

**WEST CENTRAL ARKANSAS
LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD PLAN
PROGRAM YEARS 2012 - 2016**

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, as amended, requires that each Local Board, in partnership with the appropriate chief elected officials, develops and submits a comprehensive five-year plan to the Governor which identifies and describes certain policies, procedures and local activities that are carried out in the local area, and that is consistent with the State Plan. This document represents the five-year strategic plan for the West Central Arkansas Local Workforce Investment Area.

I. LOCAL WORKFORCE STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe the Local Workforce Investment Board's (Local Board) strategic vision for its local workforce investment area (local area) and the Board's overarching goals. Rather than simply compiling data from various sources, base this section on a thorough understanding of the economic strengths and employment needs of the workforce area.

Boards must review Governor Beebe's Plan for Economic Development

(<http://www.arkansasedc.com/arkansas-edc/the-governors-strategic-plan.aspx>) and the State of Arkansas Integrated Workforce Plan PY 2012–2016

(<http://dws.arkansas.gov/AWIB/pdfs/stateplan/PY%202012->

2016%20Arkansas%20State%20WIA%20W-P%20Plan,%20FINAL,%2011-2-2012%20low%20res.pdf) to ensure that their plans follow the same strategic direction. Consistent strategic direction among Board Plans will aid further integration of the Arkansas workforce system.

The State Workforce Strategic Plan includes the Governor's Vision, in order to guarantee consistency with the State Plan the West Central Arkansas Local Workforce Investment Board has incorporated the Governor's Vision as it applies to the West Central Arkansas area in order to advance a streamline workforce development system that focuses on resources on increasing educational attainment at all levels and enhancing the technical skills required by knowledge-based employers.

Governor's Vision

The Governor has shared a clear vision for Arkansas' economic development that defines a stronger partnership between economic development, education and the state workforce investment system to attract, retain and grow Arkansas' high growth industries and encourage the development of regional economies.

Governor Mike Beebe's Strategic Plan for Economic Development is predicated upon five goals that serve as the plan's foundation. Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan requires that each goal be achieved at the highest level possible.

Five Goals for Economic Development (Arkansas Strategic Plan 2009)

1. Increase the incomes of Arkansans at a growth pace greater than the national average.
2. Expand entrepreneurship, focusing on knowledge-based enterprises.
3. Compete more efficiently in the global marketplace for new businesses and jobs, and create a business retention strategy to reduce closures.
4. Economic development will meet the special needs and take advantage of the extraordinary assets of various areas of the state. It will not be a one size fits all.
5. Increase the number of workers with post-secondary training so they are prepared when they enter the workforce and equipped for new jobs in the future.

AWIB Strategic Objectives (Arkansas Integrated Workforce Plan 2012 – 2016)

- Serve the Range of Job Seekers
- Serve the Range of Employers
- Serve the Range of Economies
- Increase the effectiveness of local WIBs
- Gain efficiencies across the system
- Re-imagine Learning and Work
- Diversify and Link Resources

FIVE COMPONENTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The Governor's full plan for economic development can be found online at <http://www.arkansasedc.com/arkansas-edc/the-governors-strategic-plan.aspx>

The Governor must designate local workforce investment areas in order for the State to receive funding under Title I of WIA. The West Central Arkansas Area consists of the counties of Clark, Conway, Garland, Hot Spring, Johnson, Montgomery, Perry, Pike, Pope and Yell.

The West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board consists of business owners, business organizations, labor organizations, education entities, economic development organizations, youth agencies and other community based and employment programs.

A. LOCAL BOARD VISION AND GOALS

Local board plans must identify the key issues, challenges, and opportunities that are expected in the next five years and that have an impact on the workforce system. Identify the goals and objectives for the workforce area. The plan must specifically address the following. [WIA §117(d)(1)], [WIA §118(a)]

- **The vision for the local workforce investment system and how the local system will appear at the end of the five-year period covered by this plan.**

The vision of the West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board mirrors the State WIB's vision statement as follows:

A highly trained and diversified workforce that meets the needs of high growth industry, which drives a region wide economy that is competitive in the statewide and global market.

The local area will align its goals with those of the Governor and the State Workforce Investment Board.

The challenges to achieving this vision include: inadequate education/skill level of workforce, especially for high-tech jobs; lack of work ethic in some workers; inadequate coordination between employers and education/training professionals; failure of job-seekers and employers to benefit from existing workforce programs; less than the best K-12 and non-baccalaureate education and job-training system; lack of motivation to increase skill and education level; lack of knowledge of the existence of higher-paying jobs for people who receive increased education/training; duplication of services and programs; lack of motivation to invest in an improved workforce; resistance to change creating barriers to service.

The five year vision of the WCAWIB is to have the full service comprehensive and satellite Arkansas Workforce Centers serving the educational and workforce needs of the ten counties of the West Central Workforce Area.

- **How the local workforce investment system will help achieve the state workforce investment goals.**

The local area will align its goals with those of the Governor and the State Workforce Investment Board.

