

Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Area Workforce Investment Act Local Plan Modification for Program Year 2009

Economic and Labor Market Context

1. *Provide a detailed analysis of the local area's economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context. (§112(b)(4).)*

A response to this question was prepared by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Institute for Economic Advancement (UALR IEA) and is included as an attachment to this local plan modification as Attachment A, "Central Arkansas Economic Profile for 2009."

Local Area Vision and Priorities

2. *What is the local area's vision for ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce? (§112(a) and (b)(4).)*

The Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will use the analysis provided in question 2, above, to create an invigorated, innovative public workforce system capable of facilitating future economic growth and advancing shared prosperity for all citizens of Central Arkansas. Recovery Act funds will be integrated into transformational efforts to bring effective employment and training programs that are responsive to the changing needs of employers and job seekers in the explosive and changing economic environment created by recent economic factors.

To achieve this goal, Central Arkansas will introduce or enhance the following actions:

- Increase the number of customers served and the number of these customers who receive training;
- Assist workers who are facing unprecedented challenges to retool their skills and re-establish themselves in viable career paths;
- Accelerate transformational efforts and demonstrate the ability to innovate and implement effective One-Stop service delivery strategies;
- Match labor market and business needs to education and training to advance careers and upgrade employee contributions to the workplace;
- Help disconnected youth to reconnect through multiple pathways to education and training that enable them to enter and advance in the workforce;
- Align adult education, job training, postsecondary education, apprenticeships, career advancement activities, and supportive services with economic and

community development strategies to meet the skill needs of existing and emerging regional employers and high-growth occupations; and

- Partner and develop solutions in collaboration with community colleges, businesses, faith-based organizations and community groups to align workforce development services with sector strategies that enable low-income, displaced and under-skilled adults and disconnected youth to acquire the knowledge and skills for success at work in key industries.

3. What is the local area's vision for ensuring that every youth has the opportunity for developing and achieving career goals through education and workforce training, including the youth most in need of assistance, such as out-of-school youth, homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, migrant and seasonal farm worker youth, youth with disabilities, and other youth at risk? (§112(b)(18)(A.))

Central Arkansas has been an active participant in the Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC) since it was created. The AYDC offers a vast network of state and local partnerships that work to connect youth to education and workforce opportunities. Through these AYDC networks and partnerships, Central Arkansas has the opportunity to target disconnected youth to reconnect them through multiple pathways to enter and advance in the workforce. Through the AYDC partnerships, disconnected youth have several reconnection pathway options. The pathway options include but are not limited to:

- Targeted industry sector work experience;
- Apprenticeships; and
- Work experience in their chosen fields.

The Shared Youth Vision calls upon all levels of the youth service system to work collaboratively in designing and coordinating programs focused on serving the Youth of Promise by:

- Conducting a local analysis to gather data of the neediest youth, identifying gaps in existing services and infrastructures target services;
- Develop local strategic plans and coordinate initiatives; and
- Build stronger partnership in local communities in the development and implementation of collaborative vision activities.

The services that will be provided to Central Arkansas youth using ARRA funds are described in greater detail in question 10, below.

4. Identify the local area's key workforce investment system priorities for the local area's workforce investment system and how each will lead to actualizing the local area's vision for workforce and economic development. (§§111(d) and 112(a).)

Central Arkansas will fully support the Governor's mission for the workforce, which is to promote maximum coordination and efficiency among education, employment and economic development services in order to positively position Arkansas in the global economy.

The Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will strive toward maximum effectiveness and will remain accountable to all citizens of Central Arkansas. The ultimate accountability measure is whether growth in per capita income is realized for the people of Central Arkansas.

Specifically, Central Arkansas will support the Governor in his efforts to ensure that all Arkansans have every opportunity to be educated and trained for the highest possible level of lifelong, knowledge-based employment and will brand workforce development broadly to include preparation for all 21st century jobs.

Central Arkansas will adopt the following priorities, which 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 Collaborative:** Create technological equity in the learning experiences and career opportunities for every youth in the State;
- **STEM Education Coordination:** Create a coordinates and seamless educational pipeline from elementary grades to the highest competency levels in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics;
- **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:** Increase the number of trained medical professionals;
- **Aviation:** Promote the aerospace industry in Arkansas, increase the growing workforce needs, and ultimately create an Aerospace Coalition;
- **New and Emerging Industry:** Emphasize education in STEM disciplines to support an increasing number of new and emerging entrepreneurial companies requiring a workforce with innovative skill sets; and
- **Save the Children:** To provide quality in school, after school, and summer literacy programming to poor children living in rural areas.

Service Delivery Strategies, Support for Training

5. Describe innovative service delivery strategies the local area has or is planning to undertake to maximize resources, increase service levels, improve

service quality, achieve better integration or meet other key local area goals. (§112(b)(17)(A).)

Strategic Vision for Implementation of Employment and Training Provisions of the Recovery Act

The Recovery Act, signed by President Obama on February 17, 2009, is intended to preserve and create jobs, promote the nation's economic recovery, and to assist those most impacted by the recession. Central Arkansas Workforce Centers will target services to meet the changing needs of workers and employers, helping the dislocated engineers to refine their resumes, the construction workers to develop competencies in green construction technologies, and the nurse's aides to enroll in a registered apprenticeship program that will put him or her on the pathway to higher skilled and higher paying jobs. Central Arkansas Workforce Centers will implement the Recovery Act expeditiously and effectively, with full transparency and accountability of our expenditure of funds.

General Policy Guidelines

In utilizing the funding in the Recovery Act, Central Arkansas will be guided by four principles:

- Transparency and accountability in the use of Recovery Act funding;
- Timely spending of the funds and implementation of activities;
- Increasing workforce system capacity and service levels; and
- Using data and workforce information to guide strategic planning and service delivery.

