

C. Plan Development and Implementation

1. Methods for Joint Planning and Coordination of Programs and Activities Included in Unified Plan

[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination of the programs and activities included in the unified plan. (WIA Sec. 501(c)(3)(A)) State Consultation with Locals in Development of Plan: The authorizing statutes for many of the programs that may be included in a unified plan require that the State plan be developed in consultation with various public and private entities, as well as members of the general public. Some statutes also require formal public hearings. Depending upon the programs that a State chooses to include in its unified plan, it may be possible for the State to satisfy many of these consultation requirements through a single set of processes. For example, both WIA Title I and Perkins III require that the business community be involved in the development of the State plans for these programs. The State may satisfy both of these requirements by involving the business community in the development of a unified plan that includes the two programs. Separate consultations are not necessary.]

During the 1997 session of the Arkansas General Assembly, Governor Mike Huckabee and the General Assembly recognized the need to upgrade the Arkansas workforce. The Vocational and Technical Education Division and the State Board of Vocational Education were abolished, and the Department of Workforce Education and the State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities were created by Act 803 of 1997. In addition, the Workforce Development Commission was created by this legislation.

The Workforce Development Commission was composed of representatives from a wide variety of business, education, and government leaders. Among their purposes were the development of a state plan for better delivery of technical education and training in needed skills, which would include maximizing the effectiveness of postsecondary vocational education. Portions of this plan have been included in the Arkansas State Unified Plan. Other portions may be included as the State Unified Plan is evaluated and modified each year.

Governor Huckabee established the Arkansas Career Opportunities Partnership Cabinet (COPC) to govern the state's full-service employment, career development, and training systems before the development of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Members of this cabinet were the state directors of the Department of Workforce Education, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Information Services, the Department of Health, the Economic Development Commission, the Employment Security Department, and the Department of Education. Recommendations of this Cabinet have been incorporated into the State Unified Plan.

Interested entities from all parts of the State of Arkansas have formed workgroups to make recommendations concerning various parts of this plan. These recommendations have been taken into account when developing this plan.

With direction and guidance from the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, Arkansas began developing its State Unified Plan on October 6, 1999, the day that guidance for the plan was published in the Federal Register. On this day, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board staff met with representatives of all state agencies that would be involved in developing the plan to discuss the planning guidance and begin the planning process. Both the board and public representatives provided strong representation from business and labor. The Workforce Investment Board met with representatives of these agencies again on November 19 to establish procedures and a time line for submitting contributions to the plan. (See Attachment C-1) Preliminary drafts contributions to the plan were submitted to the Workforce Investment Board by December 15, and these contributions were combined to create a preliminary draft of the plan.

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board met January 11, 2000, for a full-day workshop to discuss the State Unified Plan and provide policy guidance and direction for the 13 elements of the plan. The general public was also invited to provide suggestions for the development of the plan. The results of this workshop were included in the preliminary draft of the plan. The preliminary draft of the State Unified Plan was transmitted on diskette and by e-mail to all members of the state board on January 14, and the board returned their comments and suggestions for improving the plan to the Workforce Investment Board staff by January 21. These comments and suggestions were instrumental in improving the plan. The full state board met January 26 to consider changes that had been made, and additional suggestions were made. These suggestions were incorporated into the plan, and the Executive Summary and Draft #1 of Arkansas' State Unified Plan was presented to the Executive Committee on February 8. At this time the Executive Committee approved the publishing of the Executive Summary and Draft #1 for public comment.

Additional policies and procedures added by the Executive Committee at their March 21 meeting, after recommendations made by the other committees of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Board staff, the Department of Labor, and local boards.

The Arkansas business community has been actively involved with the development of the employment and training system under the Workforce Investment Act. The executive director of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board has addressed many meetings of Arkansas business leaders and executive, including the state convention of the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce in October 1999. Since then, two articles about the Workforce Investment Act have been published in "Policy Watch," the newsletter of the Arkansas Chamber of Commerce, which is distributed to all state chamber members and to local chambers, as well. Representatives of

the Arkansas Manufacturers Association have attended most meeting of the state board, and an article about WIA appeared in that organization's newsletter. In March 2000, a public hearing about the state plan was conducted by videoconference at ten locations across the state. To ensure participation by the business community, the conference was advertised in the business sections of four regional newspapers in a format and language familiar to the business community rather than in a legal-notice format .

