

**Strategic Two-Year State Plan**  
**for**  
**Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998**  
**and the Wagner-Peyser Act**



**State of Arkansas**  
**for the period of**  
**JULY 1, 2007 – JUNE 30, 2009**





STATE OF ARKANSAS

MIKE BEEBE  
GOVERNOR

June 26, 2007

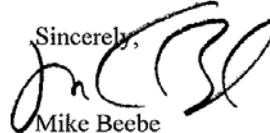
The Honorable Emily Stover DeRocco  
Assistant Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Frances Perkins Building  
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary DeRocco:

Enclosed please find Arkansas's Workforce Investment Act State Plan Modification for years 2007-2009. Included in the Plan is a request to continue the State's subsequent eligibility waiver.

I was pleased to see the Department of Labor's goals identified in the Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 13-06 as they reflect the State's ongoing efforts to encourage regional economic growth and a work-ready labor force. As detailed in the Plan, Arkansas has been building workforce partnerships across a number of programs with regional economic-growth strategies as the cornerstone element.

I look forward to our continued collaboration through the implementation of this Plan and other opportunities. Please contact our WIA State Workforce Investment Board Executive Director, Colette D. Honorable, at (501) 371-1085, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
  
Mike Beebe

MB:jb

Cc: Joseph Juarez, DOL Regional Administrator  
Kajuana Donahue, DOL Regional Representative  
Colette D. Honorable, Executive Director, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board  
Artee Williams, Director, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

## **2007 State/Local Workforce Investment Plan**

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I.	State Vision Plan .....	3
II.	State Workforce Investment Priorities .....	6
III.	State Governance Structure.....	10
IV.	Economic and Labor Market Analysis.....	20
V.	Overarching State Strategies .....	47
VI.	Major State Policies and Requirements .....	62
VII.	Integration of One-Stop Service Delivery .....	65
VIII.	Administration Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System.....	68
IX.	Service Delivery .....	84
X.	State Administration.....	113
XI.	Assurances.....	118

### **ATTACHMENTS**

A.	Program Administration Designees and Plan Signatures.....	121
B.	Grievance and Appeal Procedure .....	123
C.	State Requested Waivers .....	129
D.	State's Proposed WIA Performance Levels for Programs Years 2007-2009 .....	133
E.	Assurances and Certifications – PY07 .....	134

## Plan Development Process

**Describe, in one page or less, the process for developing the State Plan.**

1. Include (a) a discussion of the involvement of the Governor and the State Board in the development of the plan, and (b) a description of the manner in which the State Board collaborated with economic development, education, the business community and other interested parties in the development of the State Plan. (§112(b)(1).)

2. Include a description of the process the State used to make the Plan available to the public and the outcome of the State's review of the resulting public comments. (§111(g), 112(b)(9).)

At the direction and guidance of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, The AWIB Board staff and Department of Workforce Services staff began developing its State Plan in January 2007, when preliminary guidance was provided by the U.S. Department of Labor.

A meeting with all partners was conducted to: outline the expected process for the plan's development; discuss agency assignments; and articulate what areas of the plan would require moderate to no modifications.

AWIB staff continued to meet monthly to discuss section assignments and the feasibility of contracting services through other state agencies to complete and in depth economic and labor market analysis for the State of Arkansas to include in the modified plan for PY2007 and 2009.

After receiving the additional USDOL guidance dated April 5, 2007, the Workforce Investment Board Agency and the Department of Workforces Services collaborated to apply for at extended deadline for submission afforded to states with new governors. This request was submitted to the Department of Labor on April 29, 2007.

Upon receipt of the final planning guidance via the April 12 Federal Register, subsequent meetings and discussions were conducted with:

- Representatives of the Institute of Economic Advancement (IEA) from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) regarding their assistance with the assemblage and formatting of the plan;
- Representatives of UALR and state-level partners to coordinate the efforts in providing labor market and economic data;
- The AWIB staff and the Workforce Investment Board Chair to ensure that the Governor's vision was fully articulated in the plan; and
- The Governor's Liaison to ensure that the plan accurately conveyed the Governor's vision for the State's workforce system.

A website was developed through a Memorandum of Agreement between the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock/Institute for Economic Advancement to post all plan submissions, as they became available, for review by interested parties. A training meeting was held with agency partners to learn how to properly submit information for review.

By May 21, 2007, agency representatives and partner entities submitted information for their respective sections of the plans. The draft plan was disseminated to members of the AWIB Executive Board Committee via the agency website to facilitate the members' review and comments regarding the proposed plan. Members were asked to submit any input on an ongoing basis during the public comment review period.

On May 29, 2007, a public notice was published to announce the beginning of the official 30-day public comment period, with links to the website. Comments and suggestions received during this period were incorporated, as appropriate.

A final draft was prepared and submitted to the Executive Committee of the Workforce Investment Board for conditional approval and was submitted to the Department of Labor's National Office on June 29, 2007.

## **I. State Vision**

**Describe the Governor's vision for a statewide workforce investment system. Provide a summary articulating the Governor's vision for utilizing the resources of the public workforce system in support of the State's economic development that address the issues and questions below. States are encouraged to attach more detailed documents to expand upon any aspect of the summary response if available. §112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C).**

### **A. Arkansas Workforce Investment Board**

#### **Vision**

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

#### **Mission**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will strive to ensure an innovative and demand-driven workforce investment system, in collaboration with education, business, industry, labor and state agencies, that effectively leverages employment and training resources and collectively responds to the needs of local and regional economies.

The workforce investment system will:

- Enable collaboration at a regional level by engaging education, economic development, business and industry as partners;
- Foster the development of individualized career pathways; and
- Establish an accountable and responsive One Stop workforce network that is sensitive to the needs of a trained and diversified labor market.

### **B. What are the State's economic development goals for attracting, retaining and growing business and industry within the State? (§112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C).)**

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.

In his State of the State address, Governor Mike Beebe vowed to strengthen the state's economic attractiveness and competitive edge by encouraging a diversified economic base of various businesses, structures and regional economies. He agrees that a state business profile must be developed that includes regional and community profiles based on regional economies and sector strategy principles. This will be the first step in providing a framework for prospective investors, businesses, workforce professionals, and job seekers to proactively plan.

Through the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Governor will put into effect his plans to continue present priority initiatives allowing the opportunity to enhance those programs currently underway or improve those required under WIA or supported by other national strategic directions.

With careful thought and review, the Governor's priorities were revised to target specific population through those regional economic domains in which all job seekers and employers will participate,

respective to their location or interest within the state. The following priorities complement national strategic directions, the governor's mission and vision, and emerging workforce investment and development issues:

1. **High Growth/Career Pathways Initiative:** Develop educational pathways to high wage/high demand occupations;
2. **Youth Vision Collaborative:** Create technological equity in the learning experiences and career opportunities for every youth in the State;
3. **English Proficiency Initiative:** Remove barriers to successful workforce entry and career advancement for persons with limited English proficiency;
4. **Mature Worker Initiative:** Promote the value of mature workers to the State's labor force;
5. **Arkansas Disabilities Initiative:** Facilitate occupational and professional mobility for persons with disabilities to successfully compete in the State's labor market;
6. **Nursing:** Increase the number of trained medical professionals;
7. **Aviation:** Promote the aerospace industry in Arkansas, increase the growing workforce needs, and ultimately create an Aerospace Coalition; and
8. **Save the Children:** To provide quality in school, after school, and summer literacy programming to poor children living in rural areas.

These strategic efforts will prepare workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high growth/high demand and economically vital industries and sectors of the State's economy. Overall, the Governor's strategic goals for attracting emerging businesses and industries include various actions that will work in conjunction to make his vision a reality.

- Encourage development of regional economies that share similar characteristics but extend beyond geographic boundaries to foster innovation and talent maximizing for sustained economic growth through funding for economic development initiatives.
- Form a workforce cabinet, including partners from around the state in the areas of economic development, education, and workforce, to provide inter-agency guidance, after intensive introspection and collaboration at the senior level of state government, for service initiatives with statewide applicability.
- Utilize the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board as the premier source of statewide policy, governance, and oversight of the state's One Stop Workforce System.
- Continue the current priority initiatives, with some modification, to provide the opportunity to properly finalize those programs currently underway or enhance those required under WIA or similar to other national strategic initiatives.
- Commit resources, either through funding or outreach to encourage the creation of more small business networks and technological advancements in fields like healthcare, engineering, agriculture, natural sciences, and others to ensure a more diversified economic base and foster current and new regional economies throughout the state.
- Support new and enhanced legislation that illustrates a continued commitment by the State to encourage businesses to come and stay in the State through funding and various tax incentives.
- Require maximization of state resources to:

- Focus efforts on recruiting and retaining high growth businesses and creating high wage jobs in economically critical industries;
- Support statewide economic development activities through research, information, service, training, and education; and
- Increase workforce system access and employment success for all Arkansans.

**C. Given that a skilled workforce is a key to the economic success of every business, what is the Governor's vision for maximizing and leveraging the broad array of Federal and State resources available for workforce investment flowing through the State's cabinet agencies and/or education agencies in order to ensure a skilled workforce for the State's business and industry? (§112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C).**

Arkansas' workforce development partners, defined broadly to include the wide array of education, workforce development and economic development partners, have a history of collaboration directed toward meeting the needs of Arkansas' workforce and business customers. All partners are charged with being demand-driven and asked to continuously improve their responsiveness to customer needs through customer contact and use of improved labor market information.

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will continue to identify opportunities for cross program integration to address unmet needs for Arkansas' citizens and businesses.

A key strategy to identify opportunities for system integration has been to use the National Governors Association (NGA) *Pathways to Advancement* Project's State Team to identify gaps and recommend specific state policy changes to the Governor to support the success of career pathways programs. Additionally, the Governor has established a Workforce Cabinet composed of state leadership directors who are developing policy for greater utilization and impact to develop our State's talent and resources.

**D. Given the continuously changing skill needs that business and industry have because of innovative and new technology, what is the Governor's vision for ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce? §112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C).**

The Governor recognizes that workforce preparation continues throughout a person's lifetime and an education system that focuses on achievement of sound academic and workplace skills is critical to that vision. This vision anticipates life-long learning supported by a fully integrated workforce system.

**E. What is the Governor's vision for bringing together the key players in workforce development including business and industry, economic development, education, and the public workforce system to continuously identify the workforce challenges facing the State and to develop innovative strategies and solutions that effectively leverage resources to address those challenges? (§112(b)(10).)**

The Governor sees the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (State Board) as the catalyst for bringing these partnerships together. The State Board brings Arkansas' key business leaders to the table with leaders of education, workforce and economic development, to increase awareness of challenges facing business and the workforce system. This creates opportunities for innovation and development of successful strategies.

The Governor's vision is that the State and Local business-led boards will continue to improve in:

- Understanding and addressing the workforce needs of business and industry;
- Taking full advantage of federal flexibility and waiver provisions;



- Targeting available resources to areas with the most economic impact; and
- Maximizing the use of public and private resources invested in workforce development.

**II. Identify the Governor's key workforce investment priorities for the State's public workforce system and how each will lead to actualizing the Governor's vision for workforce and economic development. (§§111(d)(2) and 112 (a).)**

The Governor has established key priorities for the Arkansas public workforce system (Workforce Investment Board). These priorities will lead to a more demand-driven workforce system that supports our state's workforce and economic development through the following actions.

**1. Career Pathways to High Growth/High Demand Jobs and Industries**

Utilization of the National High Growth Job Training Initiative, utilize Arkansas' labor market information to identify high growth/high demand target industries in the ten workforce areas. This strategic effort will prepare workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high growth/high demand economically vital industries and sectors of our state's economy. The foundation of this initiative is E<sup>3</sup> partnerships that include the public workforce system, business and industry, education and training providers, and economic development, all collaborating to identify innovative workforce solutions.

The national High Growth Job Training Initiative was implemented by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to provide national leadership for a demand-driven workforce system and to assure that no worker is left behind. High Growth includes industries with significant job growth, industries critical to the nation's economic development, industries that significantly affect growth of other growth industries, new and emerging industries, and industries being transformed by technology and requiring significant changes in the workforce skill sets.

College-based career pathway programs (innovative strategies for improving the attainment of higher education credentials among adult students, particularly those who work full-time) and encourage policy changes to support the success of career pathway programs and promote access to higher education for adult students.

At the state level, the NGA Advancement Project involves decision-making leaders representing the Departments of Education, Higher Education, Workforce Education, Economic Development, Workforce Services, Workforce Investment, the Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Good Faith Fund, Science & Technology Authority, Entergy Teamwork Arkansas, State Chamber of Commerce/AIA, Business and Economic Forecast Centers, and Planning & Economic Development Districts who share the responsibility for the education, training and life-long learning of Arkansas' workforce.

The college-based career pathway program was developed and implemented to make specific policy changes at the state level that support the success of career pathway programs and promote access to higher education for adult students in support of the NGA Pathways to Advancement Project. This project involves decision-making leaders representing the Departments of Education, Higher Education, Workforce Education, Economic Development, Workforce Services, Workforce Investment, the Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Good Faith Fund, Science & Technology Authority, Entergy Teamwork Arkansas, State Chamber of Commerce/AIA, Business and Economic Forecast Centers, and Planning & Economic Development Districts who have responsibility to ensure for all Arkansans continuous opportunities to attain all available education, training, and life-long learning experiences.

Since the project's inception in August 2005, institutions have enrolled 4,085 students. The success rate for completers is 89%, defined as those who completed the semester program and remained as students during the summer session. Startup funds for the project were distributed to eleven two-year colleges and three technical institutes attached to universities in areas of the state where there are no two-year colleges (i.e., Southeast and Western Arkansas). Statewide outreach efforts for Career Pathways included the development of a promotional video and commercial branding spots. Additional institutes of learning continue to be incorporated into the system as funding allows.

In March of 2007, the Arkansas Career Pathways program sponsored a two-day Institute for Economic Development, which attracted over 150 participants from higher education, economic development and other leadership of the workforce development system. Several out-of-state educators shared their strategies for the promotion and development of regional and economic growth.

## **2. Arkansas Youth Programs and Initiatives**

The Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC) evolved out of the State's desire to respond to the Federal Shared Youth Vision. The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board has elected this effort as the primary initiative to address and seek solutions to the many service challenges to prepare the state's neediest youth, who have been named the State's "Youth of Promise" for the High Growth Industry workforce.

The AYDC Initiative seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- a. To engage youth service providers, high growth industry employers, and local workforce investment boards in maintaining a strong, committed team approach;
- b. To ensure the appropriate integration of services for high performance outcomes;
- c. To establish multiple communication mediums that will ensure proper access to needed services by youth clients and their families;
- d. To advocate for better and improved systems that will be accountable for a high ratio of high growth industries; and
- e. To focus on connecting youth with high quality secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities, high growth and other employment opportunities.

The AYDC collaborative model will be introduced regionally, preferably by each of the ten Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA). Regional implementation allows the opportunity to identify the local needs of youth and as well as the needs of available industry and future industry targeted to locate in the regional. In addition, a regional survey, to identify the specific categories of the Youth of Promise, will be completed to determine the amount of technical assistance will be needed to ensure successes. Each region will be given the additional challenge to focus on demand driven training and programming, effective alternative education models, and improved performance through overarching service delivery.

Seeking solutions to help of out-of-school youth, high school dropouts, runaway and homeless youth, youth in foster care, court involved youth, children of incarcerated parents, and migrant youth in support of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment Training and Administration Division's vision for serving out-of-school and at-risk youth, as issued in July 2004. Alternative education options for Arkansas' neediest youth to meet the demands of business (especially in high-growth industries and occupations), and improved performance.

## **3. Outreach and service delivery opportunities for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), including Hispanic Americans, Asian American workers, and other migrant**

## **populations.**

The U.S. Department of Labor's Hispanic Worker Initiative addresses the workforce needs of Hispanic workers, and challenges us to prepare Hispanic workers for good jobs with solid career paths. According to Census 2000, Arkansas' Hispanic population has experienced a growth of 86,866 (an increase of 337%) over the past ten years, and reflects the second largest gain in the United States. Through the Arkansas Workforce Centers, partnerships and collaborative efforts involving faith-based and community organizations, economic development officials, educators, and employers can provide English as a Second Language (ESL), Vocational ESL (VESL), job search assistance, financial wellness and awareness programs such as FDIC's Money Smart (a proven financial empowerment program proven to enhance employee retention, and career information (including career ladder information).

### **4. Engaging Seniors in Civic and Volunteerism and the Mature Worker Initiative**

Collaborate on a multi-level outreach effort through the public workforce system with the U.S. Department of Labor, state and local Workforce Investment Boards in support of the 2005 workforce initiative of the AARP to link featured employers with mature job seekers in an effort to address a growing concern for the projected shortage of experienced and capable workers. Three states participated in the roll out of this nationwide initiative to develop hiring partnerships with companies that value the experienced age 50+ worker, companies that have hiring needs, and companies that represent various industries and opportunities for the mature job seeker. Through the vision of the Governor's office, a committee was formed to determine direction for accomplishing the goals of the Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative as established by the AWIB. Scheduled activities for PY 2007 and 2008 are as follows:

- Develop an Arkansas state partner model for replication in all states;
- Deliver information, interactive tools, and resources to employers of mature job seekers at state and local levels through exhibit booth/sponsorships, regional meetings, conference participation, business expos, job fairs, and presentations to chambers and other civic groups;
- Promote the connection between employer needs and workforce centers;
- Develop local service delivery to mature job seekers and local resources;
- Design and launch a Mature Worker-Friendly Featured Employer Program for the state of Arkansas;
- Develop an outreach campaign for promulgating the initiative throughout the state and attaining national recognition as a best practices model; and
- Participate in a national policy academy for civic engagement and development of state guided implementation of improved services to Arkansas' aging population.

### **5. Outreach and Service Delivery for Persons with Disabilities**

- Recipients of WIA (Act) Title I funds must be ADA compliant and in compliance with Section 188 of the Act and all other applicable laws and regulations.
- Necessity of including persons with disabilities in the pipeline of qualified workers for the targeted High Growth Industries
- Outreach and Service delivery to persons with disabilities through the Arkansas Workforce Center partnerships and collaborations to involve and include:

- Faith-Based and Community Organizations;
- Job search assistance; and
- Career and career ladder information

## **6. Nursing Initiative**

Assist the medical community with addressing the shortfall of nursing personnel through collaborative efforts targeting the recruitment, career exploration and skill enhancement of prospective and/or current nursing students and nurses throughout the state.

## **7. Aviation Initiative**

Support the growing demand for employees in the field of aviation in through training for immediate jobs, planned expansion and promoting the industry as a career. This effort will provide an opportunity for growth, jobs and sustain the current industry in Arkansas.

The aerospace industry was Arkansas' number one exporter in 2006, surpassing agriculture ranking Arkansas 11 among all states in aerospace exports. Falcon Jet, one of the leading aircraft manufacturers, currently employs over 3,000 citizens and they are seeking to hire approximately 500 more employees within the next eighteen months. Vendors that supply aircrafts with their interiors are also seeking hundreds of qualified employees. The Workforce Development Taskforce proposes a unified approach to meet this critical need so that Arkansas can continue to contract these high paying jobs and local Aerospace companies will continue to expand their production in Arkansas.

### ***Short Term Solutions***

- Promote Pulaski Tech's existing aircraft manufacturing technology classes offered in both Spring and Fall Semesters
- Fund Summer Aircraft Manufacturing Course AR Pulaski Tech
- UALR New CATIA Software Design Engineer Classes – Students with the CATIA training will be immediately eligible for employment or internships with the local aerospace companies and their vendors

### ***Long Term Solutions***

- Create, promote and recruit members for a Career in Arkansas Aerospace Partnership
- Fund the Central Arkansas Aerospace Academy collaborating with the Little Rock School District, Pulaski Technical College, Arkansas Department of Economic Development, Arkansas Aerospace Education Center and others

## **8. Save The Children**

Provide in school, after school and summer literacy programming to children of low-income families living in rural areas. The Save the Children Program will be implemented by a partnership, which includes the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Altheimer Middle School in Jefferson County.

Many older youth attending middle school have been held back due to poor academic performance. This program would provide this group of children with extra literacy training to help them improve their reading abilities. The Save the Children Rural Model Literacy Program is a

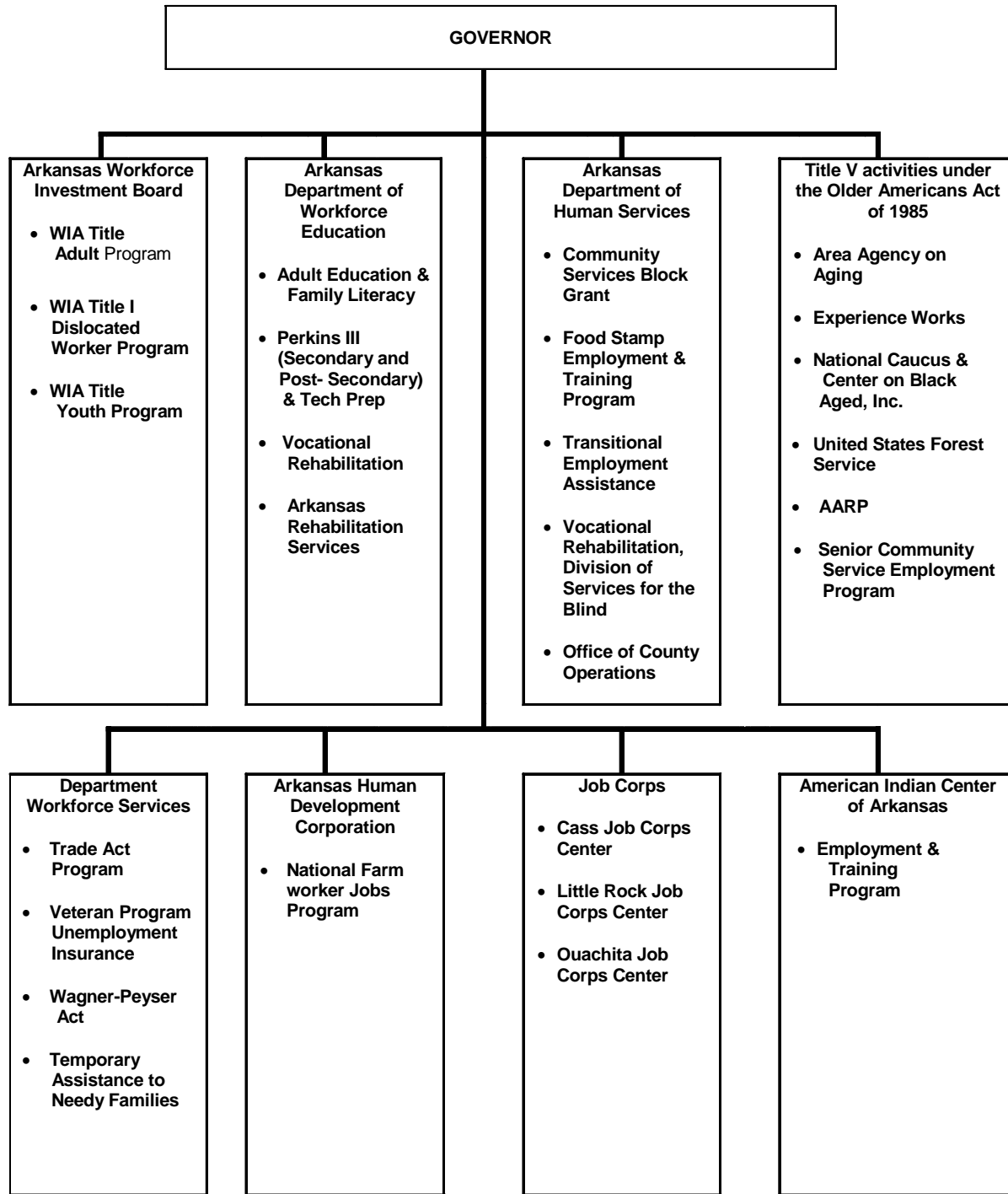
research-based literacy-coaching program that has demonstrated quantifiable success at increasing the reading abilities of participants. Save the Children would strive for the Altheimer Middle School site to mirror or surpass our nationwide literacy improvement results

These eight key priorities for Arkansas' workforce system, as well as measures to achieve even greater success through statewide support for agency collaboration and legislative actions were also addressed in the Governor's vision for the system in Section I.

### III. State Governance Structure (§112 (b) (8) (A) )

#### A. Organization of State agencies in relation to the Governor:

1. Provide an organizational chart that delineates the relationship, to the Governor, of the agencies involved in the public workforce investment system, including education and economic development and the required and optional One-Stop partner programs managed by each agency.



## **B. State Workforce Investment Board (§112(b) (1).**

### **Describe the organization and Structure of the State Board. (§111)**

As mandated by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and reinforced by Arkansas Act 1125 of 1999, the state Workforce Investment Board is comprised of 42 members. Board composition requires:

- One member of the House of Representatives
- One member of the Senate
- One member of the Women's Caucus
- One member of the Black Caucus
- Representatives of Arkansas businesses
- One chief elected official
- Not less than three representatives of labor organizations
- No less than two representatives who have experience related to youth activities
- No less than three representatives of individuals and organizations who have expertise in the delivery of workforce investment activities of which one shall be a chief executive officer of a two year college nominated by the Association of Two-Year Colleges, one shall be a director of an agency responsible to a local workforce investment board for administrative workforce investment program, and one member representing community-based organizations
- One member who represents an organization of Arkansans with disabilities
- One member who has a disability
- The Directors of: Department of Workforce Education, Workforce Services, Human Services, Economic Development, Higher Education, Rehabilitative Services, and a representative of Employment and Training Activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Additionally, the Governor may select one person from any of the following to serve in a dual capacity on the board:

- Arkansas Development Finance Authority
- Arkansas Economic Development
- State Board of Education
- State Board of Workforce Education
- Department of Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Transitional Employment Assistance Program Advisory Council.

Business representatives must make up a majority of the state board composition. They are appointed by the Governor from individuals who are nominated by business organizations and trade associations. The

chairman of the state and local boards must be from the private sector. In no event shall the Board consist of more than forty-eight members

The State Board has two officers, Chairman and Vice Chairman. The Governor selects a Chairperson for the board from among the representatives of business in accordance with State law. The Chairperson presides at all meetings of the Board and Executive Committee and shall have such other duties, powers, and responsibilities as assigned by the Board and its by-laws.

The Chairman, upon consultation with the Governor, selects a Vice-Chairman from among the members of the Board. The Vice-Chairman acts as Chairman in the absence or disability of the Chairman.

Through its standing and ad hoc committees, the State Board fulfills its mission of providing workforce initiatives. The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board has three (3) standing committees: Executive, Strategic Planning, and Program and Performance Evaluation. An ad hoc Budget Committee was established in Arkansas as well.

The structure of the State Board includes several standing committees.

- **Executive Committee**--Arkansas Act 1125 prescribes the formation of an Executive Committee of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. The Executive Committee meets monthly and has the authority of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board to act during the interim between Board meetings. Executive Committee decisions are implemented immediately and are ratified at the next Arkansas Workforce Investment Board meeting.
- **Strategic Planning Committee**--This committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Board to carry out the functions listed in Section 6(a) (1)(2)(4)(5)(9)(15)(16)(17) and (18) of Arkansas Act 1125.
- **Program and Performance Evaluation Committee**--This committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Board to carry out the functions listed in Section 6(a)(3), (6)(7)(8)(10)(11)(12)(13), and Section 6(f) of Arkansas Act 1125.
- **Budget Committee**--This ad hoc committee was established by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board to provide recommendations for the expenditure of WIA Title IB formula and 15% Statewide Activity funds.

2. **Identify the organizations or entities represented on the State Board. If you are using an alternative entity which does not contain all the members required under section 111(b)(1), describe how each of the entities required under this section will be involved in planning and implementing the State's workforce investment system as envisioned in WIA. How is the alternative entity achieving the State's WIA goals? (§§ 111(a-c), 111(e), and 112(b) (1).**

The following table reflects current state board membership and the organizations represented on the board:

### Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

First Name	Last Name	Category
Mike	Beebe	Governor
Terrie	Baker	Chairman--Business / Industry
Tom	Anderson	Business / Industry
Vacant		Business / Industry



Lawrence	Bearden	Business / Industry
Bobby	Blount	Business / Industry
Herbert	Broadway	Business / Industry
Vacant	Chairman	Business / Industry
Richard	Deweese	Business / Industry
Larry	Featherstone	Business / Industry
Willie	Gilbert	Business / Industry
Diane	Hilburn	Business / Industry
Jim	Knight	Business / Industry
Harold	Majors	Business / Industry
Ken	Milbrodt	Business / Industry
Michael	Rebick	Business / Industry
Frank	Scroggins	Business / Industry
Jim	Smith	Business / Industry
Joe	Warren	Business / Industry
Bill	Warren	Business / Industry
Kenneth	Wilson	Business / Industry
Franklin	Wise	Business / Industry
Shirley	Phillip	CEO – Two-Year College
Steve	Northcutt	Chief Elected Official
Eddie	Miller	Community Based
Dawn	Creekmore	House of Representatives
Ricky	Belk	Labor Organization
Linda	Gray	Labor Organization
Alan	Hughes	Labor Organization
Mike	Norton	Local WIA
Tracy	Steele	Member of the Black Caucus
Vacant		Person with a disability
Gilbert	Baker	Senate

Maria	Haley	State Agency – Arkansas Economic Development Council
Robert	Trevino	State Agency – Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
		State Agency – Department of Higher Education
Maria	Haley	State Agency – Department of Housing & Urban Development
John	Selig	State Agency - Department of Human Services
William	Walker	State Agency – Department of Workforce Education
Artee	Williams	State Agency -- Department of Workforce Services
James	Hudson	State Agency - Division of Services for the Blind
Dawn	Creekmore	Women's Caucus
Vacant		Youth Related Activities
Vacant		Youth Related Activities

**3. Describe the process your State used to identify your State Board members. How did you select board members, including business representatives, who have optimum policy-making authority and who represent diverse regions of the State as required under WIA? (20CFR 661.200)**

When selecting board members to serve on the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Governors of this State have adhered to the strict requirements outlined by WIA. Understanding that the state's economy is only the "big picture" of the local and regional areas' economic vitality, our current Governor has given the directive to his workforce cabinet that every decision made should reflect a commitment to increasing the economic well-being of the citizens of this state.

That same perspective filters down to the day-to-day operations of the state workforce board and agency, including the selection and appointment of committed members to the State Board. The membership of the Board must be configured to reflect the strengths of the state as well as the areas in which our state needs to improve.

As such, when vacancies occur in the business and industry sectors, potential replacements from high-growth industries are considered first for appointment. Second, the Governor's Boards and Commission staff, in communication with the AWIB Executive Director, will review the demographic make up of the board and strive to ensure diversified representation by including regional and local area expertise, small and mid-sized business owners, large corporation representation, perspectives from diverse population groups, and most importantly, commitment to moving Arkansas forward in a globally competitive marketplace.

The Governor's office staff and the AWIB leadership share the opinion that board membership is critical to the success of workforce investment strategies at the state, local, and regional level. Therefore, all business and industry representatives are critically reviewed and assessed regarding their expertise in a particular field, their ability to authorize policy change and initiatives, and their previous commitment to workforce or to an area that has significant impact on workforce development goals in the future.

The names of these nominees are submitted to the Governor's Office for consideration. Once the Governor has reviewed and approved all nominations, a letter of invitation with the appointment is sent to the nominee with a request to take an oath to serve. Upon acceptance, formal notification is sent to newly selected members who are then scheduled to attend a 2-day orientation introducing them to the Governor's expectations of service, explaining their roles on the board and the administrative structure in which to operate, and how their contributions will factor into the State's overall workforce investment goals.

**4. Describe how the board's membership enables you to achieve your vision described above. (§§111(a-c) and 112(b) (1)).**

As required by federal law, State Board members are comprised of representatives from key public and private sector elements across Arkansas. In addition to the public sector stakeholders and their respective involvement as described above, the private sector Board leaders are a crucial component in providing the light and vision of our demand-driven workforce system, creating the success of workforce investment in the state. The diversity of the Board's composition lends itself to an open forum for different perspectives and individuality among the membership. Members are involved in the decision-making and approval process for all policy, action items, and other activities required and/or allowable under the Workforce Investment Act. The role of State Board members is presented in an orientation session to new members.

**5. Describe how the Board carries out its functions as required in sec. 111(d) and 20 CFR 661.205. Include functions the Board has assumed that are in addition to those required. Identify any functions required in sec. 111(d) the Board does not perform and explain why.**

As indicated in Section II of this document, the Governor has established eight priorities for the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board in PY 2007 and 2008. To fulfill its mission, the State Board is responsible for assisting the Governor in all functions required. It is through the Board's selected committee structure that these functions are provided and accomplished. In addition to serving on one of the standing Board committees, each Board member also agrees to participate in a collaborative effort to explore an agenda for setting goals and planning actions to address the specific priority issues.

**6. How will the State Board ensure that the public (including people with disabilities) has access to board meetings and information regarding State Board activities, including membership and meeting minutes? (20 CFR 661.205)**

Public notices are provided to the media for all scheduled board membership activities and meetings. The board composition and membership, deliberations and meeting minutes are posted on the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board website. The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act is strictly adhered to at the state and local level, and is regularly monitored for compliance by the Board.

In an effort to provide access to all persons with disabilities, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board provides the following accessibility to individuals: wheel chair accessibility is available at all State Board meetings and interpreter for the hearing impaired can be provided at all Board meetings upon request. Additionally, TDD communication accessibility can be provided upon request.

**7. Identify the circumstances that constitute a conflict of interest for any State or local workforce investment board member or the entity that s/he represents, and any matter that would**

**provide a financial benefit to that member or his or her immediate family. (§§111(f), 112(b) (13), and 117(g).**

Members of the State and Local Boards are subject to state laws governing conflict of interest. Arkansas Act 1125 of 1999 clearly delineates the Conflict of Interest policies for the State. More specifically, a member of the Board is precluded from voting on any of the following:

- matters regarding the provision of services by an entity that the member represents;
- matters that would provide direct financial benefit to the member or the immediate family of the member;
- matters in any other activity determined by the Governor or by law to constitute a conflict of interest.

Additionally, Arkansas Act 553 of 1999 and the Governor's Directive GPD-1 requires State Board members to file a statement of financial interest within 30 days of their appointment.

**8. What resources does the State provide the Board to carry out its functions, i.e. staff, funding, etc.?**

The Governor's 15% Workforce Investment Act discretionary funds are used to carry out State Board activities. These funds provide staff positions and include operating expenses such as facilities, travel, and meeting preparation costs. There is authorization for thirteen staff members who organize, plan, develop, and implement each state board meeting, carry out recommendations as assigned from the Board, and implement action items upon request following each State Board meeting.

The Executive Director acts as a facilitator and participant at all State Board meetings and assists in appointing special committee chairs and ad hoc committee members. The staff supports the various committees and workgroups, as well as state partners and stakeholders. Staff members conduct research on issues and provide background required by the Board members to engage in productive discussion and high-level policy decisions.

**C. Structure/Process for State agencies and State Board to collaborate and communicate with each other and with the local workforce investment system (§112(b) (8)(A).**

**1. Describe the steps the State will take to improve operational collaboration of the workforce investment activities and other related activities and programs outlined in section 112(b) (8) (A), at both the State and local level (e.g., joint activities, memoranda of understanding, planned mergers, coordinated policies, etc.). How will the State Board and agencies eliminate any existing State-level barriers to coordination? (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(8)(A).)**

The Board, through its broad membership among State and local public and private entities, encourages collaboration. All agency directors of the required partner programs are represented on the State Board. Along with labor, education and private business employers, collaboration is achieved through the many efforts of the Board and legislation enacted by the State of Arkansas, as highlighted below.

**Board Issuances**

In 2004, the State Board issued a certification policy for all Arkansas Workforce centers. The intent of the policy was to ensure that the public workforce system provides job seekers with a single point

of contact for employment, training, education, and supportive services. Additional benefits for business/industry customers (employers,) include access to resources for workforce development, retention, and expansion issues, including a pipeline of qualified applicants is provided. With the oversight of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, Arkansas Workforce Centers in communities throughout the State integrate multiple workforce development programs and resources and make them available to individuals at the “street level” through an innovative, efficient user-friendly delivery system.

## **Legislation**

The 86th General Assembly of the Arkansas State Legislature enacted legislation April 2007 geared to allow all workforce investment partners to contribute in various ways to the mission of education and training to supply work-ready labor to high growth and high demand occupations. Legislation was passed that will help to remove barriers to more efficiently run federal programs in the state as well as specific to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Listed below are some of the enacted laws and their effect on workforce investment initiatives, programs, and partners across the state.

- **Act 514** Created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Oversight Board, replacing the former Transitional Employment Board and revising various provisions relating to public assistance in the State.
- **Act 857** Appropriated \$9 million to the Department of Workforce Services from the General Improvement Fund for a tuition forgiveness program for residents securing jobs in the trucking, transportation and logistics fields.
- **Act 153** Abolished for advisory boards and committees and repealed the Government Efficiency and Accountability Act, which would have abolished the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board Agency in 2011.
- **Act 827** Amends various provisions of the Arkansas Code to make technical corrections as needed and specifically removed all legislative members from the State Board Executive Committee and corrected the state law, to established the correct membership of the AWIB Executive Committee membership from eleven to thirteen persons.
- **Act 551** Creates the Department of Workforce Services Training Fund and the Department of Workforce Services Unemployment Insurance Administration Fund, to be funded by the stabilization tax previously used in the Employment Security Fund.

## **America's Job Link System**

Arkansas has enjoyed great success in streamlining information and gathering relevant performance data since its full implementation of America's Job Link System (AJL) in December 2005. The Arkansas Department of Information Systems hosts the system and the Kansas Department of Labor maintains the application. The AJL system has eliminated the previously costly labor exchange and WIA systems and integrated both programs into a single database with an expected interface with partner agencies. This innovative method provides:

- One-stop case management, data collection and reporting
- A single-job placement system, which is used by all partner agencies
- Program management and reporting for WIA adult, dislocated worker, youth programs, and labor exchange programs
- A staff assisted and a self-service job match system for job seekers and employers

- An eligibility determination process that leads staff to identify programs for which the individual might be eligible
- Because of this program, job seekers and business clients receive significant benefits affecting opportunity and success. Impacts are:
  - Entry to the system from multiple locations, including home or office
  - Decreased number of times the client has to provide basic information
  - Access to additional useful information (career preparation, labor market, disabilities resources, support services, etc.)
  - Better-prepared and more timely referrals between partner agencies
  - Job seeker access to job listings and employer access to resumes.

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**

In 2005, the Arkansas General assembly passed legislation moving the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant from the Arkansas Department of Human Services to the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services with the intent to expedite the delivery of employment related services to Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) clients, and increase the overall work participation rate for this target group. As stated above, the General Assembly returned in 2007 and created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Oversight Board. This board replaces the former Transitional Employment Board acts as an advisory board to the Department of Workforce Services in its mission to continue developing continuity of services and structured management and oversight of all aspects of employment related services to TEA clients.

