

In-Demand Occupations Determination & Usage

Effective Date

10/11/2023, Revisions: 8/19/2025, 9/16/2026

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to disseminate guidelines concerning the identification and utilization of in-demand occupations by the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB) as mandated under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 3(23)(B).

Background

According to WIOA regulations, local workforce boards are required to identify occupations that are in demand within their Local Areas. This policy outlines the process to be followed by NEIWDB in developing and maintaining a local list of increasing and decreasing occupations in the area.

Policy

Definition: “In-demand” refers to occupations, industry sectors, or career pathways that have been identified as emerging, growing, and a priority for local workforce partners, or that offer the best job prospects due to workforce needs and employer hiring demands. In-demand workforce needs may include occupations, occupational skill sets, or career pathways that support multiple industries and are not limited to a single targeted industry sector.

Utilization of WIOA Title I training funds is limited to customers enrolled in state-approved eligible training programs that lead to entry into an occupation on the approved in-demand list.

References

This policy is based on the following references:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 3(23)(B)
- WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(F)(v)
- WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(ii)(V)(aa)
- WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)
- Subsequent guidance

Determination of Targeted Industries

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Area identifies targeted industries using employer input, regional studies, and labor market analyses from sources such as Iowa Workforce Development and Lightcast.

Targeted industries represent major industry sectors that demonstrate regional workforce demand, economic importance, employment growth, replacement needs, employer demand, career pathway opportunities, or other workforce priorities identified by the NEIWDB.

The targeted industry sectors identified are as follows:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Educational Services
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Finance and Insurance
- Construction
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

Industry Sectors and Subsectors

The targeted industries identified above represent broad industry sectors and may include related subsectors, specializations, and components of the regional supply chain. The NEIWDB may identify or emphasize particular subsectors when labor market information, employer input, job-posting activity, workforce shortages, annual openings, replacement demand, or career pathway opportunities demonstrate a regional workforce need.

Recognition of a subsector does not require the NEIWDB to establish it as a separate targeted industry. The specific subsectors emphasized by the NEIWDB will be documented as part of the Board's annual review of in-demand industries and occupations rather than incorporated into this policy as a fixed list.

The NEIWDB may add, remove, refine, or emphasize targeted industries and subsectors through its annual review based on current labor market information, employer input, regional economic conditions, workforce shortages, career pathway opportunities, and other relevant evidence.

Identification of a targeted industry or subsector does not automatically make every occupation within that industry eligible for WIOA-funded training. The specific occupation must be included on the Board-approved NEIWDB In-Demand Occupation List or approved through the exception process established in this policy.

In-Demand Occupations

The NEIWDB must establish, maintain, review, and annually update a list of existing or emerging occupations. Occupations will be evaluated using a combination of the following criteria, as applicable:

- Alignment with an industry sector or subsector that has a high potential for sustained demand or growth in the local area;
- Alignment with targeted industry clusters within the local area;
- Support for regional economic growth priorities; and
- Evidence of industry-specific workforce shortages.

In determining whether an occupation qualifies as in-demand, the NEIWDB will consider a combination of quantitative and qualitative labor market factors. No single factor is determinative, provided sufficient evidence demonstrates current or projected regional workforce demand and employment opportunities.

Occupations will generally be analyzed at the appropriate Standard Occupational Classification level using labor market information available through Lightcast, Iowa Workforce Development, or other reliable sources. Factors considered may include:

- Projected job growth, including whether the occupation is projected to grow by at least 2 percent over a three-year period;
- Wages that meet or provide a pathway toward the NEIWDB's self-sufficiency standard;
- Annual job openings and replacement demand;
- Turnover rates;
- Regional employment concentration;
- Employer-reported workforce shortages;
- Job-posting activity;
- Minimum education, skills, and experience requirements;
- Average entry-level wages;
- Career advancement and wage progression opportunities; and
- Recognized credentials, Registered Apprenticeships, degrees, certificates, or demonstrable occupational skills associated with employment.

Cross-Sector In-Demand Occupations and Skills

The NEIWDB recognizes that certain occupations, occupational skill sets, and career pathways support employers across multiple industries and may not align exclusively with a single targeted industry sector. These cross-sector occupations and skills may be designated as in-demand when labor market information and employer evidence demonstrate a significant regional workforce need.