PERKINS III (SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY) AND TECH PREP

The director of ADWE is a member of the Workforce Investment Board and of its Executive Council. His participation on the WIB ensures that planning and coordination of the unified plan activities will include Perkins. In addition, the director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education is a member of the Workforce Investment Board. Both directors are cognizant of the goals and issues surrounding Perkins.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT TITLE I (YOUTH, ADULT, AND DISLOCATED WORKER)

Program representatives, as one-stop partners, are represented on each local workforce investment board and participate fully in the local planning process for the Workforce Investment Act. Local chief elected officials, Title I grant recipients have been very actively involved in with local boards by attending meetings and giving input to policy decisions.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY

Representatives from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (ADWE) are actively involved with other agency personnel in planning and coordination of activities to develop strategies to meet the goals and objectives of the unified plan. The agency director serves on the State Workforce Investment Board and the deputy director serves as a cabinet alternate, working with other agency alternates to assist the state and local boards in planning and coordination of activities. Representatives from ADWE serve on several working committees to develop policies and procedures required for implementation of the State Unified Plan.

FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM

Plans are developed by the state agency and approved by the Food and Nutrition Services. Representatives of the food stamp employment and training program contributed to the State Unified Plan.

TRADE ACT PROGRAMS

Because these programs are operated through Arkansas Employment Security Department (AESD), the AESD local office managers are representing this entity in local planning activities and MOUs. At the state level, the Field Operations Administrator, the Unemployment Insurance Administrator, and the Employment and Training Services Administrator consider their resources when entering into state level MOUs and when contributing to the State Unified Plan.

WAGNER-PEYSER ACT

At the state level, staff members who are paid from Wagner-Peyser funds have contributed to the State Unified Plan. The Field Operations Administrator, who devotes approximately half his time to Wagner-Peyser, has initiated planning sessions with state agency counterparts to provide direction to local offices of state agencies on local planning options. At the local level, AESD local office managers are participating as partners to enter into MOUs and to provide input to the local plans.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

- **ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES**

ARS has participated in the development and implementation of the State Unified Plan in each step of the process. ARS was represented in all work-groups and sessions developing the plan. ARS participated in work-groups formed to implement the workforce system including Information Systems, Cooperative Agreements, Performance Measures, Training Providers, Individual Training Accounts, and Local Boards. A work-group chaired by the Deputy Director of the State Board, composed of the principle partners in the system, met to develop the plan on an ongoing basis. Electronic media were utilized to submit and edit the Plan as well. All state agencies that are required partners have been involved extensively in collaboration and cooperation through the Governor's Career Opportunity Partnership Cabinet and the State Workforce Investment Board. ARS' Commissioner by state law (Act 1125 of 1999) is a member of the State Board. ARS Regional Administrators are members of the local boards in each of the certified areas.

The Rehabilitation Act requires input from the State Rehabilitation Council of Arkansas in development of the ARS sections of the Plan. The Council is by law made-up of individuals with disabilities, their family members, representatives and professionals who serve people with disabilities. ARS consulted with the Council on an ongoing basis and received their input concerning the development of the Plan.

- **DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND**

DSB participates in State Workforce Investment Board meetings and committee meetings. Information is shared by the participating WIA agencies and programs regarding the planning and implementation of WIA and the One-Stop centers. DSB has provided input in discussions with staff serving on the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board committee addressing accessibility.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration requires public meetings to obtain consumer information and feedback on the DSB State Plan. Guidance received from the RSA Region VI Office indicates DSB should comply and adhere to the procedure the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board implements to obtain public comment for the Unified Plan. DSB has provided information to its consumers on the public comment process, including the public hearing held February 25. This information will be submitted to blind consumer groups and agencies as well as all individuals currently on DSB caseloads. Information regarding the public comment process for the State Unified Plan will be available from the DSB Web page. Announcements about the public comment period, public meeting locations and information to obtain copies of the State Unified Plan will be announced on Arkansas Radio Reading Service for the Blind. Arkansas Radio Reading Service for the Blind broadcasts readings of local and national newspapers and magazines daily over special television and radio channels.