### **Arkansas Workforce Centers**

It was envisioned that the local Arkansas Workforce Centers (AWC) would be designed by employers for employers, to help find and train qualified workers, and assist qualified workers to find jobs in business and industry. The idea was to simplify the maze of current programs into a comprehensive, streamlined system of services for job seekers and employers, eliminating the need to visit different locations and understand multiple, complex program requirements. The Arkansas Workforce Centers bring about the integration of federal, state, and local workforce programs, giving employers and workers a chance to connect in real or virtual communities, and access labor market information, education, and training.

The partners of the Arkansas Workforce Centers share memoranda of understanding, cross-train for eligibility determination and service referrals, and use common intake or registration forms. Additionally, the AWC certification document requires that each comprehensive AWC have a business liaison team composed of representatives from each partner who serve as a single point of contact to provide information regarding customized services and outreach to the business community.

## **2. Describe the lines of communication established by the Governor to ensure open and effective sharing of information among the State agencies responsible for implementing the vision for the public workforce system; between the State agencies and the State Workforce Investment Board.**

Through the representation and involvement of directors of State agencies, open lines of communication are ensured. As members of the Governor's cabinet, regular meetings are scheduled among these entities to discuss issues and tactics. The State Board's committees meet regularly and include

representatives from local boards and critical entities' at the State and local levels, including business and industry.

**3. Describe the lines of communication and mechanisms established by the Governor to ensure timely and effective sharing of information between the State agencies/State Board and local workforce investment areas and local Boards. Include types of regularly issued guidance and how Federal guidance is disseminated to local Boards and One-Stop Career Centers. (§112(b) (1.))**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board ensures the timely and effective dissemination of information between state agencies, the state and local boards, and other WIA partners through regular and special meetings in accordance the AWIB bylaws. In addition, as a state agency, communication between other state agencies is accomplished through the Governor's Cabinet meetings as well as the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, which was specifically created to address workforce issues in the state. All local workforce investment areas receive memos and general notices through several mediums, including but not limited to email notices, hard copy mailings, website postings and alerts, and quarterly meetings and conference calls. The AWIB agency does recognized an open door policy for its staff and local area partners and encourages all WIA partners to contact our offices at any time to seek or share information pertaining the workforce activities or issues across the state.

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) has a long established Issuance and Informational Memorandum system in place whereas policies, guidance, and general instructions are provided to local areas in the provision of WIA services. All issuances and informational memoranda are transmitted electronically by way of email to all interested and affected parties. The system is set up to distribute information to all ten local workforce investment areas, including Chief Elected Officials, local board chairs, local administrators, one-stop operators, program operators, partner agencies, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and staff, and DWS central and local office staff. All policy is transmitted via consecutively numbered issuances, under the signature of the directors of the Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

The Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative, which is an initiative of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, has access to the aforementioned systems in addition to a youth specific website to communicate information, program and policy changes. Communication between collaborative partners is accomplished through a list serve generated electronically via email service.

**4. Describe any crosscutting organizations or bodies at the State level designed to guide and inform an integrated vision for serving youth in the State within the context of workforce investment, social services, juvenile justice, and education. Describe the membership of such bodies and the functions and responsibilities in establishing priorities and services for youth. How is the State promoting a collaborative cross-agency approach for both policy development and service delivery at the local level for youth? (§112(b) (18)(A).)**

The Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC) is the entity leading the effort to develop the Arkansas State Youth Vision program. The AYDC was formed out of the challenge given to the state following the first Federal Youth Vision Forum held in Phoenix, Arizona, in December 2004. The Collaborative was formed in April 2005 from a core group of interested state agency liaisons, community leaders, and local workforce area administrators, and has continued with strong participation from state agencies, service providers and volunteers. To date, the Collaborative has conducted seven quarterly meetings to advance the mission, vision, and strategies listed below. The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) acts as the lead and oversight agency of the AYDC.

The AYDC vision is to enable all youth-serving entities, statewide, to freely share information and resources to create and sustain a comprehensive system that provides youth easy access to the services and support that will prepare them to be productive members of society. It's mission: to promote all partners (public agencies, private entities, churches, community and faith-based organizations, and family members) to actively seek input from employers and youth, and jointly focus their resources on meeting the needs identified and subsequently to connect youth with high quality secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities and high-growth and other employment opportunities.

The AYDC has established the following **objectives**:

- Develop and coordinate policy, within existing policy structures, to address the needs of disadvantaged youth;
- Maximize interagency collaborations to utilize the significant expertise within specific Federal agencies;
- Develop innovative approaches that efficiently and effectively respond to serving youth;
- Enhance the quality of service delivery and improve efficiencies; and
- Improve the outcomes for the youth served by the Federal agencies.
- Encourage all state youth service agencies and stakeholders enter into MOUs committed to overarching service delivery using the AYDC collaborative model by December 2007.
- Conduct a Spring Youth Summit to draft policies targeting overarching service delivery and systems changes that ensure quality services, technologically appropriate education, and workforce development for the State's Youth of Promise.

**AYDC** has been very successful during its short time of existence, and to its credit, the following milestones have been achieved:

- Launched a youth specific website used to keep youth, parents, professionals and collaboration members informed of best practices and outcome strategies to target the state's youth.
- Conducted the AYDC Youth Workforce Development Summit in partnership with the Arkansas Coalition for Juvenile Justice.
- Selected as one of sixteen states in the United States to participate in an advanced Federal Technical Assistance Forum in Atlanta, GA.
- Adopted "Youth of Promise" in lieu of "neediest youth" to define the targeted youth.
- Established eligibility to receive additional federal investment resources to rollout, at the local and regional level, an infrastructure for meeting the needs of the neediest (Youth of Promise) of the state.
- Established plan to initiate a state solutions desk to provide assistance to service providers and agencies regarding service needs and possible requests for waivers to accomplish overarching case management and service delivery.



**IV. Economic and Labor Market Analysis (§112(b)(4).):** As a foundation for this strategic plan and to inform the strategic investments and strategies that flow from this plan, provide a detailed analysis of the State's economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context. Elements of the analysis should include the following:

**A. What is the current makeup of the State's economic base by industry?**

The 2006 Arkansas population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, was 2,810,872. Arkansas' Civilian Labor Force (seasonally adjusted) numbered 1,364,700 in March 2006, with 1,292,900 employed and 71,800 unemployed. The state's unemployment rate was 5.3 percent, which was above the Federal unemployment rate (4.7 percent). This was according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey.

Arkansas' total nonfarm payroll jobs (not seasonally adjusted) totaled 1,207,500 in March 2007. The following table shows the industry sector breakdown for Arkansas' nonfarm jobs. The trade, transportation, and utilities sectors had the largest number of jobs (250,000), followed closely by government (214,700) and manufacturing (193,200). However, approximately 9,500 manufacturing jobs were lost since 2005. The natural resources and mining sector had the fewest (7,900 jobs).

**Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs: Arkansas--As of April 2007**

Industry	Number of Employed	Percent of Jobs
Total Nonfarm	1,207,500	100.0
Natural Resources and Mining	7,900	0.7
Construction	56,300	4.7
Manufacturing	193,200	16.0
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	250,000	20.7
Wholesale Trade	48,300	4.0
Retail Trade	134,000	11.1
Transportation, Warehouse, and Utilities	67,700	5.6
Information	20,400	1.7
Financial Activities	53,100	4.4
Professional and Business Services	116,300	9.6
Leisure and Hospitality	97,300	8.1
Other Services	43,800	3.6

Government	214,700	17.8
------------	---------	------

**Source: Department of Workforce Services.**

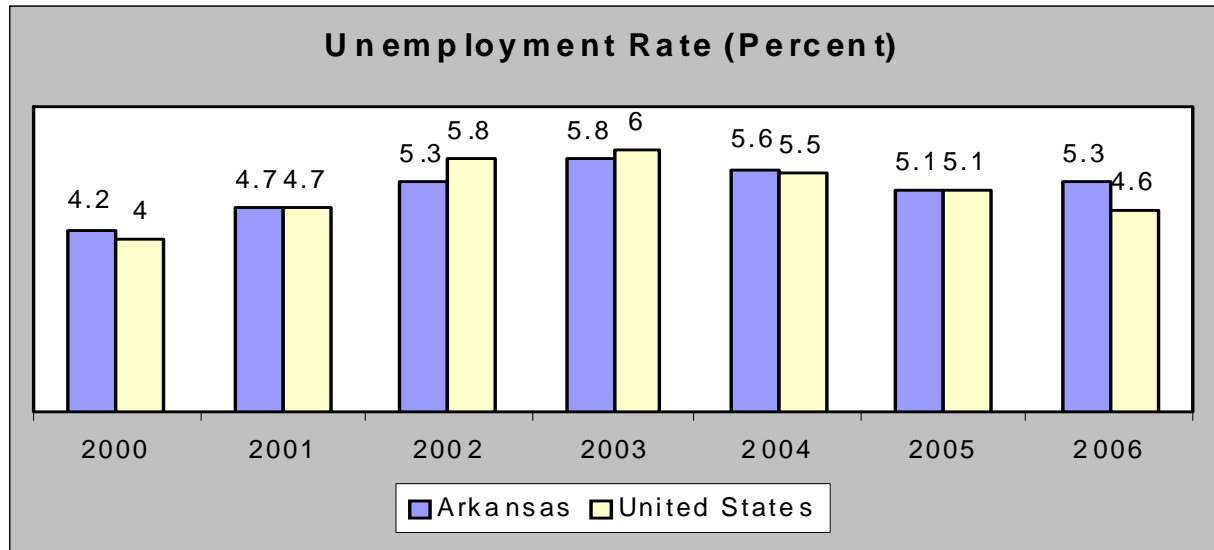
Another measure of economic base is the contribution to the State's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by industry. Manufacturing (19.5%) and Services (35.9%) are the dominant industries, with other significant industries being Wholesale & Retail Trade, Finance Insurance & Real Estate, and Government.

**Industry Breakdown by Gross State Product (GSP)--Millions of Current Dollars, 2005\***

		Percent
INDUSTRY	2005	2005
All Industries	86,752	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	2,401	2.8
Mining	972	1.1
Transportation/Warehousing and Utilities	6,174	7.1
Construction	3,841	4.4
Manufacturing	16,874	19.5
Wholesale & Retail	12,066	13.9
Information	3,120	3.6
Finance/Insurance and Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	11,738	13.5
Professional and technical services	3,263	3.8
Management of companies and enterprises	1,797	2.1
Administrative and waste services	1,759	2.0
Educational services	365	0.4
Health care and social assistance	6,593	7.6
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	377	0.4
Accommodation and food services	1,950	2.2
Government	11,523	13.3

**Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.**

Arkansas unemployment rates were close to the national average between 2000 and 2006. In 2001, both the State and the Nation had an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent. Arkansas unemployment rate was lower than the U.S. in 2002 and 2003, but rose above the national rate during the recovery of 2004. Both the State and the Nation had the same unemployment rate of 5.1 in 2005, but the National rate was lower than the State in 2006 with 4.6 percent versus 5.3 percent unemployment rate, respectively.



**Source: Department of Workforce Services, Civilian Labor Force, Annual Averages 2000-2006.**

Arkansas' Labor Force grew an annual average of 1.01 percent from 1,260,300 in 2000 to 1,364,700 in 2006. During the same period, employment increased by 85,500 for an annual average growth of 1.01 percent. The number of unemployment increased by 18,900 over the 2000-2006 period, which converts to an annual average growth rate of 1.04 percent.

### **Arkansas Civilian Labor Force by Year**

**As of April 2007**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Labor Force	1,260,300	1,252,700	1,272,400	1,273,600	1,301,600	1,345,400	1,364,700
Employment	1,207,400	1,194,000	1,204,500	1,199,400	1,228,200	1,276,900	1,292,900
Unemployment	52,900	58,700	67,900	74,200	73,400	68,500	71,800
Unemployment Rate	4.2	4.7	5.3	5.8	5.6	5.1	5.3

*Source: Department of Workforce Services, Civilian Labor Force, Annual Averages 2000-2006*

### **B. What industries and occupations are projected to grow and or decline in the short term and over the next decade?**

#### **Short Term**

The Top Fifty Growth Occupations between the years 2005 and 2007 were dominated by professions related to the oil and gas industry. This was a result of Fayetteville's Shale Play in Northern Arkansas. With this being an exception, Arkansas follows the national trend and is moving away from manufacturing industries towards a more service-based economy. The top growth occupations are dominated by health services, support functions, and IT.

From the Top Twenty Declining Industries, the fastest declining industry was Oil and Gas Extraction with the negative growth rate of 81.2%. It was followed by Electronic and Precision Equipment Repair and Maintenance (-31.7%) and Forging and Stamping (-23.3%). However, in terms of the number of jobs lost, the industries with the largest decrease in jobs were: Manufacturing (-1,240), followed by Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing (-575); Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing (-435); and Grocery Stores (-402). This indicates that Arkansas was not able to keep manufacturing jobs from moving abroad where the labor costs are less expensive.

The top declining occupations are Actors (10.9 % decline in employment rate), followed by a variety of textile occupations: Textile Winding, Twisting, and Drawing Out Machine Setters (9.8 % decline); Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers (8.8 % decline); All Other Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders (5.5 % decline).

### Top 50 Growth Occupations

#### Short-Term Employment Estimates (2005-2007) for Arkansas

Code	Occupation	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Growth Rate (%)
	<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	1,349,837	36,187	1.4
475013	Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining	342	78	13.8
475071	Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	383	65	9.7
475011	Derrick Operators, Oil and Gas	253	37	8.2
475012	Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	207	28	7.5
172171	Petroleum Engineers	39	5	7.1
518093	Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gau	194	25	7.1
518099	Plant and System Operators, All Other	147	17	6.3
292056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	27	3	6.1
271029	Designers, All Other	49	5	5.5
292052	Pharmacy Technicians	2,994	304	5.5
319096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	844	78	5.0
193022	Survey Researchers	424	39	4.9
475081	Helpers--Extraction Workers	365	33	4.9
373019	Grounds Maintenance Workers, All Other	89	8	4.8
172031	Biomedical Engineers	46	4	4.7
291051	Pharmacists	2,917	257	4.7
151031	Computer Software Engineers, Applications	1,373	111	4.3
172061	Computer Hardware Engineers	103	8	4.1
319092	Medical Assistants	1,489	115	4.1
419041	Telemarketers	3,800	295	4.1
433011	Bill and Account Collectors	3,610	281	4.1

439031	Desktop Publishers	144	11	4.1
113042	Training and Development Managers	236	18	4.0
251032	Engineering Teachers, Postsecondary	40	3	4.0
151081	Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	790	58	3.9
194091	Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including	395	29	3.9
232011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	1,206	89	3.9
194041	Geological and Petroleum Technicians	42	3	3.8
291131	Veterinarians	612	44	3.8
473016	Helpers--Roofers	155	11	3.7
493052	Motorcycle Mechanics	245	17	3.7
151071	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	1,612	111	3.6
251021	Computer Science Teachers, Postsecondary	263	18	3.6
291071	Physician Assistants	145	10	3.6
312021	Physical Therapist Assistants	613	42	3.6
319095	Pharmacy Aides	321	22	3.6
472121	Glaziers	191	13	3.6
299099	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other	166	11	3.5
474031	Fence Erectors	507	34	3.5
493092	Recreational Vehicle Service Technicians	105	7	3.5
151061	Database Administrators	1,241	81	3.4
171022	Surveyors	514	33	3.4
251067	Sociology Teachers, Postsecondary	93	6	3.4
291124	Radiation Therapists	376	24	3.4
493011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	845	54	3.4
537072	Pump Operators, Except Wellhead Pumpers	62	4	3.4
173019	Drafters, All Other	126	8	3.3
194021	Biological Technicians	193	12	3.3

212011	Clergy	7,903	501	3.3
251022	Mathematical Science Teachers, Postsecondary	371	23	3.3

*Source: Department of Workforce Services. Ranked by Growth Rate*

### Top Twenty Declining Industries

Code	Industry	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Growth Rate (%)
211000	Oil and Gas Extraction	676	303	81.2
811200	Electronic and Precision Equipment Repair and Maintenance	732	176	31.7
332100	Forging and Stamping	1131	214	23.3
541700	Scientific Research and Development Services	1381	244	21.5
541600	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	2785	431	18.3
561400	Business Support Services	5291	810	18.1
213000	Support Activities for Mining	1874	257	15.9
210000	Mining	4361	555	14.6
611700	Educational Support Services	191	23	13.7
488400	Support Activities for Road Transportation	526	62	13.4
446000	Health and Personal Care Stores	7331	825	12.7
517200	Wireless Telecommunications Carriers	2279	244	12.0
541900	Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4123	416	11.2
621400	Outpatient Care Centers	3697	373	11.2
485400	School and Employee Bus Transportation	441	44	11.1
481000	Air Transportation	1073	101	10.4
238900	Other Specialty Trade Contractors	5614	527	10.4
336400	Aerospace Product and Parts Manufacturing	3479	325	10.3
523900	Other Financial Investment Activities	728	68	10.3

336200	Motor Vehicle Body and Trailer Manufacturing	3792	354	10.3
--------	--	------	-----	------

Source: Department of Workforce Services. Ranked by Net Growth

### Top Twenty Declining Occupations

Code	Occupation	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Growth Rate (%)
272011	Actors	96	-25	-10.9
516064	Textile Winding, Twisting, and Drawing Out Machine Setters,	239	-55	-9.8
516099	Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers, All Other	139	-28	-8.8
516062	Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	174	-21	-5.5
435041	Meter Readers, Utilities	655	-65	-4.6
512023	Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers	220	-18	-3.9
512021	Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	783	-63	-3.8
271012	Craft Artists	40	-3	-3.6
516021	Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials	1,067	-81	-3.6
516031	Sewing Machine Operators	2,375	-161	-3.2
517042	Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except	1,861	-127	-3.2
536011	Bridge and Lock Tenders	75	-5	-3.2
516093	Upholsterers	732	-45	-2.9
517041	Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	1,656	-102	-2.9
434071	File Clerks	1,956	-113	-2.8
517099	Woodworkers, All Other	296	-17	-2.8



434041	Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks	442	-25	-2.7
499063	Musical Instrument Repairers and Tuners	37	-2	-2.6
439011	Computer Operators	1,119	-56	-2.4
536021	Parking Lot Attendants	200	-10	-2.4

*Source: Department of Workforce Services. Ranked by Growth Rate*

### Long Term

The Top 50 Growth Occupations Table for Long Term Employment Estimates (2004 -2014) indicate that the occupations with the greatest long term growth potential in Arkansas are in the information technology (IT) sector and include: Computer Software Engineers, Applications (69.8 percent increase); Database Administrators (62.9 percent increase); Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts (59.3 percent increase); Computer Specialists, All Other (55.4 percent increase); and Network and Computer Systems Administrators (53.5 percent increase). Other desired occupations are Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining (60.5 percent increase). All Other (60.2 percent increase). Medical and business professionals will be in strong demand in the next decade as well. For more details, see table below.

Direct Selling Establishments are expected to have a negative growth of 47.1 percent in the next decade. This may be a result of Internet use and innovative marketing. Performing Arts Companies are projected to decrease by 35.3 percent. The trend of moving Fabric Mills; Textile Mills; Textile and Fabric Finishing and Fabric; and Pesticide, Fertilizer, and Other Agricultural Chemical Manufacturing industries abroad will continue in the future. The expected growth for those industries is between (-) 32.5 and approximately 26.7 percent.

The Internet, technological advancements, increased efficiencies, and changing job responsibilities will eliminate many clerical professions in the next decade. Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks jobs will decrease by 39.6 percent; File Clerks by 32 percent; and Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, except Postal Services by 28.6 percent. Meter Readers, Utilities Professions, and Bridge and Lock Tenders are expected to decline by 39.1 percent and 35.1 percent, respectively.

### Top 50 Growth Occupations

#### Long-Term Employment Estimates (2004-2014) for Arkansas

Code	Occupation	Employment	Change	Growth Rate (%)
	Total, All Occupations	1,349,837	36,187	1.4
475013	Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining	342	78	13.8
475071	Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	383	65	9.7
475011	Derrick Operators, Oil and Gas	253	37	8.2
475012	Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	207	28	7.5

172171	Petroleum Engineers	39	5	7.1
518093	Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gau	194	25	7.1
518099	Plant and System Operators, All Other	147	17	6.3
292056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	27	3	6.1
271029	Designers, All Other	49	5	5.5
292052	Pharmacy Technicians	2,994	304	5.5
319096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	844	78	5.0
193022	Survey Researchers	424	39	4.9
475081	Helpers--Extraction Workers	365	33	4.9
373019	Grounds Maintenance Workers, All Other	89	8	4.8
172031	Biomedical Engineers	46	4	4.7
291051	Pharmacists	2,917	257	4.7
151031	Computer Software Engineers, Applications	1,373	111	4.3
172061	Computer Hardware Engineers	103	8	4.1
319092	Medical Assistants	1,489	115	4.1
419041	Telemarketers	3,800	295	4.1
433011	Bill and Account Collectors	3,610	281	4.1
439031	Desktop Publishers	144	11	4.1
113042	Training and Development Managers	236	18	4.0
251032	Engineering Teachers, Postsecondary	40	3	4.0
151081	Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	790	58	3.9
194091	Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including	395	29	3.9
232011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	1,206	89	3.9
194041	Geological and Petroleum Technicians	42	3	3.8
291131	Veterinarians	612	44	3.8
473016	Helpers--Roofers	155	11	3.7
493052	Motorcycle Mechanics	245	17	3.7

151071	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	1,612	111	3.6
251021	Computer Science Teachers, Postsecondary	263	18	3.6
291071	Physician Assistants	145	10	3.6
312021	Physical Therapist Assistants	613	42	3.6
319095	Pharmacy Aides	321	22	3.6
472121	Glaziers	191	13	3.6
299099	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other	166	11	3.5
474031	Fence Erectors	507	34	3.5
493092	Recreational Vehicle Service Technicians	105	7	3.5
151061	Database Administrators	1,241	81	3.4
171022	Surveyors	514	33	3.4
251067	Sociology Teachers, Postsecondary	93	6	3.4
291124	Radiation Therapists	376	24	3.4
493011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	845	54	3.4
537072	Pump Operators, Except Wellhead Pumpers	62	4	3.4
173019	Drafters, All Other	126	8	3.3
194021	Biological Technicians	193	12	3.3
212011	Clergy	7,903	501	3.3
251022	Mathematical Science Teachers, Postsecondary	371	23	3.3

Source: Department of Workforce Services. Ranked by Growth Rate

#### Top Twenty Declining Industries

Occupation	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Growth Rate (%)
Direct Selling Establishments	514	-458	-47.1

Performing Arts Companies	363	-198	-35.3
Fabric Mills	204	-98	-32.5
Textile Mills	248	-116	-31.9
Textile and Fabric Finishing and Fabric	44	-18	-29.0
Pesticide, Fertilizer, and Other Agricultural Chemical Manufacturing	325	-121	-27.1
Land Subdivision	277	-101	-26.7
Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instrument	957	-349	-26.7
Farm Product Raw Material Merchant Wholesalers	703	-232	-24.8
Other Furniture Related Product Manufacturing	116	-33	-22.1
Other General Purpose Machinery Manufacturing	2,570	-657	-20.4
Apparel Manufacturing	1,695	-415	-19.7
Nonstore Retailers	1,782	-398	-18.3
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	790	-159	-16.8
Travel Arrangement and Reservation Services	373	-67	-15.2
Sawmills and Wood Preservation	5,274	-933	-15.0
Personal and Household Goods Repair and Maintenance	495	-83	-14.4
Spectator Sports	741	-119	-13.8
Pipeline Transportation	863	-121	-12.3
Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	697	-92	-11.7

Source: Department of Workforce Services. Ranked by Growth Rate

### Top Twenty Declining Occupations

	Projected	Numeric	Growth
Occupation	Employment	Change	Rate (%)

Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks	281	-184	-39.6
Meter Readers, Utilities	444	-285	-39.1
Bridge and Lock Tenders	37	-20	-35.1
File Clerks	1,402	-660	-32.0
Actors	137	-61	-30.8
Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Services	651	-261	-28.6
Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers, All Other	133	-41	-23.6
Gas Compressor and Gas Pumping Station Operators	134	-40	-23.0
Computer Operators	912	-250	-21.5
Motion Picture Projectionists	102	-26	-20.3
Travel Agents	172	-38	-18.1
Order Clerks	1,185	-256	-17.8
Parking Lot Attendants	180	-37	-17.1
Rail-Track Laying and Maintenance Equipment Operators	178	-34	-16.0
Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	764	-121	-13.7
Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	184	-28	-13.2
Mining Machine Operators, All Other	27	-4	-12.9
Material Moving Workers, All Other	139	-20	-12.6
Office Machine Operators, Except Computer	365	-48	-11.6
Timing Device Assemblers, Adjusters, and Calibrators	200	-26	-11.5

Source: Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. Ranked by Growth Rate

**C. In what industries and occupations is there a demand for skilled workers and available jobs, both today and projected over the next decade? In what numbers?**

#### **Arkansas Occupational Demand by Education Level**

##### **2004-2014 Projections**

Based on occupational demand by education level, bachelor degree candidates who receive degrees in teaching or business will be in higher demand than other degree candidates will. Annual job openings for Elementary School Teachers, Secondary School Teachers, and Middle School Teachers are expected to increase by 1,270. There will be additional job openings for General & Operations Managers (418 new positions created annually), Accountants & Auditors (282 new positions), Management Analysts, and Financial Managers (to be determined).

Graduates with an associate degree in nursing will be in high demand in the next decade. There will be 1,289 new positions created annually for Registered Nurses; Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants; and Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses.

The highest increase in job openings by growth is expected in jobs that require work experience or on-the-job training. Retail Salesperson and Cashier jobs will increase by 2,267 and 1,703 new jobs annually. Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer occupations will see an annual increase of 1,703.

### **Bachelor's Degree**

#### **Occupation Annual Job Openings by Growth**

Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	600
General & Operations Managers	418
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Vocational Education	408
Clergy	286
Accountants & Auditors	282
Middle School Teachers, Except Special & Vocational Education	262
Management Analysts	253
Financial Managers	153
Pharmacists	151
Lawyers	151

### **Associate Degree/Vocational Training**

#### **Occupation Annual Job Openings by Growth**

Registered Nurses	1,115
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants	684
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	494
Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	266
Bus & Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	168
Computer Support Specialists	159
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	123
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	98

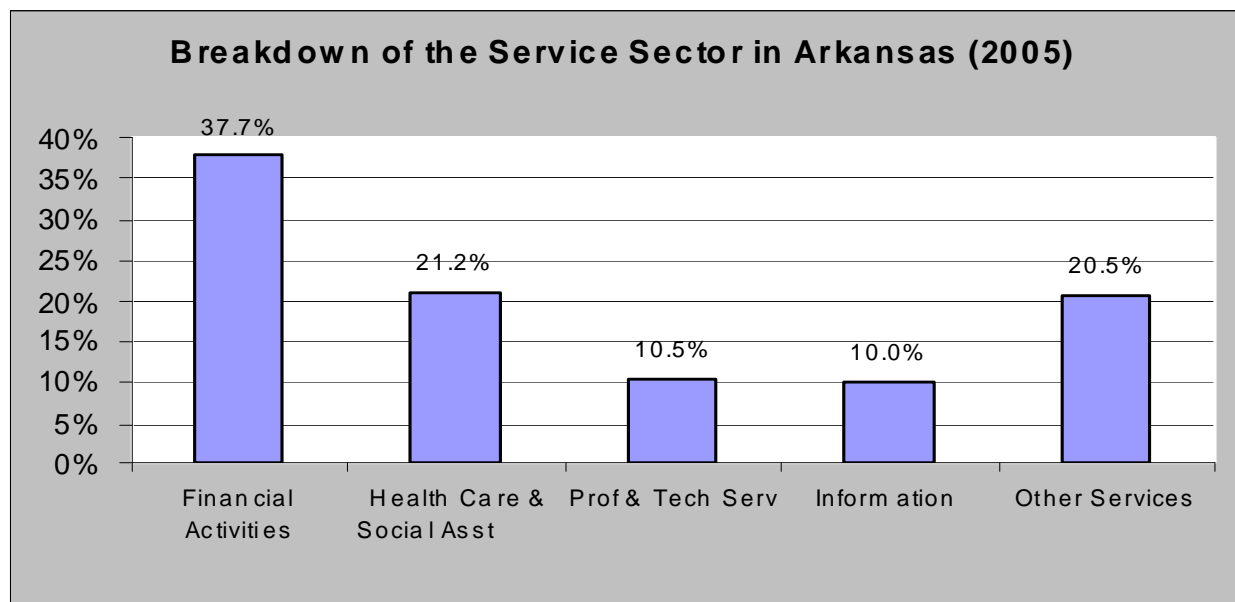
Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	96
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	76

### Work Experience or On-the-Job Training

#### Occupation Annual Job Openings by Growth

Retail Salesperson	2,267
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	1,782
Cashiers	1,703
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Inc. Fast Food	1,285
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	1,253
Waiters & Waitresses	1,118
Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	975
Office Clerks, General	909
Helpers - Production Workers	768
Team Assemblers	754

Source: Department of Workforce Services: Arkansas Industry and Occupational Projections: Long Term 2004-2014



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.

#### **D. What Jobs/Occupations Are Most Critical To The State's Economy – Arkansas' Major Employers?**

Several critical Arkansas companies are represented in the Fortune 500 list of major companies ([http://www.1800arkansas.com/data\\_demographics/files/2004%20Fortune%20500%20List.pdf](http://www.1800arkansas.com/data_demographics/files/2004%20Fortune%20500%20List.pdf)). Additionally, a substantial number of nationally known companies are headquartered in Arkansas. For a list of these companies, go to Arkansas Corporate Headquarter at Arkansas Economic Development Commission website at ([http://www.1800arkansas.com/reports\\_publications/](http://www.1800arkansas.com/reports_publications/)).

##### **Businesses with the Largest Number of Employees (Manufacturing)**

- Tyson Foods, Inc.
- Pilgrim's Pride
- Whirlpool Corporation
- Georgia-Pacific Corporation (Koch Industries, Inc.)
- OK Industries, Inc.

##### **Businesses with the Largest Number of Employees (Nonmanufacturing)**

- State of Arkansas
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- Federal Government
- J. B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc.
- Baptist Health, Inc.

For a full list of Arkansas' largest employers, see Arkansas' Largest Employers at Arkansas Economic Development Commission website: [http://www.1800arkansas.com/reports\\_publications](http://www.1800arkansas.com/reports_publications).

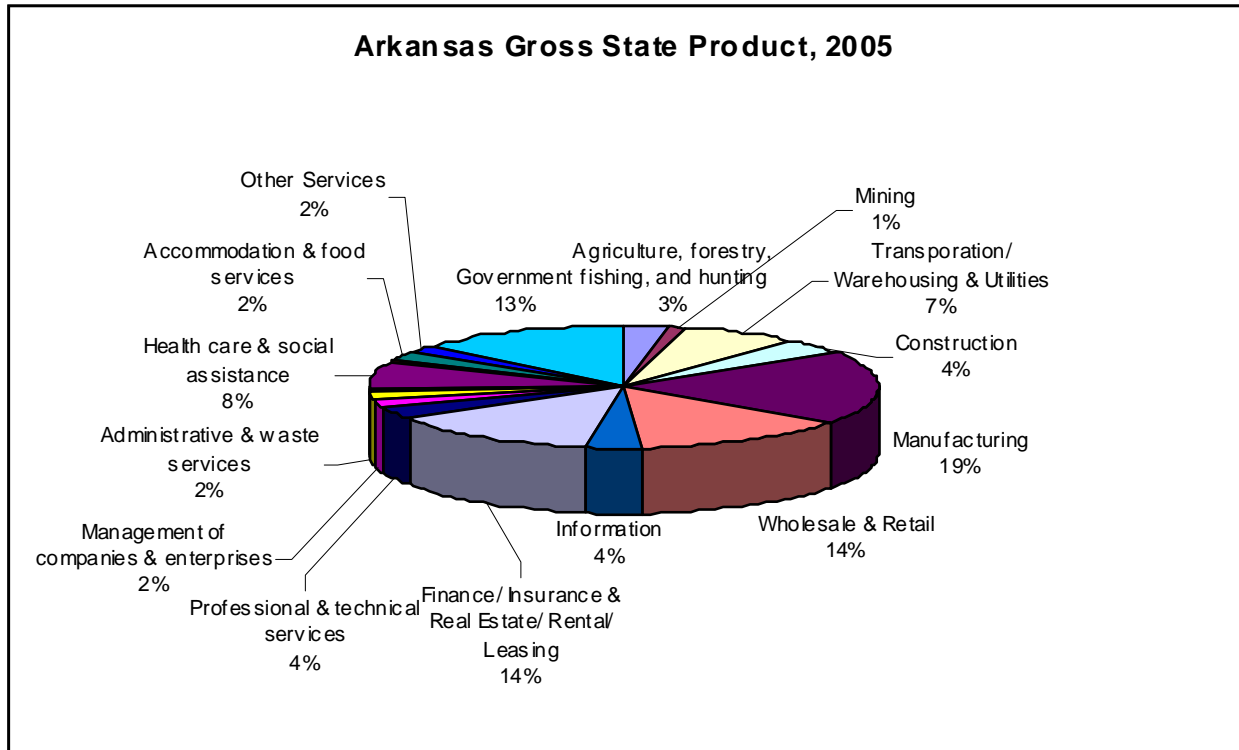
##### **Industry Sectors**

Until the mid-1950s, Arkansas' economy was dominated by agriculture. As the state began to industrialize, Arkansas' manufacturing base grew, especially in food and kindred products, forest products, and apparel.

By the mid-1980s, two economic forces began to affect the economic structure of Arkansas. First, the diversification of manufacturing brought significant growth in plastics, metals, electronics, and transportation equipment. Second, by the late 1980s, growth in the services, wholesale, and retail sectors added to the diversification of Arkansas' economy. During the 1990s, economic diversification continued with the growth of services, particularly health and business services.

Manufacturing employment, while remaining an integral part of Arkansas' economy, has shrunk as other economic sectors sustained rapid growth. Current manufacturing employment and payroll data by manufacturing industries can be found in the Industry Mix 2005 at the Arkansas Economic Development Commission website at ([http://www.1800arkansas.com/reports\\_publications](http://www.1800arkansas.com/reports_publications)).





Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.

As stated in Section IV, Arkansas is a very diverse state that not only has a significant agriculture industry, but also some of the U.S. blue chip companies as well. Industries that Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) is targeting include:

- Administrative Services
- Life Science
- Information Technology
- Logistics
- Metals
- Transportation Equipment
- Forest Products
- Food and Kindred Products
- Rubber and Plastics
- Agriculture

The Labor Market Information Department is developing an “Industry/Career Pathways/Occupations” database consisting of AEDC’s list of industries, along with the top twenty industries statewide and the top ten industries in each of Arkansas’ ten Workforce Investment Areas (short-term industry projections). A goal of this new database is to allow the employers and citizens of Arkansas to perform searches that

will produce not only occupational skill information, but also the whole array of labor market information found in Arkansas' Labor Market Information System (ALMIS) database.

#### **E. What are the skill needs for the available, critical, and projected jobs?**

To provide information on the skill needs of jobs/occupations in Arkansas, as mentioned in the above section, the Department of Workforce Services Labor Market Information Section has created (through the Pathways to Advancement Policy Academy) a skills matching prototype on the "Discover Arkansas" Labor Market Information website. The tool links Arkansas' growth industries to the nationally recognized Educational Career Clusters. It also identifies whether a growth industry is a targeted industry by the Arkansas Department of Economic Development or an industry that has been identified by the Department of Labor High Growth Employment Initiatives. The tool identifies occupations related to each growth industry and career pathway and provides information on skills, projections, wages, training programs, and licensing requirements. It is also noted whether an occupation is an employment opportunity. The O\*Net skills sets are being utilized to complete the matching process for Arkansas job needs as provided at Section IV.H.3 of this document.

#### **F. What are the current and projected demographics of the available labor pool (including the incumbent workers) both now and over the next decade? Age, Ethnicity, and Educational Characteristics of the Arkansas Labor Pool**

The makeup of Arkansas' population by age is very similar to that of the United States. The largest differences between Arkansas and the U.S. are in the categories 62 years and over and 65 years and over. The median age is also higher in Arkansas, 37 for the 2005 estimate, compared to 36.4 for the United States.

AGE				Estimate		
<b>Arkansas</b>	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Median Years	36.3	36.2	36.7	36.3	36.6	37.0
Percent of Population:						
18 Years & Over	73.8	73.6	74.4	74.5	74.9	75.1
21 Years & Over	69.8	70.0	70.7	70.7	71.0	71.0
62 Years & Over	16.0	16.1	16.1	16.3	16.0	16.4
65 Years & Over	13.4	13.5	13.4	13.6	13.2	13.5
				Estimate		
<b>United States</b>	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Median Years	35.5	35.7	35.9	36.0	36.2	36.4
Percent of Population:						

18 Years & Over	73.8	74.0	74.2	74.3	74.5	74.6
21 Years & Over	70.0	70.2	70.5	70.6	70.7	70.9
62 Years & Over	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.4	14.4	14.7
65 Years & Over	12.1	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey.

The similarity to the United States also holds true for the group aged 34 or under. Given these similarities, Arkansas will become even more like the Nation as time passes.

AGE						
				Estimate		
<b>0 to 34 Years</b> (Percent of Population)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Arkansas	48.3	48.3	47.9	48.3	47.8	47.3
United States	49.3	48.9	48.7	48.5	48.3	47.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey.

### Race and Ethnicity

Arkansas is less diverse than the United States in both racial makeup and ethnicity. The racial makeup of Arkansas is concentrated in Caucasian or African American populations. However, the Hispanic and Latino population is growing significantly and is expected to influence population data for the next census.

<b>RACE</b>						
(Percent of Population)						
				Estimate		
<b>Arkansas</b>	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
White	80.1	80.8	80.1	79.3	79.4	79.0
Black	15.9	15.5	15.8	15.5	15.3	15.3
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.39	0.49	0.38	0.65	0.71	0.68
Asian	0.65	0.75	0.82	0.97	0.95	0.93
Native Hawaiian & Pac. Isl.	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.11	0.15
Some Other Race	1.3	0.9	1.3	2.0	2.2	2.4
Two or More Races	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey.

By comparison, the United States exhibits less concentration in Caucasian or African American, and greater percentages in Asian and Some Other Race.

<b>RACE</b>						
(Percent of Population)						
				Estimate		
<b>United States</b>	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
White	77.3	76.5	75.8	76.2	75.6	74.7
Black	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.1	12.2	12.1
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.75	0.70	0.70	0.77	0.75	0.8
Asian	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.3
Native Hawaiian & Pac. Isl.	0.15	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.1
Some Other Race	3.9	4.6	5.1	4.8	5.2	6.0
Two or More Races	2.2	2.3	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey.

Arkansas is very different from the United States concerning its population of Hispanic Origin. While the percentage of Hispanic or Latino (of any race) is estimated to grow very rapidly in Arkansas as compared to the United States, it is still a much smaller share of total population than in the United States.

