

Southern Tier

Regional Plan

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2029

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Regional Service Strategies	2
Sector Initiatives for In-demand Industry Sectors or Occupations	4
Regional Labor Market Analysis	7
Regional Spending Plan	10
Supportive Services	10
Economic Development	10
Performance Accountability Measure Negotiation and Reporting Agreement	11
Public Comment	11

WE ARE YOUR DOL



Regional Service Strategies

- a. Identify regional plan strategies and specifically provide detail on how regional plan strategies relate to the workforce needs of local businesses, as well as priority projects from the appropriate Regional Economic Development Council ([REDC](#)).

According to the 2024 Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (STREDC) Annual Progress Report, the Southern Tier continues to build upon its strong foundation of target industries, higher education institutions, the nonprofit sector, and government agencies. The report highlights that the region's economy is increasingly driven by emerging industries in cleantech, advanced manufacturing, and agribusiness innovation, supported by research institutions such as Binghamton University and Cornell University.

The 2023 Strategic Plan, which guides regional development through 2028, identifies Five Pillars of Regional Investment that align with the workforce priorities of Broome-Tioga Workforce NY, Tompkins County Workforce Development, Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Workforce NY and Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Chenango, Delaware & Otsego County Workforce. These pillars include: (1) Positioning the Southern Tier as a dynamic hub for cleantech; (2) Propelling growth in backbone industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, and transportation; (3) Demonstrating the region's livability through housing and community revitalization; (4) Growing a diverse, adaptable, future-ready workforce; and (5) Amplifying the Southern Tier's story through tourism and cultural engagement.

According to the New York State Department of Labor, between July 2023 and July 2024, the Southern Tier's private sector employment grew by 1,600 jobs (0.7%), bringing the total private sector job count to 216,900. The largest gains were in education and health services (+1,600), leisure and hospitality (+1,200), and construction (+400). Declines occurred in trade, transportation, and utilities (-800), manufacturing (-400), and professional and business services (-400). These trends reinforce the region's need to continue investing in workforce training and retention strategies that align with employer demand.

The REDC's Five Pillars emphasize collaboration among workforce partners, higher education, and employers to ensure that industry-led workforce initiatives support both existing and emerging sectors. A key focus of regional strategies is on advanced manufacturing, clean energy technology, healthcare, agriculture, and tourism—industries that remain critical to the Southern Tier's economic vitality. Notable examples include: (a) FAST NY grants in Broome and Chemung Counties, preparing shovel-ready sites for clean tech and transportation manufacturing. (b) The Raymond Corporation's Energy Solutions Manufacturing Center of Excellence in Chenango County, expanding the region's energy storage and electric vehicle technology footprint. (c) The Battery-NY initiative at Binghamton University, establishing the region as a national hub for energy storage research and advanced manufacturing. (d) The Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) grant awarded to Ithaca Area Economic Development, expanding manufacturing and construction trades training.

WE ARE YOUR DOL



The report also identifies ongoing challenges that continue to impact workforce participation, including a shortage of affordable childcare, limited public transportation options, and a need for housing near employment centers. Projects such as Oakdale Commons in Broome County and the Vecino-Asteri Complex in Tompkins County are highlighted as examples of mixed-use redevelopment that integrate housing, childcare, and workforce access.

The REDC's emphasis on their Five-Pillar's aligns with Broome-Tioga Workforce NY's mission to connect individuals to training, employment, and career advancement opportunities that meet the needs of regional employers. With continued coordination among business, education, and community partners, the Southern Tier is well positioned to develop, attract, and retain talent that supports both legacy industries and emerging economic clusters.

Looking ahead, the Southern Tier is expected to experience significant workforce turnover and growth over the next decade due to retirements, new business investment, and industrial transformation. Regional data indicate a continuing need to fill tens of thousands of jobs across key sectors—including healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and skilled trades—through both replacement and expansion hiring. The challenge remains to ensure that residents have access to the skills, credentials, and supportive services necessary to compete for these opportunities, while employers can access a qualified and reliable workforce that sustains long-term economic vitality across the region.

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

- b. Provide a list of executed cooperative agreements (where applicable) and define how local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the regional strategies.

The Local Workforce Development Boards of the Southern Tier (STLWDB) works with the STREDC to coordinate strategies that align with the work of the REDC, but will look at ways to collaborate more with the REDC. The STLWDB Directors attend the REDC meetings and participate in their committees when possible and upon request. Our demand occupations are aligned with the goals of the REDC and we work to find and match the skills of employees needed by employers (new and existing) that work with the REDC. In addition we work closely with eligible training providers to provide the kind of skills training that match with the needs of employers especially those new to the area that work closely with the REDC.