DSB has been and continues to be involved in the planning and preparation process of the State Unified Plan by attending meetings, submitting information, and participating in collection of information at the planning meetings conducted by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. DSB has informed its consumers of the State Unified Plan process and how to access and obtain information on the Plan. At the DSB Board meeting held December 11, 1999, information was disseminated to DSB Board members and consumers. The DSB Web site provides linkage to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board web site as a convenience to individuals who are blind or visually impaired and the general public. Consumers of the DSB programs are encouraged to review State Unified Plan documents and provided feedback and comment to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

VETERANS PROGRAMS

Veterans' interests during the planning process are represented through the AESD local office managers at the local level and through the Field Operations Administrator and his staff at the state level.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The UI Administrator and his staff at the state level have helped to write this plan and remain involved in planning discussions at the agency level.

TANF

Information is given in 2(d) below.

WELFARE-TO-WORK

The individuals who plan the WtW program at the state and local levels contribute to planning the WIA Title I programs, so planning for the two sets of programs is integrated. Additional information concerning the state Welfare-to-Work plan is given in 3(e) below.

SCSEP

The SCSEP has contributed to the Unified Plan as requested. Local planning will be facilitated through close contact with the One Stops and the workforce investment boards.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

Representatives of the Department of Human Services serve on a WIA workgroup, responsible for recommending criteria to be considered for the five-year strategic plan. Additional information is given in 2(e) and 3(g) below.

2. Opportunity for Public Comment and Participation

[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe the process used by the State to provide an opportunity for public comment and participation for each of the programs covered in the unified plan.]

Participation by each program is described in C(1) above.

(a) Perkins III

[Federal Planning Guidance: Perkins III, you must hold public hearings and include a summary of the recommendations made by all segments of the public and interested organizations and groups and the eligible agency's response to the recommendations in the State plan. (Sec. 122(a)(3))]

Before the five-year Perkins plan was submitted, three public hearings were held across the state during the first week of March 1999—one in the northwest region, one in the southeast region, and one in central Arkansas. Prior to these public hearings, a summary of the impact on the state's programs was mailed to all secondary and postsecondary administrators, consortia fiscal agents, and other interested persons such as the Arkansas Vocational Association board members, project directors of the equity and single parent/displaced homemaker programs, etc. The invitation to the public hearings also contained information on how to access further information regarding the Perkins Act through the U.S. Department of Education's web site.

The summary of impact paper mailed with the invitation included the major changes from Perkins II to Perkins III and pointed out the issues of the 10% reserve of local funds, the state's choice to reserve up to 1% for corrections and institutions that serve persons with disabilities, the decision to fund the current Tech Prep consortia without a new RFP, the core indicators of performance, the amounts for nontraditional training and employment, etc.

A notice for the public hearings was placed in the Sunday edition of the newspaper with statewide distribution. In addition, a press release was mailed to the media in each of the regions in which a public hearing was held. Approximately 80 persons attended the public hearings.

The draft of the State Plan was placed on the Department's web site on March 23 prior to final State Board action on April 8 and comments were accepted until April 1.

Responses to Recommendations from the Public on the State Plan:

Nontraditional Education and Training

Comments: The greatest area of concern expressed at the public hearings and in written comments was the loss of the set aside funding for sex equity and single parent/displaced homemaker projects. There was one recommendation that the \$150,000 maximum allowable expenditure on nontraditional education and training out of state leadership should be directed to programs in the rural Delta that have lost their set asides under Perkins II equity and single parent/displaced homemaker programs. There was one recommendation that the colleges who had these programs should have their funding disproportionately increased to help continue the program. Several persons requested assistance in figuring out how the projects might transition into locally supported activities.