1. Increase the incomes of Arkansans at a growth pace greater than the national average.
Focus training in high demand areas that result in higher wage occupations.
2. Expand entrepreneurship, focusing on knowledge-based enterprises.
Partner with local agencies and universities that foster entrepreneurship.
3. Compete more efficiently in the global marketplace for new businesses and jobs, and create a business retention strategy to reduce closures.
Align with local Chambers and the Regional Alliance Economic Development Plan
4. Economic development will meet the special needs and take advantage of the extraordinary assets of various areas of the state. It will not be a one size fits all.
Identify local extraordinary assets such as tourism
5. Increase the number of workers with post-secondary training so they are prepared when they enter the workforce and equipped for new jobs in the future.
Continue to emphasize training in post secondary education and internships

- **Aligning efforts among workforce development partners to achieve accessible, seamless, integrated, and comprehensive service**

Within the one-stop comprehensive workforce center system, any workforce center partner can provide assistance with employment and training services in support of the customer’s job search or skill development by enabling the customer to access the best mix of services from the combined menu of all partners’ resources. Equally important are the partners not located in a workforce center that contribute to the comprehensive system which include employers and educational institutions.

- How the local board will coordinate the workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with local economic development strategies and develop other employer linkages with these activities.

The WCAWIB will coordinate with the community and economic development department at WCAPDD to continue to support education and training to foster development that will provide labor pool or workers educated and trained in the areas most needed by business and industry in the West Central area.

- How programs and activities described in the plan will support both the Governor’s plan for economic development and the state’s strategic plan for employment and training needs of youth and adults in the state.

The local board supports a system that provides education, job training, work experience, and career planning to job seekers and students in accordance with the Governor’s plan for economic development and the states strategic plan

B. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE INFORMATION ANALYSIS

Local plans should include: *[WIA §117(d)(7); A.C.A §15-4-2212]*

- Identify the workforce needs of businesses, job seekers, and workers in the local area and how the local workforce system will address these needs.

Business Needs: Recruiting and screening services; job postings; highly trained and skilled workers; labor market info. (Demand occupations/wage info./performance)

Job Seeker Needs: Training; access to job listings; skills upgrades; (WAGE, KUDER, CRC)

Workers’ Needs: Skills upgrades; continuing education

The West Central area will address these needs by referral/partnerships/training services

Mission

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 provides a road map for success via a unique National, State and local partnership that fulfills the needs of job seekers and those who want to secure their future through career development.

The West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board has been created to work successfully in partnership with business owners, business organizations, labor organizations, education entities, economic development organizations, youth agencies and other community based organizations in the development of job skills training programs, employment programs and One-Stop Career Centers. These partnerships must respond to dynamic and ever-changing work environments, be progressive and break new ground to meet the demands of employers, pursue excellence, be user-friendly and instrumental in enabling both employers and job seekers to interact professionally, build character and work ethic, prepare potential employees for the changing job market through education, enhance communication to convey vital employment information, and embrace the positive changes necessary to prepare job seekers for today’s market and the markets of the future.

- Current and projected employment opportunities in the local area and the job skills necessary to obtain the employment opportunities.

The data analysis provided by Discover Arkansas from information compiled EMSI's educational attainment numbers are based on Census 1990, Census 2000, the Current Population Survey, and EMSI's demographic data. This educational attainment data covers only the population aged 25 years or more

and indicate the highest level achieved. The chart below provides the statistics for the West Central Arkansas area compared to the statewide levels.

Educational Attainment, West Central Area and Arkansas				
	West Central Area		Arkansas	
	2011 Population	% of Population	2011 Population	% of Population
Less than 9 th grade	21,695	11%	192,728	10%
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	17,594	11%	160,878	8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	77,851	12%	669,929	35%
Some college, no degree	47,858	11%	431,065	22%
Associate's degree	12,027	11%	111,695	6%
Bachelor's degree	23,242	9%	248,505	13%
Graduate or professional degree	11,553	9%	122,221	6%

Of the educational statistics provided by Discover Arkansas, (<http://www.discoverarkansas.net>) the West Central Area's highest educational attainment is in the area of high school graduate or less with a percentage of 46%. This is compared to the state's 75% for the same statistic. However, West Central's lower proportion statistic provided is in the area of those with college or professional degrees with a statistic of 29% as compared to the state's 25% for the same statistic.

Research suggests that there is a high correlation between educational attainment and income. According to a 2011 study conducted by the Arkansas Research Center, graduates of the state public colleges and universities confirm that the higher the degree a student attains, the higher the salary that will be earned.

The West Central area has a low percentage of adults, ages 25 to 64 with an associate degree at 11% and the percentage of those with a bachelor's degree is only 9%. These statistics could propose a significant barrier in the area's efforts to bring high-skilled/high wage job opportunities into the West Central Area.

The West Central Arkansas WIA Profile provided in the 2012 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report is included in *Attachment A*.

A large percentage of the population in the West Central Area currently earns an average wage of \$25,676.70 based on the area's ten largest occupations in the most recent data of May 2011.

The economic development goal is to increase the incomes of those living in the counties of the West Central area while considering the industry sectors that offer solid growth opportunities. According to the information provided by Discover Arkansas the West Central Area will experience the highest growth in Administrative, Social Assistance Industries, Educational Services, Educational and Ambulatory Health Care Services.

Based on the projections it is estimated that 74% of those occupations will require a postsecondary education. According to the educational statistics, only 29% of the population of adults ranging in age of 25 years to 64 years old has the educational attainment required.

The West Central area has developed strong partnerships with the post-secondary training providers in the area consisting of both four-year and two year colleges. The institutions submit applications through the ACRS system to be approved by the local board based on occupations in demand in the State and/or

local area. The training providers in the area also have strong and responsive relationships with business and industry and quickly adapt their training programs to provide the workforce with the skills needed for available employment.

- How local boards will work cooperatively with local economic development to identify local targeted industries that supports state identified targeted industries and the Governor’s plan for economic development.

Aligning with the state’s identified target industries and Economic Development targeted industries and encouraging job seekers to focus on training and gaining skills that will allow them to be employable and become self-sufficient.