Recovery Act funding received by Central Arkansas will be used only for authorized WIA activities. Central Arkansas will fully utilize the additional workforce funding to substantially increase the number of customers served and to substantially increase the number and proportion of those customers who receive training. These funds will be used to supplement annual WIA appropriations and will only be used for activities that are in addition to those otherwise available in the local area. To that end, Recovery Act funding will be spent concurrently with other WIA funding, and will not be used to replace state or local funding currently dedicated to workforce development and summer jobs.

Key Recovery Act Provisions and Emphases of Note

Contracts with Institutions of Higher Education and Other Training Providers

To increase the availability of training to workforce system customers, as sanctioned in the Recovery Act, the Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (CAWIB) will award contracts to institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, or other eligible training providers, if the board determines it would facilitate the training of multiple individuals in high-demand occupations and if the contracts do not limit customer choice. Direct contracts with institutions of higher education and eligible training providers will allow Central Arkansas to quickly design training to fit the needs of the job seekers and employers.

Training services will include the full range of occupational skills training, adult education and literacy services, and customized training as described in WIA section 134 (d)(4)(D). Before entering into such contracts, Central Arkansas will assess current training offerings to ensure that the contracts do not duplicate existing training courses and curricula. These training contracts may be performance-based to ensure that they result in real outcomes for the students.

As part of the contract, the institution of higher education or eligible training provider may develop curricula for emerging sectors and enhance the capacity of the institutions to ensure quality training within limited timeframes. The development of curriculum by institutions of higher education can be considered a training activity under WIA, if it is developed in the context of providing training to WIA participants. To be consistent with the timely spending of Recovery Act funds, curriculum activities must focus on adapting existing or creating new curriculum that will result in a short-term increase in training capacity, rather than long-term curriculum development activities.

Institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, need not be on a state list of eligible providers of training services in order to be awarded a contract with Recovery Act funds. Other providers of training that are not institutions of higher education must be on the state list of eligible providers in order to be awarded a contract.

Emphasis on Serving Low-income, Displaced and Under-skilled Adults and Disconnected Youth

Priority use of WIA Adult formula funds under the Recovery Act will be for services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals as described in WIA section 134(d)(4)(E). Furthermore, Central Arkansas will comply with the law that requires states to ensure that supportive services and needs-related payments described in WIA section 134(e)(2) and (3) will be made available to support the employment and training needs of these priority populations. The provision of

supportive services and needs-related payments will also be a focus for the Recovery Act Dislocated Worker formula funds.

Summer youth work experiences will include youth who are disconnected from education and the workforce. WIA funds may be used for adult education, including basic or English language education, as delivered through community colleges and other high quality public programs and community organizations that provide such services, as long as they are provided in connection with occupational skill training leading to a job or career for which the individual is preparing.

Provision of Reemployment Services

The Recovery Act includes a new, major investment to provide Reemployment Services to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants. These funds are in addition to those provided through the Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment program implemented under the UI system. Central Arkansas will develop close partnering relationships between UI and One-Stop services to ensure UI claimants are quickly linked to a local One-Stop in their area to develop and pursue an employment plan.

Green Jobs

The energy efficiency and renewable energy industries offer workers new opportunities that may require additional training and certification. Through the Recovery Act, a number of other federal programs will receive large investments in programs and projects that could create “green jobs.” These include investments in renewable energy infrastructure, energy-efficiency home retrofitting, bio-fuel development, and advanced drive train/vehicle development and manufacturing. Central Arkansas will seek out opportunities to prepare workers for “green jobs” related to other sources of federal funding. Central Arkansas will take advantage of registered apprenticeship programs that have the potential to prepare workers for careers in the renewable energy sectors and for other “green jobs.”

Connections to Other Federal Recovery Act Investments

Central Arkansas will review the Recovery Act with an eye toward the activities to be carried out through the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Interior, Transportation, and others, to monitor these funding streams at the state level in an effort to coordinate workforce development activities and maximize the return on each investment in terms of the number of workers employed or reemployed through such projects.

Central Arkansas will collaborate with local government agencies and employers who are creating jobs in road and bridge projects, local food production and processing, nursing and allied health, and local conservation projects and energy efficiency programs such as the Weatherization Program run by many local Community Action Agencies.

Listing Recovery Act Jobs on State Job Banks

Central Arkansas will list all jobs generated through the Recovery Act in Arkansas JobLink (AJL). This will enable all job seekers to view and, if appropriate, pursue newly created jobs, as well as assist job placement coordinators in identifying reemployment opportunities for job seekers. As modifications are made to AJL to accommodate Recovery Act data collection, Central Arkansas anticipates having the ability to identify those jobs that have been created with Recovery Act funding.

In order to foster greater accountability and transparency in the use of Recovery Act funds, the federal government will include on www.Recovery.gov links to and information about how to access job and registered apprenticeship opportunities, local employment agencies, and State Job Banks.

Availability of Funds

Central Arkansas will endeavor to spend Recovery Act funding quickly and effectively. WIA funding for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth are considered to be Program Year (PY) 2008 funds and, therefore, must be expended by the end of PY 2010 (June 30, 2011). Central Arkansas recognizes and understands that it is the Congress' intent, as well as that of the Administration, that the majority of these funds will be utilized within the first year of availability.