Each local area has executed a MOU process with their partners, which have either been approved or is waiting on approval from NYSDOL.

Sector Initiatives for Regional In-demand Industry Sectors or Occupations

a. Identify in-demand regional industry sectors and occupations.

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

An example of potential collaboration is the growing demand for workers in the transit industry. This is currently led by Alstom in Hornell and CAF USA in Elmira for railcar manufacturing. Alstom and CAF have each been awarded significant new manufacturing contracts for domestic rail customers. Alstom recently opened Plant Four in Hornell. This \$75 million investment is dedicated to rail car body production and will create an estimated 250 jobs.

Siemens Mobility has announced plans to construct a \$60 million railcar plant in Horseheads. It will be the first in our country dedicated to high-speed rail production and is projected to create 300 jobs.

The Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council has identified advanced manufacturing, clean energy, healthcare, agribusiness, and tourism as the region's most in-demand sectors. To address the evolving needs of these industries, the Southern Tier LWDBs continue to collaborate with regional employers, training providers, and educational institutions to align curriculum and skill development with current labor market demand.

New initiatives such as Battery-NY and New Energy New York (NENY) have strengthened the region's focus on clean energy and advanced manufacturing, driving demand for skilled technicians, engineers, and production workers. In addition, ongoing partnerships with BOCES, SUNY campuses, and apprenticeship programs—including NYCAN and WANTO—are expanding opportunities for residents to gain industry-recognized credentials in high-demand occupations across the manufacturing, healthcare, and trades sectors.

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

Due to the rural nature of the Southern Tier region it is difficult to provide training opportunities regionally but if participants can logistically attend they are able to participate in training opportunities in adjacent counties. The LWDBs continue to explore

WE ARE YOUR DOL



effective and efficient ways to share training opportunities across a broad geographic area.

- b. Identify and describe sector initiatives that address the needs of the identified in-demand regional industry sectors or occupations.

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

The Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council has reaffirmed advanced manufacturing, clean energy, healthcare, agriculture, and tourism as key industry sectors driving regional growth. To address the workforce needs of these in-demand sectors, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and regional partners continue to collaborate with businesses, education providers, and community organizations to develop responsive, industry-informed training initiatives.

Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy, and Cleantech:

The Southern Tier continues to lead the state in advanced manufacturing innovation through initiatives such as Battery-NY and New Energy New York (NENY), which position Binghamton University and its partners as national leaders in energy storage and clean technology. These initiatives are driving workforce demand for skilled technicians, engineers, and production specialists across the clean energy supply chain. The region's workforce strategy includes coordination among BOCES, community colleges, and industry partners to develop training curricula in mechatronics, precision machining, automation, and energy systems.

The Accelerated Machinist Program (AMP) remains a best-practice model for multi-employer training collaboration, producing graduates with industry-recognized credentials and high job placement rates in advanced manufacturing occupations. Regional partners continue to adapt this program model to new technologies and emerging manufacturing needs, particularly within the clean energy and electrification sectors.

Healthcare and Human Services:

Building on prior Rural Healthcare Initiative investments, regional partners have expanded training programs to address critical shortages in healthcare and direct care occupations. Training and apprenticeship opportunities now extend across roles such as Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, Medical Laboratory Technicians, and Behavioral Health Counselors. Clinical placement programs and simulated training labs at local colleges are helping individuals gain hands-on experience while addressing workforce gaps in both urban and rural healthcare systems.

WE ARE YOUR DOL



Agriculture, Food Systems, and Agribusiness:

The Southern Tier’s long-standing strength in agriculture continues to evolve through innovation in food processing, agritech, and value-added production. Workforce initiatives are focused on precision agriculture, supply chain logistics, food safety certification, and equipment operation. Partnerships among Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY campuses, and local employers are promoting credentialing and on-the-job training that support sustainable, technology-driven farming and processing practices.

Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing:

The region’s geographic position and infrastructure investments have elevated logistics and distribution as a growth sector. LWDBs are partnering with training providers to deliver certified logistics technician programs, forklift operation training, and warehouse management system instruction. These programs are aligned with employer demand in regional distribution hubs, helping businesses expand capacity while creating entry-level and upskilling opportunities for workers.

