



City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Staff Report
May 20, 2025

TOPIC: Regional and Unified Local Workforce Plans for Program Years 2025-2028 as required under the Federal Title I Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

AGENDA TITLE

Regional and Unified Local Workforce Plans for Program Years (PY) 2025-2028 as Required Under the Federal Title I Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the Regional and Unified Local Workforce Plans for PY 2025-2028 and authorize the submission to the State as required by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I grant.

GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLIES: No

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local and Regional Plan refers to strategic planning documents developed under WIOA, a federal law that governs how workforce development services are delivered in the United States. These plans guide how local and regional workforce boards, like the Santa Ana Workforce Development Board (WDB), align resources, coordinate services, and develop strategies to meet local labor market needs. The Santa Ana City Council must take action on the WIOA Local and Regional Plan because:

- Oversight and Accountability: The Workforce Development Board operates under the auspices of the City of Santa Ana. The City Council provides formal oversight to ensure public accountability and compliance with federal and state requirements.
- Approval Requirement: Both the Local Plan (specific to Santa Ana) and the Regional Plan (which includes Santa Ana as part of a larger regional collaboration) require local elected official approval and submission to the California Workforce Development Board and the Employment Development Department (EDD).
- Approval and adoption of the plans are required to access WIOA Funds, which support local job training, youth employment, career counseling, and support services for disadvantaged residents.

Pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the development of regional and local workforce plans is required, in part, to ensure that these plans remain current and responsive to evolving labor market conditions, economic shifts, and other factors that may influence the successful implementation of the local plan (29 U.S. Code §3123). The plans are developed every four years and updated at the mid-point of the four year planning cycle to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and responsive to evolving workforce needs and economic conditions.

The California Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan (State Plan) is an overarching state policy document that provides a conceptual outline for Local Workforce Development Boards and their partners as they jointly develop regional and local plans. The State Plan policy objectives, developed in collaboration with WIOA partners and Local Workforce Development Boards, advance a shared vision of establishing a comprehensive workforce system that addresses poverty, promotes upward economic mobility, and integrates equity as a foundational principle of service delivery.

As outlined under WIOA Section 106, Regional Plans provide a roadmap for alignment of resources and investments to meet specific outcomes within the 15 Regional Planning Units (RPU). Regional Plans serve to outline how RPUs will strategically engage with key industry sectors, coordinate workforce development efforts across multiple jurisdictions, and enhance access to career pathways for individuals facing barriers to employment.

Guidance for Local Plans is provided in Section 108 of WIOA, which requires Local Plans to present an action-oriented framework for implementing the strategies outlined in the Regional Plan. Specifically, Local Plans must describe how individuals access services through the local America's Job Center of California system and detail how Local Workforce Development Boards will coordinate with local partners to ensure the delivery of person-centered services.

Five years after the onset of the global pandemic, the economy continues to recover and gradually return to pre-pandemic conditions. However, for communities that have historically faced barriers to employment, the pandemic-induced recession has deepened existing disparities and further intensified long-standing economic inequities.

The State Board issued Directive WSD 24-09 that provides guidance to Local Workforce Development Boards on the requirements associated in preparation of the Regional and Local Plans.

In alignment with the State Plan, the draft Regional and Unified Local Plans (Exhibits 1 and 2) focus on the development of partnerships to create a coordinated service delivery approach to targeted populations, including individuals with barriers to employment and hard to serve populations.

Several Key initiatives from the Regional and Unified Local Plans include:

- Regional Collaboration: Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Orange County Workforce Development Boards developed a joint plan to align workforce services and support regional job seekers and employers.
- Focus on Equity: Priority services target veterans, English learners, individuals with disabilities, and justice-involved populations through partnerships with community organizations.
- Hybrid Service Delivery: In-person and virtual services are offered, supported by AI tools, mobile units, and multilingual digital resources.
- Work-Based Learning: Emphasis on on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and upskilling programs aligned with industry needs.
- Sustainability Integration: Workforce initiatives support climate goals by promoting green jobs and clean energy careers.
- Strong Partnerships: MOUs with educational, social service, and veteran organizations ensure coordinated, accessible services across the region.

To ensure the Regional and Local Plans accurately reflect the various components of the workforce system, the Directors and staff of the Anaheim, County of Orange, and Santa Ana Workforce Development Boards, collectively known as the Orange Planning Unit (OPU), proactively engaged community leadership and key stakeholders through a series of in-person and virtual engagement sessions held in the fall and winter of 2024. These sessions provided a platform for input from workforce partners, educational institutions, and community leaders. In alignment with this collaborative approach, the OPU jointly prepared a Unified Local Plan to reflect shared priorities and coordinated strategies across the region.

City Council approval of the WIOA Local and Regional Plan is essential for maintaining funding, ensuring strategic alignment, and supporting the economic vitality of the city. The City Council plays a central role in implementing workforce services while coordinating with regional, state, and federal partners to build a skilled, competitive workforce. This collaboration is critical to helping residents access quality jobs and supporting local businesses with a pipeline of trained talent.

On March 20, 2025, during its regularly scheduled meeting, the Workforce Development Board voted 14:0 with members Hubbard, Korthuis, Lopez, Perez, and Ruiz absent, to recommend that the City Council approve the proposed action.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

EXHIBIT(S)

1. PY 2025-2028 Regional Plan
2. PY 2025-2028 Local Plan

Regional and Local Unified Workforce Plan PY 2025-2028

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Approved By: Alvaro Nuñez, City Manager