Program Review and Monitoring

Central Arkansas will conduct regular oversight and monitoring of its WIA Employment Services activities and those of its subrecipients and contractors in order to determine that expenditures have been made against the appropriate cost categories and within the cost limitations. Oversight and monitoring will determine whether or not there is compliance with programmatic, accountability, and transparency provisions of the Recovery Act and TEGL 14-08, as well as the regular provisions of the WIA and the regulations and other applicable laws and regulations.

WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Training Activities

Central Arkansas will use the six methods of providing training listed below in utilizing the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds provided in the Recovery Act:

- 1) Individual Training Accounts;
- 2) Customized training;
- 3) On-the-job training;
- 4) Contracts with institutions of higher education and other eligible training providers ;

- 5) Contracts with community-based organizations for the provision of training;
and
- 6) Registered apprenticeship.

Individual Training Accounts allow job seekers maximum flexibility in selecting training providers to meet their training and education needs.

Customized training is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer or group of employers and is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ an individual on successful completion of the training. The employer pays for not less than 50 percent of the cost of the training. Customized training is a valuable tool to create specific training for an employer or group of employers with jobs available that require similar skill needs that results in positive employment outcomes for individuals upon completion of training.

On-the-job training (OJT) provides job seekers with work experience and skills training needed to successfully obtain and retain employment. Under OJT, the employer is provided up to 50 percent of the costs of training calculated and paid on a wage reimbursement basis. National outcome data shows that outcomes for individuals completing OJT are higher than for those using other training methods. Additionally, research on successful adult learning strategies indicates that “earn-while-you-learn” models are critical to the successful training outcomes.

Contracts with institutions of higher education and other training providers allow LWIB to work directly with institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, and other training providers to quickly design education and training to fit the needs of the job seekers and the employers they are serving. Given the budget restrictions many states and regions are facing, these contracts are intended to provide a means of quickly ramping up much-needed training capacity.

Contracts with community-based organizations. WIA section 134(d)(4)(G) gives local areas the flexibility to contract directly with community-based organizations to provide training, in lieu of Individual Training Accounts, if the local board determines that there is a training services program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the local area by a community-based organization to serve special participant populations that face multiple barriers to employment.

Registered apprenticeship combines education and work experience resulting in a nationally recognized portable credential and offers adults and dislocated workers a career pathway into specific fields. There are a number of creative ways to utilize WIA funding in support of both pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. See TEGL No. 2-07, “Leveraging Registered Apprenticeship as a Workforce Development Strategy for the Workforce Investment System,” and the recently updated apprenticeship regulations (73 Fed. Reg. 64402 (Oct. 29, 2008)) for more information.

Sequence of Service

In TEGL 14-08, ETA is clarifying requirements in WIA regulations related to sequence of services for the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs as follows:

- Before providing intensive services, a local area must determine that an individual is unable to obtain employment through core services, among other criteria.
- To provide training services to an individual, the local area must determine that an individual is unable to obtain employment through intensive services, among other criteria.

As stated in the preamble to the WIA regulations, these determinations do not mean that the individual must go through layers of service to prove that need; the determination of need itself can be a core and/or intensive service, such as an assessment or development of an Individual Employment Plan. Thus, a case worker could initially meet with a participant at a One-Stop Career Center, assess his or her skills and consider labor market conditions, and determine that core or intensive services will not be sufficient to result in employment for the participant. The provision of training or other needed services can then be provided sequentially, concurrently, or in whatever order makes the most sense for the individual.

Coordination With State-Level Activities

Central Arkansas recognizes that the State of Arkansas has taken practical steps to leverage federal money from a variety of resources to accomplish the goal of providing innovative service strategies. Arkansas' economic development strategy has created a vision of what a 21st century career system should look like by building a network of industry-linked partnerships that combines the workplace and the classroom. This innovative system linking awards such as the WIRED grant, Carl Perkins, WIA, Wagner Peyser, ACT, the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), and a multitude of reforms seek to rebuild education and training systems and create career pathways and ladders within and across companies with strategies. We are expanding existing training programs such as registered apprenticeship, to prepare workers for careers in renewable energy sectors and other green jobs.

Arkansas will enhance existing programs and add new programs to build the capacity to deliver more targeted services. Also, the state plans to increase the number of adults and dislocated workers placed in employment and/or placed in training programs. To accomplish these goals, Central Arkansas will collaborate with the state and pursue options including but not limited to:

- Implement training programs in collaboration with business partners to close the gap between existing skills and skills required by employers. The sequence of the training will vary based on the needs of the jobseeker and the business. The

components of the program may include: *Assessment > Work Readiness > Credentials > Pre-Apprenticeship > Apprenticeship > Regular Employment*;

- Hire ARRA career specialists to increase number of customers served and to increase connections of jobseekers to jobs;
- Align training strategies with the business needs survey, Economic Development strategies, and regional economies. This approach will help our customers in acquiring the skills needed in high growth jobs in Arkansas;
- Expand universal access points to services through several partnerships;
- Offer the Key Train Assessment system and CRC program for jobseekers to assess their current abilities and interests; to provide job seekers an objective assessment of their job specific skills; to determine training needs; and to provide a pre-assessment tool for businesses to fill job openings with qualified workers;
- Offer workshops to our jobseekers to assist customers in uncovering their own dependable strengths and articulating their strengths and skills to potential employers;
- Expand support services for individuals in occupational training to assist with basic needs, e.g., transportation, to make it possible for trainees to successfully complete training; and
- Increase the number of opportunities for industry certifications and credentials using the RFP process to hire local colleges/training vendors to develop curriculum for targeted industries.

Service Delivery

6. Describe how the agencies involved in the workforce investment system interrelate on workforce, economic development, and education issues and the respective lines of authority. (§112(b)(8)(A).)