II. LOCAL OPERATIONAL PLAN

The local operational plan must present an overview of the workforce system in the local area.

A. LOCAL GOVERNANCE

- **Identify the fiscal agent or entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIA § 117(d)(3)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official(s) under WIA § 117(d)(3)(B)(i). [WIA §118(b)(8); Act 1125 §12(b)(8); 20 CFR 661.350(a)(9)]**

West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc.

- **Describe the agreement specifying the respective roles of the individual chief elected officials, including fiscal liability. [WIA §101(6)(B); 20 CFR 667.705(c); 20 CFR 661.300(e)]**
 - **Attach a copy of this agreement.**

Agreement between West Central Arkansas Chief Elected Officials and the West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board describes the roles and responsibilities of the parties.

See Attachment B-a. – Chief Elected Officials Agreement
Attachment B-b. – Chief Elected Official/LWIB Agreement

- Describe the local workforce investment board. [WIA §117(d)(4); Act 1125 §11(g)]
 - How will the local board provide a leadership role in developing policy, implementing policy, and providing oversight for the local workforce investment system?

The local board convenes on a quarterly basis to review and plan activities for the workforce system. Policies are developed and implemented as needed. Policies are reviewed annually for needed updates. The local board will oversee the development of local policies. The Local board, in conjunction with one-stop operator will develop and review policies annually or as needed. Oversight of the system occurs through monitoring and guidance.

- How will the local board do this in partnership with the chief elected officials?

The Chief Elected Official, on behalf of the West Central CEOs, reviews and approves the actions of the local board.

- Attach a copy of the board bylaws.

See Attachment C – Local Workforce Investment Board Bylaws

- Describe the youth council and its development of the portions of the local plan relating to eligible youth. *[WIA §117(h); Act 1125 §11(o)]; 20 CFR 661.335; 20 CFR 661.340(b)]*

The youth council is a non-voting sub group of the local Board. It makes recommendation for youth activities and providers to the Board. The Youth Council met and reviewed the policy relating to youth activities and the definition of the sixth barrier for the youth.

- Describe the local board’s plans to provide administrative services. *[WIA §117(3) (b)(ii)(4); Act 1125 §11(e)]*
 - Identify any staff positions that will be hired directly by the board.

The board does not have any staff positions that will be hired by the Board. The Board has selected WCAPDD, Inc. to be its administrative entity for the services.

- Describe the board’s plans, if applicable, to contract for some or all of its administrative services (administrative agent).

Not Applicable

- Describe the local grievance procedure established in accordance with 20 CFR 667.600.
 - Attach a copy of the local grievance policy.

See Attachment D – Local Grievance Policy

- How will the local board ensure that the public – including persons with disabilities – has access to board meetings and activities, including information regarding the local board membership, the designation of One-Stop operators, the award of grants or contracts to eligible providers of youth activities, notification of meetings, and meeting minutes? Per Arkansas Workforce Investment Board Open Public Meetings policy, please provide the website where notices of meetings, board agendas, and minutes will be posted. *[WIA §117(e), AWIB Open Public Meetings Policy]*

The local board notifies the public of meetings and activities through the news media and email (if requested). Notification will be available on WCAPDD’s website when development is completed. Upon request individuals are added to the mailing list for notification.

- Include as a separate attachment a list of the board of directors, the by-laws, and an organizational chart (with names) for the fiscal agent, the administrative agent, and the major entity responsible for providing core and intensive services.

Attachment E – West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. Board of Directors List

Attachment F – West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. Board Bylaws

Attachment G – Local Workforce Investment Area Organizational Chart

- Also include an organizational chart (with names) for the local workforce investment board.

Attachment H – Local Workforce Investment Board Organizational Chart

B. ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

- **Describe the One-Stop delivery system to be established in the local area, including the location of comprehensive centers, satellite centers, and affiliate centers. [WIA §118(b)(2); Act 1125 §12(b)(2); 20 CFR 661.350(a)(3); 20 CFR 662.100(e)]**

The local one-stop system is conducive to coordination of services and collaborative efforts of service delivery. Local offices are co-located with local DWS offices in the three Certified Comprehensive centers in the West Central area. Shared staff and cross-training has occurred allowing a maximum degree of collaboration with Wagner-Peyser activities. Additional partners include the Job Corps, National Park Community College, Adult Education, Department of Human Services, Title V Older Workers, Veterans, Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, TAA/NAFTA, Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I and Unemployment Insurance.

The West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board serves ten contiguous counties in the western half of Arkansas. There are two major economic development centers within the area: Garland County south of the Arkansas River, and Pope County north of the river. The Hot Springs trade area generally encompasses the five southernmost counties and Russellville serves the northern five.

The certified comprehensive centers for the area are located in Hot Springs, Malvern and Russellville. The two satellite centers are located in Arkadelphia and Morrilton.

- **Describe the process used for selecting the One-Stop operator(s), including the appeals process available to entities that were not selected as the One-Stop operator(s). [WIA §121(d); 20 CFR 662.410; 20 CFR 670.667(b)(1)]**

The request for proposal (RFP) process will be used to determine the selection of the One Stop Operator. The RFP's will be reviewed by the One Stop Committee and the Administrative Entity staff. Recommendations for approval will be provided to the full LWIB from the One-Stop Committee. The full LWIB will make the final determination.

The appeals process, available to entities that were not selected, will be to appeal to the LWIB. This appeal must include the reason the entity is requesting to be the one-stop operator as well as its demonstrated effectiveness in providing similar or related services. The LWIB will then set a

hearing date for the appeal. Procedures shall include written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing; the manner in which it will be conducted and issues to be decided.