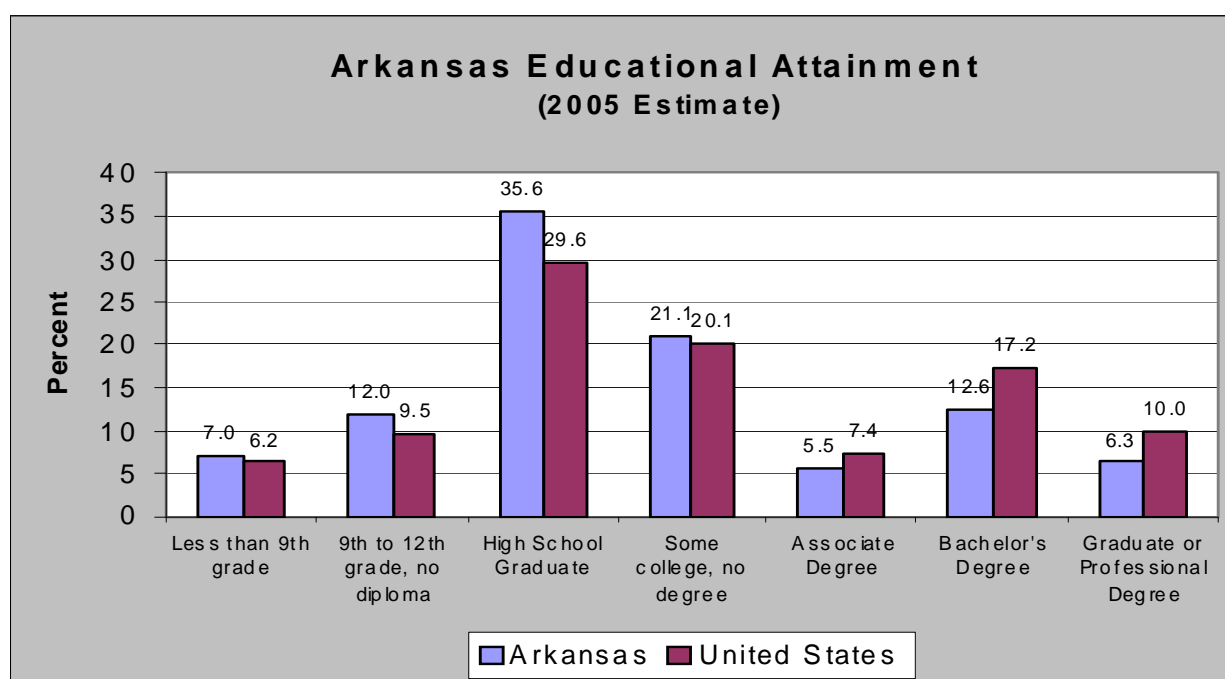
<b>HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>							
(Percent of Population)							
				Estimate			
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
<b>Arkansas:</b>							
Hispanic or Latino	2.7	3.4	3.5	3.7	4.4	4.7	
Not Hispanic or Latino	97.3	96.7	96.5	96.3	95.6	95.3	
<b>United States:</b>							
Hispanic or Latino	12.6	13.1	13.5	13.9	14.2	14.5	
Not Hispanic or Latino	87.4	86.9	86.5	86.2	85.8	85.5	

NOTE. Data are limited to the household population and exclude the population living in institutions, college dormitories, and other group quarters. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see Survey Methodology.

Source: General Demographic Characteristics: 2005 Data Set: 2005 American Community Survey; Survey: 2005 American Community Survey

## Education

Arkansas faces many challenges in education. Compared to the United States, Arkansas graduates a larger percentage of its high school students (35.6% as compared to 29.6%), but lags behind the Nation in the percent of college graduates (12.6% as compared to 17.2%). The estimates for population 25 years or older with a bachelor's degree or higher are considerably higher for the United States (27.2 percent) than Arkansas (18.9 percent).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 Years and Over						
(Percent of Population)						
			ESTIMATES			
Arkansas	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Less than 9th grade	7.9	8.3	7.3	8.0	7.3	7.0

9th to 12th grade, no diploma	14.8	14.6	12.9	12.3	12.5	12.0
High School Graduate	35.0	34.0	33.6	35.5	35.5	35.6
Some college, no degree	21.2	20.7	21.8	20.4	21.6	21.1
Associate Degree	4.5	4.5	4.8	4.8	4.9	5.5
Bachelor's Degree	11.2	12.4	13.2	12.3	12.0	12.6
Graduate or Professional Degree	5.5	5.6	6.5	6.8	6.1	6.3
Percent High School Graduate or Higher	77.3	77.2	79.9	79.7	80.2	81.0
Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher	16.7	18.0	19.7	19.0	18.1	18.9
			ESTIMATES			
<b>United States</b>	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Less than 9th grade	7.0	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.2
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	11.5	11.2	10.7	9.9	9.8	9.5
High School Graduate	29.6	29.6	29.6	29.8	29.5	29.6
Some college, no degree	20.5	20.4	20.4	20.3	20.3	20.1
Associate Degree	6.5	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.1	7.4
Bachelor's Degree	16.0	16.3	16.6	16.9	17.2	17.2
Graduate or Professional Degree	9.0	9.2	9.4	9.7	9.9	10.0
Percent High School Graduate or Higher	81.6	82.1	82.6	83.6	83.9	84.2
Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher	25.0	25.5	25.9	26.5	27.0	27.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey by Years.

NOTE. Data are limited to the household population and exclude the population living in institutions, college dormitories, and other group quarters.

## Implications/Issues

Like the Nation, Arkansas faces a number of challenges resulting from changing characteristics of the workforce and its population. Due to the forthcoming waves of the baby-boomer retirements, Arkansas is facing a reduction in its future workforce, and it currently has insufficient numbers of skilled and qualified replacement workers or new workers to take their place. For these reasons, the workforce investment system looks to the Governor's priorities as a strategic solution to these challenges. The Mature Worker, Youth, Limited English Proficiency Initiatives and the NGA Pathways Project focus on strategies to fill the pipeline of qualified workers that business and industry in Arkansas demand.

Through business/industry input, targeted outreach efforts, and collaborative strategies, the partnerships under the Workforce Investment Act provide solutions to these challenges.

### **G. Is the State experiencing any "in-migration" or "out-migration" of workers that impact the labor pool?**

The state experienced an impact in the labor pool due to the "in-migration" of workers in 2004 according to the State-to-State Migration Data from the Internal Revenue Service. However, migrants who filed U.S. tax returns had mean adjusted gross income lower than the non-migrants in 2004.

On average, U.S. incoming migrants had mean adjusted gross income higher than migrants who were leaving Arkansas (\$20,087 versus \$18,726). The opposite was true for foreign migrants and the difference in the salaries was much more significant. Foreign migrants who were coming to Arkansas had mean adjusted gross income of \$8,861 versus leaving migrants whose mean adjusted gross income was \$18,726.

### **People Moving Away from Arkansas (2004)**

#### **IRS State-to-State Migration Data**

State FIPS	Area	Number of Returns	Number of Exemptions	Aggregate Adjusted Gross Income	Median Adjusted Gross Income
96	AR Total Mig - US & For	26,949	55,118	\$882,044	\$18,278
97	AR Total Mig - US	26,348	54,020	\$864,354	\$18,263
98	AR Total Mig - Foreign	601	1,098	\$17,691	\$18,726
5	AR Non-Migrants	881,463	1,996,075	\$35,558,893	\$25,654

### **People Moving To Arkansas (2004)**

### IRS State-to-State Migration Data

State FIPS	Area	Number of Returns	Number of Exemptions	Aggregate Adjusted Gross Income	Median Adjusted Gross Income
96	AR Total Mig - US & For	30,574	64,463	\$1,067,728	\$19,750
97	AR Total Mig - US	29,554	62,854	\$1,059,885	\$20,087
98	AR Total Mig - Foreign	1,020	1,609	\$7,843	\$8,861
5	AR Non-Migrants	881,463	1,996,075	\$35,558,893	\$25,654

*Source: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.*

**H. Based on an analysis of both the projected demand skills and the available and projected labor pool, what skill gaps is the State experiencing today and what skill gaps are projected over the next decade?**

- **Wage Change as an Indicator of Labor Supply**
- **Completers Data as a Skills Shortage Tool**
- **Employer Reported Shortages**

The Labor Market Information (LMI) staff prepares short-term (2-year) industry and occupational employment projections annually, as well as long-term (10-year) employment projections biennially, following the biennial release of the national employment projections. The most current available short-term projections cover the period 2003-2005, and the most current long-term projections cover the period 2002-2012. This data was used in conjunction with the newly developed Skills-Based Employment Projections application from the Projections Managing Partnership to identify the following three areas where gaps are and will continue to be present.

Skill Categories: learned sets of facts and standards required by many work situations

- Reading Comprehension
- Active Listening
- Speaking
- Critical Thinking
- Writing
- Instructing
- Active Learning
- Coordination



Knowledge Areas: learned capabilities that allow workers to master and perform the specific activities of their jobs

- Customer and Personal Service
- English Language
- Education and Training
- Mathematics
- Psychology
- Clerical
- Mechanical

Generalized Work Activities: types of tasks common to many jobs.

- Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships
- Communicating with supervisors, peers, or subordinates
- Getting information needed to do the job
- Handling and moving objects
- Organizing, planning, and prioritizing work
- Updating and using job-relevant knowledge
- Making decisions and solving problems
- Identifying objects, actions, and events
- Monitoring processes, materials, or surroundings

**I. Based on an analysis of the economy and the labor market, what workforce development issues has the State identified?**

Several issues must be addressed concerning workforce development in the State of Arkansas.

1. The State of Arkansas does not have any single system that can clearly describe “the workforce” in “terms” common to the business and industry that exist in the state or to industries that are looking at locating in Arkansas. An evaluation system that will clearly identify the skill, knowledge and abilities of the workforce needs to be created, implemented and maintained. This system should have a common set of terms that relate to both the business and industry and the education providers.
2. Other demographic information also needs to be collected, analyzed, and documented. Information such as drive time/distance to work, as it is associated with hourly wages. Turn over rates for companies and the association between turn over rates and hourly salaries deserve a more in depth review.
3. Work ethic in the workforce is a critical factor that needs to be addressed at an early age and improved on for the existing workers.

4. Communication skills seem to be an issue that all industries are continually trying to improve. In general, "soft" skills need to be developed in most of the existing workforce as well.
5. Supervisory skills among the first and second line supervisors are desperately lacking. Most of the supervisors in these positions have achieved this position through longevity with the company and lack any real training in how to deal with personnel/ supervisory issues.
6. Technology upgrades are needed with most of the workers in Arkansas today. As new plants locate in Arkansas and existing companies expand, they are faced with increased levels of technology that the workforce must embrace to maintain a competitive edge in their business or industry.
7. There is an ever-increasing demand for ESL and bi-lingual employees. The diversity of the workforce demands that the employees deal with much different co-workers than has ever been required of them. They must have a positive way to deal with this before being faced with it.
8. We have an increasing need to create special schools for incoming workers and their children who are from Japan and China. The American and Arkansas culture for education is much different than in the Eastern Societies. There are issues to address with this changing culture as more and more companies move here from those regions of the world.
9. The Arkansas workforce needs to be developing clusters of skills that cross several industry skill sets. The development of new skill sets for new industries that allow the worker to maintain a productive life style in the current industries is critical. As we learn which new industries may be residing in Arkansas, we must anticipate the skill and knowledge required for these new industries and start efforts to train for these position. If we wait until they are here, we will be playing catch up with skill sets while the companies are trying to be productive with less than effective workers.
10. There are issues that exist with the existing workforce and the skills that are becoming outdated. Weekly, even daily, there are announcements of plant closures and layoffs. These transitional people must learn new job skills to keep themselves productively employed. A re-training of workers of all ages must be considered to keep pace with the ever-changing market conditions.

The membership of the new oversight board for the state's TANF program includes several state agencies. The board routinely examines policies and procedures that could be changed to improve service delivery. In addition, when the Arkansas Legislature meets every two years, these agencies work together with legislators to propose legislation designed to enhance State laws.

Arkansas is a small diverse state that not only leads the nation in rice production, but is also the home to some of America's corporate giants such as; Wal-Mart, Acxiom, Tyson Foods, Dillard's, and Alltel, to name a few. This creates a host of issues that the workforce development system must address to ensure that the employers in the State have a varied but highly skilled and trained workforce.

When analyzing economic data, six of the top ten fastest growing occupations in Arkansas require an Associate Degree or higher level of education. In contrast, when studying occupations with the largest amount of net growth, eight of the ten top growth jobs require only either moderate or short-term on-the-job-training. In the 2005 census, Arkansas' percentage of adults holding post-secondary

degrees was 24.4% compared to a national average of 34.6%. This leads Arkansas into many issues for the system to address:

- Is there sufficient funding for the system to address its varying training needs? This question leads directly to a broader question of what efforts need to be undertaken to better understand expenditures, whether administrative or programmatic, to guarantee that resources are being utilized effectively.
- How can career technical education be enhanced to ensure that Arkansas' youth and workers are prepared for today's workplace and succeed in their academic and career goals?
- How can we close the wage gap differences between Arkansas' workers compared to the workers in surrounding states and the nation, so that we can retain our trained workforce?
- What career pathways are available for workers to transition to higher paying jobs?

When looking at the demographic data for the State, particularly the northwest region, Arkansas is experiencing large increases in the number of immigrants. Many of these immigrants have limited English-speaking abilities. The AWIB and its workforce partners have determined the following issues for the system must be addressed to continue to meet the needs of job seekers:

- What workplace competencies can be developed to ensure that workers possess the skills that businesses need to succeed?
- How do we better integrate with our educational and training partners, as well as business and industry, to address literacy barriers?
- While addressing both economic and labor market issues, Arkansas must also address systemic issues. These include:
  - How do we ensure that Workforce Center partners are paying their fair share? How can the system better serve special populations such as youth and individuals with disabilities?
  - Can the State better coordinate program activities such as administrative costs and monitoring in an effort to maximize resources?
  - How can local boards and One-Stop operators better meet the needs of their business community?
  - What waivers should the State pursue to effectively manage the workforce development system, given the limited administrative resources?

#### **J. What workforce development issues has the State prioritized as being most critical to its economic health and growth?**

Concentrated and on-going data studies reveal barriers such as low wages and a reduction in a ready labor force for certain age groups in the future. In addition, projects such as the National Governors Association Career Pathways program prioritize the need for a more definitive approach to bridging the gap for workers between the ages of 18 to 21 who need skill upgrades and/or apprenticeship programs to better equip them with a career path for building their future.

As described at Section II of this document, the Governor has identified priorities for the Arkansas Workforce Investment System. The issues contained in the previous section are of equal importance and must be addressed by the workforce system in order to achieve economic health and growth. While some of these issues are administrative and can be addressed at the State level with input from local

partners, others will be addressed by the State Workforce Investment Board through their existing committee structure.

## **V. Overarching State Strategies**

### **A. Identify how the State will use WIA Title I funds to leverage other Federal, State, local, and private resources in order to maximize the effectiveness of such resources and to expand the participation of business, employees, and individuals in the Statewide workforce investment system? §112(b)(10).**

The Governor's goal in leveraging workforce investment dollars takes a "big picture" approach that includes two overarching governance strategies (1) encourage a diversified economic base for various business structures based on regional economies and (2) build an integrated service delivery system through collaborative partnerships where policy governance and oversight dictate collaboration at the highest levels of state government and replication throughout all levels of the WIA service system. The diversified economic base envisioned by the Governor requires commitment to collaboration by partner agencies, business and industry, and local and regional partners with latitude in implementation for other supplemental strategies necessary to achieving this end.

One of the State's primary strategies for leveraging funds is to encourage development of regional economies that share similar characteristics but extend beyond geographic boundaries to foster innovation and talent maximizing for sustained economic growth. Arkansas, which is surrounded by six other states (OK, MO, TN, MS, LA, and TX), is perfectly poised to reap the benefits of its own state specific regional economies, but it is also a necessary player in the regional economic plans and investments of its boarder states. For example, the Delta Region, which is in Arkansas and Mississippi, was one of 13 Regions selected for Second Generation WIRED grants, all based on the Department of Labor's recognition of the possibility of transforming the economy of the Delta by building capacity and bringing about a catalysis of economic viability and stability.

The second leveraging strategy is to encourage more local and state level MOUs and cost-sharing agreements that can guide the day-to-day partner operations within the local workforce areas and the One Stop System. The Governor and other statewide workforce investment partners understand the need to integrate economic planning and workforce investment activities to yield the highest levels of talent development that will undeniably encourage economic prosperity for local communities, regional areas, the State, and the nation.

Similarly, though not yet formalized in an actual Workforce Investment Board policy, Arkansas currently follows a precedent of requiring matching contributions to discretionary grant programs such as Incumbent Worker Training or through other statewide partnerships or Initiatives.

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board continues to encourage local workforce investment areas to seek out additional funding opportunities through private, public, and co-funding opportunities with other government agencies, private businesses, foundations, and partner programs.

By leveraging WIA Title I funds in every aspect of program administration and oversight, including integrated services, employer matching, agency cost saving partnerships, and seeking additional funding opportunities, Arkansas will begin to redefine workforce investment as a system of inter-related partners led by the Governor's vision and fostered by hands on information from state and local partners. With consistent organization and management, this system will shape economic projections and opportunities for future decades, not solely based on current labor market deficiencies, (i.e. plant closings; lack of post-secondary academic attainment, etc.) but on demand-driven economic expectations and goals.

### **B. What strategies are in place to address the national strategic direction discussed in Part I of this guidance, the Governor's priorities, and the workforce development issues identified through the analysis of the State's economy and labor market? §§ 112(b) (4) (D) and 112(a).**

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.

In his State of the State address, Governor Mike Beebe vowed to strengthen the state's economic attractiveness and competitive edge by encouraging a diversified economic base of various business structures and regional economies. He and the newly named director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission agree that a state business profile must be developed that includes regional and community profiles based on regional economies and sector strategy principles. This will be first step in providing a framework for prospective investors, businesses, workforce professionals, and job seekers to proactively plan.

Through the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Governor will put into effect his plans to continue present priority initiatives allowing the opportunity to enhance those programs currently underway or improve those required under WIA or supported by other national strategic directions. With careful thought and review, the Governor's priorities were revised to target specific populations through those regional economic domains in which all job seekers and employers will participate, respective to their location or interest within the state. The following priorities complement national strategic directions, the Governor's mission and vision, and emerging workforce investment and development issues:

- **High Growth/Career Pathways Initiative**--Develop educational pathways to high wage/high demand occupations;
- **Youth Vision Initiative**--Create technological equity in the learning experiences and career opportunities for every youth in the State.
- **English Proficiency Initiative**--Remove barriers to successful workforce entry and career advancement for persons with limited English proficiency;
- **Mature Worker Initiative**--Promote the value of mature workers to the State's labor force;
- **Arkansas Disabilities Initiative**--Facilitate occupational and professional mobility for persons with disabilities to successfully compete in the State's labor market;
- **Nursing**--To increase the number of trained medical professionals;
- **Aviation**--To promote the aerospace industry in Arkansas, increase the growing workforce needs, and ultimately create an Aerospace Coalition; and
- **Save the Children**--To provide quality in school, after school, and summer literacy programming to poor children living in rural areas.

This strategic effort will prepare workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high growth/high demand and economically vital industries and sectors of the State's economy. Overall, the Governor's strategic goals for attracting, growing, and emerging businesses and industries include the following.

- Encourage development of regional economies that share similar characteristics but extend beyond geographic boundaries to foster innovation and talent maximizing for sustained economic growth through funding for economic development initiatives.
- Form a workforce cabinet, including partners from around the state in the areas of economic development, education, and workforce, to provide inter-agency guidance, after intensive introspection and collaboration at the senior level of state government, for service initiatives with statewide applicability.
- Utilize the State Workforce Investment Board as the premier source of statewide policy, governance, and oversight of the state's One Stop Workforce System.

- Continue the identified priority initiatives, with some modification, to provide the opportunity to properly finalize those programs currently underway or enhance those required under WIA or in common with national strategic initiatives.
- Committing resources, either through funding or outreach, to encourage the creation of more small business networks and technological advancements in fields like healthcare, engineering, agriculture, natural sciences, and others to ensure a more diversified economic base and foster current and new regional economies throughout the state.
- Support new and enhanced legislation that illustrates a continued commitment by the State to encourage businesses to come and stay in the State through state funding and various tax incentives.
- Require maximization of state resources to (1) focus efforts on recruiting and retaining high growth businesses and creating high wage jobs in economically critical industries; (2) support statewide economic development activities through research, information, service, training, and education; and (3) increase workforce system access and employment success for all Arkansans.

**C. Based on the state's economic and labor market analysis, what strategies has the state implemented or plans to implement to identify and target industries and occupations within the state that are high growth, high demand, and vital to the state's economy? §112(a) and §112(b)(4)(A). The state may want to consider: (1) Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs to the economy; or (2) Industries that have a significant impact on the overall economy; or (3) Industries that impact the growth of other industries; or (4) Industries that are being transformed by technology and innovation that require new skill sets for workers; or (5) Industries that new and emerging and are expected to grow.**

Arkansas is pursuing a number of strategies to identify and target industries and occupations within the state that are high-growth, high-demand and vital to the state's economy. Encouraging a diversified economic base of various businesses structures and regional economies will give the State the opportunity to accentuate its very distinct natural resources and to capitalize on an economic recovery and rebound period waiting to be properly nurtured and sustained.

### **(1) Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs to the economy**

#### **Information Technology**

The information technology industry sector of Arkansas includes businesses for computer programming, data processing and management, computer software systems design, information retrieval, and telephone communications. Although it is one of the fastest growing industries in the state, its primary network of support are currently Arkansas educational institutions that are working overtime to prepare the best and brightest minds for the job opportunities that await them in this field. For example, the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority introduces cutting edge technological advances to our State by promoting post-graduate and professional scientific research as well as product development requiring an unequivocal mastery in the areas of science, math, and engineering.

The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville is home to GENESIS Technology, which houses multiple firms to conduct engineering research in various industries from healthcare to microelectronics. Similarly, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock is home to the Internet/E-Commerce Incubator, which targets small service and retail businesses desiring to increase sales through internet marketing.

The high growth expectancy attributed to the future of this industry requires nothing less than a strategy of committing resources, either through funding or in job seeker preparedness, to support and encourage the creation of more small business networks and technological advancements in fields like healthcare, engineering, agriculture, natural sciences, and others to ensure a more diversified economic base and to foster current and new regional economies throughout the state.

## **(2) Industries that have a significant impact on the overall economy**

### **Retail and Manufacturing**

Two industries that have a significant impact on the State's overall economy are manufacturing and retail. Thanks to retail behemoth Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., which is headquartered in the undisputed "retail capital of the world," Bentonville, Arkansas, some 200 suppliers and vendors have set up offices in the area, fueling a housing construction boom, among other spin-off industry benefactors, in Northwest Arkansas.

A multifold investment strategy utilized by the State workforce system leaders in partnering with a powerhouse like Wal-Mart is to **(1)** bring and keep them at the table of industry and business contributors, **(2)** invite the company to share insights regarding its experiences as an industry leader for start-up companies and entrepreneurial visionaries, and **(3)** encourage healthy and competitive expansion through elimination of barriers to employment for prospective job seekers. If the old adage of "if you build it, they will come" holds true for the economic boom that continues to thrive in Northwest Arkansas, then economists and workforce leaders know that if Wal-Mart builds it, others will certainly come.

Although the Walton Family retail giant, may share the same humble beginnings as some Arkansas manufacturing companies, they have not experienced the economic and labor market declines that have befallen many manufacturing companies in the state.

Historically, manufacturing companies have enjoyed much success in Arkansas; therefore, it is not surprising that our state has maintained a higher percentage of workers employed in manufacturing jobs than the national average. The largest manufacturer, Tyson Foods, Inc., along with other notable and influential business powerhouses like ConAgra, Inc. and Georgia-Pacific Corporation, has provided employment security for Arkansas residents for many years. Nevertheless, the unexpected is always to be expected, and with nationwide closures like Whirlpool, Inc., well informed workforce investment leaders must have a fluid system of services to get dislocated workers retrained and re-hired in the most timely and cost effective manner.

Although labor force reductions and limited state and federal funding may be a possibility, no state workforce leader can simply rely on a purely reactionary service system to meet the needs of participants. Some workforce investment actions must be preemptive in nature and scope.

By offering specialized programs like Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), state workforce leaders help ensure that Arkansas workers are consistently being afforded opportunities to enhance or upgrade their skills. Programs like IWT and OJT have a dual benefit. First, they promote partnerships with state businesses and encourage retention in the state. Second, they offer on the job training to workers with skills that may be transferable to other future employment opportunities.

During the 2007-2008 program years, the State Workforce Board, its Agency and partners will research and build more networks as well as partner with other entities and organizations that provide no cost, specialized training opportunities for select fields. One such network is the Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions (AMS), a program within the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority that will provide on-site training by engineers for technical and management assistance to manufacturing companies in the State.

Because AMS is also a partner with the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology, small manufacturers benefit from the expertise of business and manufacturing leaders across the U.S. through non-profit centers in over 400 locations, including one at the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority in Little Rock, Arkansas.

## **(3) Industries that impact the growth of other industries**

### **Distribution**



Arkansas' comprehensive transportation network and central location in the U.S. gives our state the advantage of being a national hub for distribution markets. Arkansas is 500 miles from 26 other states, midway between California and the Carolinas, and halfway between Montreal and New Mexico. It is expected that the transportation sector will continue to increase over the next decade because a variety of Fortune 1000 companies have recognized our logistical advantage and have established major distribution facilities in the State. Some of those companies include Dillard's Stores, Target, UPS, and Family Dollar.

According to the Arkansas Trucking Association, there are more than 1600 for-hire motor carriers with interstate operations based in Arkansas and over 90,000 Arkansans are employed by trucking and distribution industries. With this growth in the trucking industry, state economists and workforce strategists recognize the possibilities of labor market growth in careers like truck driving, automotive and mechanical engineering, as well as highway construction jobs. Billions of dollars are spent upgrading the State's eight major interstates and furthering the possibilities of creating new highways that will support even more opportunities for land distribution industries. However, without skilled and work-ready job seekers, there will ultimately be labor shortages in each of these occupational fields.

With this economic data in mind, workforce investment partners sought outside funding to expeditiously train eligible participants and other job seekers in the necessary skill sets to secure available jobs in response to the industry's demand for trained workers. The Department of Workforces Services and the Arkansas Association for Two-Year Colleges applied for and received one of the U.S. Department of Labor's Transportation and Logistics Career Pathways Project Grant for \$1,350,665. This funding will help facilitate training for 150 commercial truck drivers to support the region's transportation and logistics industry and help build capacity at area Mid-South Community Colleges to provide training and education specific to the field.

Arkansas has other extremely profitable distribution markets that contribute to its established presence as the mid-point for North American trade. There are over 1,000 miles of navigable waterways in the state with ports along the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers, complemented by twenty-six rail carriers that also operate in Arkansas. The major rail carrier, Union Pacific Railroad, has its Arkansas hub in North Little Rock (Central Region), home to the company's largest and most modern locomotive repair shop and the second largest freight car classification yard on the system. It is no surprise that when these two industries merged to create an intermodal facility in Marion (Northeast Arkansas and ten miles east of Memphis, TN), it was nothing short of state-of-the-art and considered world class by "sit location" expert standards.

### **Oil and Gas**

Another industry with high expectations for its own economic impact and success that is certain to have a definite impact on other industries is the oil and gas industry centered on a natural gas reservoir known as Fayetteville Shale Play. The reservoir is located on the Arkansas side of the Arkoma Basin (Western Arkansas), but may also be present across numerous counties in central and eastern Arkansas. Only in recent years has this reserve become an economic source of gas supply thanks to drilling technologies and ever increasing natural gas prices.

In August of 2004, Southwestern Energy Company announced that SEECO, Inc. had successfully drilled and commercially produced gas from the shale. Since that time, research and development have led to the presence of many companies in the oil and gas industry that have committed to investing in the future of the Fayetteville Shale Play.

Capital investments in leasing land and mineral rights, drilling, completion and production activities as well as the potential for the installation of major gas gathering and transportation systems are just a few of the spin-off industries that now affect labor and economic outcomes in the participating Shale counties and the State.

...From 2005 to 2008, it is estimated that operators will make direct expenditures of about \$3.8 billion in leasing land and mineral rights, drilling, and other activities and that these expenditures will be responsible for total economic activity of about \$5.5 billion in the state of Arkansas. Associated with the \$5.5 billion of economic output will be the creation of approximately 9,683 jobs in the aggregate by year 2008 and about \$357.7 million of state and local tax revenues.

Based upon U.S. Department of Labor statistics, average wage and salary earnings in the oil and gas industry are generally higher than the average of all industries. ...

*Excerpt taken from: "Projecting the Economic Impact of the Fayetteville Shale Play for 2005-2008" Sam Walton College of Business, Center for Business and Economic Research, University of Arkansas*

If all economic projections are correct and favorable market conditions continue, drilling programs related to Fayetteville Shale Play will remain in the State for the next 10-15 years, and the citizens within the Shale counties will have employment opportunities unmatched by any other area of the state.

One way in which state leaders can commit to industries such as these with high growth and high demand potential is to enact new and enhanced legislation that illustrates a continued commitment by the State to encourage businesses to come and stay in the State through various tax incentives including, but not limited to:

- The Free Port Law—no tax on goods in transit, raw materials , or finished goods destined for out of state sales;
- The Arkansas Enterprise Zone Program (Advantage Arkansas)—corporate income tax credits and sales and use tax refunds to qualifying businesses that create new jobs;
- The Biotechnology Development and Training Act—income tax credits for biotech activities including construction, training, and research;
- The Consolidated Incentives Act (2003, revised 2007)—to give an income tax credit or sales and use tax credit to technology-based start-up companies with payrolls of \$250,000 or more and wages of at least 175 percent of the state or county average; and
- The Arkansas Alternative Fuels Development Act—provides more than \$10 million in distributing grants to companies that produce alternative fuels.

#### **(4) Industries that are being transformed by technology and innovation that require new skill sets for workers**

##### **Telecommunications and Aviation**

Growing telecommunications and aviation industries in the State, particularly in central Arkansas, have emerged and made a definite impact on workforce and economic decision makers' agendas. Workforce leaders and administrators are devising strategic plans with short-term, immediate, and long-term goals to provide training to all available and work-ready participants as the realization has become apparent that the skills of yesterday simply will not transfer into new technologically advanced careers that are currently in need of qualified workers to fill the positions.

The State Board follows the Governor's direction and supports his interest in special projects like the Little Rock School District's Summer Youth Aviation Academy. This is a program designed specifically to meet the needs of the aviation industry and to quickly introduce students to the world of aviation and train them for entry level positions with some of the State's aviation companies. These companies contribute

over \$1 billion to the State's economy per year, constituting the state's largest export. Companies like Dassault Falcon Jet, Raytheon Aircraft, Central Flying Service, Beaver Lake Aviation (home to Wal-Mart's Aviation Fleet), and SYAIR Designs have presented their case before the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, Economic Development Commission, and Chamber of Commerce, expressing their desire to find qualified applicants to fill their vacant positions.

With well over 10,000 Arkansans working in aviation-related jobs, there is no time like the present to build more bridges between workforce leaders, local area administrators and workforce centers, and aviation businesses to showcase WIA participants as a great fit for training and employment opportunities that will enable them to secure future jobs in the field of aviation.

#### **(5) Industries that are new and emerging and are expected to grow.**

With any new endeavor, there are understood financial risks associated with the exploration of new ideas, testing, and implementation. Arkansans understand the importance of technological advancement and what it means to be on the cutting edge while simultaneously underestimated. That is why when the State's universities developed new degree programs that would begin to provide skilled workers for emerging industries, the Arkansas General Assembly took note, and passed amended tax incentives to attract these industries to the State.

#### **BIO and NANO**

Bio-fuel research and nanotechnology development are just a couple of the industries making major headway on the state's top university and college campuses. For example, bio-fuel infrastructure and crushers can be the seeds for an industry of the future that will create gasoline from cellulose products. Learning opportunities are not limited to higher education institutions. Arkansas high schools were the first to offer Environmental and Spatial Technology (The East Program), a collaborative partnership with Intergraph Corporation, several state universities, and the Arkansas Department of Education.

Not to be excluded are the following industries that are also making a name for themselves in the Natural State as both new and emerging fields or established industries experiencing renewed economic impact.

- Nanotechnology
- Biosciences,
- Forestry Programs
- Aquaculture
- Entrepreneurship in business, financial, and retail services
- Tourism

Support of future exploration in these fields is critical and needed to attract and retain talented individuals and companies to the state.

Arkansas' workforce investment partners, defined broadly to include a wide array of education, workforce development, and economic development partners, have a history of collaboration directed toward meeting the needs of Arkansas' workforce and business customers. All partners are charged to think "demand-driven" in all planning and to continuously improve their responsiveness to customer needs through customer contact and sharing of labor market information. This will be important in guiding the direction of workforce investment as it applies to these emerging industries within individual or overlapping regional economies.

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will continue to identify opportunities for cross program integration to address unmet needs for Arkansas' job seekers and businesses, and it will continue to

utilize its members and partners to implement strategies to encourage and sustain economic growth in the state.

**D. What strategies are in place to promote and develop ongoing and sustained strategic partnerships that include business and industry, economic development, the public workforce system, and education partners (K-12, community colleges, and others) for the purpose of continuously identifying workforce challenges and developing solutions to targeted industries' workforce challenges? §112(b)(8).**

Preparing our workforce for new and increasing job opportunities in high growth and high demand, economically vital industries is the visionary impetus for collaboration between the public workforce system, employers, education and training providers, and economic development professionals to develop work-readiness solutions for the growing regional economies in Arkansas.

Another role of the workforce investment system is to serve as the catalyst to bring together partners in business, industry, and government, including education, economic development, workforce, and lawmakers for the purpose of sharing information, generating ideas, leveraging resources, and promulgating laws to ensure a better quality of life for Arkansas. Nothing may influence the outcome more than our citizens' ability to learn, work, and generate economic resources and opportunities to better their lives.

As previously mentioned, the State Board is comprised of diverse leadership from business and industry, education, workforce, and economic development. It brings Arkansas' key business leaders together to increase awareness of challenges facing business and the workforce system. This creates opportunities for innovation and development of successful strategies based on desired regional prosperity.

Collaboration also occurs between board members in committees designed to address the Governor's priorities. These small groups of individuals collaborate and advise the Governor on strategic planning and oversight of local One Stop systems and local area workforce investment boards.

At the AWIB Agency level, staff members collaborate with individuals from a seemingly endless list of government agencies, school systems, civic groups, juvenile justice and youth service providers, colleges and universities, professional associations, city and county administrators, legislators, chief elected officials, and the others who are continuously brought to awareness that they are a part of the workforce system in the State. Through presentations, meetings, conferences, webinars, memberships, job fairs, special assignments, board committees, and emergency response initiatives, AWIB leadership and staff have continuously utilized opportunities to establish new partnerships and build bridges with public and private entities that contribute to the big picture for workforce investment in Arkansas.

Local level WIA collaborations are best described by understanding workforce center certification standards, which require a business services representative or team for each workforce area within the state. It is the responsibility of this person (or team) to serve as the liaison between the workforce system and the area employers to enhance awareness of services offered and to promote the collaboration between education, economic development, and area employers.

Partners within the local workforce centers are further engaging business by re-establishing Local Employer Advisory Committees (LEACs). The Department of Workforce Services (DWS), provider of Wagner-Peyser services in Arkansas, has revived the committees to help the State improve services provided to employers. Additionally, senior management in DWS track employer contacts made by all field offices. This is specifically briefed at each Quarterly Office Manager Meeting. Local committees composed of a cross-section of all business and industry in the local area, One-Stop operators, and WIA providers are formed so job services can be tailored to the special needs of each community. Committee members meet with local workforce center partners to discuss employer needs and how the State can help meet those needs. Information is provided on new programs and services and potential benefits for employers who utilize the programs.

The Governor's Workforce Cabinet is a major step toward state agency collaboration. Shared decision-making at the highest levels of state government can ensure a consistent message in service approaches to our citizens where cost-effective integration of services and application of best practices are the primary modes of action, but where knowledgeable and productive citizenship is the ultimate goal.

Lastly, the expansion of the State Board's membership to include more diversified business and industry interests, including representation from trade associations and apprenticeship entities, small business leaders and entrepreneurs, pioneers in emerging technological occupations, and economic development visionaries, will only put the state's workforce investment board at the forefront of any goal-setting for the state workforce investment system.

In addition, local WIBs and the AWIB have taken action to encourage new employer-employee paradigms that will enable all Arkansans to train and compete for high-skill jobs. Such actions have involved:

- Local workforce administrators and their WIBs working with local economic developers to conduct retention and growth studies for their areas and
- Creation of taskforces in local communities to explore job growth prospects and target untapped high growth industry sectors in the state.

The results have been the creation of several regional coalitions that include employers, local elected officials, local workforce boards, and local economic development boards whose goals is to provide the impetus to economic change in their communities. The current established regional coalitions are:

- Arkansas River Valley Economic Development Compact
- The Cornerstone Coalition
- The Crossroads Coalition
- The Golden Triangle Economic Development Council
- Mayoral Alliance
- The Metro Little Rock
- Memphis Regional Economic Development Council
- Missouri Arkansas Partnership
- North Central Arkansas Regional Development
- Northwest Arkansas Council
- Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning
- Two-State Coalition
- Texarkana Regional Initiative

#### **State Collaborations Encouraging Legislation:**

Similar to other rural states, Arkansas must enhance its workforce investment infrastructure through systematic changes in the most cost-effective and prudent manner to yield the greatest outcomes. To meet this challenge, state education, economic development, and workforce leaders were convened, at the Governor's request, to form a workforce cabinet to provide inter-agency guidance, through introspection and collaboration at the senior executive levels of state government, for service initiatives with statewide applicability.

Together these agencies, along with their partner community and state associations can lobby for new and enhanced legislation that illustrates a continued commitment by the State to:

- Compete with other South Eastern and Midwestern states by emphasizing the uniqueness of the Natural State and its ability to attract business to the state;
- Encourage new businesses to come and stay in the State through various tax incentives; and ***The Quick-Action Closing Fund***—a set-aside fund for the governor to use to seal the deal on prospective economic development opportunities and to retain industries currently in the state;
- Support economic development visions that will build bridges between education entities as well as workforce and economic development resources.

The AWIB recognizes the need to develop evaluation and benchmarking standards in addition to federal performance measures that will show system variables and outcomes as well as opportunities for further system improvement beyond pre-established performance levels.

The revitalization of a new and improved workforce system that will be guided by the Governor's vision, implemented through local workforce investment area boards and One Stop Centers, strengthened by the oversight and guidance of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and its partners, and supported by knowledgeable staff in the multifaceted areas of WIA is the best possible network of players to ensure accessible and consistent service to all WIA and Wagner Peyser participants.