The Central Workforce Investment Board will collaborate with the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and other local boards to encourage new employer-employee paradigms that will enable Central Arkansans to train and compete for high-skill jobs. Such actions will include working with local economic developers to conduct retention and growth studies for their areas. Also, Central Arkansas workforce staff will work with the employers and community economic development agencies in local communities to explore job growth prospects and target untapped high growth industry sectors in the area.

Preparing our workforce for new and increasing job opportunities in high growth and high demand, economically vital industry is important for collaboration between the public workforce system, employers, education and training providers, and economic development professionals. Central Arkansas will continue to work with state and private agencies to encourage development of partnerships and coordination of services in each of the local workforce investment areas.

The Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board is composed of diverse leadership from business and industry, to education, workforce, and economic

development. Key business leaders come together through the local board to increase awareness of challenges facing business and the workforce system. The Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will endeavor to expand its membership to include more diversified business and industry interest, including representation from trade associations and apprenticeship entities, small business leaders and entrepreneurs, pioneers in emerging technological occupations, and economic development visionaries.

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

A significant key to maintaining effective Arkansas Workforce Centers in Central Arkansas is the “no wrong door” approach to providing services that encompass the principles of universal access, integration, and collaboration and performance building blocks to the system. With the “no wrong door” philosophy, any Central 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 steps.

The Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board implements and monitors all core standards for the Central Arkansas Workforce centers. These standards are based on the business plan model for continuous improvement. Central Arkansas will continuously monitor and measure the success of services provided through and by the collaborating agencies and partners in the workforce centers.

- 8. How the local area will partner to develop workforce solutions with community colleges, business and labor organizations, registered apprenticeship program sponsors, civic groups, and community organizations to align workforce development strategies and align workforce strategies with strategies for regional development and shared prosperity.**

Central Arkansas has a long history of working closely with the employers of the local area through a variety of connections. First, Central Arkansas is a member of every Chamber of Commerce in the local area, and chamber meetings are attended by the employer services representative or a workforce center staff person. Central Arkansas is also a member of the state Chamber of Commerce.

Next, the Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. (CAPDD) is an economic development agency that serves as a link between community, government, and industry in Central Arkansas, providing services that help improve

communities economically, as well as ecologically. CAPDD's Community and Economic Development section assists with community and economic grant programs for public works development, as well as recreation and tourism development. CAPDD provides assistance for a wide variety of funding sources to help communities improve water and wastewater systems, rural fire departments, day care centers, industrial park infrastructure, and senior citizens centers.

Central Arkansas maintains close working relationships with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Institute for Economic Advancement and Pulaski Technical College's Business and Industry Center. Through these associations, Central Arkansas has a continuing source of information about the businesses and industries of the local area, including information about their workforce needs and the training available to ensure that they have a pool of workers with the skills needed for the jobs available.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

9. Describe local area 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 core services that are applicable to program partners are made available at Central Arkansas Workforce Centers, commonly referred to as One-Stops or One-Stop Career Centers. One-Stop partners are required to provide all of the core services attributable to that program and are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between all partners located in the workforce center. Customers may also access many core services via the internet, from a remote location or within the resource room (unemployment insurance, labor market information, eligible training provider list, labor exchange, self-assessments, career exploration, etc.). Arkansas Job Link (AJL), the case management information system for WIA and Trade Adjustment Assistance, and the state's labor exchange system, is used by customers to access core services.

Additionally, Arkansas utilizes SHARE Access Points, expanding usage of non-traditional sites, such as faith-based organizations, in offering core services. Arkansas has approximately ten SHARE Access Points across the state. These access points will provide outreach to targeted communities who may lack computer skills as well as those who would not be comfortable or be likely to visit a traditional Arkansas Workforce Center. People can go into their own neighborhoods to look for jobs, assisted by trained individuals who connect them to the One-Stop system via computers and direct referrals for services such as online job searches and preparing resumes.

Central Arkansas WIA Adult Program Design Under ARRA

Allowable Activities

Recovery Act funds will be used for all activities specified under the WIA Adult program. To maximize the reach of Adult formula funds, the Central Arkansas Workforce Centers will help eligible customers take advantage of the significant increase in Pell Grant funds also included in the Recovery Act.

It is the intent of the Recovery Act that WIA Adult funds be used to provide the necessary services to substantially increased numbers of adults to support their entry or reentry into the job market. To that end, Central Arkansas will consider how assessment and data-driven career counseling can be integrated into service strategies to support adults in successful training and job search activities that align with areas of anticipated economic and job growth.

Because workers may need to up-skill or re-skill to compete for limited career opportunities, training will be a particularly vital service during the economic recovery, and overall training enrollments are expected to increase. Training services may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, programs that combine workplace training and related instruction, including registered apprenticeship, training programs operated by the private sector, skill upgrade and retraining, entrepreneurship training, job readiness training, adult education and literacy training, and customized training. These funds can also be used to support adult basic education training, including English as a second language.

The Recovery Act specifically emphasizes the authority to use these funds for supportive and needs-related payments to ensure participants have the means to pay living expenses while receiving training. This should allow workers to pursue training of sufficient duration to acquire skills and credentials of value that will connect them to emerging jobs as the economy recovers.

To increase local training capacity, Central Arkansas will enter into contracts with Pulaski Technical College and other institutions of higher education to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in high-demand occupations, so long as the contract does not limit customer choice.

Priority use of these funds shall be for services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals as described in WIA section 134(d)(4)(E). Because family and income responsibilities often prevent these priority populations from successfully entering or completing training, Central Arkansas will ensure that supportive services and needs-related payments described in WIA section 134(e)(2) and (3) are available to support the employment and training needs of priority populations.