- **Describe how the local board will terminate a One-Stop operator for cause. [WIA §117(d)(2)(A)(ii); Act 1125 §11(a)(2)(B)]**

The LWIB will terminate the One-Stop Operator for cause when it has been determined that the operator has failed to provide services specified or has failed to comply with any provisions contained in the agreement. The LWIB may also terminate the operator when it has been determined that the operator has failed to comply with the WIA, Act 1125, or 20 CFR 652.

The LWIB reserves the right to terminate the operator immediately without notice in case of gross mismanagement by the operator or when it appears that WIA funds are endangered as confined in their subcontract.

- **What programs and funding streams will support service delivery through the One-Stop system? How will services provided by each of the One-Stop partners be integrated and made available in the local One-Stop system? What optional partners will be included?**

All required partners listed under 20CFR part 662.200 and section 121(b) of the WIA.

Services will be integrated and made available through a menu of services, referral process, cross training of partner staff, and dissemination of literature and information.

Optional partners may include: TANF, AARP, and others listed in certification document for each Certified Comprehensive Center.

- **Attach a copy of each memorandum of understanding between the local board and each of the One-Stop partners concerning the operation of the local One-Stop delivery system. [WIA §118(b)(2)(B); Act 1125 §12(b)(2)(B);20 CFR 662.310(b)]**

Attachment I - Memorandums of Understanding

- **Typically, what information and services will be provided and how will customers access them? How will the goal of universal access be achieved?**

Information on core, intensive, and training services will be provided at the comprehensive centers and at the satellite offices. A variety of methods for disseminating this information will be used. These methods will include, but not be limited to, brochures, videos, electronic links, and one-on-one personal information exchange.

Universal access will occur through the “no wrong door” approach to providing services to a customer who approaches any One-Stop partner requesting assistance with employment and training needs or services. The customer will be referred to all other One-Stop partners, as appropriate.

This “no wrong door” approach will also integrate services through the building blocks of the system -- integration, co-location, collaboration, and performance.

- **What is the local plan for delivery of core and intensive services?**

West Central Arkansas Career Development Center System, Inc. (WCACDCS) will be responsible for WIA core services, consisting of: program eligibility determination, career counseling, and information on availability of supportive services, information on how the local area is performing, and follow up services. If employment that leads to self-sufficiency is not obtained at the core level, the customer may receive intensive services.

Department of Workforce Services will be responsible for the following WIA core services: information of filing UI claims, employment statistical information including (a) job vacancy listings, (b) information on skills necessary to obtain these jobs, and (c) information on local occupations in demand and their earnings and skill requirements. All partners of the workforce center will coordinate efforts to provide outreach, intake, and orientation to the one-stop system, as well as, initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs.

The CEOs have agreed that WCACDCS will provide the following intensive services: assessment, individual employment plans, group counseling, individual counseling/career planning, case management and applicable short-term pre-vocational services to WIA eligible customers. Other partners of the one-stop center will have customers they are required to serve due to their respective funding streams. The partners will provide their own intensive services. All partners will work together to provide the most appropriate services for all customers. If employment that leads to self-sufficiency is not obtained at the intensive level, the customer may receive training services.

- **Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIA §118(b)(4); Act 1125 §12(b)(4); 20 CFR 661.350(a)(5)]**

Adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities will consist primarily of those available through the eligible training provider list. This list will contain certified providers offering training programs relevant to current labor market demands and will be customized for the local area. Dissemination of the provider list through area one-stops and their partners will ensure that providers meet the employment needs of local employers and job seekers.

Upon determination of customer needs to receive training services, ITAs will be used in all available training programs. Determination of the maximum amount allowable in each ITA will be determined by cost of training at the school. Participants will receive an ITA for the training program they have selected through the eligible training provider list to be presented to the individual school. This ITA will include the name of the training program as well as the maximum amount allowable to be charged within the ITA. Schools will bill WCAPDD upon enrollment each semester. Amounts reimbursed will be deducted from the ITA maximum allowed. Each additional semester enrollment will reflect the balance on the ITA so the school, participant, case manager and WCAPDD will be aware of funds remaining. Unused funds in each individual ITA at completion of training will be used for other WIA participants.

- **How will the local board promote the participation of private sector employers in the statewide workforce investment system and ensure the effective provision, through the system, of connecting, brokering, and coaching activities, through intermediaries like the One-Stop operator in the local area or through other organizations to assist the employers**

in meeting hiring needs. [Note the limitation on use of funds in WIA §181(e).] [WIA §117(d)(8); Act 1125 §11(k)]

Private sector employers' participation toward this end will occur naturally through the majority representation of this group on the local board. The customer satisfaction surveys of the employer's "customers" will provide information that can be used to measure the effectiveness of meeting their hiring needs. Additional assistance to employers will be provided through the one-stop system's partner agencies. Employment service activities under Wagner-Peyser for employers, will provide labor exchange activities such as employer outreach to develop job openings, assessing the job skill potential of applicants, matching applicants to appropriate job openings, referring qualified job applicants to employers, providing labor market and labor exchange information and certifying individuals for federal and state tax credits.

C. SPECIAL TARGET POPULATIONS

The local operational plan must describe how all workforce system partners will work together to ensure that customers who need a broad range of services receive them. This is an opportunity for the local area to describe how the workforce center services will address more specific needs of targeted sub-populations.