**E. What state strategies are in place to ensure that sufficient system resources are being spent to support training of individuals in high growth/high demand industries? §112(b)(17)(A)(i) and §112(b)(4)(A).**

Interstate sharing of knowledge and access to government resources through the State's labor market information center can create the most effective, yet challenging, implementation strategy to improve client services and empower a multi-partner workforce investment system beyond state borders.

Providing resources to citizens about labor market trends and future career and occupational opportunities for training should start them on a path to careers that will afford them the lifestyles and quality of life they seek. These strategies will not only empower participants, but they will also make them accountable for their futures.

The State Workforce Investment Board plans to review the possibility of using WIA discretionary funds as incentives to encourage the local WIBs to foster more partnerships with targeted high-growth, high-demand industries as indicated in the state plan section IV on labor and economic trends or those named below as one emerging business sectors.

1. Distribution
2. Information Technology and other Emerging Technologies
3. Manufacturing
4. Aviation
5. Small Business

Another consideration for the State Workforce Board is to award special bonus points in a newly formed discretionary grants program for innovative acts by local WIBs to create new opportunities for older youth to pursue high-growth, high-demand careers in industries identified in the State plan or in the area's regional economies.

Additionally, other statewide funds could fund a cash incentive award program for WIBs that engage present and emerging industries in innovative projects for growing and targeted populations in the State, including but not limited to Mature Workers, Limited English Speakers, Dislocated Workers, and Older Youth.

The State Workforce Investment Board may, through the Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative and the Mature Worker Initiative, invest in innovative and alternative learning environments to foster life-learning opportunities for entering and re-entering labor sources. More important, however, is the goal of unifying information and evaluation systems that ultimately create a “big picture” for decision makers to ascertain and make relevant and necessary plans of action.

Having a regional “big picture” perspective and a common information sharing place where every partner can review and determine necessary future courses of action is the best and the most effective approach to workforce investment over the next 3-5 years.

**F. What workforce strategies does the State have to support the creation, sustainability, and growth of small businesses and support for the workforce needs of small businesses as part of the State’s economic strategy? (§§112(b) (4) (A) and 112(b) (17) (A) (i).**

The most significant strategy the State has taken to address the needs of small business is to structure its Workforce Investment Board and local boards with individuals familiar with the experiences associated with owning or managing the day-to-day operations of a small business. Currently, small business owners or representatives comprise a significant portion of the state board membership. This same ratio transcends down to many of the local workforce investment boards. Considering that many of these individuals have learned more about the services provided to our clients, it is not surprising why small business employers have been encouraged by current and former board members to utilize the workforce centers in recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining workers.

The Arkansas Workforce Centers are required, through the Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Criteria, to have a Business Liaison Team. This team, in addition to providing a link to Wagner-Peyser activities, links employers to the prepaid services of the workforce system. Services such as job application acceptance, assessments, and pre-screening help small businesses by relieving some of the human resources-related costs of recruiting qualified employees. Employer services such as those available through the network of partnerships under the Workforce Investment Act also help in the reduction of costs associated with turnover, thus, increasing the small business’ return on investment.

Additionally, the services to job seekers ultimately benefit small and emerging businesses by providing clear career and labor market information to potential applicants. The Arkansas Workforce Center partnerships are ready and able to assist motivated people in making well-informed choices about education and training needs and to promote the probability of business success by bringing the right people and jobs together.

At one time, the State Board’s Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWP) offered priority points to Arkansas businesses that employed fifty or fewer people during its grant application review process. This may be a strategy to strongly consider implementing again. As funding continues to remain an issue for all WIA programs and less dollars are being made available for discretionary programs like IWTP, it may benefit the State Board to consider targeting particular companies and structuring competition in a way that leverages limited funding sources for smaller employers, while utilizing more plentiful funding resources to meet the needs of larger companies.

Considering the national and state visions to build more regional economies and the Governor’s vision of a more diversified economic base, encouraging the creation and survival of small businesses throughout the state may be a plausible overarching strategy to pursue.

Although these programs are available, they are not enough to truly target and encourage more entrepreneurial ventures, start-up companies, and E-commerce interests. Arkansas workforce

investment professionals recognize the value in diversifying every aspect of the State's economic and labor market. That includes being ready and capable to assist the small business entrepreneur.

Recognizing that this may be a new arena for a workforce investment system that has historically strived to get individuals trained and gainfully employed, the State Board and its staff are beginning to research the current information available regarding small business in Arkansas, to ensure that any future endeavors are taken with only the latest most applicable research behind them. The State Board and staff propose the following future strategies.

- Build linkages and partnerships with the Arkansas Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock - College of Business.

The Arkansas SBDC is a public service unit of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's College of Business, which serves the small business community from the lead office located in Little Rock and six regional offices strategically located throughout the state in areas that have been designated, or are now emerging as regional economies.

The Arkansas SBDC offers three services to the business community: market research, consulting, and training. The lead center in Little Rock offers market research services, generally affordable only to larger companies, free of charge to small business clients. Professional consulting for business owners and entrepreneurs includes help in the following areas: 1) advice on overcoming challenges in existing businesses, 2) review of business plans and strategies, 3) guidance in starting new businesses, 4) preparation of loan requests, and 5) financial analysis and budget development. Finally, training services on a variety of business topics are offered around the state.

By collaborating with the ASBDC, Workforce Centers can link prospective participants with tools that will give business owners an effective visual representation of the marketplace and a competitive edge in the global market.

- Build linkages and partnerships with the Small Business Administration.

There are over 200,000 small businesses in Arkansas, and together they employ one million people, providing nearly half of all Arkansas jobs. The Small Business Administration (SBA) has three offices across the state in Little Rock, Fayetteville, and Jonesboro. Every year, they provide approximately 100 million dollars in loans to small businesses. The AWIB, in partnership with the Arkansas Economic Development Council plans to research more statewide collaboration opportunities with the SBA because of our shared goals:

- Help foster community and economic development;
- Create new jobs in communities throughout Arkansas; and
- Ensure access to training and assistance.

**G. How are the funds reserved for Statewide activities used with entities that make up the state's workforce system at the state and local levels to achieve the governor's vision and address the national strategic direction identified in Part I of this guidance? §112(a)?**

All statewide projects that are funded target the governor's vision and priority areas, or specific National Governor's Association (NGA) or USDOL's national strategies that often coincide or overlap. The Governor's vision to create a diversified economic base, a demand-driven workforce system based on regional economies is the blueprint in which the State and Local business-led boards must strive to provide through:

- Understanding and addressing the workforce needs of business and industry;



- Taking full advantage of federal flexibility and waiver provisions;
- Targeting available resources to areas with the most economic impact; and
- Maximizing the use of public and private resources invested in workforce development.

Statewide 15% funds will be made available to provide training and other services for industries with statewide shortages of workers, programs that identify and train participants for high wage, high growth occupations, enhanced partnerships, and service-integration strategies. These funds are budgeted to support innovative initiatives statewide or within local workforce regions that solve labor market issues facing high-growth, high-demand industries in their regional areas.

The State Board plans to grant preference to regional coalitions and training consortia that strategically plan to meet those needs. More importantly, the State Board plans to award incentives to those local areas that recognize, clients based on regional economies and begin planning and serving those clients based on regional economies and sector strategies.

The State Board's Career Pathways to High Growth and High Demand Committee plans to work in collaboration with educational entities and groups, economic development organizations, labor information sharing entities, and business and industry leaders in highlighting pathways to high growth sectors, but to focus on statewide projects that meet high demand industry needs to include:

- Linking companies with labor shortages to work-ready participants, particularly older youth;
- Supporting outreach efforts to special populations that need additional assistance in accessing training and employment opportunities; and
- Collaborating with higher education institution to ensure training in growing and emerging fields.

The AWIB is also charged with finding initiatives that can assist in addressing emerging industry issues and meeting the needs of the state's youth high-demand industry job seekers. To this end, the State Board will rely heavily on the information and collaborative feedback received from its newly developed Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative.

**H. Describe the State's strategies to promote collaboration between the public workforce system, education, human services, juvenile justice, and others to better serve youth that are most in need and with significant barriers to employment, and to successfully connect them to education and training opportunities that lead to successful employment. §112(b) (18)(A).**

The Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC) is the entity leading the effort to develop the Arkansas State Youth Vision program. The Collaborative was formed in April 2005 from a core group of interested state agency liaisons, community leaders, and local workforce area administrators. It has continued with strong participation from state agencies, service providers, and volunteers. All youth-serving entities freely share information and resources to provide youth easy access to services from partners who continuously seek input from employers and youth, and who jointly focus their resources to create a continuum of information and opportunities to Arkansas' neediest youth.

Through this entity, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board hopes to bring together the public workforce system, education, human services, juvenile justice, and others to collaborate on a new strategic vision for serving the youth of Arkansas. AYDC will leverage statewide funding with other investment resources to facilitate the continued development and implementation of success strategies to promote a statewide system transformation in education, workforce, and life experiences for this population.

The Collaborative plans to design and implement a state solutions desk to make resources available to rural and depressed areas of the state and to replicate the AYDC model on a regional and local level in

partnership with the LWIAs. The pilot project has been designed in a four-phase approach over nine to ten months of implementation.

Sustainability will be accomplished in the same manner in which the Collaborative has reached its current level of success, through the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board's commitment to allocating statewide funds, through continued support from several state and local partners.

**I. Describe the State's strategies to identify State laws, regulations, policies that impede successful achievement of workforce development goals and strategies to change or modify them. § 112(b) (2).**

In January 2006, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board created and hired a new staff member for the Research and Policy Specialist position. The individual in this position is responsible for providing interpretation and advice regarding content and application of state and federal employment-related statutes, rules, regulations and directives and assisting in the development of policies, procedures, and programs to assure compliance with relevant statutes and regulations.

The position adds another level of support to the State Board and its staff in performing the day to day administrative duties that ultimately enable the governor, General Assembly, and all of the State's local workforce investment boards to meet the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and Arkansas Act 1125 of 1999.

The position requires a person knowledgeable in the creation, interpretation, and application of federal laws and regulations. The overarching strategy employed by the Workforce Investment Board is to empower and support this staff member to:

- Act as agency liaison to the Arkansas Legislature and Legislative Committees and the USDOL National and Regional Offices.
- Develop and recommend workforce investment-related policies and procedures for AWIB approval and statewide implementation.
- Discern need for policies, procedures, and methods to ensure local workforce boards' compliance when there is not an applicable state or federal law that clearly and succinctly articulates the necessary guidelines and additional guidance is needed.
- Develop strategies to comply with changes in federal and state workforce investment-related laws and regulations.
- Conduct periodic reviews of local workforce investment area documents to ensure ongoing compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

The state workforce agencies and partners, through the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, provide additional guidance and direction the state board and all of the members of the board support staff, and the State Legislature on an ongoing basis.

The Arkansas General Assembly meets every two years, and each workforce investment partner is encouraged to work collaboratively to propose legislation designed to enhance State laws for the economic benefit, labor enhancement, and occupational success of our citizens.

**J. Describe how the State will take advantage of the flexibility provisions in WIA for waivers and the option to obtain approval as a workflex State pursuant to §189(i) and § 192.**

Local Workforce Investment Boards have discussed the potential for the state to seek selected waivers as strategies for the ongoing improvement of the Arkansas Workforce Investment System. The State of Arkansas will continue to examine potential options to request individual waivers in accordance with the flexibility provisions contained under WIA. The State is currently considering pursuing approval as a workflex state. The State of Arkansas requests an extension of the current waivers listed below.

1. The State of Arkansas is requesting extension of the current waiver permitting reinstatement of the initial eligibility provisions and waiving Section 122 (c) and (d) that requires subsequent eligibility.

Section 122(d) of WIA requires that training providers submit verifiable program- specific information on the outcomes of all individuals and WIA participants who have attended the training program when applying for subsequent eligibility. Section 122 also stipulates that the information submitted must meet minimum levels set by the State.

Currently, most of Arkansas' training providers have entered into the subsequent eligibility portion of this process. However, many of them, especially the two and four-year public colleges, have found it difficult or impossible to collect the required data due to the different reporting requirements for the Department of Education and WIA. This has caused many schools to be disqualified as Eligible Training Providers in Arkansas or to quit participating in the process. DWS attempted to assist the schools in obtaining the necessary information for subsequent eligibility by matching student social security numbers with Unemployment Insurance wage records. Due to the FERPA law and the realization that not all schools collect and/or use actual social security numbers for enrollment, the process was not successful. The few training providers who do collect the required data have also found it difficult to meet the state minimum levels. It is possible for one poor performance can disqualified a program because of the small number of WIA participants served by the program.

Therefore, in order to maintain an adequate number of training providers and programs on the Eligible Training Provider List, Arkansas requests and extension of this critical waiver provision.

2. The State of Arkansas is requesting an extension to the current waiver that allows the transfer of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams to be raised from 20% to 40%. This waiver allows local workforce areas more flexibility in serving the needs of their demographic area population.
3. The State of Arkansas is requesting an extension to our current waiver permitting Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for Youth.
4. The State of Arkansas is requesting an extension of the current waiver that limits the authority to provide the activities identified in WIA Sections 129(b) and 134 to the State level. The waiver provides additional flexibility to meet employer demands for incumbent worker training.

While WIA allows Incumbent Worker Training Programs to be funded at the State level, we believe the opportunity to accelerate Incumbent Worker Training activities provides considerable benefit to those Arkansas employers in urgent need of more highly skilled employees in order to effectively compete in today's marketplace. Without such funding assistance, some of these employers might well succumb to such competitive pressures, and the jobs these employers provide in the local areas would be lost.

This waiver permits local areas, on a voluntary basis, to request to use up to 10% of local area adult and dislocated worker formula allocation funds to provide Incumbent Worker Training, a state wide employment and training activity. Local Areas will be expected to track these formula funds by funding stream.

**VI. Describe major State policies and requirements that have been established to direct and support the development of a Statewide workforce investment system not described elsewhere in this Plan as outlined below. §112(b) (2).**

**A. What State policies and systems are in place to support common data collection and reporting processes, information management, integrated service delivery, and performance management? §§ 111(d) (2) and 112(b) (8) (B)**

Participation in the National Governors Association Pathways to Advancement Policy Academy and the selection of a new One-Stop operating system for the State led to a more common data collection reporting, information management, integrated service delivery, and performance management. Several policies resulted from the Policy Academy and a data collection plan has been developed that matches data from the Departments of Higher Education, Workforce Education, and Workforce Services, along with data from individual training institutions and program operators. The data used provides an overall picture of the State and its progress towards its future workforce development goals.

In March 2007, the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (ACPI) Committee hosted a two-day Institute for Economic Development. The committee functions as one of the Governor's eight priorities for the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Agenda items included an update on ACPI, the purpose of the CPI Institute for Economic Development, and presentation by Jeff Hankins, president and publisher of *Arkansas Business Publishing Group*.

Participating agencies of the Institute included Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC), Department of Workforce Education, ADWE), and the Southern Good Faith Fund (SGFF). One hundred and fifty attendees representing higher education, economic development, and workforce were present to share their visions for the development and promotion regional and economic growth strategies.

The One-Stop operating system and its use by partners are described in Section X A. The system was selected by a team representing the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, Department of Workforce Services, Department of Workforce Education, Adult Education, Department of Workforce Education Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services' Division of County Operations, the Transitional Employment Board, and Arkansas' Chief Information Officer. Data and reporting needs were gathered through fact-finding meetings and on-site reviews of Arkansas Workforce Centers. Representatives of Workforce Centers, including WIA and Employment Service experts, and persons familiar with the needs of unemployment insurance, TAA, financial management, labor market information, eligible training provider system, and partner programs participated in evaluating the three candidate systems and selecting the America's Job Link Alliance system (called Arkansas Job Link in Arkansas).

**B. What State policies are in place that promote efficient use of administrative resources such as requiring more co-location and fewer affiliate sites in local One-Stop systems to eliminate duplicative facility and operational costs or to require a single administrative structure at the local level to support local boards and to be the fiscal agent for WIA funds to avoid duplicative administrative costs that could otherwise be used for service delivery and training? §§ 111(d) (2) and 112(b) (8) (A).**

The Arkansas Workforce Center certification policy addresses the issue of co-location and the use of satellite and affiliate centers. As a statewide system, Arkansas Workforce Centers cover metropolitan areas as well as rural areas. Therefore, different types of centers are required in order to meet customer needs, ensure statewide coverage, and provide easy access to services. The overall Arkansas workforce development system is a combination of a wide array of public and private resources and programs. Continued efforts, as reflected in Section VII, have improved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process resulting in increased co-location of staff and programs, and fewer stand-alone facilities throughout the state. Further development and offerings of concerted training criteria for all partner/program case managers has been sponsored by the state on a regular basis to increase efficiency and economy of services to customers of the workforce centers.

Comprehensive Arkansas Workforce Centers are the cornerstone of information and access to these resources. The comprehensive centers are complemented by satellite and affiliate centers that provide broader access but more limited on-site services offering electronic connections back to the comprehensive sites as well as a myriad of informational resources. The state has taken advantage of several expiring facility leases to consolidate locations with other partner agencies, consolidate more sites through the expiration of other state and contracted building leases.

The workforce center certification policy requires the local workforce investment board to prepare a business plan for each workforce center that will identify the available products and services, organizational structure, operational and financial plans including cost allocations, staff development training, marketing strategies, and other related information necessary to operate an Arkansas Workforce Center. The certification document includes a grid for the tracking of continuous improvement efforts to include the business plan. After the initial certification of a center, the recertification of workforce centers is required every two years by the state workforce investment board.

A state policy requiring a single administrative structure at the local level has not been necessary as all ten local workforce investment areas in Arkansas have chosen a single organization to serve as the administrative and fiscal agent for the area.

The office of State Building Services in Arkansas is responsible for the housing of state agency out-station locations. The office has been made aware of WIA requirements for the programs mandated to be available in a comprehensive (one-stop) workforce center and the workforce development system. As rental and lease contracts come up for renewal, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), cost allocation and resource sharing issues are visited in an effort to maximize co-location and space requirements of collaborating programs.

**C. What State policies are in place to promote universal access and consistency of service Statewide? §112(b) (2).**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board approved the Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Criteria in January 2004. This critical policy mandates not only universal access but also consistency of services.

A significant key to implementing the Arkansas Workforce Center system was the “no wrong door” approach to providing services that encompass the principles of universal access, integration, co-location, collaboration, and performance as the building blocks to the system. With the “no wrong door” philosophy, any Arkansas Workforce Center partner can provide assistance with employment and training or services in support of the customer’s job search or skill development. This system enables the customer to access the best mix of services from the combined menu of all partners’ resources and gain immediate access to the appropriate next step. For instance, several WIA case managers in six of our ten areas have received initial labor exchange training in AJL. Several more sessions are pending to include refresher training as well as on-site follow-up visits. Regional training sessions have also been scheduled for the fall of 2007 to include all local staff that work with clients and utilize the AJL system.

Case Managers for the Department of Workforce Services are located in Workforce Centers to ensure that an individual can apply for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, and Medicaid assistance without having to go to multiple social service locations. Recent State legislation transferred responsibility for TANF case management activities to the Department of Workforce Services, the administrative entity for the Department of Labor funds granted to Arkansas by the Workforce Investment Act. This change increases the number of staff members available in the local Workforce Centers and the services offered to those who enter the workforce system.

The local workforce investment board is the agent charged with substantiating, implementing, and monitoring all core standards. These standards are based on the business plan model for continuous improvement. The state has encouraged local workforce investment boards to develop performance levels for measuring success of service providers collaborating in the workforce centers. Performance requirements for the center operator are determined at the local level, to customize services according to local demands.

The Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Criteria may be found at the following website:  
<http://www.arworks.org/pdfs/CertificationFinal.pdf>

In Spring 2007, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board awarded a contract to Thinking Media, the producers of KeyTrain, to assist with the statewide implementation of the Career Readiness Certificate program in Arkansas. KeyTrain provides a comprehensive learning system for common skills required by all jobs, based on ACT's WorkKeys employment system. Workforce and education entities have already started using the KeyTrain curriculum, software, and management system statewide to teach foundational workplace skills as defined by ACT. Student mastery of these applied workplace skills will be measured by three WorkKeys assessments and can result in being awarded an Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). Successful students will exit the program with a bronze, silver, or gold Certificate to present to employers who demand these skills. See attached *Arkansas's Career Readiness Certificate* process outline.

The WorkKeys job skills assessment system benefits businesses, educators, individuals and the community. It helps classroom instructors identify gaps between student skills and employment needs. Instructors are better able to align their class curricula to meet local job skill requirements and streamline their teaching strategies. Having the available skills necessary to company operation encourages businesses to stay in the community and keeps employers from moving their entry-level jobs to other locations. KeyTrain could actually influence the community by increasing the tax base as business become more profitable and additional individuals enter the workforce. This provides the opportunity to improve the overall quality of life for all citizens.

Several Arkansas state agencies are working with DWS and AWIB, including the State's 22, two-year colleges, higher education, economic development, and workforce education to get employer buy-in to recognize these certificates in their hiring process. We anticipate the onset of awarding certificates to begin in summer 2007.

**D. What policies support a demand-driven approach, as described in Part I. "Demand-Driven Workforce Investment System," to workforce development, such as training on the economy and labor market data for local Board and One-Stop Career Center staff? (§§ 112(b) (4) and 112(b) (17) (A) (iv).**

As part of the plan developed through the Pathways to Advancement Policy Academy, State agencies have agreed to use a common method to identify high demand occupations and industries and to use the resulting list to target training, future training and education initiatives. The core list is developed by the Department of Workforce Services' Labor Market Information section and is supplemented by data from the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and the nationally identified Education Career Clusters, and the U.S. Department of Labor's High Growth Employment Initiatives.

The state plan at Section IV B includes a listing of the top 20 high growth industries in the state. Additionally, each of the ten local areas is provided with the top 10 high growth industries within their defined counties by region. All other initiatives of the Labor Market Information section are addressed in Section IV.

**E. What policies are in place to ensure that the resources available through the Federal and/or State apprenticeship programs and the Job Corps are fully integrated with the State's One-Stop delivery system? (§112)(b)(17)(A)(iv).**

The State ensures that the resources available through apprenticeship programs and the Job Corps are integrated into the local One-Stop systems by coordinating programs through representation on the State Board, Local Boards, Youth Councils, and the newly created state collaborative team focusing on serving the State's youth (AYDC). Discussions with collaborating agencies have escalated due to increased interest in development of apprenticeship programs in the state. Job Corps plays a key role on local

boards and youth councils play a vital role as a member of the State youth collaborative team, now recognized as a priority and endorsed by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. The vision of the AYDC (which also has representatives from local workforce boards and one-stop operators) has committed to becoming a formalized entity with goals to serve the State's most needy youth by pledging its time and resources to provide and sustain a comprehensive system. A grant request for supplemental federal funding was submitted in April 2007 on behalf of AYDC to increase their chances for advancing activities of the collaborative and attaining the hoped-for levels of success.

The State Youth Coordinator, along with the 10 Local Workforce Areas will ensure further integration of apprenticeship programs in client objectives, which assist in the attainment of improved performance of services, meeting the demands of high-growth industries in locating, training, and certifying eligible clients.

**VII. Describe the actions the State has taken to ensure an integrated One-Stop service delivery system Statewide. (§§112(b) (14) and 121).**

Arkansas is engaged in an ongoing process of integrating the service programs necessary for developing strong and effective One-Stop Centers. The Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Criteria, approved by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, identifies minimum standards a local workforce investment area can use to create an environment that integrates services and programs across agencies by minimizing duplication of services and funding, improving job seeker and business customer access, and creating a framework for continuous improvement.

Local Boards are encouraged to use the certification criteria to guide the development of their local plans. Specifically, local areas must describe specific measurements for their local fiscal agent, local administrative entity, eligible training providers, and local One-Stop delivery system. These measurements must be responsive to local labor market needs and consistent with the statewide vision.

**A. What State policies and procedures are in place to ensure the quality of service delivery through One-Stop Centers such as development of minimum guidelines for operating comprehensive One-Stop Centers, competencies for One-Stop Career Center staff or development of a certification process for One-Stop Centers? (§ 112(b) (14).)**

The AWIB has and seeks to continue promulgating various, policies designed to assist local areas develop quality service delivery processes. To date, the AWIB has developed procedures to establish and maintain local boards; accountability policies that relate to administrative, fiscal, and program execution; local plan development and modification policies; an incentive policy, and; a funding recapture/reallocation policy.

In addition, the AWIB arranges statewide training as needed, such as “effective case management: for program staff.”

**B. What policies or guidance has the State issued to support maximum integration of service delivery through the One-Stop delivery system for both business customers and individual customers? (§112(b)(14).**

The AWIB's center certification criteria provide guidance on the integration of service delivery within the Arkansas Workforce Center network. Before an Arkansas Workforce Center is considered for certification, the One-Stop operator, along with the mandated and optional partners, is required to prepare an Arkansas Workforce Center site business plan. The business plan identifies the available products and services, the organizational structure, an operational and financial plan that includes cost allocations, staff development training, marketing strategies to jobseekers and employers, and other related information necessary to operate an Arkansas Workforce Center. The review and approval of that plan by the local Workforce Investment Board will prevent duplication of services and provide for the inclusion of all partners. The fact that WIA and Wagner Peyser staffs are using AJL as a single source database for Job Order listings, employer accounts, and case management has greatly facilitated the service integration efforts.

Finally, the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices must be signed by every Arkansas Workforce Center employee. This code serves as a reminder that a One-Stop Center is a service organization and that job seekers and employer clients deserve the best efforts at all times to attain the full mission of WIA in Arkansas.

**C. What actions has the State taken to promote identifying One-Stop infrastructure costs and developing models or strategies for local use that support integration? (§ 112(b) (14).**

According to the State criteria issued for certification of Arkansas Workforce Centers, partners are required to share costs of the centers consistent with their on-site staffing participation on a square footage basis. The square footage basis is used to allocate the space used directly by staff and for the allocation of shared space and other shared operating costs that may include cash and in-kind products and services. Staff time used in common areas is considered as an in-kind contribution.



The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board ensures that all partners at the State level understand and fully participate in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Cost Allocation process. The understanding and commitment established at the state level is intended to promote and enable cooperation and compliance at the local level.

Accordingly, the local WIB is responsible for overseeing partner cost-sharing commitments and renegotiating commitments when needed. The One-Stop operator and the workforce center partners are accountable for adherence to the cost allocation MOU and the business plan implementation. In addition, the One-Stop operator is responsible for notifying the local WIB when commitments are not being honored and/or when commitments need to be renegotiated. The local WIB is responsible for negotiation and the enforcement of partner commitments as needed, including seeking assistance from the State WIB to attain State-level agency commitments when necessary and appropriate.

The MOU and cost allocation templates are provided as Appendices D and E of the Arkansas Workforce Center Certification policy and are used to standardize procedures throughout the State.

**D. How does the State use the funds reserved for Statewide activities pursuant to (§§129(b)(2)(B) and 134(a)(2)(B)(v). to assist in the establishment and operation of One-Stop delivery systems? (§ 112(b) (14).**

Since the inception of WIA, the State Board has invested 15% statewide funds toward establishment and operation of the One-Stop System. A percentage of the funds are earmarked for major One-Stop outreach efforts designed to inform the general public about the existence and locations of centers, One-Stop staff certification, One-Stop infrastructure improvements, technical assistance opportunities for One-Stop Center staff to assist in the effective delivery of services. The AWIB also uses 15% funds to support high concentration youth activities, incumbent worker training programming, Arkansas Joblink maintenance, the Governor's special projects and priorities, and other training needs as identified.

The State Board also recognizes the need to invest in Arkansas' labor market information development processes to enhance the accessibility of economic analysis relevant to local one-stop systems engaged in developing a demand-driven system.

**E. How does the State ensure the full spectrum of assets in the One-Stop delivery system support human capital solutions for businesses and individual customers broadly? (§112(b) (14).)**

The AWIB continually works to contribute approaches intended to broadly support human capital solutions for all One-Stop customers. The AWIB staff attends LWIB meetings randomly (or at the request of a LWIB) to observe and provide input. The staff provides technical assistance and policy guidance to local areas. Through a collaborative effort, the AWIB and LWIBs engage in statewide and local planning processes by arranging supportive training (in areas such as strategic planning, case management and financial management as needed).

The AWIB has assigned each board member to an ad hoc committee dedicated to the Governor's identified priority areas. Each ad hoc committee has developed its respective visions, missions, goals, and action plans to accomplish the identified priorities. In alignment with the Governor's priorities, each local workforce investment area maintains business liaison teams. The state regional advisors work closely with local area staff members to determine local priorities, identify high growth industries, and target declining or emerging industries for increased and more effective delivery of client services.

Additionally, Arkansas has established a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), which is a portable credential intended to confirm to employers that an individual possesses foundational or essential workplace skills in reading, math, and locating information. The State complements this endeavor through skill assessment and job matching systems, such as WorkKeys and KeyTrain. The practice of combining credentialing and skill assessment supports partnership efforts, like the one between the Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Economic and Development Commission. The certificate is designed to assure business, decision makers and industry leaders that Arkansas job seekers and workers are knowledgeable and work ready.

The State also works to speed the transition of all new Arkansans into established and growing communities by promoting stability and rapid employment with good wages and enhancing economic development through the establishment of New Arkansas Resource Networks (NARNs). The NARNs, located in select Workforce Centers throughout the State, are full-service offices charged with conducting outreach and providing services in the areas of job placement, community service referrals, translation, language and occupational training, resettlement assistance, supportive services, and technical and legal assistance in the areas of alien and resident documentation, civic responsibilities and other needed services.

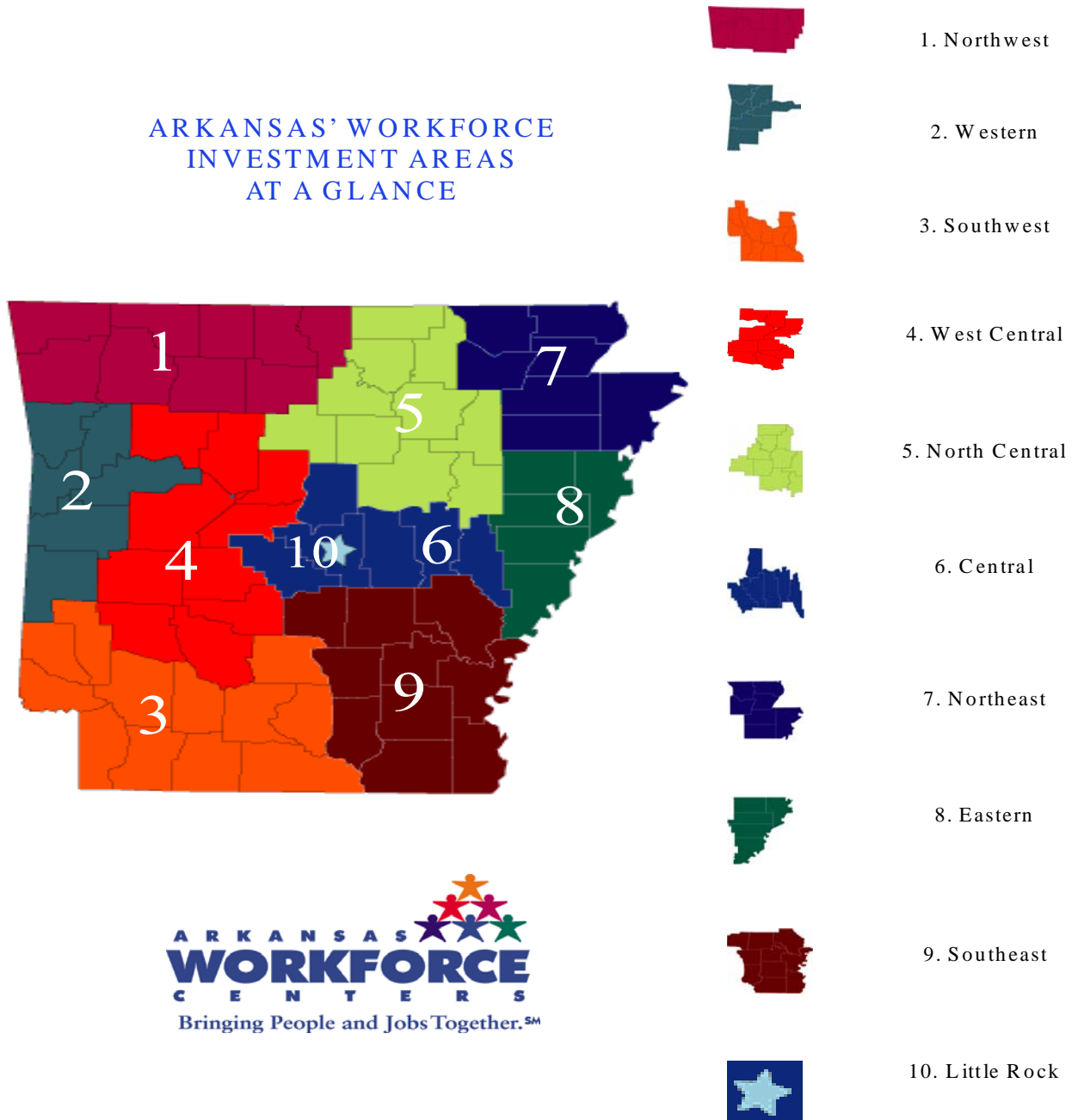
All of these programs and activities create an information and service sharing environment intended to bolster local programming efforts and should enable both state and local program staff to more clearly understand customer needs, extend a more flexible mix of services, and expand the public workforce system.

## VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System

### A. Local Area Designations

1. Identify the State's designated local workforce investment areas and the date of the most recent area designation, including whether the State is currently re-designating local areas pursuant to the end of the subsequent designation period. (§ 112(b) (5).

#### LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREAS



## Local Workforce Investment Board Contacts

### City of Little Rock

*Serving the City Limits of Little Rock*

Janet Davis, Interim Administrator

Little Rock Workforce Investment Board

300 South University Avenue

Suite D14

Little Rock, Arkansas 72205-5208

Phone: (501) 683-3846

Fax: (501) 683-3851

[janet.l.davis@arkansas.gov](mailto:janet.l.davis@arkansas.gov)

### Central

*Serving Lonoke, Monroe, Prairie, Saline, Faulkner, and Pulaski (excluding the City of Little Rock) counties*

John Guthrie, Administrator

Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

P.O. Box 2067

Fort Smith, Arkansas 72902

Phone: (479) 785-2651

Fax: (479) 785-1964

[jguthrie@wapdd.org](mailto:jguthrie@wapdd.org)

### Eastern

*Serving Cross, Phillips, Crittenden, St. Francis, and Lee counties*

Dave Brady, Administrator

Workforce Investment Board of Eastern Arkansas

P.O. Box 1388

West Memphis, Arkansas 72303

Phone: (870) 733-0601

Fax: (870) 735-0618

[dave@thewib.org](mailto:dave@thewib.org)

### North Central

*Serving Fulton, Izard, Stone, Cleburne, White, Sharp, Independence, Van Buren, Jackson, and Woodruff counties*

Van Thomas, Administrator

North Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

P.O. Box 2396

Batesville, Arkansas 72503

Phone: (870) 793-5233

Fax: (870) 793-4035

[thomas@wrpdd.org](mailto:thomas@wrpdd.org)

### Northeast

*Serving Randolph, Clay, Lawrence, Greene, Craighead, Poinsett, and Mississippi counties*

Sammy McGuire, Administrator

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

2805 Forrest Home Road

Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401

Phone: (870) 932-1564

Fax: (870) 932-5310

[etsinc@cos-internet.com](mailto:etsinc@cos-internet.com)

### Northwest

*Serving Benton, Carroll, Boone, Marion, Baxter, Searcy, Newton, Madison, and Washington counties*

Mike Norton, Administrator

Northwest Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

P.O. Box 190

Harrison, Arkansas 72602

Phone: (870) 741-5404

Fax: (870) 741-1905

[jmnorton@alltel.net](mailto:jmnorton@alltel.net)

### Southeast

*Serving Grant, Arkansas, Lincoln, Bradley, Ashley, Desha, Jefferson, Cleveland, Drew, and Chicot counties*

Glenn Bell, Administrator

Southeast Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

P.O. Box 6806

Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71601

Phone: (870) 536-1971

Fax: (870) 536-7718

[glennbell@cablelynx.com](mailto:glennbell@cablelynx.com)

### Southwest

*Serving Calhoun, Columbia, Dallas, Hempstead, Howard, LaFayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Sevier, and Union counties*

John Guthrie, Administrator

Southwest Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

P.O. Box 2067

Fort Smith, Arkansas 72902

Phone: (479) 785-2651

Fax: (479) 785-1964

[jguthrie@wapdd.org](mailto:jguthrie@wapdd.org)

### West Central

*Serving Johnson, Yell, Pope, Perry, Montgomery, Garland, Pike, Clark, Conway, and Hot Spring counties*

Dwayne Pratt, Administrator

West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

P.O. Box 21100

Hot Springs, Arkansas 71903

Phone: (501) 525-7577

Fax: (501) 525-7677

[dpratt@wcapdd.org](mailto:dpratt@wcapdd.org)

### Western

*Serving Crawford, Scott, Sebastian, Franklin, Logan, and Polk counties*

John Guthrie, Administrator

Western Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

P.O. Box 2067

Fort Smith, Arkansas 72902

Phone: (479) 785-2651

Fax: (479) 785-1964

[jguthrie@wapdd.org](mailto:jguthrie@wapdd.org)

**2. Include a description of the process used to designate such areas. Describe how the State considered the extent to which such local areas are consistent with labor market areas: geographic areas served by local and intermediate education agencies, post-secondary education institutions and area vocational schools; and all other criteria identified in section 116(a)(1) in establishing area boundaries, to assure coordinated planning. Describe the State Board's role, including all recommendations made on local designation requests pursuant to section 116(a) (4). (§§112(b) (5) and 116(a)(1).**

On September 30, 1999, in accordance with Section 8 of the Arkansas Act 1125 of 1999 and Section 116(a) of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, ten local workforce investment areas were designated within the state through a collaborative effort with the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, and many chief elected officials. After consideration of feedback received during the public comment process, the current workforce investment areas were based on common geographic counties and economic factors and were consistent with the former designated JTPA service delivery areas.

In each of the areas, chief elected officials submitted written requests to be designated as local workforce investment area. The proposed geographic area designations were subjected to a public review and hearing before the Governor's approval. There are currently no plans to re-designate the existing local workforce areas before the next plan period.

To assure coordinated planning, the State Board developed the Local Area Modification Policy in 2002. This policy (and processes), as well as those adopted by the state for initial and subsequent designations of local areas, follows federal guidance, including the local workforce investment area designation criteria identified in Section 116(a)(1).

**3. Describe the appeals process used by the State to hear appeals of local area designations referred to in §§ 112 (b) (5) and 116(a) (5).**

A unit or combination of units of general local government or a rural concentrated employment program grant recipient (as described in WIA §116(a)(2)(B). that requests but is not granted designation as a local workforce investment area under WIA §116(a)(2) or §116(a)(3) may appeal to the decision to the State Board within 30 days of the decision. The appeal must be sent by certified mail with a request for a return receipt from the AWIB Executive Director.