Supportive services may include transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and other services that are necessary to enable an individual who is unable to obtain the services from other programs to participate in activities authorized under WIA. Supportive services will be provided using existing CAPDD policies and procedures.

Needs-related payments may be provided to adults who are unemployed and do not qualify for or have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation for the purpose of enabling such individuals to participate in programs of training services.

Central Arkansas Workforce Centers will take advantage of the availability of these payments so that customers can pursue their career goals, rather than their short-term income needs determining the length of their training.

Service Delivery Strategies

In allocating the WIA Adult formula funds in the Recovery Act, Central Arkansas will include the following activities in the service delivery strategies:

Targeted Use of Funds

Central Arkansas will develop plans and strategies that target the use of WIA Adult formula funds for the services that most efficiently and effectively assist workers impacted by the current economy to obtain employment, with priority given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals as described in WIA section 134(d)(4)(E). These strategies will include assisting adults to adapt their skills and career goals to the rapidly changing economy and employment options.

Central Arkansas will assess the skills, abilities, and career goals of adults and to help them map their skills against current and anticipated jobs. The Recovery Act recognizes that adults participating in training to advance or retool their skills will need supportive services and needs-related payments to remain and succeed in training.

Central Arkansas will execute plans and strategies in a way that builds towards the vision of the workforce system as articulated in Section 4 of TEGL 14-08.

Coordination and Alignment with Wagner-Peyser, Reemployment Services, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and One-Stop Career Center Partner Programs

Central Arkansas will coordinate services with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and other state agencies to align the use of WIA Adult formula funds and other federal and state resources, such as Adult Basic Education and Pell grants, and with their spending strategies for other funding streams provided through the Recovery Act to ensure the most efficient and effective use of all funding. Central Arkansas will cooperate with state agencies to integrate their implementation of

Adult services with Reemployment Services and UI programs so that individuals have easy access to all programs, regardless of their point of entry into the system.

Leveraging and Support for Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Central Arkansas will leverage new, and existing national, state and local registered apprenticeship programs and assets as a key resource in their talent development and reemployment strategies. These efforts will target key industries such as construction, health care, transportation, and other industries with emerging green jobs that traditionally utilize or are expected to draw heavily upon registered apprenticeship. Linking talent development and reemployment strategies to these Recovery Act investments, particularly those focused on generating new “green” jobs, is critical to providing employment opportunities that can provide a pathway to the middle class and allow individuals to earn while they learn.

Alignment with State and Regional Economic Recovery Plans

Central Arkansas will align WIA Adult formula activities with state and regional economic recovery plans as they are developed, particularly those connected with the Recovery Act, to ensure that training and employment services support anticipated industry growth, and corresponding expected employment opportunities and required skill competencies. States and local areas are encouraged to develop comprehensive regional partnerships to facilitate this alignment.

Central Arkansas WIA Dislocated Worker Program Design Under ARRA

Allowable Activities

It is the intent of the Recovery Act that WIA Dislocated Worker funds be used to provide the necessary services to dislocated workers to support their reentry into the recovering job market.

To that end, Central Arkansas will consider how assessment and data-driven career counseling can be integrated into service strategies to support dislocated workers in successful training and job search activities that align with areas of anticipated economic and job growth.

Recovery Act funds can be used for all activities specified under WIA for the Dislocated Worker program. It is the intent of the law that substantially increased numbers of dislocated workers will be served with this infusion of formula funds, and that training will be a significant area of focus.

Training services will include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, programs that combine workplace training and related instruction, including registered apprenticeship, training programs operated by the private sector, skill

upgrade and retraining, entrepreneurship training, job readiness training, adult education and literacy training, and customized training.

Additionally, Central Arkansas will enter into contracts with Pulaski Technical College and other institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, or other eligible training providers to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in high-demand occupations, so long as the contract does not limit customer choice.

To be eligible to receive services under the WIA Dislocated Worker formula funds provided in the Recovery Act, individuals must meet the eligibility requirements as stated in WIA section 101(9). This definition allows individuals to qualify as a dislocated worker in four different ways. Central Arkansas will test individuals' eligibility against all options to ensure that the maximum number of people qualify as dislocated workers. Individuals who do not qualify under category A because of the nature of their employment separation may still qualify under category B, C, or D. Customers who do not qualify as dislocated workers will be considered for eligibility in the Adult formula program.

Category A – General Dislocated Workers. To qualify, an individual must meet the following three criteria:

1. Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment;
2. EITHER is eligible for or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation; OR has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate, to the appropriate entity at a One-Stop Career Center referred to in WIA section 134(c), attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings or having performed services for an employer that were not covered under a state unemployment compensation law; and
3. Is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation.

Category B – Plant Closure. To qualify, an individual must meet one of the following three criteria:

1. Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of any permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff at, a plant, facility, or enterprise;
2. Is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within 180 days; or
3. For purposes of eligibility to receive services other than training services described in WIA section 134(d)(4), intensive services described in WIA section 134(d)(3), or supportive services, is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close.

Category C – Self-Employed or Unemployed. To qualify, an individual must meet the following criteria:

1. Was self-employed (including employment as a farmer, a rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters.

Category D – Displaced Homemaker. To qualify, an individual must meet the following three criteria:

1. Has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home;
2. Has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; and
3. Is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

Strategies

Central Arkansas will consider following service strategies to serve dislocated workers:

Targeted Use of Funds

Central Arkansas will develop plans and strategies that target the use of WIA Dislocated Worker formula funds on the services that most efficiently and effectively assist dislocated workers to obtain employment. These strategies will include assisting dislocated workers to adapt their skills and career goals to the rapidly changing economy and employment options. Central Arkansas will assess the skills, abilities, and career goals of dislocated workers and to help them map their skills against current and anticipated jobs.