Response: The Department initiated a meeting with the Department of Human Services and Employment Security Department, the state agencies responsible for the state's welfare-to-work program and the one-stop system. Efforts are being made to help the equity and single parent/displaced homemaker programs learn how to transition some of their activities that fit into

the purposes and needs of these other programs. The potential exists to have at least partial funding for one-year for the Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Programs from Department of Human Services funds. This will allow additional time for each local program to work with the one-stop partners in their area.

10-Percent Reserve

Comments: There was one recommendation that the state should reserve 10% of the local grant funds for rural areas with high concentrations of vocational students. There was one comment that the state should reserve 10% for programs in the rural Delta that serve large numbers of special populations in vocational programs. Several attendees stated that all funds should flow through the regular distribution formulas.

Response: The databases necessary to support the determination of high numbers or concentrations of vocational students do not exist at this time. Since Arkansas is primarily a rural state with very few metropolitan areas, the effect of using the rural area factor would be negligible. Also, the data needed to support a trial run for the change in the secondary distribution formula does not exist at this time. The State Board did not reserve funds under this purpose.

Accountability – Core Indicators

Comments: Concern was expressed by several attendees regarding using Grade Point Average as a measure of academic and vocational technical skill proficiency. At the postsecondary level average GPA may fluctuate depending upon the region's unemployment rate. High unemployment and factory closings may translate into a student body that is motivated to excel quickly and return to work. Low unemployment rates usually are reflected in a student body that is comprised of those who are hard to serve with low academic skills. At the secondary level, improving a vocational program through increased academic rigor may cause a drop in GPA for a short time.

Response: While GPA is not a perfect measure, it is one of the few data factors that is available without requiring additional testing and data collection at the local level. The other factor that could be used (and is being used by some states) is course/program completion. We do not feel that seat time is an adequate indicator that a student actually attained skill proficiencies. GPA does indicate some degree of skill attainment.

(b) WIA Title I, Wagner-Peyser Act, and Veterans Programs

[Federal Planning Guidance: WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs, describe the process used by the State, consistent with section 111(g) of WIA, to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of business and representatives of labor organizations, and input into development of the plan, prior to submission of the plan.]

Workforce Investment Act planning and implementation calls for broad public involvement. In complying with §111(g) of WIA, Arkansas observed a 30-day public comment period on the WIA five-year plan. The Arkansas State Workforce Investment Board advertised the final draft plan in state and local newspapers and published the plan on the Internet. A paper copy of the plan was available at the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board office.

In addition to information provided under C(1), the following steps were taken to provide opportunity for public comment and participation in the unified plan:

- A legal notice ran in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, a newspaper of statewide circulation, on February 9, 2000. The ad announced the availability of a copy of the first draft of the state plan for public viewing from February 9 through March 10.
- The notice also identified a Web address through which the draft could be viewed.
- A legal ad in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and display ads in four regional newspapers and business publications announced information concerning the public hearing held February 25. Copies of the releases were sent to persons registered for notification under the State's Administrative Procedures Act.
- A videoconference public hearing relating to the workforce investment system and the State Unified Plan was held February 25 at the State Education Building in Little Rock. It was broadcast to 12 sites across the state. Seventy-six persons participated, 7 registered in advance to speak, 17 actually spoke, and 1 submitted written comment. Nine state board members served as site hosts. Rebekah Lee, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, attended the Little Rock site.
- An additional comment period is being held March 29 – April 28. Notice of this comment period was advertised in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette March 22 – 28.

The Arkansas State Unified Plan was developed over several months with input and suggestions from members of the public and private sectors, including representatives, labor organizations, providers of youth services, Veterans Organizations and Arkansas' Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker service provider, the Arkansas Human Development Corporation (AHDC), whose role is further described in the MSFW attachment to this plan. Four separate veteran organizations participated in selecting the veterans representative of the ten local workforce investment boards, and the director of the Arkansas office of the Veterans Employment and Training Service coordinates closely with the director of the Arkansas Employment Security Department, Arkansas' Wagner-Peyser Act program administrator.

Lists of comments submitted through the public review/hearing process are carried as Attachment C-2.

