagements throughout the region at such events as Rotary Club meetings, Chamber of Commerce meetings and Career Advantage Days at the Technical College. This type of outreach has allowed us to market the WIB and services that are provided to individuals and employers via the CareerCenter and program offerings. In addition, the Executive Director's office is housed at the regional planning organization – EMDC, thus strengthening linkages and collaborations with staff from various economic development programs that visit businesses and organizations daily that also promote the CareerCenter services. This strong relationship has been invaluable to our outreach efforts where strong referral mechanisms continue to be strengthened.

The large amount of dislocations in the region over the past year has also allowed us to gain a lot of media exposure on services offered at the CareerCenters. With each closing, the area gets media coverage from the three largest news stations and the Bangor Daily News and other local papers. Not only have these agencies just reported on the closures, but also have done in depth articles on what training programs and services are available at the CareerCenters. This too, has helped bring in more customers and employers as well as other agencies asking how they can partner with us.

However, probably our most valued activity are the job fairs that we hold at the CareerCenters quarterly and others that are held regionally such as the Hancock County Job Fair, the Southern Piscataquis Job Fair and the recently Tri-County WIB sponsored Bangor Chamber of Commerce Career Day/Job Fair. We also recently held a “reverse” job fair in Hancock County where adults and students brought in resumes and showcased skills and we invited employers in to look for skilled workers for full-time positions or summer positions.

The Board has invested in these job fairs by purchasing commercial table skirts and linens to give a uniform and professional look and also purchases door prizes that individuals can sign up for. By getting people to sign up for door prizes (these tend to be supportive items such as coupons for groceries, heating fuel, gasoline and clothing) we can use these lists to do follow-up letters and phone calls to promote programs and services to these individuals. This pro-active approach has been very successful in bringing additional customers into our centers. We also make individual visits to all business at the job fairs and talk about the services we offer for them at the CareerCenter. We mostly sell the fact that they can place job orders with us at no cost and that we will work with them to provide “quality” placements. This is really what the CareerCenters in our region will focus on – it’s back to the basics. We need to get employers to list jobs with us and provide them with quality referrals or services. If we are not successful in working with the employers in this area, we can get as many people into the CareerCenters as we want, but if there are no jobs to look at then why would people want to come to our facilities. And for the most part, people come to the CareerCenters looking for work. Also, with the cost of advertising in the papers and on the radio, this is a great cost savings to many businesses in the region.

At the beginning of last year, about 60% of employers spoken to at the job fairs did not realize that they could list job orders with us at no cost and were not knowledgeable about our services. Thus, all of the outreach that has occurred throughout the year has been vital to our continued success to market the basics of the CareerCenter. The employers love the job fairs – we advertise and get great attendance. And by making them happy and giving them information on what we offer, they are our greatest sales people when they go back into the communities and tell everyone about how the CareerCenter has helped them. Not only do we open up our job fairs to employers but also to other organizations that offer business services to individuals such as the Small Business Development Center at EMDC that works with individuals who want to start their own business.

**6. System Design: What does the plan say about how the needs of adults and youth for the entire local area will be incorporated?**

*The assessment of needs of customers were described very well in the Plan, but the assessment of the type and availability of all (not just JTPA/WIA) workforce investment activities available in the local area was absent. Please provide an updated description explaining how the Tri-County Board is addressing the identified needs of job seekers and employers with services in addition to WIA services provided through the CareerCenter.*

To begin; the Mission, Vision and Goal Statements by both the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board and the Youth Council as discussed in response numbers 2 and 4 respectively, state that we will strive to nurture partnerships and strengthen connections to direct and maximize the use of employment resources in the area. To this end, the Board and the local area has collaborated as often as possible with various partners and other funding sources in the area to address the needs of the job seekers and employers. A listing of some of these programs that we have worked with or secured funding from are listed below:

- National Emergency Grants, U.S. DOL (2 in this region for Dexter Shoe and Jordan's Meats and one pending for Saucony Shoe)
- TAA/TRA, U.S. DOL
- Governor's Training Initiative, MDOL/DECD
- TANF, DHS
- Maine Quality Centers, EMTC
- Maine Career Advantage, EMTC
- Job Corps, Penobscot Job Corps Center
- Adult Basic Education, DOE
- Carl Perkins, DOE
- PELLs/SEOGs, DOE
- Wagner-Peyser, DOL
- Welfare-To-Work, DOL and Training and Development Corporation (TDC)
- Vocational Rehabilitation, DOL
- Apprenticeship, DOL
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program, TDC
- Small Business Development Centers, EMDC
- Women, Work and Community, UMA
- Women Unlimited
- Jobs for Maine's Graduates
- University of Maine Upward Bound Project
- SCSEP, DHS
- Veteran's Program, DOL
- Unemployment Compensation, DOL
- Economic Development Administration, EMDC
- Maine Manufacturer's Extension Partnership (MEP), EMDC

It is these partners and others that we work with daily to maximize resources and meet the needs of the employers and job seekers in the Tri-County region.