Describe how the local system will meet the needs of the following groups:

- **Services to the Unemployed, to include:**
 - **How will reemployment services to Unemployment Insurance claimants be coordinated**

In addition to core, intensive and training services, Unemployment Insurance claimants will be offered counseling and referrals to services designed to meet their individual needs and address barriers that cannot be resolved through WIA services.

- **How will services to Trade Adjustment Assistance customers be coordinated and how will these customers be co-enrolled in these programs**

TAA customers are co-enrolled with WIA when appropriate.

Workforce partners have met and designed a system specific to TAA customers to address the individual needs of the customer. (Referral process from TAA to WIA or other partner agencies)

Rapid Response activities/proper referrals (TAA/WIA, etc)/Co-enrollments based upon assessment without duplication of services.

In addition to core, intensive and training services, Trade Adjustment Assistance customers will be offered counseling and referrals to services designed to meet their individual needs and address barriers that cannot be resolved through WIA services.

- **Low-Income Individuals – Include how Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) services will be further integrated into the workforce center system and how services to TANF customers are coordinated within the workforce centers**

TANF is co-located in all of our Workforce Centers and individuals are co-enrolled as appropriate. We utilize all resources and activities in the Center to assist these individuals. In addition to core, intensive and training services, Low-Income Individuals will be offered counseling and referrals to services designed to meet their individual needs and address barriers that cannot be resolved through WIA services.

- **Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers – please specify what outreach activities the local area will make to reach this population**

Information and referral to the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program occurs in all offices. Individuals may receive all services at Workforce Centers

In addition to core, intensive and training services, Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers customers will be offered counseling and referrals to services designed to meet their individual needs and address barriers that cannot be resolved through WIA services.

- **Veterans Services – include how the Veterans Priority of Service will be implemented in the local area**

Veterans Priority of Service follows Department of Labor guidance and all staff has been trained to ensure Veterans Preference. Local policy assures that priority of services will implemented at the point of intake in accordance with TEGL 10-09 and State Issuance 09-08.

Services to veterans through the Gold Card Initiative are available at the local Workforce Centers. The **Gold Card** Initiative provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with the intensive and follow-up services they need to succeed in today's job market. The Gold Card initiative is a joint effort of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

An eligible veteran can present the Gold Card at his/her local workforce center to receive enhanced intensive services including up to six months of follow-up. The enhanced in-person services available for Gold Card holders at local workforce centers may include:

- Job readiness assessment, including interviews and testing;
- Development of an Individual Development Plan (IDP);
- Career guidance through group or individual counseling that helps veterans in making training and career decisions;
- Provision of labor market, occupational, and skills transferability information that inform educational, training, and occupational decisions;
- Referral to job banks, job portals, and job openings;
- Referral to employers and registered apprenticeship sponsors;
- Referral to training by WIA-funded or third party service providers; and
- Monthly follow-up by an assigned case manager for up to six months.

The local area also stands ready to provide employment services to veterans that have been enrolled in the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP). The VRAP program offers up to 12 months of retraining assistance to Veterans who meet all the following criteria:

- Unemployed
- At least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Have an other than dishonorable discharge
- Not eligible for any other VA education benefit programs (e.g., the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment)
- Not in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability (IU)
- Not enrolled in a federal or state job training program

In order to promote both the Gold Card Initiative and VRAP services, the state has modified the management information data system to place notifications to all staff members as they log in, notifying them of those programs and providing a live link for more details. This same message is also provided to all veteran job seekers each time they log into the system. Additionally to aid in identifying and reaching out to Gold Card eligible veterans, the state has set up a questionnaire as the first step after logging into the system, asking if they have served on (or since) 9/11 as well as if they are aware of the Gold Card Initiative.

- **Limited English Proficiency**

Individuals who have Limited English Proficiency are served by bi-lingual staff, if available, and interpretation is available to individuals on request. Individuals are referred to Adult Education for English as a Second Language and basic skills training.

- **Ex-Offenders**

Staff has been providing workshops and individual services Ex-Offenders as they reenter society and the workforce, partnering with probation and parole agencies. Staff works with employers to solicit openings for ex-offenders. Job fairs are provided by the Correctional facility in Hot Spring County, employers and the Arkansas Workforce Center as needed.

- **Mature Workers**

Mature Workers are served in our area by Experience Work, Job Service and Unemployment as appropriate and needed. As a partner, the local workforce centers provide a worksite for experience works clients and enrollment into WIA if warranted.

- **Services to Individuals with Disabilities – Include how the local system will ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunity, as well as compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. [WIA §188(a)(2)]**

All offices are ADA compliant and the public is made aware of the Equal Opportunity Act and Non-Discrimination. Individuals are given information and acknowledge this in the AJL system. Youth with disabilities are encouraged to apply for WIA youth services. The JAWS system is provided for customers who are visually impaired.

- **Youth Services – include the local area’s design framework for the youth program and the local area’s definition regarding the sixth youth eligibility criterion. Describe and assess the type and availability of youth activities in the local area, including an identification of successful providers of the activities. Also, include how the services for youth will be connected to the workforce center.**

Both WIA and Non-WIA youth have access to the resource rooms within the Workforce Centers. The youth have available access to services such as job search, resume writing, labor market information etc.

WCACDCS, Inc. serves as the sole provider for youth services within the West Central workforce investment area.