(c) Adult Education and Family Literacy

[Federal Planning Guidance: Adult Education and Family Literacy, describe the process that will be used for public participation and comment with respect to the AEFLA portion of the unified plan. (Sec. 224(b)(9))]

The Adult Education State Plan Transitional Year 1999-2000 was on public review in Room 309D of Three Capitol Mall, Little Rock, Arkansas, during regular business hours from February 9, 1999, through March 10, 1999. A notice was placed in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, a statewide newspaper of report, which ran from February 9-15, 1999, concerning the public notice period. Copies of the public notice were mailed to all local adult education and literacy providers on February 9, 1999, requesting comments. The notice was also placed on the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center's web site <www.aalrc.org>

Comments received by March 10, 1999, were considered by the State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities prior to final approval.

(d) TANF

[Federal Planning Guidance: TANF, the State shall make available to the public a summary of any plan or plan amendment submitted by the State under this section. (Sec. 402(c))]

The TEA program operates under a separate State Plan required by Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. Prior to submission of the Plan to the federal Department of Health and Human Services, a 45-day public comment period is provided so that other agencies and interested parties can provide comments on the development of the Plan. In addition, Arkansas Act 1567 of 1999 created the Agency Advisory Council whose members include the Directors of the State Agencies involved in the TEA program and the programs included in this unified plan. The Advisory Council may make recommendations regarding the implementation of the TEA program and the collaborative efforts of the agencies involved.

(e) CSBG

[Federal Planning Guidance: Provide evidence that the public participation requirements were met, including documents which confirms that a legislative public hearing on the state plan was conducted as required by subsection 675(b) and that the plan was also made available for public inspection and review as required by 675(d)(2)].

Public hearings on the 2000-2001 State Plan for Community Services Block Grant Program were held in Bentonville, Conway, Jonesboro, and Fordyce in July 1999. On September 22, 1999 the House and Senate Committees on Public Health, Welfare and Labor reviewed the 2000 – 2001 State Plan for Community Services Block Grant Program.

The public notice of rule making was published in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, the state's predominate state-wide newspaper, on July 18, 1999. In addition, summaries of the plan were sent to Community Action Agency Executive Directors on July 12, 1999, with a notice that the plan would be available for public review until August 19.

3. Summaries of Consultations

[Federal Planning Guidance: Provide summaries of the consultations with appropriate agencies, groups and individuals in the evaluation, development and implementation of activities included in the plan. This section should describe the types of activities and outcomes that were conducted to meet this requirement. Demonstrate how comments were considered in the plan development process including specific information on how the various WIA agency and program partners were involved in developing the State Unified Plan.]

Information concerning how the various WIA agency and program partners were involved in developing the State Unified Plan are listed in C(1) above.

(a) Perkins III

[Federal Planning Guidance: The following agencies, groups or individuals must be consulted, if your unified plan includes Perkins

III:]

- *[Parents*
- *Teachers*
- *Students*
- *Eligible Recipients*
- *Representatives of special populations in the State*
- *Representatives of business and industry in the State, including small- and medium-sized local businesses*
- *Representatives of labor organizations in the State*
- *Interested community members*
- *Governor of the State]*

Other than the public hearings and posting on the Department's web site of pertinent information, specific groups were targeted and staff from the Department of Workforce Education or Department of Higher Education met with them to discuss issues regarding Perkins III.

The Workforce Education Coordinators who are located in the regional secondary educational cooperatives have expertise in strategies for special populations. Staff of the Department of Workforce Education met with many of them to gather input for the special populations section in particular. In addition, this group was specifically consulted regarding assessment.

The postsecondary administrators of the technical institutes and vo-tech schools provided input on the core indicators of performance and data gathering methods.

Department of Higher Education staff met with the two-year technical and community college presidents to review the changes for Perkins III and gather input prior to the summary of issues being developed. College staff were also consulted regarding the development of the core indicators of performance.

Additional less formal strategies were also used to both inform individuals about the plan development and to seek their input. These include discussions with postsecondary institution presidents, secondary superintendents and principals, personnel working with equity grants and with tech prep grants, and other groups and individuals with interest in vocational education.