In determining whether an occupation or occupational skill area qualifies as a cross-sector priority, the NEIWDB will apply the in-demand occupation factors established in this policy and may also consider its applicability across multiple Northeast Iowa employers or industries.

Designation as a cross-sector priority does not automatically make every related occupation or training program eligible for WIOA-funded training. The specific occupation must be included on the Board-approved NEIWDB In-Demand Occupation List or approved through the exception process established in this policy.

Cross-sector priorities will be reviewed through the NEIWDB's annual review and may be added, modified, or removed based on current labor market information, documented employer demand, and regional workforce needs.

This policy enables NEIWDB to:

- Extend services to low-income workers and facilitate their career path to self-sufficiency.
- Prioritize high-wage industry sectors and occupations for training.
- Make job-training programs leading to self-sufficiency a priority.

Usage of the In-Demand Occupation Policy

The Title I Service Provider will use this policy and the Board-approved NEIWDB In-Demand Occupation List to determine whether a proposed training program prepares a participant for employment in an in-demand occupation. Employment associated with the proposed training may be located within or outside



Local Policies – Title IB Programs

the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Area. An adult or dislocated worker may receive training for an occupation that is in demand in another area when the participant is willing and able to commute or relocate for employment.

In determining the relationship among an occupation, targeted industry, industry subsector, or cross-sector priority, the NEIWDB may utilize O*NET, Lightcast, Iowa Workforce Development labor market information, employer-demand data, job-posting information, and other reliable labor market sources.

Exceptions

In specific circumstances, an exception may be considered for an industry, subsector, occupation, or occupational skill area not otherwise included under the NEIWDB's approved targeted industries, In-Demand Occupation List, or cross-sector priorities.

The request must be submitted in writing to the NEIWDB Executive Director before any related training expenditure is approved. The request must identify the industry, subsector, occupation, or occupational skill area for which approval is requested; explain the basis for the request; include supporting documentation demonstrating regional workforce need and employment opportunities; and indicate whether the requested exception is temporary or ongoing.

The NEIWDB Executive Director will review the request with the Business Engagement & Strategy Committee Chair and respond in writing within ten (10) business days.

Availability of the In-Demand Occupation List

The NEIWDB will maintain a separate Board-approved In-Demand Occupation List to implement this policy. The list will identify specific in-demand occupations, emphasized industry subsectors, cross-sector occupation and skill priorities, and applicable Standard Occupational Classification and North American Industry Classification System codes.

The current list will be made available at the American Job Centers in the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Area and on the NEIWDB website.

Annual Reporting

An updated report on the NEIWDB In-Demand Occupation List will be presented to the Board during the last meeting of each program year, or more frequently when necessary. The review will consider targeted industries and subsectors, individual in-demand occupations, cross-sector occupations and skills, applicable classification codes, emerging workforce needs, and relevant labor market and employer-demand information.

The Board may add, modify, or remove targeted industries, subsectors, occupations, cross-sector priorities, and applicable classification codes based on the review. The Board may also approve an occupation that does not meet every criterion when sufficient supporting evidence demonstrates regional workforce need and employment opportunities. Board action, including any exceptions or cross-sector designations, will be documented in the official meeting minutes.



Local Policies – Title IB Programs

In-Demand Industry/Occupation Request for Exception

This form is used to request an exception for an industry, subsector, occupation, or occupational skill area not otherwise included under the NEIWDB's approved targeted industries, In-Demand Occupation List, or cross-sector priorities. The request must include sufficient supporting documentation demonstrating regional workforce need and employment opportunities.

Date of Request:	
Contact Name:	Contact Title:
Contact Phone:	Contact Email:
Industry or Subsector Requested:	

Occupation Information

Occupation Title Requested:	
Occupational Skill Area Requested:	
Primary O*Net/SOC Code:	Additional O*Net/SOC Codes, if applicable:

Supporting Justification: Describe the basis for the requested exception and explain why the industry, subsector, occupation, or occupational skill area should be approved. Provide sufficient detail to support review of the request.

--

Additional Supporting Information: Provide a narrative describing the need to support current and future job openings or increased wages that may not be reflected in the labor market information and data utilized for the current in-demand industry list. Attach additional information and supporting documentation to this request as evidence.

--

Exception Request Approval

Business Engagement & Strategy Committee Chair Signature:		Date:
Executive Director Signature:		Date:

Submit the completed form to: Taylor Williams, NEIWDB Executive Director at taylor@northeastiawdb.org