Each WIA youth must have an Objective Assessment completed on them when they enroll into WIA. This Object Assessment is a diagnostic approach to evaluating the needs of a participant without regard to services or training programs already available in a local area. It is an independent, comprehensive evaluation of an individual designed to identify information vital to the design of an ISS. The assessment should address the participant’s educational and employment barriers taking into account the participants’ family situation, work history, education, occupational skills, interests, aptitudes, attitudes toward work, motivation, behavior patterns affecting employment potential, financial resources and needs. Objective assessment is an ongoing process and should not be viewed as a one-time event. It should be a multi-faceted approach that includes a full array of options including items such as structured interviews, paper and pencil tests, performance tests, behavioral observations, interest inventories, career guidance instruments, aptitude tests, and basic skill tests. As an ongoing process, it must be revisited regularly and amended, as appropriate, when additional needs are identified or goals achieved. All youth will have Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The ISS is developed consists of four (4) primary areas: Goals, Assessment, Achievement Objectives and Plan Progress. The ISS will give an overview of the services received as it relates to the ten (10) program elements. Services needed are determined from the information gathered in the ISS. A career interest inventory, such as but not limited to, Kuder is administered to each youth client. This and other assessment tools are available to all youth through the resource room. The purpose of the interest inventory is to expose youth to the concept that a career should be chosen on the basis of aptitudes, interests, values, non-traditional employment and abilities. Workshops and orientations are conducted in employability skills, study skills, soft skills, teamwork, communication skills, pre- and post employment skills, and other specific occupational skills.

WIA clients are exposed to the business community through summer employment and work experience. These opportunities allow the youth to develop valuable work related skills to ensure employability in the future.

The youth provider has begun using incentives to help ensure that as many youth possible meet performance. The biggest challenge when working with the out-of-school youth is to get them to participate. Sometimes incentives are not enough. It takes case managers many hours to counsel this clientele.

The LWIB has defined “an Individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” to include any of the items listed in the WIB Approve Barrier Policy.

Attachment J – Local Workforce Investment Board Approved Barrier Policy

D. GRANTS MANAGEMENT

- **Describe the process for developing a budget for the purpose of carrying out the duties of the local board. In answering this question, indicate how allowable administrative funds will be divided between the local board and the One-Stop operator(s). [WIA §117(d)(3)(A); Act 1125 §11(a)(6)]**

The local board develops the budget for the purpose of carrying out the duties of the board based upon historical data and anticipation of future needs.

The administrative entity and the one-stop operator provide their requests of budget approval to the one-stop committee on an annual basis. These requests cover both administrative and programmatic costs. Once the one-stop committee approves these budgets a recommendation is made to the full board for final approval. No more than 10% of funds will be spent on administrative costs.

- **Describe the competitive process to be used to award grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under WIA Title I, Subtitle B, including the process to be used to procure training services that are made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process as described in WIA §134(d)(4)(G). [WIA §118(b)(9); Act 1125 §12(b)(9); 20 CFR 661.350(a)(10)]**

The Board advertises for bidders through a competitive Request for Proposal for the Youth Provider and for the Adult & Dislocated Worker Provider. The Youth Council is responsible for evaluating the proposals submitted for Youth Provider and make recommendation to the Board for approval. The Adult and Dislocated Workers proposals are reviewed by the One Stop Committee who makes recommendation to the Board for approval. Provider performance is reviewed annually and the option for continuation of the contract is offered if criteria are met or exceeded.

As mentioned above, the West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board sends notice of RFP's for Youth Services separately. Notice of the RFP and deadline for submittal will be published in the legal section of newspapers serving our local Workforce Investment Area and at least one newspaper having general circulation in the state. Each RFP submitted will be evaluated for recommendation for funding using criteria established by the Youth Council. Results of all evaluations will be provided to the Youth Council to use as recommendations for funding to the full West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

The only current contracts the West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board has in place are the One Stop Operator/Title IB Service Provider and the Youth Provider. Both are West Central Arkansas Career Development Center Systems, Inc.

The Board will review the need for contract services on an as needed basis.

- **Describe the criteria to be used under 20 CFR 663.600 to determine whether funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities under WIA sections 133(b)(2)(A) or (3) are limited and the process by which any priority will be applied by the One-Stop operator. [20 CFR 661.350(a)(11)]**

West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (WIB) has determined that funds are limited in this area. There are not enough adult or dislocated worker funds available to provide intensive services and training services to all people who could benefit from such services.

Attachment K – Local Workforce Investment Board Priority of Funds Policy

- **Describe any current plans to solicit grants and donations from sources other than WIA funds. [WIA §117(d)(3)(B)(iii); Act 1125 §11(f)]**

Currently there are no current plans to solicit grants but as opportunities arise for application to grants and other funds we will take advantage of these, including National Emergency Grants and others.

- **How will funds received under the Workforce Investment Act be used to leverage other federal, state, local and private resources to maximize the effectiveness of such resources and expand the participation of business, employees, and individuals in the local workforce investment system? [WIA §112(b)(10)]**

Funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be used to leverage other resources and expand the system by cost sharing among partners located in the Workforce Centers. Office spaces, staff salaries and other expenses are cost pooled.

Costs for participants can be leveraged by co-enrolling in programs and sharing the expenses for training, supportive services and other costs.

- **Describe the ITA system and the procedures for ensuring that exceptions to the use of ITAs, if any, are justified under WIA §134(d)(4)(G)(ii) and 20 CFR 663.430. [20 CFR 661.350(a)(5)]**

The Board reserves the option to contract for training special populations, such as second language barriers, multiple barriers or offenders, when there is a Community Based Organization (CBO) or other private organization which has a special and proven effective training program that meets the special needs identified. Such procurements will be assessed for cost reasonableness and cost effectiveness.

