

L. Data Collection

The Workforce Information Act of 1998 requires all programs included in the Arkansas State Unified Plan to provide services, collect data, and report on those services across all programs. The Act also requires an integrated data reporting system that will measure the effectiveness of those programs they provide to maintain a productive workforce. With direction from the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and the agencies responsible for administering the programs in this plan, the Arkansas Department of Information Services (ADIS) is developing a data collection and reporting system to meet this requirement. The system will be known as ASCET, Arkansas Shared Component Engineering Technology, and the data collection capability will be fully tested and operational by July 1, 2000, when WIA data collection begins. The reporting capability will be fully tested and operational by October 1, 2000.

The Arkansas Shared Component Engineering Technology (ASCET) project architecture began as a response to the WIA requirements. Under the direction of the Career Opportunities Partnership Cabinet, the shared architecture began as the ARIES Lab and sought a way to provide shared, integrated, accurate, one-stop data on individuals and their program participation. After evolving through three iterations of Enterprise JavaBean technology and building a proof of concept for the Welfare-to-Work (WtW) system, the ASCET technology has been adopted by ADIS Engineering. ASCET will be used to integrate information across state agency systems, providing common information on individuals to allow agencies to access more accurate and timely information, updated whenever any agency using the architecture updates and individual's information.

The initial ASCET reporting system will integrate information across the programs administered by the Arkansas Employment Security Department (AESD): employment service (ES), unemployment insurance (UI), WIA, and WtW. ASCET will enable Arkansas to report on all or each of these programs, and it will provide the basis for further sharing among state agencies as requirements develop to share information. The system effort is estimated based on the WIA report requirements and the experience with WtW. Specific report requirements will be gathered during requirements analysis, and the reporting requirements for the programs administered by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services will also be included.

System requirements must be baselined early in the development effort to stay on schedule. To help with this constraint and to meet a stringent schedule, ADIS will develop the report formats as late in the development cycle as possible. The initial development effort will concentrate on developing reports required for the third quarter of 2001. This report will include data from the last three quarters of 2000 and the first quarter of 2001. The 2000 data will be loaded from existing systems and merged with data collected for 2001 by the new system. Business process improvements to take advantage of the shared technology architecture will be the subject of

subsequent development efforts. Current planning would have the input system in place by July 1, 2000 with the reporting system in place prior to October 1, 2000.

General information about the data collection and reporting systems of the programs include in this plan follows below, and expanded information about selected programs follows.

PERKINS III/TECH PREP

The data for reporting achievement on the performance indicators for secondary programs will be gathered primarily from the Arkansas Public School Computer Network. All school districts provide information through this system on an individual student record basis. The data for reporting achievements for postsecondary programs will be gathered from the Department of Higher Education database, which includes individual student records. *[Also see 1(a), below.]*

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

[Please see information about the ASCET project at the beginning of this section. Also, please see 1(b) and 2(a), below.]

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (ADWE) is in the process of developing a new management information system, AdEd MIS, in conjunction with the Arkansas Department of Information Systems (ADIS). This new MIS will allow local programs to bring their technological capabilities online with electronic transmittal of data to the state. This is a Web-based system with all information stored in a relational database on a central server. Local programs will have access to their own data and state aggregate data. State agencies will have read only access to all data. Predefined reports will be sent and received electronically. Queries on past data, stored in a data warehouse, will be made using Business Objects and Web Intelligence software.

All of the core indicators of performance will be trackable using this new system. Additionally the system will allow for grants management, and financial reports management. All full-time local adult education programs will be required to utilize this system to report their data. Furthermore, DWE will allow private, non-profit community-based literacy programs receiving federal funds to transmit similar program information electronically to the DWE. The new AdEd MIS is being developed to also allow for data matching of information between agencies when the Aries system is finished.

FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM

Information is collected and compiled by Research and Statistics. A quarterly report is submitted to the funding agency, Food and Nutrition Service. *[Also see I(c), below.]*

TRADE ACT PROGRAMS

Data collection for these programs in the past has been done manually, for the most part. AESD has developed some PC-based programs to capture data and to keep up with the program processing. The agency also is reviewing software that will allow the program to be managed in a much more technologically up to date manner.

WAGNER-PEYSER ACT

AESD has an operations and reporting system for Wagner-Peyser programs that is used by about a third of the states. It produces monthly reports that are used for tracking performance.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

- **ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES**

ARS is required by the Rehabilitation Act to be accountable to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and to furnish extensive data on an ongoing basis. Reports to RSA include data from the Cumulative Caseload tracking system. Reports to RSA include the 911 Annual Cumulative Caseload Report of client services and expenditures, the 113 Quarterly Cumulative Caseload Report, the 704 Annual State Independent Living Council Report, the Rehabilitation Council Annual Report, the 636 Supported Employment Report, the RSA 2 Report of Client Expenditures, as well as, annual updates on the State Plan. Providers are accountable through contracts with ARS and state Disclosure requirements. Providers are held accountable through a performance based payment system.

- **DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND**

The Division of Services for the Blind is implementing a client information and tracking system-Blind Services Information System (BSIS). The information collected corresponds to the information required to be reported to the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Service providers adhere to purchasing policy and procedures mandated by the State of Arkansas and the Department of Human Services.

VETERANS PROGRAMS

AESD has an operations and reporting system for Wagner-Peyser programs that is used by about a third of the states. It produces monthly reports that are used for tracking performance. This system produces reports on the agency's services to veterans.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

AESD has a program developed by the agency over a period of years to collect information about UI recipients and employers and to provide information for performance measurement. The data are provided to USDOL and are used by AESD staff in performance analysis.

TANF

The Arkansas Client Eligibility System (ACES) captures most demographic information concerning recipient families. In addition, monthly reports generated at the county office level report information such as work participation and job retention rates. The Division's centralized Quality Assurance Section performs reviews of TEA cases to validate the information reported.

WELFARE-TO-WORK

AESD and the WtW program operators use a reporting system developed by the Arkansas Department of Information Systems (DIS) based on the ARIES (Arkansas Repository and Information Exchange Server) methodology and also based on a FoxPro reporting system the state has used for the Job Training Partnership Act. Modifications to make the reporting system more effective continue.

SCSEP

The Title V coordinator conducts annual assessments of performance and prepares reports of deficiencies and strong points. SCSEP workers are selected at random for interviews on their assessment of the program and participant files are randomly chosen and reviewed. The assessment tool is based on the policy regulating performance of the program.

CSBG

The State CSBG office will not approve an application which does not address a minimum number of services outlined in Section 676 (b) (1) (c) of the Community Services Block Grant Act and no activities are approved which are outside the scope of services called for in that section of the Act. The State CSBG office requires, as a condition of funding, that eligible

entities provide monthly fiscal reports and quarterly program reports to assure that the programs and expenditures are progressing consistently with the approved plans.

1. Processes to Collect and Validate Data to Track Performance

[Federal Planning Guidance: What processes does the State have in place to collect and validate data to track performance and hold providers/operators/subgrantees accountable?]

(a) Perkins III and Tech-Prep

(i) Reporting of Data

[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe how data will be reported relating to students participating in vocational and technical education in order to adequately measure the progress of the students, including special populations. (Sec. 122(c)(12))]

The data related to the core indicators on student attainment will be reported in aggregate form by occupational area as well as by special population categories. For secondary students, the data will be reported for students completing one or more unit of credit as well as for vocational completers. Postsecondary data regarding performance on each of the core indicators will be reported in both aggregated and non-aggregated form. The annual report will include scores for the state as a whole as well as scores from each participating institution, thus permitting an examination of the performance of the state as well as an examination of that of each institution on each of the core indicators. These scores will reflect all coursework taken during spring term of the reporting year.