The Governor's Career Opportunities Partnership Cabinet has facilitated the sharing of information and input among the various state agency members and the Governor's liaisons of this Act as well as other federal and state initiatives and activities.

[Federal Planning Guidance: In addition, you must consult with the State agency responsible for secondary education and the State agency responsible for supervision of community colleges, technical institutes, or other 2-year post secondary institutions primarily engaged in providing postsecondary vocational and technical education concerning the amount and uses of funds proposed to be reserved for adult vocational and technical education, postsecondary vocational and technical education, tech-prep education, and secondary vocational technical education. Include any objections filed by either agencies in the plan and your response(s). (Sec. 122(e)(3))]

Staff of the Department of Workforce Education and the Department of Higher Education worked together closely to develop the Plan for Perkins funds. Staff members of both agencies attended and collaborated at numerous meetings sponsored by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, regarding accountability and other aspects of the Perkins Act. In addition, staff from each agency were members of the state's team at the national Planning for Performance Institute in October of 1999, which focused on planning for a workforce investment system.

Members of both agencies participated in the public hearings and then met to draft recommendations to the State Board on key issues (e.g., the secondary-postsecondary funding split, the 10% reserve, etc.). Staff from each agency wrote various sections of the Plan document.

(b) WIA Title I, Wagner-Peyser Act, and Veterans Programs

[Federal Planning Guidance: The following agencies, groups or individuals must be consulted, if your unified plan includes WIA Title

I, Wagner-Peyser Act, and Veterans Programs:]

- *[The Governor of the State and State Board*
- *Local elected officials*
- *Local boards and youth councils*
- *Business community*
- *Labor organizations*
- *Educators*
- *Vocational rehabilitation agencies*
- *Service providers*
- *Welfare agencies*
- *Community based organizations*
- *State Employment Security Agency]*

[Federal Planning Guidance: In addition, describe the role of the State Board and Local Boards in planning and coordination in the unified plan (Sec. 501(c)(3)).[NOTE: While WIA only requires the involvement of State Board and Local Boards in the planning and coordination of the programs and activities authorized under Title I, the intent of the unified plan approach is to enable all the relevant parties in an area, if they so choose, to come together more readily to coordinate their activities in the best interests of the population to be served. However coordination is achieved, nothing in the unified plan or in WIA itself permits a Board or any other entity to alter the decisions made by another program grantee in accord with that grantee's statutes.]

Section C(1) provides basic information relative to planning sessions held with representatives of appropriate agencies and groups involved in plan development. By December 15, 1999, agency representatives submitted script for their respective sections of the plan. Thereafter the WIB staff held frequent meetings with agency/organization staffs in finalizing the unified plan.

The Governor's liaison had frequent dialogue with the WIB staff, conveying the Governor's input. The State WIB chair had separate communication with the Governor. The State WIB was significantly involved as indicated under C(1). Local chief elected officials were involved in various ways including an interchange of ideas as the Executive Director of WIB met with each of the ten local boards in January/February 2000. Local boards were also represented at State Board committee and full-board meetings.

The business community and labor organizations as well as other entities (education, etc.) were represented through the State Board and local workforce investment boards and through participation as public representatives in the State Board meetings. In addition, the President and CEO, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries of Arkansas, spoke at the State WIB meeting of October 12, 1999, providing recommendations from the business community.

(c) Adult Education and Family Literacy

[Federal Planning Guidance: The following agencies, groups or individuals must be consulted, if your unified plan includes Adult Education and Family Literacy: Governor of the State (any comments made by the Governor must be included in the plan) (Sec. 224(d))]

The Governor of Arkansas, through his Deputy Chief of Staff Rebekah Lee, has made numerous comments and contributions that have been incorporated into the State Unified Plan.