- **Describe any limits on ITAs as established by local board policies, in accordance with 20 CFR 663.420. [20 CFR 663.420(c)]**

The limitations on ITAs will be on a case by case basis. The maximum amount available will be determined by the length of training and information provided by the institution on the exact cost contained in ACRS.

Attachment L – Local Workforce Investment Board ITA Policy

- **If the local board has determined that there are insufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs, describe the process to be used in selecting the providers under a contract for services. This process must include a public comment period for interested providers of a least 30 days. [20CFR 663.430(a)(2)]**

The local board has determined that there are sufficient numbers of eligible providers in the area.

E. COORDINATION AND NON-DUPLICATION

- **Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities, as appropriate. [WIA §118(b)(5); Act 1125 §12(b)(5); 20 CFR 661.350(a)(6)]**

The Rapid Response activity is delivered through the Governor’s Dislocated Worker Task Force at the State level. Therefore, there is no subcommittee of the West Central Workforce Investment Board responsible for this activity.

The co-location of DWS and WIA staff allows the timely notification of the layoff/closure and coordination among the partners in the workforce center to help provide the best-individualized service for the participant. Since notification for the closure/layoff comes directly from DWS, the West Central Workforce Investment Board has not developed any policies.

The Governor’s Dislocated Worker Task Force and the local Workforce Center are responsible for coordinating Rapid Response services in the local One Stop system.

The Governor’s Dislocated Worker Task Force contacts various agencies that will provide beneficial information to the dislocated workers. When the labor market information identifies companies in danger of closing or having a substantial layoff the Task Force immediately begins to work with the company, the community and the effected individuals. Once notification of a permanent closure or layoff has been received, the Task Force contacts company officials. A community meeting is scheduled with the Elected Officials and business leaders to determine if a Dislocated Worker workshop is necessary. If decided that a workshop is needed a location and date is set.

At the workshop the effected individuals are made aware of the following services:

- Early Detection and Intervention
 - Community Involvement
 - Labor Management Adjustment Committees
 - Department of Workforce Services Office Support
 - NAFTA
 - Vacated Facilities Marketing
 - Worker Assistance Workshops
 - Career Assessment and Counseling
 - Educational Fairs
 - Emergency Disaster Relief Centers
 - Job Fairs
 - Information
 - Mobile Career Resources Centers
 - Trade Adjustment Assistance
- **Describe how coordination with Job Corps, Youth Opportunity Grants, and other youth programs in the local area will occur. *Note the limitation on use of funds in WIA §129(c)(6)(B). [WIA §112(b)(18)(C)]***

Coordination with Job Corps, Youth Opportunity Grants, and other youth programs in the local area will occur through referrals and co-enrollments.

- Workforce Center staff are continuously working to strengthen ties and enhance awareness of the Job Corps' mission and the kinds of programs/services available
 - Workforce staff participates in pre-orientation activities and tours of Job Corps Centers to become more familiar with its resources and thus be better able to continue planning future collaboration
 - Workforce staff refers youth who will benefit from the unique services available through the Job Corps residential training programs.
 - Workforce Centers make Job Corps information and brochures readily available to customers by keeping material in resource rooms
 - Job Corps representatives bring their students to the Workforce Center so they may utilize the services available to them
 - Workforce staff and Job Corps collaboration provides at-risk youth with additional opportunities to pursue training in a variety of in-demand occupations.
- **Describe the local plan for avoiding duplication of services. [WIA §112(b)(8)(A)]**

By using the Arkansas Job Link (AJL) management information system case managers are able to see services that area being provided by partner agencies. Core and intensive activities are coordinated in each office to avoid duplication of services.

- **Describe the business service team and how the team will be used to coordinate services to employers.**

The West Central LWIB has approved a business service representative who is responsible for ensuring the coordination of business service throughout the ten county area. The business service representative coordinates teams in each of the comprehensive centers to address the needs of employers in our area. The business services team will coordinate services that meet employer/business demands in an easily accessible, transparent way.

F. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

- **Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers and participants. [WIA §118(b)(2)(A); Act 1125 §12(b)(2)(A); 20 CFR 661.350(a)(3)(i)]**

Because of the waiver to extend initial eligibility requirements exempt providers are not required to submit performance data. Non-exempt providers must meet the State minimum eligibility requirement for performance. Those that do not meet minimum requirements are not added or will be removed from the eligible training provider list.

- **How will the local board determine the satisfaction of users of the workforce system?**
- **How will the board develop and implement a continuous improvement plan based on customer feedback?**

Customer satisfaction comment cards are used by Arkansas Workforce Centers to gather information regarding non-grievable complaints. These cards are conveniently located for customers at the front desk and in the Resource Rooms at the Arkansas Workforce Centers. These cards offer a short questionnaire and a section for comments regarding the quality of services received. These cards are pre-addressed to the One-Stop Operator. Also, made available for customer convenience, are comment card drop boxes (no postage necessary) located in the Arkansas Workforce Center Lobbies and on WCACDCS, Inc. website www.wcacdcs.org.

The Business Service Representative will be responsible for collecting all survey cards and/or website responses and providing copies to the Administrative Entity. The Business Services Representative is then responsible for responding to all customer comments whether positive or negative.

The One-Stop Operator receives copies of all comment cards from the Business Service Representative and uses the information to provide management with feedback so that identified issues or deficiencies in operation may be addressed and the necessary adjustments may be made for improvement.

The comment card information is shared monthly at partner meetings to give staff feedback on our customer service performance. This is the procedure used to ensure continuous improvement of service delivery in the Arkansas Workforce Centers of West Central.

During local WIA monitoring, the monitor reviews all the comment cards received by the business service representative and discuss process to address complaints or suggestions for improvement of services.