The Director, in collaboration with the State Board, will investigate the appeal and make a decision in agreement with the State Board within 60 days of receipt of the appeal.

If the appeal does not result in a new designation, an appeal may be made to the Secretary of Labor within 30 days of the appeal decision of the State Board. It must be submitted by certified mail with a receipt request. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. *The appeal process is in accordance with 20 CFR 667.645.*

**B. Local Workforce Investment Boards – Identify the criteria the State has established to be used by the chief elected official(s) in the local areas for the appointment of local board members based on the requirements of section 117. §§112(b)(6) and 117(b).**

The AWIB provided all local chief elected officials in Arkansas with the criteria to appoint and maintain local board members, as outlined in WIA Title I, Section 117. The criterion distributed to chief elected officials provides guidance on board composition and minimum standards necessary to acquire and maintain certification. Chief elected officials and their respective local boards understand that the board will, at a minimum, be composed of the following persons.

- Representatives of business in the local area, who are owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, and other business executives or employers with optimum policymaking or hiring authority; who represent businesses with employment opportunities that reflect the employment opportunities of the local area; and who are appointed from among individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations
- Representatives of local educational entities, including representatives of local educational agencies, local school boards, entities providing adult education and literacy activities, and postsecondary educational institutions, selected from among individuals nominated by regional or local educational agencies, institutions, or organizations representing such local educational entities
- Representatives of labor organizations, if employees in the local area are represented by a labor organization, nominated by a local labor federation, or if no employees are represented by a local labor organization, other representatives of employees
- Representatives of community-based organizations, including organizations representing individuals with disabilities and veterans if such organizations are present
- Representatives of economic development agencies, including private sector economic development entities
- Representatives of each of the workforce partners, either required or voluntary; and other individuals or representatives of entities as the LEO in the local area may determine to be appropriate

The chief elected officials and local boards understand that the workforce centers in their areas must meet minimum core certification requirements, which include, but are not limited to, developing core and excellence standards in the following categories:

- Defining Business;
- Products and Services;
- Marketing;
- Management and Organizational Structure;

- Operational Plan;
- Measuring Success; and
- Financial Plan.

Initial certification is valid for two years. Recertification of centers must occur at the end of every two years using criteria that require demonstrated, documented, and continuous improvement that aligns with both the AWIB certification document and WIA Section 117(b)(2).

**C. How will your State build the capacity of Local Boards to develop and manage high performing local workforce investment systems? §§ 111(d) (2) and 112(b) (14).**

The AWIB has assigned each staff member to functions designed to support the development and growth of the local workforce investment systems. The staff acts as liaisons to all ten local workforce boards by attending local board meetings, providing technical assistance, providing briefings on national and state issues, and assisting in the coordination of statewide trainings responsive to identified needs. The staff also identifies and coordinates regional and statewide collaboration opportunities related to promoting youth and mature worker activities, disability awareness, and workforce policy development.

Local boards are encouraged to initiate capacity building activities by hosting strategic planning sessions to formalize policy, discuss economic and industry trends, review prior program performance, and recommend measures to improve future program performance. In addition, local board chairpersons, or their representatives, are scheduled to attend the quarterly Arkansas Workforce Investment Board meetings to present information regarding their local program performance, comparative outcomes and trends, fiscal management, and emerging workforce related issues in their communities.

**D. Local Planning Process -- Describe the State mandated requirements for local workforce areas' strategic planning. What assistance does the State provide to local areas to facilitate this process, (112(b)(2) and 20 CFR 661.350(a)(13). including:**

The State has issued several supplemental guidance instructions to support the local workforce area strategic planning process to ensure that local plans are consistent with the State's vision and goals. Specifically, local boards must address the following factors:

- Change in local performance goals;
- Grant Recipient/sub-grant recipient/administrative entity designation change;
- One-Stop Operator/Title I Provider change;
- Memoranda of Understanding revision regarding operation of the local workforce centers; and
- Significant changes in local economic conditions.

To assist the Local Boards in facilitating this process, the Department of Workforce Services, Labor Market Information Division, acting on behalf of the AWIB, provides a range of social, economic and demographic data, fitted to the boundaries of each Local Board that help local organizations identify target group needs and make appropriate resource allocations for employment and training activities. The resulting local plans are pursuant to the requirements outlined in WIA Section 118.

**1. What oversight of the local planning process is provided, including receipt and review of plans and negotiation of performance agreements?**

Local areas are provided with a planning guidance document, modeled after the planning guidance provided by USDOL for state planning. Once local plans are submitted, AWIB staff formally reviews the



plans in conjunction with other workforce professionals who specialize in labor market information, allocations and expenditures, and performance trends. If the review reveals any plan deficiencies, the plans are returned to the local area for further development, and the AWIB staff provides technical assistance, as necessary. At the conclusion of the review period, the plans are submitted to the State Board for approval. AWIB staff then notifies the local areas, in writing that the plans have been approved for implementation.

Preliminary performance negotiations between local areas and the AWIB generally begin before the AWIB's submission of proposed performance measures to the USDOL. AWIB staff charts and compares the performance results of each local area to detect any visible trends, as well as averages the performance results of each local area and compares those results to the levels negotiated between the Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) and the AWIB in previous years.

In addition, the AWIB earnestly considers area-specific factors that may have or could affect local areas' performance, such as factory closings or high staff turnover. Each method is used, in concert, to assess historical achievement levels and project realistic, future performance levels. The proposed measures are then forwarded to the LWIBs for their input. Performance negotiations with local areas conclude after the USDOL and AWIB agree on the state's performance negotiations. Local area performance measures are then adjusted to comply with the state's final measures.

## **2. How does the local plan approval process ensure that local plans are consistent with State performance goals and State strategic direction?**

The state uses an oversight philosophy intended to engage local elected officials and local workforce boards in a strategic planning process that fosters candid communication. The state review process applies standards anticipated to result in the identification of proper target groups and the production of realistic strategies reflective of both local and statewide needs.

The AWIB requires each plan to describe the local area's economic environment, identify any implementation challenges, and propose viable solutions to the identified challenges. Local areas are also tasked with describing how local services are coordinated. The plans are reviewed to determine whether they align with state and national workforce priorities.

Local areas are also provided with an opportunity to request a preliminary review of their draft local plan. During the preliminary review, select AWIB staff members provide the technical assistance requested by the local area and review the plan for compliance with state policy and direction. The state approves local area plans by applying the process stated in WIA Section 118(d).

## **E. Regional Planning (§§ 112(b) (2) and 116(c).)**

### **1. Describe any intra-State or inter-State regions and their corresponding performance measures.**

Arkansas does not have any formally created intra-state or inter-state regions. However, state leaders have begun to recognize the value in planning around regional economies. Each local area is encouraged to structure their local plans around the established and growing economies for their regions.

### **2. Include a discussion of the purpose of these designations and the activities (such as regional planning, information sharing and/or coordination activities) that will occur to help improve performance. For example, regional planning efforts could result in the sharing of labor market information or in the coordination of transportation and support services across the boundaries of local areas.**

Arkansas does not have any formally created intra-state or inter-state regions. However, regions of the state have participated in efforts to share important information among their areas and make the information available to workforce customers. These efforts support other State and local staff with workforce preparation of customers across Arkansas. One of our known intra-state regions is the Central Arkansas industry sector, which includes aviation, telecommunications, and healthcare. Three other

areas of the state that are emerging inter-state economic markets include the Delta Region (AR and MS), Texarkana (AR and TX), and Fayetteville Shale Play (AR, OK, MO, and TX).

Arkansas was selected to participate in the 2nd Generation WIRED project, which presents the state with an opportunity to transform the economy of the Delta by through talent development, a catalyst of regional economic growth. In addition, the state continues to maintain its Discover Arkansas website ([www.discoverarkansas.net](http://www.discoverarkansas.net)), a product of the state's participation in "Workforce Informer" consortium of 22 state labor market information (LMI) programs.

**3. For inter-State regions (if applicable), describe the roles of the respective Governors and State and local Boards.**

While Arkansas does not have formally created intra- or inter-state regions, local boards do participate with each other in informal issue-driven collaborations between themselves and local boards of surrounding states, such as Oklahoma, Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. These efforts are flexible and vary in scope to address specific issues.

**F. Allocation Formulas (112(b) (12).**

**1. If applicable, describe the methods and factors (including weights assigned to each factor) your State will use to distribute funds to local areas for the 30% discretionary formula adult employment and training funds and youth funds pursuant to §§128(b)(3)(B) and 133(b)(3)(B).**

Arkansas distributes Adult and Youth fund allocations according to the standard formula prescribed and recognized by the WIA. The formula used to distribute the Adult allocations considers the following factors:

- Unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment;
- Relative excess number of unemployed individuals in the State; and
- Number of individuals unemployed for 15 weeks or more.

The formula used to distribute the Youth allocations considers the following factors:

- Unemployed individuals in the areas of substantial unemployment;
- Relative excess number of unemployed individuals in the State; and
- Relative number of disadvantaged youth.

**2. Describe how the allocation methods and factors help ensure that funds are distributed equitably throughout the State and that there will be no significant shifts in funding levels to a local area on a year-to-year basis.**

Use of these formula factors has compensated Local Areas equitably each year since the formulas are primarily based upon the relative number of shares for each factor within the State. If any significant shift in funding occurs because the numbers change in one or more of the factors within the formula, the shift is "softened" with implementation of the "hold-harmless" provision. The "hold-harmless" provision guarantees that local areas will receive at least 90 percent of their average allocation percentages for Adult and Youth funds granted the prior two years.

**3. Describe the State's allocation formula for dislocated worker funds under § 133(b) (2) (B).**

The State allocates the Dislocated Worker funds based on a formula prescribed by the Governor of the State. The Governor may amend the formula not more than once for each program year. The formula

shall utilize the most appropriate information available to distribute amounts to address the State's worker readjustment assistance needs.

The State Board will review the factors each year to confirm the weight given to each factor to ensure each local area receives an equitable share of the formula allocation. Any recommendation to change the existing factors would be forwarded to the Governor by the State Board. Dislocated worker funds will be distributed by placing the following weights on the six factors:

- Five percent toward insured unemployment;
- Fifteen percent toward unemployment concentrations;
- Thirty percent toward plant closings and mass layoffs;
- Fifteen percent toward declining industries;
- Five percent toward farmer-rancher economic hardship; and
- Thirty percent toward long-term unemployment.

**4. Describe how the individuals and entities on the State Board were involved in the development of the methods and factors, and how the State consulted with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining such distribution.**

The standard formula allocation method for distribution of Adult and Youth funds does not require input by the State Board, CEOs, or Local Boards. However, state and local board members provided input regarding the formula when original discussions were conducted during the initial implementation of the WIA. The discussions considered factors pertinent to the needs of both rural and urban areas. If the relevancy of factors changes, the State Board, CEOs, or Local Boards may make policy recommendations to the Governor to adjust the manner in which the allocations are distributed to the local areas.

**G. Provider Selection Policies (§§112(b) (17)(A)(iii), 122, 134(d)(2)(F).**

**1. Identify the policies and procedures, to be applied by local areas, for determining eligibility of local level training providers, how performance information will be used to determine continuing eligibility, and the agency responsible for carrying out these activities.**

In August 1999, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board delegated the responsibility for the development, maintenance, and dissemination of the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list to the Department of Workforce Services (DWS). The DWS maintains this responsibility, and in partnership with Local Boards, the department identifies training providers who are qualified to receive WIA funds to train Adults and Dislocated Workers.

To be listed, a training provider's program must be evaluated and approved by one or more local boards and meet the criteria established by the State. All training must be directly linked to employment opportunities either in the local area or in an area to which the individual is willing to relocate. Training providers are required to submit an initial eligibility application to each local board where the training provider desires to provide training; a more detailed workflow process is described in Section G.3 below.

The State typically requires the initial application to contain cost information and verifiable performance information. If an application is approved, the training provider and program will be listed on the ETP list for a period of one year.

In prior years, training providers have encountered two major barriers in this process. First, many training providers have found it difficult to collect this program-specific performance data. The DWS attempted to assist the providers in obtaining the necessary information by matching student social security numbers with Unemployment Insurance wage records. However, the attempts proved unsuccessful. Secondly, providers that have the required data have found it difficult to meet the State minimum levels. In many instances, one poor WIA performer has disqualified a program because of the small number of WIA participants served by the program. In other instances, a provider has met or exceeded minimum State levels in all but one category and is disqualified.

To address these barriers, Arkansas requested a waiver of WIA Section 122 (c) and (d) during program years 2005-06. The waiver was crucial in assisting the State in maintaining an adequate number of training providers and programs on the ETP list. The waiver reinstated initial eligibility and waived the subsequent eligibility typically required by Section 122 (c) and (d).

*The State will again request a waiver of WIA Section 122 (c) and (d) for program years 2007-08. See Section X.C.*

**2. Describe how the State solicited recommendations from local boards and training providers and interested members of the public, including representatives of business and labor organizations, in the development of these policies and procedures.**

Arkansas' ETP policy, which lists the minimum levels for provider performance, was developed through workgroups consisting of representatives from local boards, training providers, private businesses, and other State agencies. Per State requirements, interested members of the public and business community have a 30-day period for submitting comments; the comment period ends 30 calendar days after the policy notice is produced and made available for public comment. The Department of Workforce Services staff meets with local board staff to address and resolve issues pertaining to recommendations.

**3. How will the State maintain the State's eligible training provider list?**

The DWS administers the ETP list through the Arkansas Consumer Report System (ACRS) web site available at <http://www.arkansascrs.org>. The general workflow process through ACRS is as follows:

1. A training provider submits an application on-line.
2. The application is screened for minimum State requirements (i.e., completeness of cost and performance information and relation of training to an employment opportunity) and assigned a status of "Pending."
3. The local board is automatically notified of the pending application.
4. The local board evaluates the application and assigns a status of "Approved" or "Disapproved."
5. The training provider is automatically notified of the status.
6. Approved applications are published on the ETP list immediately upon designation.

**4. Describe the procedures the Governor has established for providers of training services to appeal a denial of eligibility by the local board or the designated State agency, a termination of eligibility or other action by the board or agency, or a denial of eligibility by a One-Stop operator. Such procedures must include the opportunity for a hearing and time limits to ensure prompt resolution.**

A decision made by a local workforce investment board may be appealed to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board when no decision is reached within 60 days or when either party is dissatisfied with the local hearing decision. A training provider that has been denied eligibility or has had eligibility terminated may appeal to the State Board within 60 days of the decision. A provider of on-the-job training or

customized training that has been denied eligibility may also appeal to the State Board within 60 days of the decision.

The appeal must be sent by certified mail with a return receipt request to the AWIB Executive Director within 60 days of the local decision or when no local decision has been reached within 120 days of the original filing date. The Director will contact the local board director or administrator and investigate the appeal. Generally, a decision made under the state appeal process concerning a training provider (including on-the-job training and customized training) may not be appealed to the Secretary of Labor.

**5. Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the State level to award grants and contracts for activities under title I of WIA, including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts. (§112(b)(16).)**

Arkansas adheres to the federal and state procurement laws governing all agencies that receive and are engaged in the practice of awarding competitive and non-competitive contracts. In addition, Arkansas inputs state-specific guidance and procedures, as outlined in the State Administrative Procedures Act and specifically the provisions and guidance provided in OMB Circular A-87 and 20 CFR Part 95.

The primary method used for competitive bidding for contracts is through Requests for Proposal (RFP). Potential bidders are made aware of funding available for competitive bidding through the notification process required by law and regulation. The availability of competitive grants is advertised on the State Board website and through public notices mailed to interested parties.

**6. Identify the criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth activities, including criteria that the Governor and local boards will use to identify effective and ineffective youth activities and providers of such activities. (§ 112(b) (18) (B)).**

Arkansas has developed a plan for youth activities designed to ensure that a comprehensive array of services and community resources will be available to all eligible youth. Local Youth Councils play a significant role in developing the programs and services. In accordance with WIA, Section 117 (h) and 20 CFR 661.340, Youth Council responsibilities include developing portions of the local plan related to eligible youth and making recommendations to the local workforce investment board regarding youth service providers.

As part of their local plan, each local area will develop written criteria to identify effective and ineffective youth activities for providers. The local boards will approve grants for youth activities and providers that demonstrate persuasive performance and program cost data and display the following goals.

- Develop relationships between youth and caring adults.
- Involve family members.
- Build youth responsibility.
- Develop youth citizenship and leadership skills.
- Place high expectations on youth and staff.
- Provide appropriate services based on age and needs of each youth.
- Demonstrate involvement of the business/employer community.
- Provide accessible facilities and provide accommodations for special needs populations, including individuals with disabilities.
- Demonstrate prior successes in providing employment and training services to youth.

- Prepare youth for success in employment
- Advocate for the youth perspective.
- Demonstrate the connection between work and learning
- Provide comprehensive guidance and counseling

Consideration of the above criteria, while following State procurement policies, will occur before a youth grant or contract is awarded. Local Boards will approve grants based on performance and program cost data provided by potential grantees, with guidance from the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Youth Councils should make recommendations of eligible providers of youth activities to the Local Board. Previous experience with potential providers will be considered. State and Local Boards will gather information regarding performance indicators and will use this information in evaluating the continuous improvement of the grantees and the future awarding of grants and contracts.

Looking beyond the current criteria that Local Boards and their Youth Councils use in identifying effective youth providers and activities, the Department of Labor's strategic vision recognizes that targeted youth are a vital segment of the new workforce. It notes that WIA-funded Youth programs must provide youth with quality secondary and postsecondary education and prepare them for entry into positions in high-growth industries and other employment opportunities.

As both the Department of Labor and State of Arkansas continue to develop their new youth vision, additional criteria and guidance for Local Boards and their Youth Councils will be identified and provided to Local Boards. These additional criteria will emphasize service in following specific areas:

- Alternative education to meet the demands of business in a high-growth economy and diverse populations;
- Youth most in need; and
- Improved performance outcomes.

#### **H. One-Stop Policies (§112(D)(14).**

**1. How will the services provided by each of the required and optional One-Stop partners be coordinated and made available through the One-Stop system. Include how the State will consolidate Wagner-Peyser Act funds to avoid duplication of core services. (§ 112(b) (8) (A).)**

The State's strategy to ensure that services are provided by each of the required and optional One-Stop partners through local One-Stop systems is discussed in Section IX(A)(1), "One-Stop Delivery Strategies." The State provides guidance and technical assistance to local workforce investment areas instructing them to deliver Wagner-Peyser services through local One-Stop systems in ways that minimize duplication of services and costs.

Each local area contains at least one comprehensive workforce center and some combinations of affiliate and satellite offices. Customers are able to access core, intensive, training, and Wagner-Peyser services within their respective local workforce investment areas. Partner agencies avail basic information (core services) verbally, physically, or electronically, they and often provide additional services as agreed upon per their MOU with the Local Board.

The State has been cross-training One-Stop staff to deliver core services utilizing Arkansas Joblink (AJL), the state's integrated management information system, so as not to duplicate services. The State continuously provides AJL-related training to Local Boards and has given One-Stop Providers access to the management system to promote both a comprehensive understanding of AJL and seamless delivery of services. The AWIB continues to work with Local Boards and other state agencies to encourage

development of partnerships and coordination of services in each of the local workforce investment areas.

**2. Describe how the State helps local areas identify areas needing improvement and how technical assistance will be provided.**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) cooperatively assist Local Boards in identifying areas needing improvement by monitoring fiscal, program, and governance compliance. When areas needing improvement are identified through monitoring by the DWS, those areas are communicated to the AWIB. The two agencies coordinate the provision of technical assistance based upon the identified need according to the WIA Responsibilities Agreement between the agencies.

Technical assistance is provided to the Local Areas through the development and implementation of corrective action strategies by one or both agencies. In addition, technical assistance and policy guidance are provided through the DWS Issuance and Informational Memorandum system.

The AWIB offers capacity-building resources through educational workshops and workforce conferences involving all One-Stop partners. The AWIB also works to build capacity by assigning a Regional Advisor (RA) to each Local Area. The RA informs each area about pertinent statewide and national issues and/or provides technical assistance when requests are received from a local area. The State is committed to continually improving State-level technical assistance and capacity building.

**3. Identify any additional State mandated One-Stop partners (such as TANF or Food Stamp Employment and Training) and how their programs and services are integrated into the One-Stop Career Centers.**

The State has not mandated any additional One-Stop partners. However, since the move of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant from the Arkansas Department of Human Services to the Department of Workforce Services during Arkansas' 2005 legislative session, the delivery of employment related services to Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) clients has been expedited. In addition, this direct service delivery strategy more fully integrates TANF into Arkansas' Workforce Center system.

Although the TANF is not a mandated One-Stop partner, over ninety TEA and WorkPays case managers have been located in selected Workforce Centers, assisting in efforts to determine eligibility for cash assistance, Food Stamps and Medicaid. Each case manager has been trained to operate the Arkansas Joblink and labor exchange management systems. As a result, TEA clients are exposed to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 job openings daily.

**I. Oversight/Monitoring Process -- Describe the monitoring and oversight criteria and procedures the State utilizes to move the system toward the State's vision and achieve the goals identified above, such as the use of mystery shoppers, performance agreements. § 112(b) (14).**

The State conducts annual on-site compliance reviews of programmatic, financial, procurement, one-stop certification/delivery system, and equal opportunity and ADA requirements. Corrective actions, including training and technical assistance, are required and provided as a result of any findings in the delivery of services.

A monitoring instrument and associated procedures are used to perform the annual on-site reviews. By May 2006, these monitoring tools were revised to accommodate and include the monitoring/oversight and evaluation requirements of all federally-funded programs that are under the direction of the Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB); the monitoring tools were developed and revised in accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act, the Federal Regulations, U. S. Department of Labor guidance, and State requirements.

Through continued monitoring and performance evaluations, the State provides technical assistance to the Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA) that assists in the improvement of performance and achievement of overall goals of the workforce development system. When warranted, the State, in coordination with the LWIA operators, develops and revises policy for use in local operations.

The State requires the LWIA to implement a monitoring, evaluation, and corrective action system. Local areas must implement a system of solid fiscal policies, monitoring, and corrective action to ensure that all funds received are spent in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and direction of the state and local workforce investment boards.

**J. Grievance Procedures. (§§122(g) and 181(cc). Attach a copy of the State's grievance procedures for participants and other affected parties (including service providers.)**

*See Attachment B.*

**K. Describe the following State policies or procedures that have been developed to facilitate effective local workforce investment systems (§§ 112(b) (17) (A) and 112 (b) (2).**

**1. State guidelines for the selection of One-Stop providers by local boards**

One-Stop operators are responsible for continuous operation of the Arkansas Workforce Centers. Their roles range from coordinating service providers in the center to directly providing the services at the center. (WIA Section 121(d). The breadth of their role is determined by the Local Board. In areas where there is more than one comprehensive One-Stop center, there may be separate operators for each center or one operator for multiple centers, depending on need.

The operator may be selected by the Local Board through a competitive process or the Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) may designate a consortium that includes three or more required One-Stop partners as an operator. WIA Section 121(d) Per State requirement, entities selected to be the One-Stop operators include:

- Post-secondary educational institutions;
- Employment service agency established under the Wagner-Peyser Act on behalf of the local office of the agency;
- Private, nonprofit organizations (including community-based organizations);
- Private for-profit entities;
- Government agencies; and
- Other interested organizations or entities, as applicable.

The LWIB itself may not serve as a One-Stop operator, except with the consent of the chief elected official(s) of the local workforce investment area and the Governor.

**2. Procedures to resolve impasse situations at the local level in developing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to ensure full participation of all required partners in the One-Stop delivery system**

Local Boards, in conjunction with chief elected officials and One-Stop partners, must earnestly negotiate the development of a MOU. If negotiations fail to yield an understanding between all required stakeholders, Local Boards are directed to report such impasse situations to the AWIB, as outlined in the WIA provisions.

Arkansas employs the process described in §662.310 (b) for resolving an impasse between a local Workforce Investment Board and any local One-Stop partners. This process is administered as follows:



1. The Local Workforce Investment Board and their local partners must enter into good faith negotiations in an effort to negotiate an MOU;
2. If an impasse occurs, the negotiating parties must seek the assistance of the appropriate state agency in an effort to resolve the impasse situation;
3. If resolution is not reached, the negotiating parties will be required to present their issue to the State Board, which will attempt to mediate the dispute and assist the parties in arriving at a resolution;
4. If the State Board is unable to facilitate a successful resolution to the impasse, the Governor and the State agency responsible for administering the partner's program will be notified;
5. The Governor, the State agency, and the State Board may consult the appropriate Federal agency to resolve the impasse;
6. If resolution is not reached, the impasse will be reported to the Secretary of Labor and the head of any other Federal agency with responsibility for oversight of a partner's program; and
7. Sanctions will be imposed on the board and/or partner program as specified in §662.310 (c).

The State also ensures that all impasse notifications are conveyed to the Department of Labor and other appropriate federal agencies.

### **3. Criteria by which the State will determine if Local Boards can run programs in-house**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), acting on behalf of the Governor, chose to prohibit Local Boards from running WIA programs in-house. The issue was discussed in-depth when waiver requests were initially submitted by a few local workforce areas. During these discussions, the AWIB solicited public comments and hosted an open forum discussion with local elected officials.

Ultimately, the AWIB decided that it was not in the best interest of the State to grant local WIA administrators a waiver to provide core and intensive services or to be a One-Stop operator. The decision was made in adherence to Federal and State WIA law. In the event that a local area submits a waiver request in the future, the AWIB will transmit the request, on behalf of the Governor, to the Department of Labor.

### **4. Performance information that on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training providers must provide**

The State has excluded OJT and customized training providers from the reporting requirements of the Eligible Training Provider List, as allowed under the WIA Section 122(h) (1). The State has not established separate data collection requirements for these providers.

### **5. Reallocation policies**

Recapture and Reallocation Policies and Procedures were modified and approved by the State Workforce Investment Board and issued effective January 10, 2006. These policies apply to all funding streams under WIA (Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker) and are at the discretion of the Governor and State Workforce Investment Board.

From each funding stream of each local area, the State will, at its discretion, recapture, for purposes of reallocation, any unobligated and/or unexpended balance that exceeds 20 percent of that year's allocation for the program. The calculation will exclude any amount reserved for administrative costs (up to 10 percent), per WIA Section 667.160(b). The unobligated and/or unexpended balance will be determined based on an adjustment for any allowable transfers between funding streams. Each funding stream will be calculated separately.

Funds that were not expended or obligated by a local area in the two-year period, as described under WIA Section 667.107(b), must be returned to the State. Funds returned to the State may either be utilized for Statewide projects or, at the discretion of the State, distributed to other local areas that fully expended their allocation of funds for the same program year within the two-year period of availability of the funds. Such funds must be expended by the next program year whether used for statewide projects or distributed to local areas.

**6. State policies for approving local requests for authority to transfer funds (not to exceed 20%) between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams at the local level**

Arkansas received a waiver during the 2005-06-grant cycle that increased the State's privilege of transferring funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams to 40%. Arkansas will again request said waiver for the 2007-08-grant cycle.

**7. Policies related to displaced homemakers, nontraditional training for low-income individuals, older workers, low-income individuals, disabled individuals and others with multiple barriers to employment and training**

Local areas have authority to develop and implement local policy, guidance, procedures, and definitions targeting those services to special participant populations such as displaced homemakers, nontraditional training for low-income individuals, older workers, low income individuals, and others with multiple barriers to employment and training. Limitations on funding may require that Local Boards establish policies regarding priority of service to specific population groups within the low-income and public assistance recipient categories. Such priority of service policies will be included in local plans.

The State has also committed to addressing the Governor's priorities of improving employment and training opportunities to persons with disabilities, the limited-English proficiency, most-in-need youth, individuals seeking careers in aviation and nursing, and mature workers. For example, Arkansas was recently selected to participate in the National Governors Association's Policy Academy for Engaging Senior in Civic Engagement and Volunteerism. The state anticipates exposure to innovative policies that will assist Arkansas in further supporting mature workers in the State's labor force.

The State also encourages collaborative efforts at the local level to address the employment and training needs of welfare recipients, ex-offenders, and other emerging workforce populations. In these cases, the collaborations are most likely to succeed with Faith-based or Community-based organization involvement.

**8. If you did not delegate this responsibility to local boards, provide your State's definition regarding the sixth youth eligibility criterion at section 101(13) (C)(iv) ("an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment"). §§ 112(b) (18) (A) and 20 CFR 664.210).**

Currently, the State delegates the responsibility for defining the sixth youth eligibility criterion to Local Boards. However, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board recognizes its role in oversight and monitoring and may revisit this issue during the 2007 program year.

**IX. Service Delivery - Describe the approaches the State will use to provide direction and support to local Boards and the One-Stop Career Center delivery system on the strategic priorities to guide investments, structure business engagement, and inform service delivery approaches for all customers. (§112(b) (17)(A). Activities could include:**

**A. One-Stop Service Delivery Strategies: (§§ 112(b) (2) and 111(d) (2).**

**1. How will the services provided by each of the required and optional One-Stop partners be coordinated and made available through the One-Stop system? (§ 112(b) (8) (A)**

The One-Stop delivery system is a system under which entities responsible for administering separate workforce investment, educational, and other human resource programs and funding streams (referred to as One-Stop partners) collaborate to create a seamless system of service delivery that will enhance access to the programs' services and improve long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance.

As specified in Section 121 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Part 662 of the WIA Regulations, each Arkansas local workforce investment board (LWIB), with the agreement of the chief elected official(s), must develop and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the One-Stop Delivery System between the LWIB and the One-Stop partners consistent with the following requirements and must contain the following basic component:

- The services that will be provided through the One-Stop system. (In Arkansas, centers that provide services through the One-Stop system are called Arkansas Workforce Centers);
- How the costs of services and operating costs will be funded, including cost-sharing strategies and methodologies;
- What methods will be used for referral of individuals between the One-Stop operator and partners;
- How long the MOU will be in effect. An optional partner may withdraw from the MOU by giving written notice of intent at least 60 days in advance;
- What procedures have been developed for amending the MOU; and
- Other provisions as determined by the local board

Arkansas' planning and development process included extensive discussions with AWC representatives at the State and local levels. State-level agency coordination is vital to ensuring that the mandated and necessary mix of partner programs and services meet the needs of the workforce and businesses throughout the State.

State-level coordination includes the following steps:

- Providing local planning guidance that assists Local Boards in facilitating linkages among partner programs and systems;

- Ensuring State- and local-level accountability by guiding outcome-based linkages among partner programs and systems; and
- Developing cost sharing options and strategies that will reduce the administrative expenditures of WIA funds while better supporting One-Stop infrastructures and expanded direct services such as training.

The services of the required and optional partners are coordinated in the Arkansas Workforce Centers (AWCs) through the co-location of the partners, the referral system among partners, the cross training for eligibility determination, and the use of common intake forms. In addition, in order for an AWC to become certified, the partners of the AWCs are required to submit a business plan outlining the operational structure and describe quantified and measurable goals for the center as a whole. The plan also identifies how the partners will assist each other in meeting the individual performance standards of each organization and funding source.

The Labor Market Information and Analysis section of the Department of Workforce Services and other AWC partners provide informational resources through the AWC resource rooms. The resource rooms are Americans with Disability Act compliant and provide access to information via Internet, printed publications, videos, and other information delivering methods for job seeking or career changing clients. The resource rooms also act as an information clearinghouse for employers.

## **2. How are youth formula programs funded under (§ 128(b) (2) (A). integrated in the One-Stop system?**

All One Stops provide formula program services to youth, either directly or through partners. Local Youth Councils, along with local WIBs, are responsible for ensuring that services to Title I eligible youth are comprehensive and that the services are coordinated with all participating state and local agencies offering youth programs. In Section 129 of WIA, required youth program design, program element

Local Boards also are encouraged to work in conjunction with their CEOs to appoint a comprehensive array of representatives from local youth service providers, parents, supportive service organizations, and other interested parties to their local youth councils, and additional requirements are outlined and required of local areas. The local elements and requirements for youth programs are available to all eligible youth who enter the program within the local region. The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will continue working with other state agencies to encourage the respective local programs to coordinate services and to develop partnerships with the local Workforce Centers.

Local boards are encouraged to utilize their MOUs to enhance linkages with academic institutions and to promote coordination with foster care, welfare providers, and other resources. Local boards are further encouraged to develop strong connections with local employers and educational institutions (both mainstream and alternative schools to provide academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work experience, and tutoring.

## **3. What minimum service delivery requirements does the State mandate in a comprehensive One-Stop Centers or an affiliate site?**

A Comprehensive Arkansas Workforce Center is the physical location where, at a minimum, all the core services of the required programs will be available (if partner/program services are provided in the workforce area). Employment Services, Adult and Dislocated Worker Services, and Veteran's Services must be accessible on site on a full time basis in order to be considered comprehensive. The center will have a business liaison team as the single point of contact for business services. Additionally, job search or job development leads performed by any partner will be entered into database.

Satellite Centers are locations in which five or more programs are delivering services, providing access to the web-based system, and providing staff assistance to customers. Each satellite center must be part of

a comprehensive center's business plan, and must have a minimum of five programs, two of which must be mandated WIA programs, providing services on a full time basis.

Affiliate Sites must be tied to a comprehensive center's business plan, must have hardware, software, and Internet access at minimum, and must provide information about services available at the comprehensive center.

Local WIBs have the responsibility to plan, oversee and continuously evaluate the operation of the Workforce Centers. They must utilize the statewide minimum criteria to ensure a high quality Workforce Center in their local region and to promote their continuous improvement efforts as follows:

- Center must be accessible to all job seekers and workers throughout the workforce region. Centers may include electronic/automated methods of accessibility.
- Center must offer locally customized, reliable information in easy-to-use formats
- Consumer information of the quality of education and training providers is available to customers in a variety of formats, and a formal mechanism for further customer feedback has been instituted.
- Centers actively solicit customer feedback and use it to continuously improve services.
- Center focus upon employee satisfaction just as they do customer satisfaction, with management ensuring that staff members will have the tools and skills they need to provide excellent customer service to Center customers.
- Center services must be regularly and continuously marketed to customers.

#### **4. What tools and products has the State developed to support service delivery in all One-Stop Centers Statewide?**

Each local workforce investment area is required to have at least one comprehensive center with an ADA compliant resource room. Tools within the resource room include computers with Internet access, fax machines, and telephones. The computers may be used by job seekers to search websites for job openings, post resumes with selected employers, access resume writing assistance, practice computer applications, and find information about the labor market and skill requirements through several State sponsored websites.

Tools and products developed to ensure service delivery to employers and job seekers are centered around Arkansas Job Link (AJL), [<http://www.arjoblink.Arkansas.gov>], a web-based service that is designed to allow employers to post job openings on their own. Another particularly valuable web based resource is [www.discoverarkansas.net](http://www.discoverarkansas.net).

The AJL Management Information System (MIS) provides Workforce Center staff the ability to track and count all AJL customers. This database records the following information:

- Identifying Information – The customer name, address, Social Security number, demographic information, citizenship status, and veteran information;
- Services Requested – The reason(s) the customer has come into the Workforce Center;
- Services Provided – The self-service or staff assisted services that a customer received.

The AJL MIS is considered a gateway system for the tracking of general Workforce Center customers. As a condition of the State's AJL chartering process, staff at each Workforce Center must consistently enter customer's activity into the internet-based system. The customer's activity may be assessed by using a number of management reports available for the purpose of evaluation service delivery and providing information for performance management.

In addition, each workforce investment area is required to maintain a website linking partner services, labor market information and service delivery information. Local areas often include links to resources for business/industry to find information regarding labor and immigration law and human resources information.

**5. What models/templates/approaches does the State recommend and/or mandate for service delivery in the One-Stop Centers? for example, do all One-Stop Centers have a uniform method of organizing their service delivery to business customers? Is there a common individual assessment process utilized in every One-Stop Center? Are all One-Stop Centers required to have a resource center that is open to anyone?**

The Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Criteria manual provides guidance to local workforce investment boards on the core standards required in the development of the Arkansas Workforce Centers and the standards of excellence to be achieved. The goal of this policy guidance is to develop an excellent workforce center network that goes well beyond the minimal requirements established by the federal Workforce Investment Act. It is critical to make the centers user friendly and attractive, creating a public image that is inviting to job seekers, education seekers, and employers seeking skills and talent in the local labor markets.

This manual brings all the tools approved by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (WIB) into a single reference for Local Workforce Investment Boards, the certifying agents of the Arkansas Workforce Centers. The intent of the Arkansas WIB in creating this is to provide a guide to what is expected, not to provide the means of accomplishing it. Ongoing organization, implementation, and continuous improvement assurance of the local certification process are the responsibility of the local WIB. This certification manual describes only the expectations and minimum requirements of the AWC's but does not provide a means for accomplishing the task of seamless delivery of services. As mentioned earlier the partners within the AWC must create a business plan that describes how each is a part of the integrated system.

The certification process promotes excellence and continuous improvement. This certification process serves as an opportunity to continually re-examine, improve, and revise procedures to ensure that the Arkansas workforce development system is a primary asset in Arkansas' economic growth and subsequent high quality of life. Additionally, the Workforce Centers exemplify the one-stop concept so that a full array of services is available in one location to maximize customer accessibility. DWS has also taken advantage of the reporting capabilities available in AJL. At Quarterly Office Manager meetings, each labor exchange office is briefed not only on the status of common measures performance, but also on each office's contribution to these measures. Additional metrics are being refined that will further measure office productivity and efficiency based on FTEs.

As Arkansas delivers most programs and activities through local entities, it provides local workforce areas with as much flexibility and decision-making authority as permitted under federal law and as consistent with minimum service delivery requirements. Because of this, One Stop Centers have different methods of organizing their service delivery to business customers and are permitted to use individual assessment processes (although many centers use the same or similar processes). Minimum service delivery requirements dictate that all One Stop Centers have a resource Center that is open to jobseekers and workers throughout the workforce region.

**B. Workforce Information - A fundamental component of a demand-driven workforce investment system is the integration and application of the best available State and local workforce information including, but not limited to, economic data, labor market information, census data, private sources of workforce information produced by trade associations and others, educational**

**data, job vacancy surveys, transactional data from job boards, and information obtained directly from businesses. §§111(d)(8), 112(b)(1), and 134(d)(2)(E).**

**1. Describe how the State will integrate workforce information into its planning and decision-making at the State and local level, including State and local Boards, One-Stop operations, and case manager guidance.**

A fundamental component of a demand-driven workforce system is the integration and application of the best available State and local workforce information including, but not limited to, the economic data, labor market information, census data, private sources of information, educational data, job vacancy surveys, and information obtained directly from business.

The local workforce investment areas often have distinct labor market needs and for this reason representatives from economic development, education, business and industry, and the workforce system were consulted as the Department of Workforce Services' Labor Market Information section developed the area specific occupation demand lists. Allowable Title I-funded training programs correspond to these lists. Through that relationship, the local boards are able to promote skill attainment in areas of growth or need.