Tourism, Hospitality, and Creative Economy:

The REDC’s goal to “amplify the Southern Tier story” through placemaking and tourism continues to guide investments in the hospitality and recreation sectors. Training initiatives emphasize hospitality management, culinary arts, customer service, and cultural interpretation, preparing workers to support expanding tourism destinations, outdoor recreation assets, and event-based economies across the region.

Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Initiatives:

The region continues to advance apprenticeship opportunities through programs such as the New York College Apprenticeship Network (NYCAN), the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant, and the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI). These programs assist high school and college students, disconnected youth, veterans, and adults in obtaining technical skills and industry certifications. The LWDBs are also collaborating with BOCES and local employers to expand pre-apprenticeship pathways in the construction trades, manufacturing, and emerging clean energy occupations.

Cross-Sector and Supportive Workforce Initiatives:

The Southern Tier continues to address workforce participation barriers through expanded access to childcare, transportation, and workforce housing. Projects such as Oakdale Commons and Asteri Ithaca integrate employment, housing, and community services in mixed-use developments. Regional partners are also coordinating wraparound supports for individuals affected by substance use disorder through initiatives such as Recovery-to-Work programs funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission and administered through the Broome-Tioga Workforce NY INSPIRE Initiative.

WE ARE YOUR DOL



The Southern Tier’s LWDBs and workforce partners also utilize On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training programs to help businesses retain and advance employees. These initiatives ensure that workers across all sectors gain the skills necessary to adapt to technological change and shifting market demands.

Job Fairs are also being held to address worker shortage in industries that are in high demand, including; Healthcare, Hospitality, Tourism, and Manufacturing.

Overall, the region’s workforce strategy reflects the priorities outlined by the Southern Tier REDC—linking economic development with workforce development to ensure that emerging industries have the skilled labor force necessary to sustain long-term regional growth. Through apprenticeship expansion, targeted training, and barrier-reduction efforts, the Southern Tier continues to create pathways for residents to access quality employment opportunities in the region’s most in-demand industries.

The Executive Directors of the LWDBs attend Southern Tier REDC meetings and Participate on the Workforce Committee. Due to the rural nature of the Southern Tier region it is difficult to provide training opportunities regionally but if participants can logistically attend they are able to participate in training opportunities in adjacent counties.

The LWDBs continue to explore effective and efficient ways to share training opportunities across a broad geographic area.

Regional Labor Market Analysis

- a. Include an analysis of regional economic conditions incorporating the existing emerging in-demand sectors and occupations, the employment needs of businesses in those sectors and occupations, as well as attesting that the information used in the analysis was determined in conjunction with the appropriate New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) Labor Market Analyst.

The Southern Tier region (Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins) has seen mixed but resilient labor market dynamics heading into 2025. According to NYSDOL, as of August 2025, the region’s private sector employment stood at 211,200 jobs, reflecting a net gain of 2,000 jobs (1.0 %) year-over-year. The strongest job growth occurred in education & health services (+2,500), leisure & hospitality (+900), and natural resources, mining & construction (+200). Offsetting those gains, the region saw declines in manufacturing (–1,100) and trade, transportation & utilities (–500).

The region’s nonfarm total (private + government) jobs reached approximately 257,100, with job gains in the nonfarm sector of roughly 1,900 positions.

Over the 12 months ending February 2025, however, NYSDOL reports a slight contraction: private sector jobs declined by about 300 (–0.1 %), with losses concentrated in manufacturing (–500), information (–400), and trade/transportation/utilities (–400), while education & health services and natural resources / mining & construction posted modest gains.

WE ARE YOUR DOL



Average weekly wages in Broome County rose by 2.7 % (over the year to Q1 2025), ranking among the stronger county-level wage growths in the state.

According to the NYSDOL “Significant Industries 2024” framework, industries are assessed for designation based on a combination of job counts, wage levels, and historical growth (2018–2023) plus projected growth through 2030.

In earlier assessments (e.g. 2021 Significant Industries report), manufacturing wages in the Southern Tier averaged \$65,400 annually, well above the all-industry regional average of \$54,600 (circa 2020).

Within health services, ambulatory care roles had average wages around \$78,000, and hospital sector wages averaged \$61,700 (in 2020), both above the regional all-industry norm at that time.

In past regional reports, some specialized manufacturing subsectors (e.g. computer/electronics manufacturing) had high average wages (e.g. \$89,600 in 2018) compared to regional averages.