(ii) Reliability Of Data Reported To State Agency

[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe how the data reported to you from local educational agencies and eligible institutions under Perkins III and the data you report to the Secretary are complete, accurate, and reliable. (Sec. 122(c)(20))]

SECONDARY

With the implementation of the Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) system in the 1998-99 school year, the accuracy of data at the secondary level has been greatly enhanced. The student records system of APSCN provides data on a student record basis with a unique identifier for each student. The record for the student can be sorted and aggregated by special populations categories, courses taken, and graduation status. The amount of data that the Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must report to the state for Perkins funds has been greatly reduced by using this database. Most of the data that will be used to determine the state level of performance for the core indicators will be gathered from this source. Arkansas has invested

millions of dollars in the APSCN system to help ensure its data on public schools and students is reliable. We believe that the data that will be gathered and reported under this state plan is more accurate and complete than in any previous plan.

POSTSECONDARY

Higher Education Institutions: Information and data regarding higher education programs and institutions in Arkansas is processed by the Student Information System, an extensive unified data system operated by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. This system has a long history of providing highly accurate and comprehensive reports and analyses representing all facets of higher education in the state. Accuracy of the data that is fed into this system is assured by a series of data checks to determine that the data is “clean.” This data system will be utilized to assure the accuracy and reliability of the process whereby performance data essential to the postsecondary core measures is analyzed. Much of the data required by these measures is currently being collected and processed by this system. In such cases, this data will be captured and analyzed for Perkins purposes; all data will either be retrieved from this data base in this manner, or will be collected by other means and processed by this system. This will assure that data related to postsecondary community and technical colleges’ performance on the core indicators is accurate, complete, and reliable.

Technical Institutes: Information and data regarding performance on the core indicators for the technical institutes and vocational-tech schools that are under the auspices of the Department will be reported by each institution and entered into the Department of Higher Education’s data system for the purpose of the Perkins reporting requirements. This method will provide a complete state picture of the performance of postsecondary institutions in the state.

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

[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe the common data collection and reporting processes to be used for the programs and activities described in Sec. 112(b)(8)(A). (Sec. 112(b)(8)(B))]

The ASCET (Arkansas Shared Component Engineering Technology) project described at the beginning of this section will provide the common data collection and reporting processes for these programs and services. WIA Title I data will be collected on adult, dislocated worker, younger and older youth clients existing WIA programs using a common application system. Data elements will include all elements required for WIA reporting plus additional data elements as directed by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Core measure levels will be calculated by matching these clients Social Security Numbers to education provider and Unemployment Insurance wage data. These measures must at least match those core measure indicator levels specified by the State Workforce Investment Board. WIA SPIR reports will be generated using a

reporting software package such as Crystal Software on data coming from the selected case management system. The AWS/AWSES system will generate required ES reports, including the ETA-9002, Veterans Performance Standards, and Migrant Indicators of Compliance.

(c) Food Stamp Employment and Training

[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe how employment and training data will be compiled and where responsibility for employment and training reporting is organizationally located at the State level. Include the department, agency, and telephone number for the person(s) responsible for both financial and non-financial E&T reporting.]

Non-financial employment and training reporting is the responsibility of:

Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Administrative Services
Research and Statistics Unit
Linda Strickland, Manager
Telephone: (501) 682-6261

Financial employment and training reporting is the responsibility of:

Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Administrative Services
Managerial Accounting
Gerald Fitzgerald, Administrator
Telephone: (501) 682-6334

2. Common Data Elements and Reporting Systems

[Federal Planning Guidance: What common data elements and reporting systems are in place to promote integration of unified plan activities?]

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

[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe the common data collection and reporting processes used for the programs and activities described in Sec. 112 (b)(8)(A). (Sec. 112(b)(8)(B))]

The ASCET common data collection system being developed by the Arkansas Department of Information Systems with direction from the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will meet all initial data collection and reporting requirements for WIA Title I programs. The system will be expanded to include WIA Title II, Title III, and Title IV programs plus all employment training and support services programs offered in by the One-Stop center of the Arkansas Career Development Network.