Supportive Services and Needs-related Payments

Because of the nature of our nation's changing economy, many dislocated workers may need training to increase their skills and gain employment. Central Arkansas will implement policies that assure that supportive services and needs-related payments, described in WIA section 134(e)(2) and (3) and in WIA regulations 20 CFR part 663, subpart H, that may be necessary for an individual's participation in job training are part of the dislocated worker service strategy.

Guidance on the provision of needs-related payments to dislocated workers can be found in 20 CFR 663.820 and 663.825. To maximize the reach of these funds, Central Arkansas Workforce Centers will help eligible customers take advantage of the significant increase in Pell Grant funds also included in the Recovery Act by coordinating with the Pell Grant program in accordance with 20 CFR 663.320. One-Stop staff will also take into account the additional weeks of UI benefits available under the Emergency Unemployment Compensation and Extended Benefits that may help eligible customers complete longer-term training.

Coordination and Alignment with Wagner-Peyser, Reemployment Services, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, One-Stop Career Center Partner Programs, and Registered Apprenticeship

Central Arkansas will align the use of WIA Dislocated Worker formula funds with the spending strategies for other funding streams provided through the Recovery Act to ensure the most efficient and effective use of all funding. Central Arkansas will integrate the implementation of Dislocated Worker services with Reemployment Services and UI programs such that individuals have easy access to all programs, regardless of their point of entry into the system.

Since significant Recovery Act investments are targeted to key industries such as construction, transportation, healthcare and other industries with emerging “green” jobs that traditionally utilize or are expected to draw heavily upon registered apprenticeship, Central Arkansas will leverage new and existing registered apprenticeship programs and assets.

Alignment with State and Regional Economic Recovery Plans

Central Arkansas will align WIA Dislocated Worker formula activities with state and regional economic recovery plans, particularly those connected with the Recovery Act as they are developed, to ensure that training and employment services support anticipated industry growth, and corresponding expected employment opportunities and required skill competencies. Central Arkansas will cooperate in the development of comprehensive regional partnerships to facilitate this alignment and will partner with each other regionally and across political jurisdictions as necessary.

Youth Services

10. Describe the local area’s strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need. (§112(b)(18).)

Any youth activities under WIA are allowable activities for the Recovery Act funds. Unless otherwise stated in this document, the laws and regulations for WIA Youth funds apply to the Recovery Act funds.

While the Act does not limit the use of the Recovery Act funds to summer employment, the Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Area understands that the bulk of these funds should be used to create summer employment opportunities for youth. Central Arkansas plans to use as much of these funds as possible to operate a program of expanded summer youth employment opportunities during the summer of 2009 (May 1 through September 30). Central Arkansas will provide as many youth as possible with summer employment opportunities and work experiences throughout the year, while ensuring that these summer employment opportunities and work experiences are high quality. Central Arkansas will develop work

experiences and other activities that expose youth to opportunities in “green” educational and career pathways.

Central Arkansas recognizes that the Recovery Act includes two other significant changes to youth activities under WIA:

- The Act increases the age eligibility to a maximum of 24 years old.
- The Recovery Act also states that the work readiness indicator will be the only indicator to assess the effectiveness of summer employment.

Summer Employment

For purposes of the Recovery Act funds, the period of “summer” will be from May 1 through September 30. “Summer employment” may include any set of allowable WIA youth services that occur during the above referenced summer months as long as it includes a work experience component. (Work experience is defined under WIA regulations at 20 CFR 664.460.)

Sec. 664.460 What are work experiences for youth?

- (a) Work experiences are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. As provided in WIA section 129(c)(2)(D) and Sec. 664.470, work experiences may be paid or unpaid.
- (b) Work experience workplaces may be in the private, for-profit sector; the non-profit sector; or the public sector.
- (c) Work experiences are designed to enable youth to gain exposure to the working world and its requirements. Work experiences are appropriate and desirable activities for many youth throughout the year. Work experiences should help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. The purpose is to provide the youth participant with the opportunities for career exploration and skill development and is not to benefit the employer, although the employer may, in fact, benefit from the activities performed by the youth. Work experiences may be subsidized or unsubsidized and may include the following elements:
 - (1) Instruction in employability skills or generic workplace skills such as those identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS);
 - (2) Exposure to various aspects of an industry;
 - (3) Progressively more complex tasks;
 - (4) Internships and job shadowing;
 - (5) The integration of basic academic skills into work activities;
 - (6) Supported work, work adjustment, and other transition activities;
 - (7) Entrepreneurship;
 - (8) Service learning;
 - (9) Paid and unpaid community service; and
 - (10) Other elements designed to achieve the goals of work experiences.
- (d) In most cases, on-the-job training is not an appropriate work experiences activity for youth participants under age 18. Local program operators may choose, however, to use this service strategy for eligible youth when it is appropriate based on the needs identified by the objective assessment of an individual youth participant. (WIA sec. 129(c)(2)(D).)

In order to implement the Congressional intent to offer expanded summer employment opportunities, Central Arkansas will take advantage of the additional flexibility for youth served with Recovery Act funds who participate in summer employment only. This program design flexibility will be incorporated in the following areas that may facilitate the implementation of expanded summer employment.

Because all 10 youth program elements will already be available, Central Arkansas will use Recovery Act funds to make all 10 program elements available on a case-by-case basis. Central Arkansas will determine which program elements will be provided with Recovery Act funds for any youth participant.

Central Arkansas will exercise the flexibility to determine if the 12-month follow-up will be required for youth served with Recovery Act funds during the summer months only (May 1 through September 30). Central Arkansas will provide follow-up services when deemed appropriate for such individuals on a case-by-case basis.