The State also is involved in identifying the high growth industries of the state in an attempt to plan education, certification, and career selection strategies for job seekers who access the services of the Arkansas Workforce Centers.

Through the partnerships under the Workforce Investment Act, along with voluntary partners such as the University of Arkansas Institute for Economic Advancement, census data, business and industry surveys, and labor market information are analyzed for areas of greatest need and customized services.

The State board has established ad hoc committees to focus on each of the Governor's priorities. Those priorities, with high growth job training as the overarching initiative, focus on providing a steady pipeline of qualified workers to Arkansas' employers. The State board uses the information and analysis from the partnerships to plan the budget and strategies of the board to ensure the success of this demand driven workforce system.

Using workforce information to develop plans for service delivery ensures the system is responsive to the needs of business and jobseekers. As these plans are implemented, One-stop Center staff uses updated information to make front line customer specific decisions. The AJL real-time labor market statistics system provides workforce information to guide day-to-day operations and help business and jobseekers validate decisions.

**2. Describe the approach the State will use to disseminate accurate and timely workforce information to businesses, job seekers, and employment counselors, in easy to use formats that are readily accessible within One-Stop Career Centers and at remote locations such as libraries, schools, worksites, and at home.**

Arkansas provides accurate, timely state and local workforce information to employers, job seekers, students, economic developers, researchers, analysts, and employment counselors. The information, including economic data, labor market information, census data, educational data, job information and career information, is provided through an Internet-based web site called "Discover Arkansas".

The web site has specially designed portal pages with information pertaining to business, education, industries, jobs, occupations, labor market information, and career information. Labor Market publications and articles are available on-line and can be easily downloaded and printed. Customized data requests may be made through the interactive data analysis pages of the web site. Web site help is available either by phone or via e-mail. This information includes statistics on occupational outlooks, wages, employment and unemployment. Additionally, two professionally designed tri-folds for employers and job seekers have been placed in each Workforce Center.

The AWC resource rooms serve as a clearinghouse for workforce information for businesses and labor market information for job seekers and those wishing to change careers. Within the resource room, jobseekers have access to both electronic and hardcopy tools to research career decisions and assist in their job search. The hardcopy tools available include occupational reference books, occupational briefs, career-related periodicals, occupational biographies and videotapes. Other types of materials that are available include assessment instruments, employment data and transferable skill information.

**3. Describe how the State's Workforce Information Core Products and Services Plan is aligned with the WIA State Plan to ensure that the investments in core products and services support the State's overall strategic direction for workforce investment.**

The Labor Market Information and Analysis section has aligned Arkansas' Workforce Information Core Products and Services Plan with the Arkansas' Workforce Investment Board's Two Year Plan to support our overall strategic direction for workforce investment. The grant plan is designed to respond to the State Board's strategic direction. Workforce information is the key to supporting informed decision making in the workforce development system. The State's core products and services are directly responsive to the needs of the workforce system and the State will:

- Continue to populate the Workforce Information database with state data. The database is incorporated with DWS's LMI web site called "Discover Arkansas." The most current information is maintained in the Workforce Information database and displayed on the "Discover Arkansas" website.
- Produce and disseminate Industry and Occupational Employment Projections. Short-term and long-term industry and occupational employment projections reflect industry and occupational trends essential to career and program planning and are produced for both the State and for Local Workforce Investment Areas.
- Provide occupational and career information products for public use. The Occupational/Career Information staff produces and disseminates many customer-focused occupational and career information products. All products may be found on the "Discover Arkansas" web site. Products include the following list.
  - Projected Employment Opportunities List
  - Occupational Employment and Wage Data Publication
  - Arkansas Affirmative Action Data
  - The Future Awaits
  - Career Watch magazine
  - Career Video CDs
  - Top Ten Occupations By Educational on the website
  - Directory of Licensed Occupations
  - Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections
  - Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections
  - Labor Market Information Resources
  - Occupational Outlook Handbook-support and distribution



- Ensure that workforce information and support required by State and Local Workforce Investment Boards are provided. This is done through meetings with the Local Workforce Investment Board's staff to determine localized needs, to provide training and input on existing and innovative LMI products, and to measure consumer service. As needed or requested, meetings are held with Local Board staff to examine problems and offer solutions to information questions. To meet the standards of the Local Boards, meetings are held with Local Board's staff to examine problems and offer solutions to informational questions as needed or requested.
- Maintain electronic delivery systems such as the following websites:
  - [www.discover.arkansas.gov](http://www.discover.arkansas.gov) - LMI Portal Site
  - [www.arkansascrs.org](http://www.arkansascrs.org)- Arkansas' Consumer Report System
  - [www.arkoscar.org](http://www.arkoscar.org)- Arkansas' Career Inventory Delivery System
  - [www.careerwatch.org](http://www.careerwatch.org)- Arkansas' Career Magazine
- Support state workforce information training activities. The LMI section holds annual LMI Users conferences to train State and Local WIB and AWC staff members and partners. LMI staff provides training at career fairs, seminars, conferences and other meetings as requested.

**4. Describe how State workforce information products and tools are coordinated with the national electronic workforce information tools including America's Career Information Network and Career Voyages.**

The State Occupational projections are submitted for viewing on the Career One-Stop and State Occupational Projections web sites. The Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, Current Employment Statistics, Local Area Employment Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, and Mass Layoff Statistics data are submitted and displayed on the Bureau of Labor Statistics web site. The Workforce Information (formerly ALMIS) Database will produce the following deliverables.

- 1) Continue to populate the Workforce Information Database with state and local data
  - a. Populate version 2.3 of the Workforce Information Database
  - b. Produce and submit licensing data – publish printed publication and include “discover Arkansas” at [www.discoverarkansas.gov](http://www.discoverarkansas.gov) or [www.discoverarkansas.net](http://www.discoverarkansas.net)
- 2) Produce and disseminate industry and occupational projections
  - a. Develop 2004-2014 sub-state Long-Term Projections and submit for public dissemination through Discover Arkansas and printed publication
  - b. Develop 2006-2008 statewide Short-Term Projections and submit for public dissemination through Discover Arkansas and printed publication
- 3) Publish and annual economic analysis report for the Governor, the State Workforce Investment Board and each local workforce investment area.
- 4) Post products, information and reports on the internet
  - a. Projected employment Opportunities List – publish printed publication and include on discover Arkansas

- b. Arkansas Wage Survey – publishes printed publication and include on Discover Arkansas
- c. Future Awaits – publish printed publication and include on Discover Arkansas
- d. Pocket Resume - publish printed publication and include on Discover Arkansas
- e. Career Watch Magazine – publish printed publication and maintain publication on the Career watch website at [www.careerwatch.org](http://www.careerwatch.org)
- f. Ark OSCAR – maintains and update information on Arkansas' Career Watch Information Delivery System
- g. Career Videos – maintain and continue to reproduce the 24 CD set of the career videos divided into Career Clusters and Pathways
- h. Real Life in Arkansas – Maintain current information in Arkansas' lifestyle/budget calculator – [www.real-life.arkansas.gov](http://www.real-life.arkansas.gov)

5) Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards.

- a. Arkansas LMI staff will collaborate and consult with the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and Local Workforce Investment Boards by attending various meetings in order to identify and provide needed informational support for workforce investment strategic planning and response to rapidly changing economic conditions and state and local initiatives.
- b. Arkansas LMI will keep a grant file of all identified needs through its consultations.

Arkansas has implemented and will maintain the most current version of the Workforce Information Database and populate all tables designated as core tables in accordance with guidelines issued by the Analyst Resource Center. The database content is updated timely in order to be as current as the state's most recent publications and data releases.

The web links to America's Career Information Network and Career Voyages are listed on the LMI regional website for easy access by jobseekers, employers and workforce professionals.

### **C. Adults and Dislocated Workers**

#### **1. Core Services. (§ 112(b) (17) (a) (i).**

##### **a. Describe State strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers have universal access to the minimum required core services as described in § 134(d) (2).**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board approved the Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Criteria in January 2004. This critical policy mandates not only universal access but also consistency of services.

A significant key to implementing the Arkansas Workforce Center system is the “no wrong door” approach to providing services that encompasses the principles of universal access, integration, co-location, collaboration, and performance as the building blocks to the system. With the “no wrong door” philosophy, when a customer approaches any Arkansas Workforce Center partner requesting assistance with employment and training needs or services in support of the customer's job search or skill development, the customer is able to access the best mix of services. Services funded by the Wagner-Peyser Act are an integral part of Arkansas' workforce development system

##### **b. Describe how the State will ensure the three-tiered service delivery strategy for labor exchange services for job seekers and employers authorized by the Wagner-Peyser Act, including (1) self-**

**service, (2) facilitated self-help service, and (3) staff-assisted service, and is accessible and available to all customers at the local level.**

Arkansas' Job Link (AJL) self-service online component allows applicants and employers to file applications and job orders on line from home, the office, a local Arkansas Workforce Center, or any other computer with internet access.

Each local office has a bank of computers available for applicant use to self-file for either employment service (ES) or initial unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. The employers also will be able to use these computers to self-file job orders. The bank of computers will have an attendant experienced with both ES and UI and will furnish services to all who need assistance with the process. The number of computers available depends on the office space available.

The local offices will have Wagner-Peyser staff, Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA), Re-employment Grant Staff, and VETS staff available to do direct staff assisted services for the clients who have difficulty with the two prior mentioned features, as well as to perform file searches and call in for specific job orders, and will provide special services to specific groups such as veterans, TEA, etc.

**c. Describe how the State will integrate resources provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIA Title I for adults and dislocated workers as well as resources provided by required One-Stop partner programs, to deliver core services.**

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) integrates labor exchange activities with WIA Title I services by strategically locating service points in at least a single comprehensive Arkansas Workforce Center in each Local Area, and in affiliated locations based on community need and funding availability.

Local resource sharing agreements, memoranda of understanding, and rents and leases are negotiated with Local Boards and partners to document specific provisions of service based upon local needs. The agreements define roles and responsibilities of partners, identify joint planning for the provision of services to common customers and development of projects that serve identified community needs, and ensure coordination of employer job identification efforts.

DWS Area Operation Chiefs and Local Office Managers are authorized to participate on Local Boards and in certain local areas to participate in partner consortiums that act as One-Stop Operators. This helps to ensure the integration of Wagner-Peyser Act services into the local systems. In addition, this job service leadership helps to address other issues related to system integration, collaborative marketing, capacity building, services and staffing, accountability, universal access, and administrative decisions.

Another example of integration of services is the implementation of a new management information system in the State that replaces the WIA and Labor Exchange systems. The new system facilitates sharing of client information between the partners. WIA staff is being cross-trained in the labor exchange system to increase the efficiency of workforce center operations by allowing WIA staff to register and refer job seekers and enter job orders into one system. WIA case managers have all the labor exchange system privileges as Job Services interviewers.

**2. Intensive Services. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i). Describe State strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers who meet the criteria in § 134(d) (3) (A) receive intensive services, as defined.**

Arkansas' Local Boards provide employment and training activities as required under WIA section 134(d)(3)(A). The statewide provision of intensive services is built on the principle of informed customer choice and provides an opportunity for customers to make informed choices about available services, allowing access to the full range of education, training, and employment services.

The Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Criteria instrument is used by local boards to certify all their workforce centers. Very stringent requirements are set out in the instrument to assure that all the services are available and being provided. (The complete certification document is Attachment C to this state plan) As a part of the certification process, a chart is developed which lists all intensive services available at that workforce center for participants and employers, the agencies who provide that service in the workforce center, and the funding sources utilized to provide those services. Intensive services available at the Arkansas Workforce Centers include:

- Comprehensive and Specialized Assessments of Skills Levels and Service Needs;
- Individual Employment Plan Development;
- Group Counseling;
- Individual Counseling and Career Planning;
- Case Management for Participants Seeking Training; and
- Short Term Prevocational Services – learning, communications, interviewing, personal maintenance, and professional conduct.

Each workforce center is required to be certified as a comprehensive, affiliate, or satellite center at every location in all of the ten workforce investment areas of the state. Recertification of the sites must be conducted every two years by the local boards, using criteria that require continuous improvement as outlined in the standards for excellence developed as part of the certification document. Additionally, the State Board and the Department of Workforce Services develop and issue guidance, as necessary, to clarify the provision of intensive services to participants.

### **3. Training Services. (§ 112(b) (17) (A) (i).**

#### **a. Describe the Governor's vision for increasing training access and opportunities for individuals including the investment of WIA Title I funds and the leveraging of other funds and resources.**

The Governor's overall vision for Arkansas' workforce system, as described in Section I, requires the State and Local Boards to seek ways to target limited resources to areas that produce the most efficient use of public funds.

The Governor and the State Board already have directed the use of 15% Discretionary funding towards increased training access and opportunities for individuals in Arkansas' high growth occupations. Additionally, the State Board has established committees, based upon the Governor's Priorities, which will work towards advancing workers with barriers to employment.

Local Boards and One-Stop centers are better positioned to convene industry and employer associations, employers, and training entities to best identify current and future employer or industry skill needs in the Governor's priority areas. Using the knowledge gained from these partnerships, One-Stop provide navigate individuals through the various sources of training and support services.

**B(i). What policy direction has the State provided for ITAs? ii. Describe innovative training strategies used by the State to fill skills gaps. Include in the discussion the State's effort to broaden the scope and reach of ITAs through partnerships with business, education, economic development, and industry associations and how business and industry involvement is used to drive this strategy. iii. Discuss the State's plan for committing all or part of WIA Title I funds to training opportunities in high-growth, high-demand and economically vital occupations. iv. Describe the State's policy for limiting ITAs (e.g., dollar amount or duration) v. Describe the State's current or planned use of WIA Title I funds for the provision of training through apprenticeship. vi. Identify State policies developed in response to changes to WIA regulations that permit the use of WIA Title I financial assistance to employ or train participants in religious**

**activities when the assistance is provided indirectly (such as through an ITA). 20 CFR § 667.266(b)(1).**

Arkansas' demand-driven workforce investment system provides for maximum local flexibility in the administration of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). This affords Local Boards control over determining their training needs. Each Local Board is responsible for developing their policies pertaining to:

- Limiting the dollar amount of ITAs, and
- Identifying the appropriate occupational training

Arkansas has not yet developed policy to comply with the changing requirements for permitting the use of WIA Title I financial assistance to employ or train participants in religious activities when the assistance is provided indirectly (such as through an ITA). According to changing WIA requirements, this type of indirect support does not violate WIA regulations as long as program participants are given a genuine, independent choice about where to direct their financial assistance through an ITA. We understand that rules regarding the use of WIA Title I financial assistance for the direct support of faith-based organizations is unchanged. Direct support occurs when Title I assistance is given directly to a faith-based organization by a WIA grantee.

**c. Eligible Training Provider List. Describe the State's process for providing broad customer access to the statewide list of eligible training providers and their performance information including at every One-Stop Career Center. (§ 112(b) (17) (A) (iii).**

To ensure maximum access to the One-Stop Career Centers, the eligible training provider list is available for viewing through the Arkansas Consumer Report System web site at <http://www.arkansascrs.org>. The list may be searched by provider or program name or by the local board of approval. All updates to the list are real-time.

**d. On-the-Job (OJT) and Customized Training (§§ 112(b) (17) (A) (i) and 134(b). Based on the outline below, describe the State's major directions, policies and requirements related to OJT and customized training.**

**(i) In a narrative format, describe the Governor's vision for increasing training opportunities to individuals through the specific delivery vehicles of OJT and customized training. (ii). Describe how the State:**

- identifies OJT and customized training opportunities;
- Markets the concept as an incentive to untapped employer pools including new business to the State, employer groups;
- Partners with high-growth, high-demand industries and economically vital industries to develop potential OJT and customized training strategies;
- Taps business partners to help drive the strategy through joint planning;
- Competency and curriculum development; and determining appropriate lengths of training, and
- Leverages other resources through education, economic development and industry associations to support OJT and customized training ventures.

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board does not conduct On-the-Job-Training. Arkansas' workforce investment system gives authority to local Workforce Investment Boards to determine whether Title I providers will offer OJT opportunities under training services. The State Board, however, does provide guidance to the Local WIBs regarding OJT contracts and strategies for engaging employers in OJT opportunities. The State Board also works very closely with the

Arkansas Economic Development Council's Customized Training Coordinators to identify and coordinate resources for customized training opportunities.

The State Board has facilitated and hopes to offer the grant writing development training in several Workforce Investment Areas for Department of Labor investments that require Economic Development, Educators, and Business and Industry to identify the changing skill requirements for both existing and emerging businesses in Arkansas.

In addition, the State Board has also hosted technical assistance and training seminars in employer services and geographical information systems (GIS) mapping and analysis. OJT and customized training are employer services beyond the traditional Wagner-Peyser services that employers have seen in the past. Technical assistance in GIS and census data analysis, coupled with the Labor Market Information that Department of Workforce Services collects, helps the local areas in determining the gaps in training or employer service delivery throughout the state.

Additionally, the AWIB Incumbent Worker Training Program, an allowable activity for 15% funds, encourages customized training to help support the retention, or expansion, of Arkansas companies.

#### **4. Service to Specific Populations. (§ 112(b) (17) (A) (iv).**

**a. Describe the State's strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the State's One-Stop delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals such as migrants and seasonal farm workers, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, people with limited English-speaking proficiency, and people with disabilities.)**

Effective Local Boards and their local One-Stop service delivery systems are central to ensuring Arkansas' businesses and industries have access to an appropriately and continuously prepared workforce. They do so by assisting the State's diverse population in preparing for and accessing occupations that are in demand, in industries that are vital to Arkansas' economy.

The State's demographic diversity presents unique challenges that often result in barriers that may exclude many segments of the population from achieving self-sufficiency. However, five of the eight priorities for WIA set by the Governor support the continued and expanded service mission to several diverse and uniquely serviced population groups.

- **Mature Worker Initiative:** To promote the value of mature workers to the State's labor force;
- **Career Pathways Initiative:** To develop educational pathways to high wage/high demand occupations;
- **English Proficiency Initiative:** To remove barriers to successful workforce entry and career advancement for persons with limited English proficiency;
- **Arkansas Disabilities Initiative:** Facilitate occupational and professional mobility for persons with disabilities to successfully compete in the State's labor market; and
- **Youth Vision Initiative:** To create technological equity in the learning experiences and career opportunities for every youth in the State.
- **Save The Children:** To provide quality in school, after school and summer literacy programming to children of low-income families living in rural areas.

The Department of Human Services provides applications and other materials in Spanish and Braille, and interpreter services are available for use by the hearing impaired and those clients who cannot speak English.

**b. Describe the reemployment services you will provide to unemployment insurance claimants and the Worker Profiling services provided to claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits in accordance with section 3(c)(3) of the Wagner-Peyser Act.**

Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant profiling establishes a dynamic link between unemployment insurance and the reemployment services systems. As such, the development and implementation of a profiling mechanism should be thought of as the first critical step in the establishment of a customer-focused "profiling and reemployment services system." Profiling is intended to identify UI claimants who experience the following circumstances.

- Permanently laid off and are unlikely to return to their previous industry or occupation
- Likely to exhaust their regular UI benefits
- Need reemployment assistance in order to make a successful transition to new employment

This early provision of services is designed to shorten claimant unemployment periods and to speed up the return to productive, stable employment. In Arkansas Reemployment Services are offered to UI profiles in two ways. First, the Department of Workforce Services has four Job Search Workshop Coordinators who schedule and conduct Job Clubs for the profiles, teaching such subjects as how to get your own job, appropriate dress, resume preparation, completing a job application, interview skills, etc.

The purpose of these workshops is to make the individual more marketable to local employers. Second, the Department of Workforce Services has ten staff persons who work exclusively with UI profiles to make sure that claimants are registered for work and have active applications in the State labor exchange system. Those not registered or active are contacted and registered or activated. In addition, UI profiles are matched to jobs and called in for job referrals on available job listings.

**c. Describe how the State administers the unemployment insurance work test and how feedback requirements (under §7(a) (3) (F) of the Wagner-Peyser Act) for all UI claimants are met.**

Wagner-Peyser staff and reemployment staff have a responsibility of informing UI staff of any negative issue that might affect a client's eligibility for benefits. Some of the negative issues include refusal of work, failure to report for a job interview, failure to respond to a call-in to discuss a job referral, not able and available for work, etc. The UI Department then has the responsibility to investigate the issue and to determine the penalty, if any, based on UI Law. Likewise, the Job Workshop Coordinators report attendance to the UI Department of clients scheduled for the Job Search Workshop.

**d. Describe the State's strategy for integrating and aligning services to dislocated workers provided through the WIA rapid response, WIA dislocated worker, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. Does the State have a policy supporting co-enrollment for WIA and TAA?**

The Governor has designated the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) as the State Dislocated Worker Unit and lead agency for the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force with the responsibility for carrying out rapid response activities, in accordance with the provisions of the Act at Section 112(b) (17)(A)(ii). DWS also is the state agency responsible for administration of the Trade Adjustment Assistance and Workforce Investment Act programs in the State, which facilitate the integration and alignment of services to all dislocated workers. In addition, the State Dislocated Worker Unit assures coordination with local workforce investment areas when arranging for Worker Assistance Workshops and other educational and job fairs provided to dislocated workers.

The State does not have a specific policy regarding co-enrollment for WIA and TAA; however, the State encourages all local workforce investment areas to co-enroll and work cooperatively with other employment and training programs when funding services to clients.

**e. How is the State's workforce investment system working collaboratively with business and industry and the education community to develop strategies to overcome barriers to skill achievement and employment experienced by the populations listed in paragraph (a) above and to ensure they are being identified as a critical pipeline of workers?**

Barriers to skill achievement and employment experienced by individuals within the populations described above are complex, inter-related and unique to each individual. Business and educational representatives serving on the State and local boards work to provide strategic direction for the state workforce investment system. Specific initiatives established by the Governor also foster this collaboration to achieve state goals related to the State's economy and workforce for all groups who seek services.

Arkansas' participation in the NGA Policy Academy Pathways to Advancement (see also Sections IV.J. and VI.D.) has drawn together individuals from business and industry, the education community, economic development, workforce partners, and others to identify barriers to skill attainment and employment and to develop plans to overcome the barriers. The plans address adults who do not have post-secondary degrees or credentials.

Typically, all the groups listed in IX.C.4.a. are represented heavily in this population, so they are a target of the Pathways to Advancement plan. As part of the data collection and reporting phase of the Pathways project, progress in attaining post-secondary education and employment will be tracked for a variety of target groups, including "students specifically receiving assistance under WIA partners such as WIA Individualized Training Accounts (ITAs) or contracts, Transitional Employment Assistance (TANF), Rehabilitation Services, apprenticeship, Trade Adjustment Assistance, prisons, special populations."

**f. Describe how the State will ensure that the full array of One-Stop services is available to individuals with disabilities and that the services are fully accessible?**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board is committed to ensuring that the programs, services, and facilities of each Arkansas Workforce Center are accessible to all of Arkansas' workers, including individuals with disabilities. Our labor exchange system (AJL) is ADA compliant as well as accessible in thirteen different languages.

Priority is given to assure that throughout the system, persons with disabilities have programmatic access to all services. This commitment to adequately serving persons with disabilities extends beyond the specialized services of vocational rehabilitation to the system as a whole and assumes the responsibility of continuously enhancing system capacity for achieving that aim.

As stipulated by federal law, all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance requirements must be met before a center is eligible to receive the Arkansas Workforce Center certification, or utilize the Arkansas Workforce Center name and logo. The Arkansas Workforce Centers must meet the



requirements of compliance as provided in the DOL Memorandum "WIA Section 188 Disability Checklist" dated July 22, 2003 from Assistant Secretaries of Labor Pizzella, Grizzard, and DeRocco.

**g. Describe the role LVER/DVOP staff has in the One-Stop Delivery System? How will the State ensure adherence to the legislative requirements for veterans' staff? How will services under this Plan take into consideration the agreement reached between the Secretary and the State regarding veterans' employment programs? §§112(b)(7), 112 (b)(17)(B), 322, 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41, and 20 CFR §1001.120)**

The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program staffs are fully integrated into the comprehensive service delivery points (SDP). LVERs and DVOPs provide training in veterans' preference, priority of service to veterans, and assessment procedures to all office staff; provide services to veterans; and monitor veteran activities in the comprehensive workforce centers and to the other SDPs in the local surrounding areas.

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Operations Manual- Part VI outlines the responsibilities for providing priority services to veterans. The LVERs and DVOPs work closely to provide training to all partners in providing services to veterans on a priority basis. Local memoranda of understanding between ADWS, WIA, Department of Defense, Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Education outline the coordination and non-duplication of services provided to veterans. DVOP/LVER staff works closely with veterans' organizations, County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs), personnel associations, civic and community organizations, and WIA staff in their continued efforts to provide the best services to the Veterans of Arkansas.

The state has also undertaken several other initiatives to help veterans find employment. This past year, the Department of Workforce Services gained access to the Vets 100 report, which lists federal contractors by state. To date over 1,000 state employers with Federal contracts have been identified. This information was provided to the field vet staff to supplement their business outreach efforts. Contractors are required to list their job orders with either the state or Americas Job Bank. Additionally, the Director of the Department of Workforce Services sends monthly letters to recently separated veterans providing an overview of services. To date over 11,000 letters have been sent.

**h. Department of Labor regulations at 29 CFR 37, require all recipients of Federal financial assistance from DOL to provide meaningful access to limited English proficient (LEP) persons. Federal financial assistance includes grants, training, equipment usage, donations of surplus property, and other assistance. Sub recipients also are covered when Federal DOL funds are passed-through from one recipient to a sub-recipient. Describe how the State will ensure access to services through the State's One-Stop delivery system by persons with limited English proficiency and how the State will meet the requirements of ETA Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 26-02, (May 29, 2003) which provides guidance on methods of complying with the Federal rule.**

Arkansas' Local Areas are subject to both federal and State requirements regarding non-discrimination and equal opportunity, which includes equal access to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). To ensure meaningful access to programs and services to LEP persons, the State is issuing a directive that transmits policy and guidance on serving LEP individuals pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, its implementing regulations, and Section 188 of WIA.

In addition, the Governor has placed priority on meaningful access and service delivery on this population. Our Arkansas Workforce Centers will undergo reviews for compliance and for assessment of need and service potential.

Currently, critical documents for core services are translated into Spanish, Arkansas' most common language among the LEP population, and translation services are accessible within comprehensive centers. Additionally, areas with a high concentration of LEP population normally have a bilingual staff member or collaborate agency representative who can provide translation services. Some of the services provided to LEP individuals include the following.

## Hola AR

The Limited English Proficiency Committee sponsored each local workforce investment area (LWIA) with advertising space in the Hola AR bi-lingual newspaper. Each area is listed in the classified/employment section of the paper for a period of one month. The LWIA is featured in a half page publication to promote the services each area provides. They also have a ¼ page section to provide an employer success story which runs for the first two weeks of their month and a client success story which runs the second two weeks of their month.

## Occupational Spanish Pilot Project

The purpose of this pilot project is to develop a workforce-training program, which will provide criminal justice, health and emergency responder personnel with basic skills in Spanish, which are essential for them to communicate with the Hispanic population. The goals of this project are to:

- Develop a training program and training materials;
- Train a minimum of 100 workers in occupational Spanish;
- Document Strategies and best practices which can be used for a larger project in the future;
- Materials and best practices will be submitted to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board at the end of the project.

**i. Describe the State's strategies to enhance and integrate service delivery through the One-Stop delivery system for migrant and seasonal farm workers and agricultural employers. How will the State ensure that migrant and seasonal farm workers have equal access to employment opportunities through the State's One-Stop delivery system? Include the number of Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers (MSFWs) the State anticipates reaching annually through outreach to increase their ability to access core, intensive, and training services in the One-Stop Career Center System.**

The state employs a multifaceted approach to identify the migrant and seasonal farm worker population and deliver appropriate workforce services. The primary approach is to identify and serve the migrant population through the Migrant Farm Labor Center, located in Hope, Arkansas. A majority of the migrant farm worker population that serves Arkansas and the Midwestern Migrant Farm Labor Stream enter the State and the labor stream through southwest Arkansas and register at the MFLC. The MFLC is the oldest and largest center of its kind and serves more than 30,000 registrants annually.

The MFLC is a virtual One-Stop offering health and medical, education, overnight residential, and employment and training services, including emergency support services. The MFLC is managed by the DWS and houses the following organizations:

**DWS** provides management and oversight of MFLC, registration and housing services for Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW), and dissemination of some employment related information for migrating families. The MSFW center collects information on destinations and demographics, provides referral assistance, and provides education and advocacy on the needs of the customers and the purpose of the center.

**Arkansas Human Development Corporation (AHDC)** provides core, intensive, training, and related assistance to eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers. Customers also receive food and clothing, health and education information, pesticide safety education, referrals to other providers, translation, and first aid and CPR demonstrations.

**Hope Migrant/Community Health Center** provides health and medical services to the local population and the migrant farm worker population on a sliding fee basis, with some services provided free of charge

or through reimbursement from AHDC. The center offers non-invasive radiology, minor procedures, EKG, laboratory testing and patient education in both English and Spanish.

**Southwest Arkansas Migrant Education Cooperative** provides education and recreational services for the children of migrant farm laborers that register at the MFLC. Indoor and outdoor recreational facilities as well as computer aided education services are available. Students receive counseling on staying in school and completing their education, parents are prepared to work with their children, school districts are informed of the population coming to their areas, and a toll-free hotline is provided to facilitate information sharing among students, parents, and school districts.

**The Arkansas Baptist State Convention** operates the Hope Migrant Mission Center, located in Hope, Arkansas. The Mission provides migrant farm families with clothing, personal hygiene articles, refreshments, and a place where families are able to relax for a short period. Children receive the opportunity to play and relax in an atmosphere conducive to positive development.

The State collaborates with the Arkansas Human Development Corporation (AHDC). AHDC provides employment and training and related assistance services to the migrant and seasonal farm worker population under a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to the State's One-Stop delivery system. AHDC receives funding to operate the National Farm Worker Jobs Program (NFJP) under Section 167 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). AHDC is a full partner in a majority of the State's One-Stops and is either co-located partner or connected to the One-Stops through electronic means. Staff members serve on the local One-Stop boards in most areas, have effective Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) in place, and share operating expenses through cost-sharing agreements.

The State Monitor Advocate, who is employed by the DWS and charged with ensuring that services are delivered to migrant and seasonal farm workers on a fair and equal basis, also sits on the AHDC Board of Directors and has the opportunity to monitor its services as well as oversee the certification process for migrant labor serving the state through the H2A farm labor program.

AHDC employs bilingual staff in those offices frequented by non-English speaking customers, and this Spanish speaking ability enhances the capacity of the overall One-Stop delivery system. A majority of the AHDCs that are co-located in the One-Stops have performed agricultural labor services and understand where and how to interact with farm worker customers. This knowledge and experience is shared and expanded through staff development meetings with other One-Stop staff in cross-training activities.

Input from the employer community, especially the agricultural community, is received through a variety of means. For example, agricultural employers are represented on the State Workforce Investment Board and help develop policy and procedures for the overall workforce development System. AHDC also has made a concerted effort to involve the farmer and grower communities by conducting pesticide safety education and certification services to farmers and farm workers and has extended an invitation to the Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation to help identify a person who can represent the industry through service on the AHDC board. AHDC staff also works in very close proximity to staff at the Arkansas State Plant Board, which functions in many ways as a department of agriculture.

As mentioned above, more than 30,000 migrant and seasonal farm worker customers are expected to receive services in the State on annual basis. These customers will have access to the full array of core, intensive, training and related services under the Workforce Investment Act. Services also will be provided through the One-Stops, the MFLC, and the AHDC. Every effort will be made to ensure that customers are aware of the adult, dislocated, and other services that may be available through other partners and the faith-based community.

## 5. Priority of Service

**a. What procedures and criteria are in place for the Governor and appropriate local boards to direct One-Stop operators to give priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals for intensive and training services if funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities are determined to be limited? §§ 112(b) (17) (A) (iv) and 134(d) (4) (E).**

Arkansas recognizes the statutory mandate of WIA to prioritize delivery of adult intensive and training services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals in situations where local area adult funding is limited.

Under conditions of limited funding availability, priority of service will be provided to low-income customers. Accordingly, local areas must complete the following as part of their local plans:

- Assess local area needs for employment and training services, particularly low-income individuals; and
- Identify how low-income individuals will be prioritized for intensive and training services, including how WIA and other One-Stop resources will be directed to these groups

**b. What policies and strategies does the State have in place to ensure that, pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L.107-288)[38 USC 4215], priority of service is provided to veterans (certain spouses) who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs funded by the U. S. Department of Labor, in accordance with the provisions of TEGL 5-03 (9/16/03)?**

Labor exchange agencies are required to comply with Federal and State laws to ensure that “priority of service” to veterans is maintained at all levels. DWS and the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) monitor and ensure that veteran activity is properly directed toward meeting the agreed-upon performance standards established by the Director of DWS and the Director of VETS.

Veterans who meet the job related selection criteria established by an employer will be given first consideration for all job referrals. As appropriate, job openings will be developed for veterans and other eligible persons on a priority basis through employer contacts and by other means whenever suitable job openings are not available.

All job orders received by the Service Delivery Points are automatically placed in veteran’s hold until qualified veterans are considered. Orders in veteran’s hold can be released only by the veteran staff, employment supervisors, or SDP managers. Mandatory employers are identified and contacted by veterans’ staff to promote the value of hiring and retention of veterans.

Through partnerships, MOUs and networking contacts, the Veterans’ staff works closely with veterans’ organizations, County Veterans Service Officers, personnel associations, civic and community organizations, prisons, homeless centers, Transition Assistance Program workshops and WIA staff in their continual search for ways to enhance and promote services for veterans.

The Veterans' Program Manager monitors each SDP to ensure compliance with the approved State Veterans' Program and Budget Plan. The Director of VET also monitors the SDPs through reports, surveys, on-site evaluations and technical assistance visits.

**D. Rapid Response. (112(b)(17)(A)(ii). Describe how your State provides Rapid Response services with the funds reserved under section 133(a)(2).**

**1. Identify the entity responsible for providing Rapid Response services. Describe how Rapid Response activities involve local boards and Chief Elected Officials. If Rapid Response activities are shared between the State and local areas, describe the functions of each and how funds are allocated to the local areas.**

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force, made up of the Department of Workforce Education, the Department of Workforce Services, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), and the Department of Economic Development, has been appointed by the Governor to provide rapid response services in Arkansas. The Task Force provides the required rapid response activities for dislocated workers and trade-impacted workers, as outlined in the Workforce Investment Act at Subpart B, Sec, 665.310.

After initial notification of a layoff or impending layoff, a planning meeting (community meeting) is scheduled with elected officials, business leaders, community organizations, local boards, and key partners to create action plans to assist both the community and the dislocated workers.

**2. Describe the process involved in carrying out Rapid Response activities.**

**a. What methods are involved in receiving notice of impending layoffs (include WARN Act notice as well as other sources)?**

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force learns of business closures and impending worker layoffs through a statewide network using the following.

- Local, state, and federal agency offices
- Workforce Center offices
- Media outlets including newspapers, radio, internet news links, and corporation websites
- Employer and employee contacts
- Union contacts
- Local elected officials
- Community-based organizations
- Chambers of comers
- Consumer Credit Counseling
- Economic development Corporations
- Educational Institutions
- Job Services Programs

Worker Adjustment and Retaining Notification (WARN) database information contains the name and address of the company, appropriate contacts , number of affected workers, and significant dates pertaining to Rapid Response activities.

**b. What efforts does the Rapid Response team make to ensure that rapid response services are provided, whenever possible, before layoff date, onsite at the company, and on company time?**

Immediately upon receiving notice of a permanent closure or a substantial layoff, the Task Force contacts company officials and schedules an on-site employer visit to discuss available resources and the desirability of a worker assistance workshop. Whenever possible, the worker assistance workshops are negotiated with the employer to be held onsite prior to the layoff date, during normal business hours.

**c. What services are included in Rapid Response activities? Does the Rapid Response team provide workshops or other activities in addition to general informational services to affected workers? How do you determine what services will be provided for a particular layoff (including layoffs that may be trade-affected)?**

A Rapid Response Specialist establishes contact with company officials within a short period after learning of a qualifying dislocation event to begin collecting information, including worker demographics appropriate services. The Task Force provides the required rapid response activities outlined in the Workforce Investment Act at Subpart B, Sec, 665.310. The activities of the Task Force are detailed below.

Upon initiation of on-site contact with the employer, representatives of the affected workers, and the local community, an assessment is made which may include:

- Layoff plans and schedule of the employer;
- Potential for averting the layoff(s) in consultation with State or local economic development agencies, including private sector economic development entities;
- Background and probable assistance needs of the affected workers;
- Reemployment prospects for workers in the local community; and
- Available resources to meet the short and long-term assistance needs of the affected workers.

The Task Force plans worker assistance workshops to provide labor market and job search information to affected workers, as well as sponsors or participates in Job Fairs to facilitate employment opportunities.

Information and access to unemployment compensation benefits, comprehensive One-Stop system services, and employment and training activities, including information on the Trade Adjustment Assistance program are provided as well.

Other services provided at the time are guidance and/or financial assistance in establishing a labor-management committee voluntarily agreed to by labor and management or a workforce transition committee comprised of representatives of the employer, the affected workers, and the community. The committee may devise and oversee an implementation strategy that responds to the reemployment needs of the workers. The assistance to this committee may include:

- Providing training and technical assistance to members of the committee;
- Funding the operating costs of the committee to enable it to provide advice and assistance in carrying out rapid response activities and delivering WIA-authorized services to affected workers. Typically, such support will last no longer than six months;
- Providing a list of potential candidates to serve as a neutral chairperson of the committee;

- Providing emergency assistance adapted to the particular closing, layoff, or disaster;
- Providing assistance to the local board and chief elected official(s) to develop a coordinated response to the dislocation event and, as needed, obtain access to State economic development assistance. Such coordinated response may include the development of an application for a National Emergency Grant under 20 CFR part 671. §§101(38) and 134(a)(2)(A).

During the planning meeting, necessary services and action plans for the affected employees are discussed and determined. This includes the availability of training, layoff aversion, employee transition, educational fairs, and job fairs.

The Task Force conducts a worker assistance workshop, attended by representatives of local and state agencies and affected workers, to review the programs and assistance available to them. Services and needs discussed at the workshop include retraining and educational opportunities, unemployment insurance, social service programs, stress associated with unemployment, credit counseling, insurance needs, and tips on how to find a new job. Worker assistance workshops also give the dislocated worker valuable information for establishing successful reemployment plans. The Task Force notifies all speakers, local and state agencies, partners, local education institutions, and community organizations. Attendees (workers) complete a survey of need requirements at the workshop, which is used to determine appropriate individual services later.