(d) Vocational Rehabilitation

[Federal Planning Guidance: The following agencies, groups or individuals must be consulted, if your unified plan includes Vocational Rehabilitation: State Rehabilitation Council (including the response of the designated State unit to such input and recommendations) (Sec. 101 (a)(21)(ii)(III)]

ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES

Consultation In The Development Of The State Unified Plan
With The Rehabilitation Council Of Arkansas

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) is the state program that provides vocational rehabilitation services to assist individuals with significant disabilities in becoming employed and living independently (with the exception of DHS-Division of Services for the Blind). The Act requires a State Rehabilitation Council made-up of individuals with disabilities, their family members, representatives and professionals who serve people with disabilities and that the Council provides collaboration in development of the State Unified Plan.

The Rehabilitation Council of Arkansas provided coordination and technical assistance to ARS concerning the development of the Arkansas State Unified Plan in a variety of ways. Support was provided to ARS to assist in complying with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). The Council participated in workgroups that developed the State Unified Plan that will be submitted in April 2000 and in the Implementation of the WIA in Arkansas. The Council provided input and assistance to the ARS in Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act through the participation of members in ARS Workgroups. The ARS Workgroups in which Council members participated included the State Unified Plan Workgroup, as well as Co-location, CSPD, Data Collection/Information Systems, Memoranda of Understanding, Education/Training, ARS RSOP Policy Manual, Written Information/Forms and Virtual Office. Through the workgroups and the flow of information between the Council and ARS, the Council provided input in all aspects of development of the State Unified Plan and ARS policy regarding

the delivery of the VR program in Arkansas. Some of the activities in which the Council participated are listed below:

- The Council received technical assistance and training from ARS staff in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Rehabilitation Act Amendments, and the significant changes and requirements of the law regarding the Rehabilitation Council.
- The Council monitored, provided input and coordination in the ARS State Unified Plan, Town Meetings for public comment, and the Consumer Satisfaction Survey for consumer comment on the quality of ARS services.
- The Rehabilitation Council of Arkansas jointly developed with ARS an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities within the state, which was included in the State Unified Plan.
- The Council provided input and assistance to the ARS in development of the State Unified Plan and Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act through the participation of members in ARS Workgroups. The Workgroups included State Unified Plan, WIA Implementation, Co-location, CSPD, Data Collection and Information Systems, Memoranda of Understanding, Education/Training, ARS RSOP Policy Manual, Written Information/Forms and Virtual Office.
- The Council hosted the Open Meeting for Public Comment for the revision of ARS RSOP Policy Manual to bring the Manual in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act Amendments.
- The Council continued to provide input and technical assistance to ARS to assure coordination and non-duplication of services with other agencies and to ensure compliance with the State Unified Plan.

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

The Division of Services for the Blind is subject to a policy making Commission Board and recognized as an Independent Commission.

(e) Welfare-to-Work

[Federal Planning Guidance: The following agencies, groups or individuals must be consulted, if your unified plan includes Welfare-to-Work:]

- Public, private and non-profit organizations
- PICs or Local Boards
- Local TANF and administrative agency

See Attachment C-3 for a calendar of events detailing coordination among agencies for development of the State WtW plan.

Local PICs developed and submitted local plans describing the activities/services that were planned to serve eligible WtW customers. These plans were combined and included in the State WtW plan.

(g) CSBG

[Federal Planning Guidance: Provide summaries of the consultation with appropriate agencies, groups and individuals in the evaluation, development and implementation of activities included in the plan. This section should describe the types of activities and outcomes that were conducted to meet this requirement. Demonstrate how comments were considered in the plan development process including specific information on how the various WIA agency and program partners were involved in developing the State Unified Plan.]

As part of the state plan, the Governor made assurance that the State and eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training in the State and in communities through workforce investment systems under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

Department of Human Services representatives attended the Arkansas Statewide WIA Coordination meeting, and as a result agreed to serve on the Individual Training Accounts Workgroup. This group is responsible for developing draft criteria and recommendations for establishing Individual Training Accounts. Recommendations will be presented to the Workforce Investment Board for final action and should become part of the five-year strategic plan. As part of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding requirements, eligible entities provided descriptions of how they plan to coordinate the provision of employment and training activities as part of the workforce investment systems under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.