Central Arkansas will exercise the flexibility to determine the type of assessment and Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for youth served with Recovery Act funds during the summer months only and provide the type of assessment deemed appropriate for each individual.

Central Arkansas will exercise the flexibility to determine on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate that academic learning be directly linked to summer employment for each youth served with Recovery Act funds during the summer months only.

Central Arkansas understands that work readiness will be the only indicator used for youth that participate in “summer employment” only. The basic and occupational skills portions of the skill attainment rate and the literacy/numeracy gains measure will not be required for youth that participate in summer employment only. However, for reporting purposes, Central Arkansas will track the number of participants enrolled in summer employment and the completion rate of those in summer employment (i.e., (# youth who complete their summer employment work experience/ # of youth who participate in summer employment) x 100%).

If ETA funds a process evaluation to collect information on best practices and implementation challenges, Central Arkansas will participate in such an evaluation.

Tracking and Reporting

In order to determine how to track and report youth served by Recovery Act funds, youth will be classified in the following ways:

- Any youth served with Recovery Act funds will be included in a separate Youth Recovery Act report.
- Any youth served with only Recovery Act funds that participates in summer employment only, will only be included in the Youth Recovery Act report, and

- the work readiness indicator will be the only measure that applies to such youth.
- If a youth served with Recovery Act funds does not participate in summer employment or is served beyond the summer months, he/she would also be included in the regular WIA reporting mechanisms (Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data) [WIASRD], annual report, quarterly report) and be subject to the full set of WIA Youth measures or youth common measures for those states that have a common measures waiver. *(If the State of Arkansas receives a waiver that would allow the use of the work readiness indicator as the only indicator of performance for youth ages 18 to 24 who participate in work experience only beyond the summer months, Central Arkansas will use this waiver.)*

Expenditure of Funds

Central Arkansas will have until the end of PY 2010 (June 30, 2011) to expend WIA Youth Recovery Act funds. However, Central Arkansas will balance the need to expend the funds quickly in order to stimulate the economy, while ensuring that quality programs are in place for youth served with Recovery Act funds. Central Arkansas will make every effort to expend significant Recovery Act funds in the summer of 2009. If necessary, Central Arkansas will expend Recovery Act funds over the course of two summers and the non-summer months in between.

As specified in the state funding agreement for Recovery Act funds, costs associated with Recovery Act funds are allowable effective the date of the passage of the Recovery Act, February 17, 2009. Therefore, costs associated with the planning and implementation of summer employment opportunities are allowable if incurred after that date.

Program Administration

Eligibility for youth served with Recovery Act funds is the same as for the WIA Youth program, with the exception specified in the Act that allows for youth up to the age of 24 to be served with Recovery Act funds. Central Arkansas will begin the eligibility determination process for summer employment immediately.

Workplace Guidelines

Central Arkansas will adhere to current workplace safety guidelines and applicable federal/state wage laws. Information and resources on safety and child labor laws is available at <http://www.youthrules.dol.gov/about.htm> and <http://www.osha.gov/teens>. Provisions for wages under the amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) will apply to all youth participants employed under WIA. As applicable, current Arkansas law specifies minimum wage of \$6.25 per hour and Federal minimum wage of \$6.55 per hour effective July 24, 2008 and \$7.25 per hour effective July 24, 2009.

Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses

Given the expanded age range to 24 under the Recovery Act, Central Arkansas may encounter an increased volume of Veterans. Veterans age 21 to 24 have a particularly high incidence of unemployment immediately upon discharge. Central Arkansas will provide priority of services for Veterans and eligible spouses pursuant to 20 CFR part 1010, the regulations implementing priority of service for Veterans and eligible spouses in Department of Labor job training programs under the Jobs for Veterans Act published at 73 Fed. Reg. 78132 on December 19, 2008.

Out-of-School Youth

Central Arkansas recognizes that the requirement to expend a minimum of 30 percent of funds on out-of-school youth applies to the Recovery Act funds. Central Arkansas will ensure that a minimum of 30 percent of fund is used for serving out-of-school youth.

Procurement

In accordance with WIA regulations at 20 CFR 664.610, the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) and the Local Workforce Investment Board of Central Arkansas are responsible for ensuring that the local youth program provides summer employment opportunities to youth. The Chief Elected Officials are the grant recipients for local youth funds, unless another entity is chosen to be the grant recipient or fiscal agent. The grant recipient/fiscal agent has the option of administering summer youth employment opportunities themselves. If providers other than the grant recipient/fiscal agent are used to provide summer employment, these providers must be selected by awarding a grant or contract on a competitive basis.

The Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. (CAPDD) was selected through a competitive process by the Central Arkansas CEOs and the Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board to be the One-Stop Operator for the Central Arkansas Workforce Investment area to operate and administer all WIA adult, dislocated worker, and youth activities in the local area.

On May 11, 2009, the Central Arkansas CEOs and the Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board evaluated proposals submitted in a competitive process to operate the ARRA summer youth employment program and selected the Central Arkansas Planning and Development District to operate the ARRA summer program.

Program Design Considerations

Because all 10 youth program elements are already available, Central Arkansas will retain the flexibility to determine which program elements to focus on with Recovery

Act funds. CAPDD will use the Recovery Act funds to operate expanded summer youth employment opportunities during the summer of 2009, and provide as many youth as possible with summer employment opportunities and other work experiences outside of the summer months, while ensuring that these summer employment opportunities and work experiences are of high quality. When considering expanded summer employment opportunities, Central Arkansas will consider the following design elements.