### **3. How does the State ensure a seamless transition between Rapid Response services and One-Stop activities for affected workers?**

The Governor's Dislocated Task Force conducts a worker assistance workshop, which is attended by representatives of local and state agencies, including staff of the Arkansas Workforce Centers, and affected the workers. Workers have the opportunity at the worker assistance workshops to meet with personnel from each of these agencies to arrange for services.

### **4. Describe how Rapid Response functions as a business service. Include whether Rapid Response partners with economic development agencies to connect employees from companies undergoing layoffs to similar companies that are growing and need skilled workers. How does Rapid Response promote the full range of services available to help companies in all stages of the economic cycle, not just those available during layoffs? How does the State promote Rapid Response as a positive, proactive, business-friendly service, not only a negative, reactive service?**

The State is positioned to readily educate employers regarding the services available through the Task Force and to connect dislocated workers to new or emerging jobs within the state by including the Arkansas Department of Economic Development as a member of the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force.

Materials explaining the purpose and role of the Task Force and Rapid Response services are published and provided to workers, employers, and the community through the mail, internet, handouts, and meetings. News releases are available via radio, television, and newspapers and are adapted to the specific audience.

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force Annual Report on Rapid Response contains success stories and services available to affected workers and companies. This material is sent to all libraries, County Judges, Chambers of Commerce, Mayors, and state legislative offices. It is also provided to businesses and associations. Statewide Rapid Response personnel attend Chamber of Commerce and other civic and community organization meetings to explain the services and benefits of early notification.

**5. What other partnerships does Rapid Response engage in to expand the range and quality of services available to companies and affected workers and to develop an effective early layoff-warning network?**

The unique design of the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force combined with the critical involvement of organizations with strong linkages to education, economic development, employment, and organized labor provides a network with the ability to quickly and efficiently detect forthcoming layoffs and/or closures.

Close and constant communication with employers is essential to any early layoff-warning network. The Task Force has developed intensive partnerships that bring together workforce intermediaries, economic development entities, small business development centers, higher education institutions, community organizations, labor organizations, education, employers, and industry associations. These multiple partnerships generate support for employers and workers during times of economic downturn.

To coordinate this effort the state DLW Task Force accomplishes the following:

- Coordinates with local boards and CEOs as appropriate;
- Coordinates with local program providers and brings information to dislocated workers about emergency services and human service programs within their area;
- Coordinates with the One Stop Centers to arrange for program representatives to provide information about workforce development programs, including information on Trade act programs;
- Creates and issues agendas to the employer and participating members;
- Determines workshops and/or demonstrations appropriate for each situation;
- Surveys the laid off workers prior to the meeting to determine their interest, concerns, and needs;
- Works with employers to determine meeting dates and times, making provisions for interpreters, room accommodations, specialized equipment, and demonstrations.

**6. What systems does the Rapid Response team use to track its activities? Does the State have a comprehensive, integrated Management Information System that includes Rapid Response, Trade Act programs, National Emergency Grants, and One-Stop activities?**

The State has implemented a new management information system for the One-Stop activities to include WIA programs, the Wagner-Peyser labor exchange system, and National Emergency Grants. The State is exploring the integration of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program into the new system and interfacing with several other one-stop partners to exchange information. Currently, Rapid Response activities are tracked through spreadsheets and databases developed internally.

**7. Are Rapid Response funds used for other activities not described above (e.g., the provision of additional assistance to local areas that experience increased workers or unemployed individuals due to dislocation events in case of unusually large layoff events)?**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board has made additional financial assistance available to local areas that experience an increased number of unemployed individuals due to dislocation events. The AWIB and DWS provide a number of services to the State's ten local workforce investment areas, Arkansas employers, and dislocated workers through National Emergency Grants and state activities reserve 15% funding. Some of these services include the following:



- Additional assistance to local areas affected by disasters, mass layoffs, and plant closings, or other unforeseen events, which substantially increase the population of unemployed workers;
- Additional assistance and funding to local areas in need of supplemental resources for worker readjustment and retraining services;
- A provision of supportive services and temporary income support to enable participants to remain in training; and
- Technical assistance to local areas to increase the coordination of other available resources including TAA entitlements (if workers are Trade-certified) and Pell Grants.

**E. Youth. ETA's Shared Youth Vision identifies youth most in need as: youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care; children of incarcerated parents; youth migrant and seasonal farm workers; youth with disabilities; Native American youth; homeless and runaway youth; court involved youth or those at-risk of involvement; out-of-school youth and high school drop-outs. State programs and services should take a comprehensive approach to serving these youth, including basic skills remediation, helping youth stay in or return to school, employment, internships, help with attaining a high school diploma or GED, post-secondary vocational training, apprenticeships, and enrollment in community and four-year colleges. §112(b)(18).**

**1. Describe your State's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need, as described above. Include any State requirements and activities to assist youth who have special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, or have disabilities. Include how the State will coordinate across State agencies responsible for workforce investment, foster care, education, human services, juvenile justice, and other relevant resources as part of the strategy. (§ 112(b) (18)).**

In December 2004, Arkansas representatives attended a regional forum sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Justice, Health and Human Services, and Education with the expressed purpose of collaborating on a shared youth vision for serving our neediest youth. This forum was held in response to the White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth (December 2003) and the new strategic vision for delivery of youth services under the Workforce Investment Act of the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA). As a direct result of this regional forum, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board served as the catalyst to bring together representatives from state and local workforce boards, business and industry, education, health and human service agencies, juvenile justice system, and Job Corps to collaborate on a shared youth vision for the youth of Arkansas.

Twenty-two representatives committed to organizing themselves into a formal collaborative entity with a vision of freely sharing information and resources to create and sustain a comprehensive system that provides youth easy access to the services and support that will prepare them to become productive members of society. The collaborative team established action teams with short-term goals to help them move forward with the vision and created a timeline of future actions.

In a document entitled "Governor's Priorities for WIA" (January 12, 2005), the former Governor identified the State's priorities to address needy youth. Through the State Workforce Investment Board, all interested agencies of the State's were notified.

Under the new administration, the current Governor has designated services to the state's neediest youth a priority. The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board has adopted the Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC) as an initiative to meet the needs of the state's neediest youth.

AYDC has identified the following strategies targeted to the neediest youth of Arkansas, which were referred to by the federal Shared Youth Vision as "Priority Investments" and have been termed "Youth of Promise" by the state collaborative:

- To engage a collaborative of youth providers, high growth industry employers, and local workforce investment boards to maintain a strong committed team approach;
- To ensure the appropriate integration of services for high performance outcomes;
- To establish multiple communication mediums that will ensure proper access to needed services by youth clients and their families;
- To advocate for better and improved systems that will be accountable for a high ratio of successes in the development of a workforce that meets the challenge of high demand/high growth industries; and
- To focus on connecting youth with high quality secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities and high-growth and other employment opportunities.

The migrant population is of great concern to Arkansas because this group is growing in size and scope. Arkansas has seen a 337% increase in its Hispanic population over the past ten years and many of these families formerly worked in the agricultural industry. Many of them also have found employment in similar industries such as the poultry and cattle industries. 'English as a second language' services are of particular importance to this client group. The workforce development system will utilize a portion of its resources to assist these youth.

In particular, local Workforce Investment Boards serving Central, Northwest and Southwest Arkansas are directed to focus their attention on this client group as the overwhelming majority of the Hispanic population and thus migrant youth are likely to be found in these regions.

## **2. Describe how coordination with Job Corps and other youth programs will occur. (§ 112(b) (18) (C)).**

Job Corps is an integral partner in providing services to WIA eligible youth. At the local level, Job Corps is an active member of youth councils, and coordination efforts have been very successful in providing services and connecting with the local One-Stop systems. Job Corps was represented at the state collaboration meeting for creating the new strategic approach to serving our state's neediest youth and has committed to being an active member of the ongoing, formalized collaborative state team that organized itself on April 29, 2005. In addition, Job Corps is a participating member of the State Vision Team, which is the workgroup of the Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative that meets monthly to ensure that the action plans and strategies of the collaborative remain on schedule.

## **3. How does the State Plan to utilize the funds reserved for statewide activities to support the State's vision for serving youth? Examples of activities that would be appropriate investments of these funds include:**

### **a. Utilizing the funds to promote cross agency collaboration**

Funding is allocated to provide periodic training regarding the state and regional collaborative efforts to evaluate progress and process. An annual conference will bring together the organized collaborative to review pre-set goals and service outcomes and to determine what has and has not worked. Best practices will be identified and posted on each agency's website and the AYDC website.

### **b. Demonstration of cross-cutting models of service delivery**

Crosscutting models of service delivery will be initially implemented through the establishment of two pilot sites in the state that will test the collaborative process used to organize the Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative.

One site will be located in the Eastern part of the state where there is a high incidence of low academic achievement and low economic activity. There is also a high incidence of youth entering the court system and there are few, if any, alternatives to recidivist behaviors. The site will have partnerships involving schools, alternative education, local business community, boys and girls club, and the resources of AYDC that will assist the area to provide overarching education, training and employment opportunities that are individualized for the targeted youth.

The second site will be located at an alternative high school located in a rural setting in central Arkansas. The school provides alternative education services to 14 schools districts. The site was chosen to define and address the issues of rural Arkansas that makes up a large portion of the state. The challenges will include incorporating all of the stakeholders as part of the collaborative and identifying methods that will lead to the youth receiving a diploma or GED and the support of a business or industry mentor from the nearest business and economic centers who will become the employers of these youth.

**c. Development of new models of alternative education leading to employment**

New models of alternative education that leads to employment will include the use of the Arkansas Juvenile Education Initiative (Jedi) Program, in school vocational exploration laboratories and innovative best practices that integrate classroom experiences with site training, similar to Youthbuild and the ISUS models.

**d. Development of demand-driven models with business and industry working collaboratively with the workforce investment system and education partners to develop strategies for bringing these youth successful into the workforce pipeline with the right skills.**

The Local Workforce Areas will be challenged to bring the business community economic development community into the local/regional collaborative to define the needs of high growth industry in the Local Area or region and to make a commitment to be involved in the workforce development strategies for these youth.

**e. Describe how your State will, in general, meet the Act's provisions regarding youth program design. §§112(b)(18) and 129(c).**

In response to activities outlined in WIA sections (112(b)(18) and 129(c), Local Boards will be challenged to lead in the development of a regional collaborative efforts that will blend into the regional economic development plan. The collaborative effort will be assisted by a training team from AYDC to ensure that necessary services are available to eligible youth. Coordination with foster care, education, welfare, and other relevant resources occurs through improved local youth councils and will be monitored through State review.

The Governor dedicates statewide funds for ongoing youth activities such as:

- Distribution of Additional 15% Discretionary Funding to Local Areas with High Concentration of Eligible Youth. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and implementing regulations require states to use a portion of statewide activity funds to provide additional assistance to local areas that have "high concentrations of eligible youth." The Department of Workforce Services develops methodologies and calculates several allocation levels for funding and identifies those workforce areas in Arkansas eligible for this additional funding. The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board makes the final determination as to the level of funding and distributes additional funding based on the chosen methodology and needs described by the Local Area.

- Promotion of cross-agency collaboration. During the Spring of 2005, the State Board served as the catalyst to bring together representatives from state and local workforce boards, business and industry, education, health and human service agencies, juvenile justice system, and Job Corps to collaborate on Arkansas' new strategic vision for serving youth.
- The State Board sponsored a 2-day workshop to facilitate this effort as a follow-up to the Regional Youth Forum in December 2004 discussed above. The U.S. Department of Labor's new strategic vision for the delivery of WIA youth services was issued in TEGN No.3-04, July 2004, and served as the basis for this collaborative effort.
- The participating team members committed to continuing the collaboration and to formalize its existence. The team established a vision and a mission for providing services to the youth of Arkansas, with particular interest in serving the neediest youth. Goals and action teams were established, complete with timelines for accomplishments. This collaborative team agreed to meet quarterly as a comprehensive unit, with action teams meeting on an as-needed basis for the accomplishment of strategies leading to successful goal attainment. Statewide youth activity funds will be utilized to promote this effort.
- The collaborative has been formally named the Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC). The collaborative has developed a collaboration process that can be replicated in each of the Local Workforce Investment Areas as a part of a regionalization strategy.
- Two pilot sites are planned to evaluate the collaboration process in a rural setting and an economically depressed area to refine steps in the process to meet the need statewide.
- AYDC has a youth specific website ([www.aydc.arkansas.gov](http://www.aydc.arkansas.gov)) that is utilized as a source of information and communication to the youth, parents, and collaborative members as each area moves through both the collaborative process and the development of a regional shared youth vision.
- A State Vision Team, a work group of the collaborative, meets monthly to ensure that action plans and strategies stay on track.
- Focus groups and cross agency training to promote and facilitate the strategies of the collaborative have been planned in partnership with several of the major state agencies to move the plan for cross agency collaboration and resource sharing along.
- The collaborative has committed to four areas of focus aligned with the Federal Shared Youth Vision:
  - (1) Improved performance through services provided to these youth that are outcome driven;
  - (2) Services are to youth in the 9 categories indicated in the visions to ensure that services are individualized to meet the needs of the youth;
  - (3) Services and training will be demand driven to meet the needs of high growth industry statewide and regionally; and
  - (4) Alternative education models are used to fill educational gaps and to provide innovation and measurable successes for youth struggling in the traditional educational settings. The four focus areas will ensure the implementation of the five strategies of the collaborative.

**F. Business Services (§§112(a) and 112(b)(2).) Provide a description of the state's strategies to improve the services to employers, including a description of how the State intends to:**

**1. Determine the employer needs in the local areas and on a statewide basis.**

A variety of strategies carried out on a local and statewide level assist in the determination of employer needs. Statewide strategies include the gathering and disseminating of workforce and labor market information to the local areas. The recent addition of the Arkansas Labor Market Information Library ( <http://discoverarkansas.net> ) provides a wealth of information to assist in the development of business services. Armed with this data, state and local staff will be more able to develop the menu of services available to businesses.

The state realizes that in order for employers to use the public workforce system, they must be aware of the system and comprehend the value the system provides. Subsequently, the state will continue to engage employers to increase their awareness and use of the system and encourage the sharing of information regarding the system with business peers.

We are evaluating and focusing on what business needs are so that we may better connect to specific industries that are high in demand as well as strengthen our economic development and community college partnerships. This consideration will allow us to further leverage our funding and/or human resources. Our local business representatives maintain a service delivery database that tracks our contacts, delivery of services, and outcomes. Arkansas's Job Link system also serves as a contact management system. This system has allowed us to provide a menu of employer services that can be readily accessible across the state.

We are constantly evaluating state strategies to improve service to our employers. Each local workforce area has dedicated workforce professionals who establish relationships with employers and industries. These specialized staff persons conduct local area outreach to individual employers to list their job openings with the Workforce Centers and become the employer's primary point of contact. This approach has encouraged employers to list their job with our Centers. Business services staff meets with local economic development representatives and human resource professionals to discuss current workforce system needs, projected needs and, how to target new employers.

Business services staff conducts strategic outreach activities to target industries whose employers want the skill that our applicants possess. These tactics include phone, direct mail and face-to-face visits. The staff maintains a supply of Workforce Center brochures and information packets, which include a menu of our services. Packets also include Work Opportunity Tax Credit information. The staff also provides guidance in applying for the tax credit.

Arkansas has also invested in KeyTrain, a computer-based training for WorkKeys and occupational skill assessment and practice. The Certificate Key program provides the tools to manage work-readiness certificates based on WorkKeys skills. Certificate Key will easily identify those job seekers who are ready to take certificate assessments or who have earned certificates. Employers and training professional can quickly find desired prospective employees by listing those individuals who have earned certificates or achieved necessary skills and are seeking work in appropriate interest areas. The system will easily manage a multi-level certificate program. The system will:

- Allow access to lists of prospective employees who have certified skills;
- Aggregate the available list of prospective employees from multiple training providers; and

- Post information concerning careers and jobs available in employer organizations.

## **2. Integrate business services, including Wagner-Peyser Act services, to employers through the One-Stop System.**

In early 2005, Arkansas re-energized the Local Employer Advisory Councils (LEACs) across the State. The driving force behind the LEACs is the employee commitment of the Department of Workforce Services, the agency responsible for Wagner-Peyser programs in Arkansas. Other members include local human resource managers and other business professionals with hiring authority. LEACs provide a forum, through regularly scheduled meetings, for employers to discuss concerns and gather information regarding Wagner-Peyser and the other One-Stop programs.

The state and local WIBs place a high priority on increasing market penetration, particularly with new business and high growth industries. Local service providers engage in marketing the One-Stop system's business services, providing services to business and ensuring the services meet the customer's needs. Such activities include:

- Target marketing to new businesses and high growth industries, using direct mail and follow-up telephone calls to introduce customers to available programs and services;
- Maintaining active membership and participation in local business organizations, such as local Chambers of Commerce, economic development groups, and human resource manager groups;
- Conducting business forums at the local level to market to local employment and training services and briefing attendees on labor market information; and
- Conducting job fairs and on-site recruitments to assist small business, high-growth industries, and targeted populations.

The state supports business services efforts through marketing grants and discretionary grants focused on services benefiting employers and delivered through partnerships with the business community.

## **3. Streamline administration of Federal tax credit programs within the One-Stop system to maximize employer participation? (20 CFR part 652.3(b), §112(b)(17)(A).)**

Arkansas uses Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Welfare-To-Work Tax Credit programs to promote the hiring of welfare recipients, veterans, and individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, and members of other targeted groups. The primary strategy for encouraging employers to take advantage of these tax credits focuses on increasing awareness and knowledge of the tax credit programs. We are increasing awareness of these programs and maximizing employer participation by:

- Posting information about Federal tax credits on our partners' websites;
- Making the forms available through download from our ESD and AWIB website; and
- Including information about the tax credits through publications sent to employers.

Staff members in the Workforce Centers have the necessary knowledge to help the employers to understand the tax credit guidelines and the application process/factors, which should expedite the receipt of appropriate tax credits.

## **G. Innovative Service Delivery Strategies §112(b)(17)(A).**

**1. Describe innovative service delivery strategies the State has or is planning to undertake to maximize resources, increase service levels, improve service quality, achieve better integration or meet other key State goals. Include in the description the initiative's general design, anticipated outcomes, partners involved and funds leveraged (e.g., Title I formula, Statewide reserve, employer contributions, education funds, non-WIA State funds).**

One outcome of Arkansas' participation in the NGA Pathways to Advancement Policy Academy has been the adoption of a common list of high demand training occupations and the agreement by all state agency workforce partners to use the list in evaluating new training options. The list was developed using Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Labor Market Information as a base (projections data), supplemented as described.

A state level work group from a variety of state agencies, private businesses, and local agencies validated the list and determined the level of projected need to consider as high demand. The process was repeated with local, public, and private counterparts in each of the ten Arkansas Workforce Investment Areas. The resulting list was matched to the Educational Career Clusters and to the two-year industry targets adopted by the Arkansas Economic Development Council. A note identifying the U.S. DOL High Growth Initiative industries was included with the list.

The State's workforce development system will be more efficient and effective for businesses and jobseekers because federal and state workforce training programs in Arkansas have been unified toward a common goal of serving businesses and jobseeker customers in the most efficient and effective way possible. Utilizing value added performance will result in the following outcomes.

- Enhanced accountability
- Promotion of program management and planning
- Improved program performance
- Promotion of greater customer satisfaction
- Reduction in the incentive for "creaming"
- Encouragement of local administrators to focus on what works best for the customer
- Better and more current information when negotiating performance measures
- Consistent framework for understanding and conveying what factors affect performance

Another initiative that drew on the knowledge, skills, and resources of many partners is the adoption of Arkansas Job Link to operate and manage WIA IB, WIA III and other workforce programs in Arkansas. Because initially the system will be used for WIA IB and WIA III, WIA and Wagner-Peyser shared equally in the funding of the conversion from the old systems and in the implementation. Each partner program will pay the cost of linking with AJL. Linkages are expected in 2007 with Unemployment Insurance and Transitional Employment Assistance (TANF). Trade Adjustment Assistance Act funds will be used to make any changes necessary to use AJL to manage TAA programs.

**2. If your State is participating in the ETA Personal Re-employment Account (PRA) demonstration, describe your vision for integrating PRAs as a service delivery alternative as part of the State's overall strategy for workforce investment.**

Not applicable.

**H. Strategies for Faith-based and Community Organizations (§112(b)(17)(i).) Enhancing outreach opportunities to those most in need is a fundamental element of the demand-driven systems goal to increase the pipeline of needed workers while meeting the training and employment needs of those most at risk. Faith-based and community organizations provide unique opportunities for the workforce investment system to access this pool of workers and meet the needs of business and industry. Describe those activities to be undertaken to : (1) increase the opportunities for participation of faith-based and community organizations as committed and active partners in the One-Stop delivery system; and (2) expand the access of faith-based and community-based organizations' clients and customers to the services offered by the One-Stops in the State. Outline those action steps designed to strengthen State collaboration efforts with local workforce investment areas in conducting outreach campaigns to educate faith-based and community organizations about the attributes and objectives of the demand-driven workforce investment system. Indicate how these resources can be strategically and effectively leveraged in the State's workforce investment areas to help meet the objectives of the Workforce Investment Act.**

Arkansas' commitment to provide universal access and meaningful service to clients includes the participation and resource sharing with the Faith and Community based organizations in the state. The Arkansas Workforce Centers, in every area of the state, have informal referral processes with many Faith-based groups. Several of the Local Workforce Investment Boards have entered formal grant proposals with Faith and Community based groups. The State board has a staff person assigned to this initiative who provides technical assistance and participates with other state agencies in an effort to increase the quality of service to clients through the collaboration of the publicly funded system and Faith and Community based organizations.

The Governor and the State Board recognize that the integration and partnership of Faith and Community based organizations with the local One-Stop systems is critical to serving individuals with multiple barriers in our most economically oppressed areas of the State.

Over 30 faith and community based organizations (across seven counties) were funded to provide services in the area of improving outcomes for youth, parenting, and family functioning. The majority of these services are provided in the form of after-school programs. All grant cycles were for one-year contracts in duration.

The marriage and fatherhood program went into full swing in September 2006. These programs will provide training to more than 200 faith and community based organizations and allow up to 50 organizations to receive \$10,000 contracts to provide marriage and fatherhood training to their communities. The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service was the primary partner state entity involved in this initiative.

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service (UACES) assisted in the charge to prepare Arkansans for marriage and to strengthen existing marriages. UACES trained faith and community leaders through five workshops across the state. Leaders were empowered to provide training, resources, and support within their various communities.

UACES had the following successful outcomes:

- Trained trainers (e.g., faith and community leaders) on fundamental research-based principles of healthy marriage relationships, methods of sharing those principles with others, and how the principles apply to marriage relationships at any stage of a relationship (e.g., newlywed, empty-nest, remarriage, etc.);
- Trained trainers to use the UACES *Marriage Garden* curriculum with residents of Arkansas;
- Provided trainers with a set of the very best resource materials on strong marriages (and extracts from those resources so trainers will have ready access to a collection of marriage and relationship quotes;



- Assisted the state staff in developing a RFP for mini-grants and in reviewing mini-grant proposals that trainers submitted for consideration; and
- Provided in-person and electronic (e.g., DVD) technical assistance and support to trainers as they use *The Marriage Garden* curriculum and implement other marriage strengthening activities in their communities.

The same model was used with the fatherhood initiative, and partnerships were developed with the Division of Volunteerism to provide capacity building and technical assistance to faith and community based organizations.

The Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services (ADHHS) Division of Volunteerism (DOV) has been working with non-profit groups since 1974. In providing training and technical assistance to these organizations DOV plans to target the five key areas of capacity building: leadership development, organizational development, program development revenue development, and community engagement during this next program cycle.

## **X. State Administration**

**A. What technology infrastructure and/or management information systems does the State have in place to support the State and local workforce investment activities such as a One-Stop operating system designed to facilitate case management and service delivery across programs, a State job matching system, web-based self service tools for customers, fiscal management systems, etc.? (§ 111(d) (2), 112(b) (1) and 112(b) (8) (B)).**

Arkansas has excelled in its efforts in modernizing its data management system used for both Labor Exchange and WIA. Currently, the State is utilizing America's Job Link (AJL), as this program has met the vast majority of the State's requirements. In Arkansas, this program is recognized as Arkansas Job Link ([www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov](http://www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov)). Evolving to this operating and management information system is part of Arkansas' on going efforts to continue to raise the bar in meeting both employer and job seeker expectations. Because of its accessibility, it serves the needs of job seekers and employers who want options available to them in assessing the labor market, either through self-service or through staff-assisted help. It also shares a single database with WIA for ease and efficiency in case management information, and visible and usable real time data to facilitate client training assistance. Additionally, AJL provides the information job seekers and employers require to make informed decisions, including career information and State and local profiles for planning purposes.

Customer-specific portal pages offer customers the information they require to explore their labor market needs. Individuals are offered many services, including:

- Securing career profiles;
- Comparing occupations side-by-side;
- Searches by skills and interests;
- Searches by job type available;
- Identifying lists of employers to support their job searches; and
- Availability of articles, publications, and access to other career resources

Businesses can create job descriptions using occupational profiles, comparing local occupational wages, creating demographic profiles for affirmative action planning or government contracts, and more.

Arkansas's One-Stop operating system fully integrates labor exchange and case management services for job seekers and employers. It was selected for Arkansas by a multi-partner team with significant input

from State and local users. It is anticipated that additional State workforce system partners' (UI, TAA, Rehab Services, DHS, TEA/TANF) programs will be integrated into AJL such that basic demographic data sharing will occur within the next five years. This will allow the State to improve data reporting, better evaluate program performance, and ultimately improve services to clients. For the caseworker and job service interviewer, it will greatly facilitate establishing and maintaining currency of client accounts.

**B. Describe the State's plan for use of the funds reserved for Statewide Activities under WIA § 128 (a) (1).**

The State's current plan for the use of statewide discretionary funding is focused on the Governor's Priorities, as indicated below:

- High Growth Job Training Initiative and the Career Pathways program
- Incumbent Worker Training Program
- Arkansas's Most In-Need Youth
- Persons with Limited English Proficiency
- Mature Job Seekers
- Health Care/Nursing
- Aviation

The development of plans to commit a portion of the Statewide Activity funds towards each of these priorities is ongoing. The State Board has determined that targeting these areas through solicitations that make funds available, as well as through the funding of unsolicited proposals, will greatly enhance the workforce system's capacity to provide training and other services to the targeted client populations and industries.

**C. Describe how any waivers or workflex authority (both existing and planned) will assist the State in developing its workforce investment system. (§§189(i)(1), 189 (i)(4)(A), and 192).**

Local Workforce Investment Boards have discussed the potential for the state to seek selected waivers as strategies for the ongoing improvement of the Arkansas Workforce Investment System. The State of Arkansas will continue to examine potential options to request individual waivers in accordance with the flexibility provisions contained under WIA. The State is currently considering pursuing approval as a workflex state. The State of Arkansas requests an extension of the current waivers listed below.

1. The State of Arkansas is requesting extension of the current waiver permitting reinstatement of the initial eligibility provisions and waiving Section 122 (c) and (d) that requires subsequent eligibility.

Section 122(d) of WIA requires that training providers submit verifiable program- specific information on the outcomes of all individuals and WIA participants who have attended the training program when applying for subsequent eligibility. Section 122 also stipulates that the information submitted must meet minimum levels set by the State.

Currently, most of Arkansas' training providers have entered into the subsequent eligibility portion of this process. However, many of them, especially the two and four-year public colleges, have found it difficult or impossible to collect the required data due to the different reporting requirements for the Department of Education and WIA. This has caused many schools to be disqualified as Eligible Training Providers in Arkansas or to quit participating in the process.

DWS attempted to assist the schools in obtaining the necessary information for subsequent eligibility by matching student social security numbers with Unemployment Insurance wage records. Due to the FERPA law and the realization that not all schools collect and/or use actual social security numbers for enrollment, the process was not successful. The few training providers who do collect the required data have also found it difficult to meet the state minimum levels. It is possible for one poor performance can disqualified a program because of the small number of WIA participants served by the program.

Therefore, in order to maintain an adequate number of training providers and programs on the Eligible Training Provider List, Arkansas requests an extension of this critical waiver provision.

2. The State of Arkansas is requesting an extension to the current waiver that allows the transfer of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams to be raised from 20% to 40%. This waiver allows local workforce areas more flexibility in serving the needs of their demographic area population.
3. The State of Arkansas is requesting an extension to our current waiver permitting Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for Youth.
4. The State of Arkansas is requesting an extension of the current waiver that limits the authority to provide the activities identified in WIA Sections 129(b) and 134 to the State level. The waiver provides additional flexibility to meet employer demands for incumbent worker training.

While WIA allows Incumbent Worker Training Programs to be funded at the State level, we believe the opportunity to accelerate Incumbent Worker Training activities provides considerable benefit to those Arkansas employers in urgent need of more highly skilled employees in order to effectively compete in today's marketplace. Without such funding assistance, some of these employers might well succumb to such competitive pressures, and the jobs these employers provide in the local areas would be lost.

This waiver permits local areas, on a voluntary basis, to request to use up to 10% of local area adult and dislocated worker formula allocation funds to provide Incumbent Worker Training, a state wide employment and training activity. Local Areas will be expected to track these formula funds by funding stream.

**D. Performance Management and Accountability. Improved performance and accountability for customer-focused results are central features of WIA. To improve, states need not only systems in place to collect data and track performance, but also systems to analyze the information and modify strategies to improve performance. (See Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 15-03, Common Measures Policy, December 10, 2003.) In this section, describe how the State measures the success of its strategies in achieving its goals, and how the State uses these data to continuously improve the system.**

**1. Describe the State's performance accountability system, including any state system measures and the state's performance goals established with local areas. Identify the performance indicators and goals the state has established to track its progress toward meeting its strategic goals and implementing its vision for the Workforce Investment system. For each of the core indicators, explain how the State worked with local boards to determine the level of the performance goals. Include a discussion of how the levels compare with the state's previous outcomes as well as with the State-adjusted levels of performance established for other states (if available), taking into account differences in economic conditions, the characteristics of participants when they entered the program and the services provided. Include a description of how the levels will help the State achieve continuous improvement over the two years of the plan.**

Arkansas is continually working towards the creation of a flexible, demand-driven system that is fully accountable at the state and federal levels. America's Job Link Alliance computer system provides a wealth of data via reports that assist Arkansas in tracking its progress toward meeting its strategic goals and vision for the State's workforce investment system.

This information includes specific demographic information regarding participants who received services from Workforce Center staff as well as those who availed themselves to the self-service component. From an employer perspective, we are now positioned to have the capability to access information relating to the wide-array of services provided to employers who access our system via job service activity reports by NAICS codes and occupations. This information is proving invaluable in setting specific goals and tracking overall progress towards those goals.

In an effort to better evaluate progress toward our strategic goals, state staff has deemed the implementation of the following processes necessary:

- Preparation of a quarterly performance summary by local areas that will provide a historical trend for each performance measure, providing data by quarter for the current program year and the characteristics of clients served within the local area;
- Initiation of discussions with each local area to analyze local area performance and identify methods for improvement; and
- Routine briefings to senior management regarding labor exchange performance and how the performance affects the State's common measures. This data helps senior management make specific decisions influencing both field management and staff positioning (or placement) to meet the labor exchange requirements. Arkansas is confident that, with additional time and experience, it will identify innovative ways to use the data inherent in AJL and, as a result, be better able to measure field efficiency and effectiveness in serving our client base.

In setting the levels for negotiation of Arkansas' PY 2007-08 performance targets, AWIB staff studied previous years' levels, analyzed statewide economic conditions, looked at other states' performance levels within Region IV, and used all these factors in developing the suggested performance levels for the seventeen measures. Work sheets for these core indicators were then provided to each of the ten local workforce investment areas.

The locals were advised to review and discuss each measure with their local board performance committees, and chief elected officials and then have their pivotal decision makers available on a conference call with AWIB staff to discuss their desired levels and negotiate the resulting local and state level outcomes. Performance negotiations between the local areas and the AWIB conclude when USDOL and the AWIB agree on Arkansas's performance measures.

The agreed upon measures are anticipated to help the State achieve continuous improvement over the two years of the plan because the performance agreements account for economic differences and population characteristics that may affect performance of the local areas, which directly affects performance on a state level. Arkansas continues to monitor its performance levels to ensure that the levels are achievable and realistic.

**2. Describe any target applicant groups under WIA Title I, the Wagner-Peyser Act or Title 38 Chapters 41 and 42 (Veterans Employment and Training Programs) that the State tracks.**

All veterans, regardless of their category, are provided priority service by employment staff. Employment staff works with all of the specially targeted veterans groups such as those with multiple barriers to employment, newly separated, and economically/educationally disadvantaged veterans. Those who require intensive services are referred to the appropriate DVOP, LVER or WIA staff. Once referred, the staff member works closely with the veteran to overcome his/her barriers to employment.

**3. Identify any performance outcomes or measures in addition to those prescribed in WIA and what process the State is using to track and report them.**

Currently, Arkansas has no additional performance measures for the workforce system outside those prescribed by the WIA.

**4. Describe the State's common data system and reporting processes in place to track progress. Describe what data will be collected from the various One-Stop partners (beyond what is required by the DOL), use of quarterly wage records (including how your state accesses wage records), and how the Statewide system will have access to the information to continuously improve.**

A full description of the State's common data system and reporting processes in place to track progress is included in Sections IV.J., VI.A. and X.A. of this plan.

Some of the data collected beyond that required by the Department of Labor include assessment information obtained from the client that will reveal his/her service needs. Such items include name, contact information, SSN, employment plan, spouse's military history, migrant worker status, name of service provider(s), test scores, amount of PELL grant, identification to which state the client is seeking employment, county of residence, county of service, work history, career objectives, and preferences (wage, work shift, full/part time employment, whether the client wants résumé visible to employers, etc.).

Quarterly wage records are utilized for Department of Labor reporting through the WIA Quarterly Performance Report, WIA Annual Report, the WIASRD, and the Labor Exchange ETA 9002 Report. These reports are obtained through an interface between the State UI database and Arkansas Job Link, as well as through another interface between DART and AJL. Until recently, wage records were also obtained through the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and loaded into AJL for calculation into Department of Labor performance reports.

**5. Describe the actions the Governor and State Board will take to ensure collaboration with key partners and continuous improvement of the Statewide Workforce System.**

The State Board works collaboratively with our key stakeholders in many areas of workforce development in Arkansas. For example, the Governor has established a Workforce Cabinet, which is a conglomeration of various agencies committed to developing, investing in, and supporting a strong, viable workforce in Arkansas. In addition, the AWIB adopted the Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC) as a primary project aimed at reaching underserved youth and strengthening the infrastructure of Arkansas' youth-service network. The AWIB was also selected to participate in the NGA Policy Academy and anticipates gleaning viable policy to support the roles of mature workers in Arkansas' communities.

**6. How do the State and local boards evaluate performance? What corrective actions (including sanctions and technical assistance) will the State take if performance falls short of expectations? How will the State and Local Boards use the review process to reinforce the strategic direction of the system?**

State staff provides performance data to each local area complete with requested responses detailing the methods or steps to be taken to improve performance in each measure. In addition, state staff will assist local areas in developing strategies that are in accordance with the State's overall strategic direction.

The State Board approved a Sanctions Policy in 2005 that prescribes the corrective actions to be taken for failures in annual performance. The State will provide technical assistance in support of the local corrective action plan, including assistance in meeting the strategic elements of the state and local system.

Since July 2005, local areas have been scheduled to appear before the State Board at its quarterly meetings to discuss performance and other pertinent local issues. These appearances also will provide an opportunity for local areas to discuss how their efforts are consistent with the strategic direction of the State.

**7. What steps, if any, has the State taken to prepare for implementation of new reporting requirements against the common performance measures as described in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 15-03, December 10, 2003, Common Measures Policy?**

In addition to statewide training provided by the State, the state management information system (MIS) will be updated by America's Job Link Alliance (AJLA) to meet the common measures requirements.

**8. Include the proposed level for each performance measure for each of the two program years covered by the Plan. While the plan is under review, the state will negotiate with the respective ETA Regional Administrator to set the appropriate levels for the next two years. At a minimum, states must identify the performance indicators required under section 136, and, for each indicator, the State must develop an objective and quantifiable performance goal for two program years. States are encouraged to address how the performance goals for local workforce investment areas and training providers will help them attain their statewide performance goals.**

The State's negotiated WIA performance levels for Program Years 2007-2008 are included in this plan as Attachment D.

## **XI. Assurances**

1. The State assures that it will establish, in accordance with section 184 of the Workforce Investment Act, fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through the allotments made under sections 127 and 132. (§112(b)(11).)
2. The State assures that it will comply with section 184(a)(6), which requires the Governor to, every two years, certify to the Secretary, that -
  1. the State has implemented the uniform administrative requirements referred to in section 184(a)(3);
  2. the State has annually monitored local areas to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements as required under section 184(a)(4); and
  3. the State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance pursuant to section 184(a)(5). (§184(a)(6).)
3. The State assures that the adult and youth funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be distributed equitably throughout the State, and that no local areas will suffer significant shifts in funding from year to year during the period covered by this Plan. (§112(b)(12)(B).)
4. The State assures that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in section 134 of the Workforce Investment Act, and the activities authorized in chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 US code. The State assures that it will comply with the veteran's priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act. (38 USC 4215.)
5. The State assures that the Governor shall, once every two years, certify one local board for each local area in the State. (§117(c)(2).)
6. The State assures that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of section 136(f)(3).
7. The State assures that no funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing. (§181(b)(7).)
8. The State assures that it will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188, including an assurance that a Methods of Administration has been developed and implemented (§188.)

9. The State assures that it will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188. (§185.)
10. The State assures that it will comply with the grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary (pursuant to the authority at section 189(c) of the Act), which are necessary to enter into grant agreements for the allocation and payment of funds under the Act. The procedures and agreements will be provided to the State by the ETA Office of Grants and Contract Management and will specify the required terms and conditions and assurances and certifications, including, but not limited to, the following:
  1. General Administrative Requirements:
    - 29 CFR part 97 — Uniform Administrative Requirements for State and Local Governments (as amended by the Act)
    - 29 CFR part 96 (as amended by OMB Circular A-133) — Single Audit Act
    - OMB Circular A-87 — Cost Principles (as amended by the Act)
  - Assurances and Certifications:
    - SF 424 B — Assurances for Non-construction Programs
    - 29 CFR part 37 — Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and regulation) 29 CFR § 37.20
    - CFR part 93 — Certification Regarding Lobbying (and regulation)
    - 29 CFR part 98 — Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension Certifications (and regulation)
  2. Special Clauses/Provisions: Other special assurances or provisions as may be required under Federal law or policy, including specific appropriations legislation, the Workforce Investment Act, or subsequent Executive or Congressional mandates.
11. The State certifies that the Wagner-Peyser Act Plan, which is part of this document, has been certified by the State Employment Security Director.
12. The State certifies that veterans' services provided with Wagner-Peyser Act funds will be in compliance with 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and 20 CFR part 1001.
13. The State certifies that Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities will be provided by merit-based public employees in accordance with DOL regulations.
14. The State assures that it will comply with the MSFW significant office requirements in accordance with 20 CFR Part 653.
15. The State certifies it has developed this Plan in consultation with local elected officials, local workforce boards, the business community, labor organizations and other partners.
16. As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I of WIA, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws:
  - Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA Title I—financially assisted program or activity;
  - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color and national origin;

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs. The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIA Title I-financially
- Assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

17. The State assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act and the Wagner-Peyser Act and their regulations, written Department of Labor Guidance implementing these laws, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.