The mix of job gains in services-oriented sectors (education & health, hospitality) and ongoing contraction in manufacturing and trade suggests that while the regional economy is stabilizing, structural transitions are underway. Employers in advanced manufacturing, clean energy, biomedical, and logistics sectors continue to report challenges recruiting workers with specialized technical skills, even as wage pressures rise for skilled roles.

Working with the NYSDOL Southern Tier labor market analyst, the Local Workforce Development Boards have developed a regional demand occupations list that emphasizes roles in health care and allied health, advanced manufacturing / clean energy technologies, skilled trades (mechatronics, industrial maintenance), logistics / supply chain operations, and agribusiness / food processing.

To align workforce supply with employer demand, training efforts must span the spectrum:

Foundational work-readiness skills (soft skills, math, digital literacy)

Short-term credentials and stackable certificates

Technical and credentialed training aligned to industry needs

Apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and incumbent worker upskilling

Given anticipated retirements, ongoing automation, and the continued rollout of energy/clean-tech investments (e.g. Battery-NY, NENY), significant labor turnover and new job creation are expected. Many of the most in-demand occupations will require both domain knowledge and adaptability to evolving technologies.

To remain responsive, the region’s labor market strategy must regularly update its demand list, monitor wage and occupational shifts, and adjust training pipelines

WE ARE YOUR DOL



accordingly — ensuring that jobseekers can access quality employment, and that employers have access to a skilled, competitively compensated workforce.

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

- b. Describe the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to meet the employment needs of businesses in those sectors and occupations.

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

- c. Provide an analysis of the regional workforce.

According to the most recent CDO Workforce Strategic Plan, approximately 50% of occupations in all industry sectors require either a higher education degree or technical skills level training, increasing the retention and recruitment challenge. In terms of education attainment.

Challenges identified by the Workforce Development Work Group include: A shortfall in affordable childcare • Lack of low-cost public transportation • Limited housing stock • Elevated number of aged/neglected properties • Affordability a challenge • Computer/Internet access and adequate user ability • Elevated number of potential workers unable to pass a drug test • Prior convictions leading to employer bias • Safety Net Cost/Benefit Analysis — potential financial disincentive for families and/or individuals on safety net assistance to accept lower-wage employment • Retention of young professionals/millennials • Aligning human capital with career opportunities — effectively marketing job opportunities to the regional workforce and addressing skills gap issues.

WE ARE YOUR DOL



Regional Spending Plan

- a. Include a regional spending plan that includes administrative cost arrangements between LWDBs and the pooling of funds where applicable.

The Southern Tier Region Workforce Development Boards are in the process of collaborating on strategic opportunities for identifying and sharing specific administrative costs that may be available; specifically, discussing areas such as procurement or AP/AR processes that might be able to be shared across the region.

Supportive Services

- a. Describe how supportive services (e.g., transportation) will be coordinated throughout the region.

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

Economic Development

- a. Describe how economic development and workforce investment activities will be coordinated in the region and specifically provide detail on how continued coordination can further relationships between the region and its respective REDC.

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

The LWDBs of the Southern Tier Region (Broome-Tioga Workforce, Chenango-Delaware-Otsego Workforce, Tompkins, and Chemung-Steuben-Schuyler) are looking to collaborate on regional workforce grants to coordinate workforce programs as they are the most experienced workforce organizations that provide the wrap around services for adults and youth, maximize sustainable funding and to complement efforts to maximize the labor participation rate and the rapid return to the workforce by the unemployed which would benefit economic developers, and this work will allow economic development organizations to specialize and maximize their efforts in that field.

WE ARE YOUR DOL



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

Performance Accountability Measure Negotiation and Reporting Agreement

- a. Include an agreement concerning the Performance Accountability Measure Negotiation and Reporting. Performance Accountability Measure Negotiation and Reporting may be negotiated by LWDBs individually, involving strategies and methods collaborated on at the regional level. If this is the case for the region, include a statement that reflects that the measures were negotiated individually and any collaborative efforts devised and agreed to by the region.

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

Public Comment

- a. Describe the process used by the region to provide a period of no more than 30 days for public comment and input into development of the plan by representatives of business, labor organizations, and education prior to submission.

The draft Southern Tier Regional plan will be sent to partners, stakeholders, mailing lists and posted on the local websites and social media, if applicable.

***Note:** Per WIOA §679.510(b)(4), comments representing disagreement with the contents of the Regional Plan must be submitted with the Plan.