- **Provide a staff development plan for each classification of staff working in the workforce center to include professional development goals, priorities, and training needs. Describe the plan for cross-training of partner staff.**

All Arkansas Workforce Center staff will be required to obtain a minimum of 12 hours of training per year. Staff will be encouraged to participate in the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals certification. Endorsements such as job seeker, business service, youth and management specialties provide the requirement for ongoing professional development. The initial certification is only awarded with the individuals' credentials have been verified and documented. Staff may also participate in Workforce3One webinars, state webinars and other resources for career development. This training will be documented through certificates of completion or written acknowledgement by the training provider and will be filed in a designated area for training records. Partner agencies may also utilize their individual agency training requirements. Each training provider is responsible for providing documentation to the central filing location for each staff member attending the training session. Each partner is responsible for making other partners aware of training sessions offered that might be relevant for cross training purposes.

Partner meetings will be held to share information and to provide appropriate training sessions as needed.

Each new Arkansas Workforce Center employee will be provided with partner program/service awareness training. Their supervisor is responsible for making sure that this cross training is accomplished.

The purpose of all required training is to make a continuous effort to provide our staff members with the knowledge they need to provide quality service to our customers. Understanding the full range of services that each partner of the Arkansas Workforce Center provides is an important factor in the one-stop concept. In order to refer clients to the program that best meets their needs, we must understand what services that each partner provides. Cross training on core services will occur between all Arkansas Workforce Center staff. Core services are the services that are provided by all Arkansas Workforce Center partners and are universally accessible to all customers. There are no eligibility requirements for core services. This training will help develop our knowledge of partner services, thus improving the level of service that our customers receive; this will play an important role in helping with unexpected absences or an increase in customer flow, where it may be necessary to focus staff in different areas in order to better assist customers. Time spent cross training will account for credit hours towards Arkansas Workforce Center staff training.

G. PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Describe and provide specific quantitative targets for the local levels of performance negotiated pursuant to WIA §136(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers, and the One-Stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIA §118(b)(3); Act 1125 §12(b)(3); 20 CFR 661.350(a)(4) 20 CFR 661.350(c)]

Fiscal agent measures are not applicable. Collection and provision of eligible provider’s performance is currently waived with the exception of non-state funded institutions. One-Stop delivery system’s performance measures are currently under negotiation.

WIA Requirement at Section 136(b)	PY 2012 Performance Goal	PY 2013 Performance Goal
Adults: Entered Employment Rate Employment Retention Rate Average Six-Months Earnings Certificate Rate Dislocated Workers: Entered Employment Rate Employment Retention Rate Average Six-Months Earnings Certificate Rate Youth Common Measures: Placement in Employment or Education Attainment of a Degree or Certificate Literacy and Numeracy Gains	89.5% 92.0% \$12,530 94.0% 95.5% \$12,200 79.7% 76.9% 65%	84.0% 88.0% \$13,080 88.0% 93.0% \$14,114 81.7% 81.5% 77.9%
W-P Requirement at Section 13(a)	PY 2012 Performance Goal*	PY 2013 Performance Goal
Entered Employment Rate Employment Retention Rate Average Six-Months Earnings	63% 80.5% 11,350	64.0% 82.0% 12,300

H. WAIVER REQUESTS

Will the local area be requesting any waivers in accordance with WIA sections 117, 189, or 192 as part of this plan? If so, waiver plans should be developed in accordance with 20 CFR 661.420(c) that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

The West Central Area is not anticipating requesting any waivers at this time.

- **Statutory and/or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested.**

Not Applicable

- **A description of the actions the local area has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers.**

Not Applicable

- **A description of the goals of the waiver, how those goals relate to workforce plan goals, and expected programmatic outcomes if the waiver is granted.**

Not Applicable

- **A description of individuals impacted by the waiver.**

Not Applicable

- **A description of the processes used to monitor implementation and ensure meaningful public comment, including comment from business and labor.**

Not Applicable

I. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **Describe the plan development process, including a discussion of the process used by the local board, consistent with WIA §118(c) to provide an opportunity for public comment – including comment by representatives of business and labor organizations – and input into the development of the local plan, prior to submission of the plan.**

The local plan development was a coordinated effort between local board staff and One-Stop Operator with local partner input. The plan was submitted to the Chief Elected Officials Representative and Local Board for comment, review and approval. Availability of the plan for a thirty day (30) public review and comment period will be announced through local news media. The announcement of the plan provided the public viewing hours and location for interested parties and contained instructions and timeframe for providing comments.

- **What other organizations were involved in the development of the local plan, visions, and goals, and how were they involved? [WIA §118(b)(7); Act 1125 §12(b)(7); 20 CFR661.350 (a)(8)]**

The executive committee of the LWIB met via teleconference in February to discuss input for the local plan July 1, 2012 thru June 30, 2016. After discussion the executive committee approved the plan and agreed to be ratified at the March LWIB meeting.

- **What was the role of the chief elected official(s) (CEOs) in developing the Plan? [WIA §118(a)]**

The chief elected official reviewed and approved the plan during executive committee teleconference.

- **Describe the method used to make copies of the local plan available through such means as public hearings, the local news media, and via the Internet. [WIA §118(c)(1)]**

Public notice for the 30 day public review and comments

- **Attach any public comments received. How were these comments considered in developing the local plan? [WIA §118(c)(3); Act 1125 §12(c)(3); 20 CFR 661.345(c)]**

If any comments are received they will be attached to the local plan with a plan of action addressing any disagreements as needed.