## Attachment A

### Program Administration Designees and Plan Signatures

**Name of WIA Title I Grant Recipient Agency:** Department of Workforce Services  
(Formerly Arkansas Employment Security Department, AESD)

Telephone Number: 501.682.2121

Facsimile Number: 501.682.2273

E-mail Address: artee.williams@arkansas.gov

**Name of State WIA Title I Administrative Agency** (if different from the Grant Recipient): Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

Address: Post Office Box 2981

Little Rock, AR 72203

Telephone Number: 501.682.1020

Facsimile Number: 501.371.1030

E-mail Address: colette.honorable@arkansas.gov

**Name of WIA Title I Signatory Official:** Artee Williams, Director, DWS

Address: Post Office Box 2981

Little Rock, AR 72203

Telephone Number: 501.682.2121

Facsimile Number: 501.682.2273

E-mail Address: artee.williams@arkansas.gov

### **Name of WIA Title I Liaison:**

Colette D. Honorable, Executive Director, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

Address: Post Office Box 2981

Little Rock, AR 72203

Telephone Number: 501.371.1085

Facsimile Number: 510.371.1030

E-mail Address: colette.honorable@arkansas.gov

**Name of Wagner-Peyser Act Grant Recipient/State Employment Security Agency:**

Address: Department of Workforce Services  
Post Office Box 2981  
Little Rock, AR 72203  
Telephone Number: 501.682.2121  
Facsimile Number: 501.682.2273  
E-mail Address: artee.williams@arkansas.gov

**Name and title of State Employment Security Director (Signatory Official):**

Artee Williams, Director, Department of Workforce Services  
Address: Post Office Box 2981  
Little Rock, AR 72203  
Telephone Number: 501.682.2121  
Facsimile Number: 501.682.2273  
E-mail Address: artee.williams@arkansas.gov

As the Governor, I certify that for the State of Arkansas, the agencies and officials designated above have been duly designated to represent the State in the capacities indicated for the Workforce Investment Act, Title I, and Wagner-Peyser Act grant programs. Subsequent changes in the designation of officials will be provided to the U.S. Department of Labor as such changes occur.

I further certify that we will operate our Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs in accordance with this Plan and the assurances herein.

Typed Name of Governor: Mike Beebe

Signature of Governor  Date 6-26-07

## **Attachment B**

### **Grievance and Appeal Procedure**

#### **I. Purpose:**

In accordance with 20 CFR 667.600, the purpose of this procedure is as follows:

A process for dealing with grievances and complaints from participants and other interested parties affected by the statewide workforce investment programs

A process for resolving appeals from decisions made at the local level

A process for remanding grievances and complaints related to the local Workforce Investment Act programs to the local area grievance process

The purpose of this procedure is also a process for appealing decisions made concerning the statewide workforce investment system.

These procedures are made available, upon request, to all WIA Title I participants and staff persons.

#### **II. General Guidelines for Filing a Grievance or Complaint [WIA §181(c); 20 CFR**

**667.600; 20 CFR 610]**

A. Each local workforce investment board will establish and maintain a procedure for grievances or complaints alleging violations of the requirements of Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 or Arkansas Act 1125 of 1999 from participants and other interested or affected parties. Grievances or complaints involving local activities should follow these local procedures. Grievances or complaints involving statewide activities should be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Executive Director (Director) of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board at the address below.

B. If a grievance or complaint is filed with the Director that, in the opinion of the Director, after consultation with the chairman of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, should first be filed with the local workforce investment board, that grievance will be remanded to the administrator or director of the local board to be processed there. This decision will be made within 30 days of receiving the grievance. Notification of remanding will be sent to the complainant or informant.

C. All complaints, with the exception of complaints alleging fraud or criminal activity, must be filed within one year of the alleged occurrence.

D. The name of the complainant or informant will be kept confidential where possible. Where disclosure of the person's identity is essential to assure a fair determination of the issues and to effectively accomplish responsibilities under the Workforce Investment Act, disclosure will be under conditions that promote continued receipt of confidential information. Written reports may be subject to disclosure under Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.

E. No person, organization, or agency may discharge or in any other manner retaliate against any person because that person has filed a complaint, instituted any proceeding related to the Workforce Investment Act, testified or is about to testify in any proceeding or investigation, or provided information or assisted in an investigation.

F. Complainant's statement must include:

- The full name, telephone number (if any), and address of the person making the complaint;
- The full name and address of the person or entity against whom the complaint is made;
- A clear and concise statement of the facts, including pertinent dates, constituting the alleged violation;
- The provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Act 1125 of 1999, regulations, a grant, or other agreements under WIA Title I believed to have been violated; and
- A statement disclosing whether proceedings involving the subject of the request have been commenced or concluded before any federal, state, or local authority, and if so, the date of the commencement or conclusion and the name and address of the authority.

G. Upon receipt of a grievance or complaint, the Director or designee will acknowledge of receipt of the grievance to all parties by certified mail, return receipt requested. The acknowledgement of receipt of the grievance will:

- Outline the steps to be taken to resolve the matter;
- Notify all parties of the right to request a hearing;
- Advise of attempt to reach an informal resolution; and
- Provide a synopsis of issues to be decided.

H. The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (State Board) will be consulted on all grievances or complaints. A written decision will be made within 60 days of receipt of the grievance or complaint. If requested, a hearing will be completed within those 60 days.

I. The following procedures will apply to a hearing:

- The hearing will be informal. Technical rules of evidence will not apply.
- Hearsay evidence will be admissible at the discretion of the hearing examiner.
- Hearings will be held at a time and place determined by the Director, in agreement with the State Board, after reasonable written notice has been sent to the parties and the witnesses.
- The party requesting the hearing will have the burden of establishing the facts and the entitlement to the relief requested.
- Either party may be represented by an attorney or other representative.
- Either party may bring witnesses and documentary evidence.

- The respondent will cooperate by making available any person under their control or employ to testify, if these persons are requested to testify by the complainant, and to release requested documents relevant to the issue after the requesting party has established that such testimony/documentation is relative and not cumulative.
- Either party or representative will have the opportunity to question any witness.
- A verbatim record or tape recording will be made of the proceeding.
- A written decision will be made by the Director or designee, after consultation with Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

J. If a hearing is not requested, the Director or designee will conduct an administrative fact finding investigation, with the collaboration of the State Board. The investigation will include the following processes.

- Opportunities for all parties to submit an in-depth position statement, including documentary supportive data and/or records
- Access to and review of appropriate official records
- Interview of principle parties and opportunity for all parties to offer rebuttal to information received
- A written decision

K. A written decision will be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, and will contain the following items.

- Statement assuring that all steps included in the grievance/complaint procedures have been adhered to
- Issue(s) being decided
- Statement of facts
- Reasons for the decision
- Remedies to be offered, if appropriate
- Summary
- Advisement of the right to appeal the decision

L. A party to which the decision is adverse may appeal the decision to the Secretary of Labor (Secretary). The appeal must be filed within 60 days of the receipt of the decision. All appeals must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address below. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the appropriate U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Regional Administrator and the opposing party. The Secretary will investigate the grievance or complaint and make a final determination relating to the appeal no later than 120 days after receiving such appeal.

M. If no decision reached by the Director and the State Board within 60 days of the filing of the grievance or complaint, then the grievance or complaint may be filed with the Secretary within 120 days of the original filing date. The procedures listed in II(L) above must be followed.

N. In most cases, the decision of the Secretary may be appealed to the Office of Administrative Law Judges within 21 days of receipt of the final determination. Instructions for this appeal are given in 20 CFR 667 Subpart H. *[WIA §186; WIA §187]*

O. Nothing in this procedure shall be constructed to prohibit a grievant or complainant from pursuing a remedy authorized under another federal, state, or local law.

### **III. Appeal of Local Decisions**

A. A decision made by a local workforce investment board may be appealed to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (State Board) when no decision is reached within 60 days or when either party is dissatisfied with the local hearing decision. *[WIA §181(c)(1); 20 CFR 667.600]*

B. A training provider that has been denied eligibility or has had eligibility terminated may appeal to the State Board within 60 days of the decision. *[20 CFR 663.565(b)(4); 20*

*CFR 667.640(b); WIA §122(g)]*

C. A provider of on-the-job training or customized training that has been denied eligibility may appeal to the State Board within 60 days of the decision. *[20 CFR 667.640(b)(iii); WIA §122(g)]*

D. The appeal must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested to the Director at the address below within 60 days of the local decision or, when no local decision has been reached, within 120 days of the original filing date. The Director will contact the local board director or administrator and investigate the appeal. Except as indicated below, procedures in II(H-O) above will apply.

E. A decision made under the state appeal process concerning a training provider (including on-the-job training and customized training may not be appealed to the Secretary of Labor. *[20 CFR 667.640(b)(3)]*

### **IV. Appeal of Non-designation as Workforce Investment Area. *[20 CFR 661.280; 20 CFR 667.640(a); WIA §116(a)(5); Act 1125 §8(f)]***

A. A unit or combination of units of general local government or rural concentrated employment program grant recipient (as described in WIA §116(a)(2)(B). that requests, but is not granted designation as a local workforce investment area under WIA §116(a)(2) or §116(a)(3) may appeal to the decision to the State Board within 30 days of the decision. The appeal must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested to the Director at the address below.

B. The Director, with collaboration by the State Board will investigate the appeal and make a decision in agreement with the State Board within 60 days of receipt of the appeal.

C. If the appeal does not result in designation, an appeal may be made to the Secretary within 30 days of the appeal decision of the State Board. It must be submitted by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Secretary at the address below. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. The appeal will be made in accordance with 20 CFR 667.645.

### **V. Appeal of Local Areas Found in Violation of WIA Title I**

A. The Governor of Arkansas (Governor) is responsible for resolving findings that arise from the State's monitoring reviews, investigations and audits (including OMB Circular A-133 audits) of subrecipients. Appeal procedures in III above will be followed, with the Governor making the final decision. *[20 CFR 667.500(a)]*

B. A local area may appeal to the Governor to rescind or revise a reorganization plan imposed because of failure to meet performance levels for two consecutive program years. The Governor

must make a final decision within 30 days after receipt of the appeal. The Governor's final decision may be appealed by the local board to the Secretary under 20 CFR 667.650(b) not later than 30 days after the local area receives the decision. The decision by the Governor to impose a reorganization plan becomes effective at the time it is issued, and remains effective unless the Secretary rescinds or revises the reorganization plan. The Secretary will notify the Governor and the appellant in writing of the Secretary's decision within 30 days after receipt of the appeal. *[WIA §136(h); 20 CFR 666.420(c); 20 CFR 667.650]*

C. A local area found to be in substantial violation of WIA Title I that has received notice from the Governor that either all or part of the local plan will be revoked or that a reorganization will occur may appeal to the Secretary within 30 days of written notification of the revoked plan or imposed reorganization. The actions do not become effective until the time for appeal has expired or until the Secretary has issued a decision. The Secretary will notify the Governor and the appellant in writing of the Secretary's decision within 45 days of the receipt of the appeal. *[20 CFR 667.650; WIA §184(b)]*

D. A local area found to be out of compliance with the uniform administrative requirements found at 29 CFR part 95 or part 97, as appropriate may appeal to the Secretary in accordance with WIA §667.650. The action will not become effective until the time for appeal has expired or the Secretary has issued a decision. *[20 CFR 667.710]*

## **VI. Special Complaint Procedures**

A. Complaints of discrimination from participants and other interested parties will be handled in accordance with WIA section 188(b) and the Department of Labor nondiscrimination regulations implementing that section. Questions about or complaints alleging a violation of the nondiscrimination provisions of WIA section 188 may be mailed to the Director, Civil Rights Center, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N4123, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210. *[20 CFR 667.600(f)]*

B. A Complaint may be made directly to the Secretary of Labor if a WIA Title I recipient has discharged or in any other manner discriminated against a participant or against any individual in connection with the administration of the program involved, or against any individual because such individual has filed any complaint or instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to this title, or has testified or is about to testify in any such proceeding or investigation under or related to this title, or otherwise unlawfully denied to any individual a benefit to which that individual is entitled under the provisions of this title or the Secretary's regulations. In this case, the Secretary shall take such action or order such corrective measures, as necessary, with respect to the recipient or the aggrieved individual, or both, within 30 days. *[WIA §184(f)]*

C. Information and complaints involving criminal fraud, waste, abuse or other criminal activity must be reported immediately through the Department of Labor's Incident Reporting System to the DOL Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Room S5514, 200 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20210, or to the corresponding Regional Inspector General for Investigations, with a copy simultaneously provided to the Employment and Training Administration. The Hotline number is 1-800- 347-3756. *[20 CFR 667.630]*

D. Testing for use of controlled substances is not part of the Arkansas Workforce Investment system, therefore, an appeal procedure is not established for this procedure at this time. *[20 CFR 667.640(c)]*

## **VII. Job Corps *[20 CFR 670.470; 20 CFR 670.545]***

Job Corps has a separate appeal procedure.



A. A person who is determined to be ineligible to participate in Job Corps or is not selected for enrollment may appeal the determination to the outreach and admissions agency or to the center within 60 days of the determination.

B. The appeal will be resolved according to the procedures in 20 CFR 670.990 and 670.991.

C. If the appeal is denied by the outreach/admission contractor or the center, the person may appeal the decision in writing to the Regional Director within 60 days of the date of the denial. The Regional Director will decide within 60 days whether to reverse or approve the appealed decision. The decision by the Regional Director is the Department of Labor's final decision.

D. If an applicant believes that he or she has been determined ineligible or not selected for enrollment based upon a factor prohibited by WIA §188, the individual may proceed under the applicable DOL nondiscrimination regulations implementing WIA §188.

E. Disciplinary actions taken by a Job Corps center may be appealed in accordance with that center's appeal policy.

**Addresses:**

Executive Director

Secretary

Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

U.S. Department of Labor

#2 Capitol Mall

Washington, DC 20210

Little Rock, AR 72201

Attention: ASET



## Attachment C



Mike Beebe  
Governor

Colette D. Honorable  
Executive Director

June 29, 2007

Mr. Joseph C. Juarez  
Regional Administrator, Region IV  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration  
525 Griffin St., Room 317  
Dallas, Texas 75202

Dear Mr. Juarez:

On behalf of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, I am respectfully requesting an extension of the currently approved Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) waivers for the State of Arkansas. The approved waivers have granted the State and local areas increased flexibility to design and deliver workforce services that are appropriate, innovative, and more responsive to the varying needs of Arkansas's populations. In an effort to maintain and improve upon the flexibility of the workforce system in the State of Arkansas, the following waiver extensions are requested:

1. Extension of the waiver of the regulatory prohibition of using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for older youth and out-of-school youth in compliance with WIA Section 189(I)(4)(B) and WIA Regulations 661.420(c)

#### Rationale for the Extension

- Provides to local areas a mechanism for improving the comprehensive services available by providing an additional service option
- Ensures that local areas have enough flexibility to deliver services based on the individual needs of participants as intended under WIA
- Reduces the paperwork and tracking requirements of dual enrollment as is currently necessary for older youth to access occupational skills training through the Adult Individual Training Account (ITA)
- Offers older youth an opportunity to make informed decisions that have a direct impact on his/her future

---

**Arkansas Workforce Investment Board**  
P. O. Box 2981 • Little Rock, AR 72203  
501-371-1020 • Fax 501-371-1030 • TDD 800-285-1131  
[www.ARWORKS.org](http://www.ARWORKS.org)

2. Extension of the waiver of Section 122(c) and (d) that requires subsequent eligibility for Eligible Training Providers and the Reinstatement of the Initial Eligibility of Training Providers in Arkansas.

Rationale for the Extension

- a. Retain approved Eligible Providers and continue to increase their numbers thereby providing quality customer choice for Arkansas' job seekers
  - b. Alleviate providers' concerns with the types and amount of required information
  - c. Have sufficient time to develop an effective and efficient method of collecting data from training providers
  - d. Have sufficient time to develop reasonable criteria for subsequent eligibility performance information
3. Extension of the waiver of the legislative provisions calling for the transfer of no more than 20% of a program year's allocation between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams In compliance with WIA Section 189(I)(4)(B) and WIA Final Rules at 20 CFR 661.420(c). The waiver would allow individual LWIBs, with the Governor's approval, the ability to transfer up to 40% of each program year allocation between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams.
  - a. Enhance the ability of local boards to respond to workforce and economic dynamics within their local areas
  - b. Increase local flexibility in the design of adult and dislocated worker service plans
  - c. Improve performance outcomes
  - d. Improve the ability of local boards to provide targeted assistance in response to customer needs
  - e. Enhance the local board's ability to respond to employer needs for workers trained in employer-specific skills.
4. Extension of waiver of the restriction of the use of local area WIA funds for Incumbent Worker Training at the local area level. This waiver would allow local workforce boards, at their discretion, to spend up to 10 percent of funds allocated to a local area under Section 133(b) to carry out incumbent worker training programs.

Rationale for the Extension

- i. This waiver will help to prevent layoffs and closures by assisting companies in becoming more competitive through the provision of needed training.
5. Extension of the waiver of the requirement that local programs provide each of the ten youth program elements at WIA section 129(c)(2) as options available to youth participants affected by the 2005 Hurricanes.

Rationale for the Extension

- i. This waiver will allow local areas to continue to focus on the youth services most needed by the hurricane-impacted youth.

6. Extension of the waiver of 20 CFR 664.450(b) under WIA section 129 (c)(2)(I) that requires all youth participants to receive some form of follow-up services for a minimum duration of 12 months.

Rationale for the Extension

- i. In appreciation of the transitive nature of youth participants displaced by the hurricane, many youth may receive services in temporary locations and return back to their homes or move to new locations. Such youth would be included for a waiver of the 12-month minimum follow-up provision.
7. Extension of waiver to permit the state to exclude individuals affected by the 2005 Hurricanes from the calculation of state and local performance measures identified at WIA sections 136(b) and (c).

Rationale for the Extension

- i. In appreciation of the transitive nature of individuals displaced by the Hurricanes, many displaced persons may receive services in temporary locations and return back to their homes or move to new locations prior to program completions.
8. Extension of waiver of the required 50 percent employer match for customized training at WIA section 101 (8)(c).

Rationale for the Extension

- i. Local areas will be allowed to offer a sliding scale match based on criteria developed by the State for those training hurricane-impacted individuals. The removal of this requirement should increase the number of training providers and training options for the hurricane-impacted individuals.
9. Extension of waiver of WIA section 123 requirement that eligible providers of youth activities shall be identified on a competitive basis

Rationale for Extension

- i. In those local areas that have experienced a large influx of hurricane-impacted individuals, this waiver would provide the continued ability for an expeditious increase in service delivery capacity.
10. Extension of waiver of language that limits the authority to provide the activities identified in WIA section 134.

Rationale for Extension

- i. The ability of local areas to make requests to the State Board for the use of up to 100 percent of local area formula allocation funds would continue to

provide statewide employment and training activities to hurricane-impacted individuals.

AR Waiver, p4

11. Extension of waiver of the employer reimbursement requirement for on-the-job training at WIA section 101 (31)(b).

12. Rationale for Extension

- i. This waiver removes barriers thereby increasing both the number of participating employers and the number of on-the-job training opportunities for hurricane-impacted individuals.

Please contact Staci Croom-Raley at (501) 371-1085 or by e-mail at [staci.croom@arkansas.gov](mailto:staci.croom@arkansas.gov) with any questions. Thank you for your consideration of these requests and your continued support of Arkansas' Workforce Investment System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colette Honorable". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Colette" being more legible than the last name "Honorable".

Colette Honorable  
Executive Director

**Attachment D****Performance Levels for WIA and W-P  
State of Arkansas**

<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>PY07</b>	<b>PY08</b>
<b>WIA Adult</b>		
Entered Employment Rate	90%	91%
Employment Retention Rate	91.5%	92%
Average Earnings	\$12,300	\$12,530
Employment & Credential	78%	78.5%
<b>WIA Dislocated Worker</b>		
Entered Employment Rate	93%	93.5%
Employment Retention Rate	95%	95.5%
Average Earnings	\$13,000	\$13,200
Employment & Credential	81%	81.5%
<b>WIA Older Youth</b>		
Entered Employment	78%	79%
Retention	90%	91%
Average Earnings	\$4,150	\$4,200
Employment & Credential	55%	56%
<b>WIA Younger Youth</b>		
Skill Attainment	93.5%	94%
Diploma or Equivalent	86.5%	87%
Retention	84%	84.5%
<b>WIA Customer Satisfaction</b>		
Participant	86.5%	87%
Employer	81%	81.5%
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>		
Entered Employment Rate	71%	71.5%
Employment & Retention Rate	80%	80.5%
Average Earnings	\$9,400	\$9,500

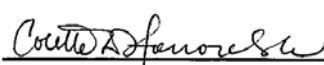
## Attachment E

### Standard ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

for the

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)  
FORMULA GRANT PROGRAM  
ANNUAL FUNDING AGREEMENT  
for  
PROGRAM YEAR (PY) 2007 FUNDS**

By signing the WIA Annual Funding Agreement (for PY 2007 funds) and on the line below, the Grantee's signatory official is providing the assurances and certifications referenced therein as detailed in the attached documents.

	Director, AR Dept. of Workforce Services		
	Director, AR Workforce Investment Board	5-22-07	AR
(Name & Signature of Authorized Official)	Date	(STATE )	

### **ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

The Grantor will not award a grant where the Grantee has failed to accept the ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS contained in this section. In performing its responsibilities under this agreement, the Grantee hereby certifies and assures that it will fully comply with the following:

- A. Assurances - Non-Construction Programs (SF 424 B)**
- B. Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension.. (29 CFR Part 98)**
- C. Certification Regarding Lobbying (29 CFR Part 93)**
- D. Drug Free Workplace Certification (29 CFR Part 98)**
- E. Nondiscrimination & Equal Opportunity Assurance (29 CFR Part 37),  
as applicable**

By signing the agreement, the Grantee is providing the assurances and/or certifications required under the above citations as detailed below:

**A. ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS. NOTE:** Certain of these Assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the Grantor agency.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal Assistance and the institutional managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project costs) to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.
2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States, and if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.
3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.
4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.
5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 4728-4783) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the nineteen statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 CFR 900, Subpart F).



6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255) as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616) as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) Sections 523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. 290 dd.3 and 290 ee-3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and (j) the requirements of any other non-discrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.
7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provides for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.
8. Will comply with the provisions of the Hatch Act (U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7328), which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.
9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 276a to 276a 7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. 276c and 18 U.S.C. 874, and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40.327-333), regarding labor standards for federally assisted construction subagreements.
10. Will comply, if applicable, with Flood Insurance Purchase Requirements of Section 102(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.
11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P. L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in flood plains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et. seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clear Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clear Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended, (P.L. 93-523); and (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, (P.L. 93-205).

12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.
13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 469a.1 et seq.).
14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.
15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.
16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.
17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations.”
18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing this program.

**B. CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS - PRIMARY COVERED TRANSACTIONS.**

1. The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:
  - A. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;
  - B. Have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
  - C. Are not presently indicted or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a government entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1) (B) of this certification; and,

- D. Have not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default.
2. Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal [or plan].

**C. CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING** - Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements.

The undersigned (i.e. Grantee signatory) certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement.
2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
3. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by Section 1352, Title 31, U.S.Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

**D. CERTIFICATION REGARDING DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS.**

The grantee certifies that it will or will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:

1. Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;

2. Establishing an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about:
  - A. The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
  - B. The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
  - C. Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and
  - D. The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;
3. Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (1);
4. Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (1) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will:
  - A. Abide by the terms of the statement; and
  - B. Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;
5. Notifying the agency in writing, within ten calendar days after receiving notice under subparagraph (4) (B) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to every grant officer or other designee on whose grant activity the convicted employee was working, unless the Federal agency has designated a central point for the receipt of such notices. Notice shall include the identification number (s) of each affected grant;
6. Taking one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under subparagraph (4) (B), with respect to any employee who is so convicted:
  - A. Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or
  - B. Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency;
7. Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6).

The grantee may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:

Place of Performance (Street address, city, county, state, zip code):

#2 Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201

---

---

---

Check ( ) if there are workplaces on file that are not identified here.

**E. NONDISCRIMINATION & EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ASSURANCE:**

*Note: This particular assurance (portions which are duplicated elsewhere in other assurances) is applicable to the extent that the program activities are conducted as part of the One Stop delivery system (See 29 CFR 37.2).*

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I of WIA, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws:

- (1) Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA Title I B financially assisted program or activity;
- (2) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin;
- (3) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
- (4) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and
- (5) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.

The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIA Title I B financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIA Title IB financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

Prepared by: Arkansas Department of Workforce Services  
March 5, 2007

## ARKANSAS'

### CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE

*Building Arkansas' Workforce—one worker at a time.*

---

**OVERVIEW: To establish an *Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate* that confirms to employers that an individual possesses the essential workplace skills required for all jobs.**

#### The Need for a Career Readiness Certificate

Career Readiness Certificates respond to and help to manage and satisfy several of the needs of the modern workforce economy:

- The increasing skills needs of the job market
- The gap between the skills of existing workforce and newly created jobs
- The need to assist employers in order to be competitive in a world market
- The need to assist the workforce in finding meaningful employment
- The competitiveness of a state's economy in attracting new employers
- The need to inform those that are preparing the workforce.

Today's economy is placing a higher demand on potential employees. Jobs are increasingly moving from unskilled professions to skilled professions. The highest growth in employment is in jobs that require some technical or post-secondary education or training, but not necessarily a four-year college degree.

Numerous surveys have demonstrated a gap between the current workforce and the basic skills needs of employers. In order to reduce the cost of remedial training and lost efficiency, more companies are implementing pre-employment assessments to identify these skills before hiring. These programs can represent a barrier to employment for individuals seeking jobs. Improving a jobseeker's basic skills will improve the chance of obtaining employment, improve the quality of the employment obtained, and reduce the cost of the hiring process for employers.

This workforce development issue also has a profound effect on economic development. Most states and many individual communities now have active programs to attract new employers to their area. In effect, these programs are competing against each other for the pool of available new jobs. The quality of a local workforce consistently ranks in the top economic development criteria that programs must have a method

for addressing workforce development, and a means for communicating the quality of the workforce to employers is needed.

These issues demonstrate the need to address the quality of the local or state workforce in a systematic way, and to be able to quantify, improve and communicate the basic skills of the workforce. A career readiness or employability certificate is a means for establishing a system for addressing these issues.

#### **Arkansas' Career Readiness Certificate:**

The Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate is a portable credential that confirms to employers that an individual possesses basic workplace skills in reading, math, and locating information – skills that all jobs require. The certificate has three levels (Bronze, Silver and Gold) and is a standardized credential that says the certificate holder is workplace ready. The certificate is issued by the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, which is the Governor's Administrative Entity for all federal employment and training programs in the state.

*Arkansas's Career Readiness Certificate* will certify core employability skills required across multiple industries and occupations. The certificate will help not only by distinguishing jobseekers from the competition and helping them to create a skill enhancement roadmap, but will also help the employer by knowing the potential employee has the needed skills. The certificate will be a portable credential signifying that an individual has achieved acceptable levels in the core employability skills, and will quickly demonstrate to an employer that an individual is workplace ready and has the foundation skills necessary for success.

This provides a method for:

- Demonstrating to individuals the need to improve basic skills and rewarding them for achieving them,
- Demonstrating to employers that potential employees possess the skills that they need,
- Communicating the quality of the workforce to potential new employers,
- Identifying training targets for educational and workforce development agencies,
- Leveraging the work of different organizations and using tax monies more efficiently by reducing overlap between agencies and programs through the establishment of commonly accepted metrics and assessments, and
- Targeting training to industries or clusters through the establishment of varying levels of categories of certificates.

The key to success for this system is the selection of a common metric for measuring the basic skills. The skills metric must be able to:

- Communicate to a wide variety of organizations, including academic and business,
- Measure both the skills of individual employees and the skill required by typical jobs on a common scale,
- Be validated and developed by a reliable source in order to develop confidence in the system,
- Be applicable to a wide variety of jobs, and
- Allow an individual to improve his/her skills in order to qualify for certificates and jobs.

***A multi- Level approach: Bronze, Silver and Gold Level Certificates:***

*Arkansas's Career Readiness Certificate* has three levels – *Bronze Silver and Gold*. The three levels allow an individual to advance his or her skill level in order to qualify for more jobs.

Bronze Level – Measures core employability skills in three categories: reading, math, and locating information. An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core employability skills for approximately 30% of the jobs profiled by WorkKeys® in these skill areas. (Indicated by a Level 3 on the WorkKeys® scale for the three categories.)

Silver Level – Measures core employability skills in three categories: reading, math, and locating information. An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core employability skills for approximately 65% of the jobs profiled by WorkKeys® in these skill areas. (Indicated by a Level 4 on the WorkKeys® scale for the three categories.)

Gold Level – Measures core employability skills in three categories: reading, math, and locating information. An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core employability skills for approximately 90% of the jobs profiled by WorkKeys® in these skill areas. (Indicated by a Level 5 on the WorkKeys® scale for the three categories.)

**Assessment Used to Certify Career Readiness Certificate:**

To earn an *Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate*, individuals are tested in Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information through the WorkKeys® employability skills assessment system. As a result of the testing, individuals earn a career readiness certificate or identify areas in which they need further instruction.

WorkKeys® is a comprehensive employability skills assessment tool designed to help employers and individuals develop better workplace skills. Thousands of companies in the United States and internationally use WorkKeys® skill assessments, job profiles, training evaluations, and research and reporting services to assess skill needs and measure progress.



## **Job Profiling**

In the WorkKeys® system, the method for determining what skills are required for a specific job is called job profiling. Job profiling is performed by consultants who are trained and authorized by ACT. The job profiling process is conducted for companies who have specific jobs whose skill requirements they want to identify.

A job profiler meet with a group of subject matter experts, people who actually work in the job. First, the group identifies all of the critical tasks that they perform in their job. Once the task list is completed, the subject matter expert group looks at examples of work at different skill levels for each WorkKeys® skill and decides two things:

- What skill level is required to perform the job tasks at an Entry Level?
- What skill level is required to perform the task at the Proficient Level?

Entry Level means the skill level someone should have who is new to the job. Proficient Level is the skill level that an employee should have who has been trained and has had experience in that job. The Entry Level skills information is often used to determine if a job applicant meets the skill requirements to enter that job. The Proficiency Level is sometimes used to determine training needed by employees currently in the job.

Once the skill levels have been identified and agreed upon by the subject matter experts group, they are asked to rank the nine WorkKeys® skills in order of most important to least important to the successful performance of job tasks. This ranking helps companies determine what skills should be considered when screening job applicants or when moving someone into a different job.

### ***Job Profiles versus Occupational Profiles***

In the WorkKeys® system, there are two types of profiles: job profiles and occupational profiles. A job profile is a profile that is specific to a job at a certain company. Jobs that have the same job title may be quite different from one company to another. Although the title is identical, the jobs may require very different tasks and skill levels.

ACT has created occupational profiles from the individual job profiles from across the country that have been collected in their database. Job profilers also sometimes create occupational profiles by conducting a profiling session that includes individuals who have the same job title, but work at different companies. An occupational profile represents the average skill level required for entry into a job category instead of a specific job.

The Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program does not plan on profiling any additional jobs, but rather will use ACT WorkKeys® extensive nationwide profile database. If an Arkansas employer wishes to have their specific jobs profiled, these additional profiles can be added to the WorkKeys® and KeyTrain® systems databases for their use.

## **KeyTrain® - A Curriculum for Improving WorkKeys® Skills**

KeyTrain® is used in many of the certificate initiatives across the country with tremendous results. KeyTrain® is a comprehensive, yet easy-to-use system for improving the basic skills measured by the WorkKeys® Job Skills Assessment System. Using KeyTrain®, you can assess your potential WorkKeys® score, review topics in each WorkKeys® skill area, and practice problems similar to those on an actual WorkKeys® assessment.

The KeyTrain® system includes targeted, self-paced instruction, pre- and post-assessments, a complete learning management system and an occupational job profiles database. These components can be used to help individuals learn, practice and demonstrate the skills they need to succeed in the jobs and careers they desire.

KeyTrain® is being used nationwide by One-Stop and workforce centers, workforce investment areas, secondary schools, businesses, WorkKeys® service centers, ACT Centers<sup>SM</sup>, school-to-work consortiums and individuals. KeyTrain® is available over the Internet to Arkansas residents, employers, workforce professionals, and educational and training institutions.

KeyTrain® is the first computer-based training available which was specifically designed for WorkKeys®. KeyTrain® is also the first curriculum to be accepted as a Level 1 preferred curriculum provider for WorkKeys®. This means that the KeyTrain® system has been reviewed by ACT, which has determined that KeyTrain® meets ACT's standards for WorkKeys® training curriculum. The KeyTrain® system includes comprehensive instruction on each of the nine skills sets in the WorkKeys® employment system. The total system includes hundreds of hours of instruction in thousands of pages of curriculum.

- KeyTrain® includes hundreds of interactive practice exercises including explanatory solutions in thousands of pages to help improve learning.
- KeyTrain® Beginning Skills addresses lower skills (Pre-WorkKeys), including a diagnostic tool to guide the user through an extensive set of curriculum.
- Full natural voice soundtrack reads instructional material word-for-word.
- Pre-tests allow quick estimations of skill levels and can assign appropriate lessons automatically. Randomized level post-tests give each user a different assessment.
- User-friendly interface for non-computer users. Instructors and users can get started almost immediately.
- Comprehensive student tracking system makes management and reporting easy.
- Available in Spanish.
- Includes an online database of occupational and job profiles to help establish skill goals.
- KeyTrain® has demonstrated effectiveness in improving WorkKeys® scores.

KeyTrain® has curriculum in nine basic workplace skills as built on the skill areas defined by WorkKeys®. While Arkansas' Career Readiness Certificate will only assess an individual on three of the nine skill areas as highlighted below, an individual can take the KeyTrain® pre- and post-assessments in the other six skill areas and use the curriculum to improve on their skill level. Additionally, WorkKeys® assessments may be added to the three core assessments at the request of an employer in a specific skill area—such as Applied Technology in the case of an advanced manufacturing employer.

WORKKEYS® SKILL AREA	DESCRIPTION
<b>Reading for Information *</b>	The ability to understand information in common workplace documents such as letters, memos, procedures and instructions.
<b>Applied Mathematics *</b>	The ability to use mathematics in solving common workplace situations.
<b>Locating Information *</b>	The ability to understand and extract information from graphics such as charts and tables.
<b>Applied Technology</b>	Problem-solving skills associated with a cross section of systems.
<b>Writing</b>	The ability to write in proper, concise and appropriate form.
<b>Business Writing</b>	The ability to write a clear and concise original persuasive document.
<b>Listening</b>	The ability to accurately capture factual information from audio passages.
<b>Observation</b>	The ability to see, comprehend, remember, and utilize information and procedures.
<b>Teamwork</b>	The ability to identify responses to group situations, which support business and team goals.
<b>Beginning Skills</b>	A series of courses covering lower-level skills below the WorkKeys® skill levels.
* To be assessed using ACT WorkKeys® for determination of skills levels for the Career Readiness Certificate.	

### Career Skills by KeyTrain®

The KeyTrain® curriculum also has a soft skills component called Career Skills that will assist jobseekers in being a more efficient and productive employee. KeyTrain® has two hundred lessons in five areas: Work Habits, Communication Skills, Workplace Effectiveness, Business Etiquette and The Job Search. All individuals that achieve at least a 90% score on the post-assessment of the Career Skills component of

KeyTrain® and go on to earn an Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate, will receive an endorsement on their certificate that indicates their successful completion of the soft skills curriculum.

### **Obtaining the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate:**

The first step towards achieving an *Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate* is by taking the KeyTrain® pre- and post-assessments to determine if the individual is ready to take the WorkKeys® assessment. If the individual does not score adequately on the KeyTrain® assessments, this indicates a need for skill improvement, and the KeyTrain® system can be used to improve his/her skill level.

An individual can qualify for and receive a *Bronze, Silver or Gold Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate* by testing at appropriate skill levels on the WorkKeys® assessment (see Skill Level in Table 1). WorkKeys® assessments may be taken at one of the WorkKeys® testing sites to be located throughout the state. A list of the WorkKeys® testing sites can be found at the CRC website [www.ArkansasatWork.org](http://www.ArkansasatWork.org).

### **Cost of WorkKeys® Assessments and KeyTrain® Curriculum:**

The cost for taking the assessments is free. Many state and federally funded workforce development programs can cover the costs for program eligible participants. The Department of Workforce Services has purchased a lifetime license to the KeyTrain® online system and curriculum for up to 300,000 users per year. Therefore, the use of the KeyTrain® curriculum will be free for other agencies, organizations, and employers to use.

### **Conclusion:**

Arkansas has the opportunity to strategically connect learning with doing through the establishment of a statewide *Career Readiness Certificate*. Establishing such a certificate provides individuals with a portable skills credential that enhances their employability and sets the stage for possible career advancement and lifelong learning. It positions “career readiness” as a priority for education and workforce development efforts. And, it signals to employers that workforce development programs are demand-driven and produce qualified workers.

**Table 1**

ARKANSAS CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE			
Level	Skill Area	Skill Level	Individual Can:
<b>Bronze</b>	Reading for Information	3 (Range = 3-7)	Identify key concepts and simple details. Recognize the proper time to perform a task.
	Applied Mathematics	3 (Range = 3-7)	Add, subtract, multiply and divide. Calculate the correct change in a simple financial transaction.
	Locating Information	3 (Range = 3-6)	Find information in charts and graphs and fill in one or two pieces of missing information in charts and graphs.
<b>Silver</b>	Reading for Information	4 (Range = 3-7)	Decide appropriate behavior based upon written policies and procedures. Identify important details and recognize and apply complex instructions.
	Applied Mathematics	4 (Range = 3-7)	Add, subtract, multiply, and divide positive or negative numbers, including fractions, decimals, and percentages. Calculate averages, simple ratios, proportions, and rates. Read a simple chart or graph to obtain information to solve a problem.
	Locating Information	4 (Range = 3-6)	Summarize and/or compare information and trends in charts and graphs.
<b>Gold</b>	Reading for Information	5 (Range = 3-7)	Recognize the application of technical terms or jargon to stated situations. Identify the appropriate definition of a word with multiple meanings. Apply instructions to new situations.
	Applied Mathematics	5 (Range = 3-7)	Calculate perimeters of basic shapes, percent discounts or mark-ups and complete a balance sheet or order form.
	Locating Information	5 (Range = 3-6)	Summarize and/or compare information and trends in charts and graphs and identify their interrelatedness.