## **7. Local Workforce Investment Board Representation:**

*The Council is concerned that the membership of the local Boards includes an appropriate balance of local community partner representations. Please describe the steps that the Board has taken to increase involvement from a broader spectrum of providers representing the disabled community, the University of Maine system and other educational services providers.*

*Please note that if the current composition of the Board in terms of size presents a barrier to recruiting broader representation, the Department is willing to negotiate the number of its members to open up seats for other community-based representatives.*

Local community partner representation can and is done in this region without having to make each agency a board member. Our Board meetings are advertised and many invitations are sent out to area agencies and businesses inviting them to attend. We do have an agenda that we follow and our meetings are highly interactive where questions, comments and issues are addressed not only by so-called “Board members” but any one in attendance. It is the way that we run our meetings that allows full representation without actually having to have additional board members. For example, at one of our recent Board meetings we focused our meeting on the Health Care Worker shortage in the area and had Senate President Michael Michaud present recent Health Care Commission findings and EMTC President Joyce Hedlund and EMTC Business and Industry Director Tom Manzo present what EMTC is doing in this area and costs/limitations to establishing expanded programs. For that meeting, in addition to advertising, the Board mailed over 100 invitations to hospitals, nursing homes and community agencies where over 60 turned out for the meeting and we had a great discussion on the issue with the Board stating that it would continue to work on promoting health care occupations and look at ways to fill this void in the region.

Just having more members on the Board is not really the answer, it is making sure that business and organizations are invited to attend and have the ability to participate in structured meetings where information and dialogue can be exchanged to assist the Board in working on new initiative and structuring policy. It is also the expectation in this area that Board members that represent various groups are informing and interacting with their counterparts to keep them informed and updated and bring the agencies and their issues to the Board meetings.

Eventually, more agencies will be invited to become Board members as we do an annual recruitment campaign now that we have established our Vision, Mission and Goals and will be marketing what the Board is all about. In our meetings, we devote half of the time to program/CareerCenter updates and issues and the second half is dedicated to working on issues that affect employers in the region. Some of the issues that the Tri-County board has addressed

deal with Child Care, Health Care Worker Shortages, and local Wellness Initiatives to help curb the rising health insurance premium costs.

## **8. Increased Private Sector Involvement:**

*The Council's review of local plans raised additional questions about how the local boards engage its members to maximize active private sector employer involvement. Please describe the strategies employed by the board to encourage active employer involvement, including, but not limited to, private sector membership, local board participation and attendance policies, outreach activities, and employer recognition events.*

Over the past couple of years, private sector participation/membership from all regions within the Tri-County area and from both small, medium and large business is an on-going struggle that we hope in the next year to work on. The struggle is that most people in this region in the private sector have been so busy running the day-to-day of their organizations and having the daily struggle of finding staff or covering for staff; that they simply don't have the time to attend a quarterly meeting. One has to remember that in each of the regions discussed earlier, that 80 to 89% of all businesses employ less than 19 people. That doesn't leave a lot of room for people to attend meetings. In order to combat the travel issue, the board has always made teleconferencing available – yet there has been little interest. Most people want to be at the actual meeting.

Now that we have developed our Mission, Vision and Goals the Board really wants to market ourselves throughout the region and look at getting new members – especially those that are using our CareerCenter services and working with the populations we serve. The Board also believes that just attending quarterly board meetings is not the end of itself into gaining private sector involvement. We also believe that updates from on-the-road visits with individuals employers, surveying employers at our job fairs and working with the Employer Assistance representatives in the CareerCenter are also ways to infuse their thinking, concerns and ideas into our processes.

In the Tri-County region we do have private sector representatives that are committed to the mission and goals of the board and look forward to expanding our actual membership and gathering the concerns of the wide variety of business that exist throughout our region via some of the mechanisms discussed above.

Over the past two years, the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board feels it has been very successful in implementing the Workforce Investment Act and will strive for continuous improvement. We have met or exceeded performance in most of the categories and continue to be responsive to the most urgent needs of the employment community – which over the past year has been working with the large amount of plant closures and layoffs that have occurred.