Objective Assessment and Individual Service Strategies

Under 20 CFR 664.405(a)(1) and (2), the design framework of local Central Arkansas youth programs will provide a modified objective assessment of each summer-only youth participant. In addition, a modified ISS will be developed for each summer-only youth based on the modified objective assessment results for each youth.

Central Arkansas will retain the flexibility to determine the appropriate type of assessment and ISS for youth served with Recovery Act funds during the summer months only. Although some level of assessment and development of an individual service strategy is required, a full objective assessment and comprehensive ISS as specified in the WIA regulations will not be created for youth served only during the summer months. Central Arkansas will determine what, if any, academic needs should be addressed for the summer-only participants. Also, Central Arkansas may choose to not assess basic skills level for out-of-school youth participating in summer employment as part of the objective assessment, since the basic skills portion of the skill attainment rate and the literacy/numeracy gains measure will not be used for summer youth participants.

In accordance with waivers granted to the State of Arkansas by the U.S. Department of Labor dated May 29, 2009, participants in the summer work-experience program may extend their participation beyond September 30, 2009, to March 31, 2010.

If an ARRA-funded youth receive services beyond the extended summer program, these youth will be reevaluated through a complete objective assessment, and a full ISS will be created for each youth in accordance with all regulations governing the WIA youth program.

Age Appropriate Activities and Work Readiness Goals

Summer employment activities will be designed to encourage participants to take responsibility for their learning, to understand and manage their career options, and to develop social skills and a maturity level that will help them interact positively with others. This is especially true for at-risk students and high school dropouts, as summer employment may be one of the few opportunities they come across to learn how to enter the world of work. These efforts will rely on developmentally or age-appropriate strategies: what is appropriate for a 24 year-old may not be appropriate

for a younger youth. Consequently, the services provided to these youth participants and the work readiness goals set for these individuals should be age appropriate.

When setting work readiness goals, Central Arkansas will follow the definition for a work readiness skill goal as specified in TEGL No. 17-05, Attachment B Definition of Key Terms found at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05_AttachB.pdf.

Work Readiness Skills Goal - A measurable increase in work readiness skills including world-of-work awareness, labor market knowledge, occupational information, values clarification and personal understanding, career planning and decision making, and job search techniques (resumes, interviews, applications, and follow-up letters). They also encompass survival/daily living skills such as using the phone, telling time, shopping, renting an apartment, opening a bank account, and using public transportation. They also include positive work habits, attitudes, and behaviors such as punctuality, regular attendance, presenting a neat appearance, getting along and working well with others, exhibiting good conduct, following instructions and completing tasks, accepting constructive criticism from supervisors and co-workers, showing initiative and reliability, and assuming the responsibilities involved in maintaining a job. This category also entails developing motivation and adaptability, obtaining effective coping and problem-solving skills, and acquiring an improved self image. (Please note: this term applies to the current WIA statutory youth measures only, it does not apply to the common measures).

The key part of the definition is the need for local areas to determine whether a measurable increase in work readiness skills has occurred. Central Arkansas will use a variety of methods, including the Employability and Work Maturity skills-assessment module of the Computer Learning Works program to assess work readiness skills at the beginning of the program as part of the objective assessment and before exit from the program. Each youth will receive specific work-readiness training using the Alchemy SISTEM program. In lieu of the Computer Learning Works evaluation, Central Arkansas may use worksite supervisor evaluations based on a work readiness skill checklist. Some summer-only participants may also receive work-readiness training provided through a contract with Pulaski Technical College.

Meaningful Work Experience

Work experience is the core component of a summer employment program. Central Arkansas will ensure that participating worksites introduce and reinforce the rigors, demands, rewards, and sanctions associated with holding a job. Central Arkansas will make an effort to match worksites with participants' interests and goals. Work experience activities and training emphasizing work readiness skills will be provided using the Alchemy SISTEM training program.

Pre-apprenticeship programs, which are an effective way of training youth for registered apprenticeship programs, may also be used to prepare youth for employment.

To succeed in the workplace, today's jobseekers and current employees should be able to build relationships with peers, managers, and customers. Consequently, work experience provided to summer employment participants will be structured to

impart measurable communication, interpersonal, decision-making, and learning skills.

Worksites

Central Arkansas will seek employers that are committed to helping participants receive the experience and training that is required to meet the work readiness goals set for summer employment participants. Central Arkansas will select employers that are willing to work closely with program staff and ensure proper worksite supervision in cooperation with both worksite supervisors and program monitors.

Employers should be flexible in working with youth who have issues that may have barriers to employment. Central Arkansas will consider a combination of public sector, private sector, and non-profit summer employment opportunities. This may also include project-based community service learning opportunities not conducted at an employer worksite.

When utilizing service-learning opportunities, worksite supervision, including participant to staff ratio, is critical. Attention will be given to ensure that work experience arrangements do not unfavorably impact current employees and do not impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements. In addition, the work experience of the participants will not replace the work of employees who have experienced layoffs (see 20 CFR 667.270 for non-displacement requirements). Youth summer employment will be a work experience intended to increase work readiness skills of participants and not impact the profit margin of a for-profit company. Central Arkansas will adopt specific selection criteria to ensure that one employer is not favored at the expense of another employer.

Section 1604 of Division A of the Recovery Act states, “none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act may be used by any state or local government, or any private entity, for any casino or other gambling establishment, aquarium, zoo, golf course, or swimming pool.” Therefore, Central Arkansas will not use Recovery Act funds to place youth in summer employment or work experiences outside the summer months in any of these facilities.

Green Work Experiences

Opportunities for skilled workers in the fields of solar, geothermal, wind power design, and the use of environmentally-friendly building materials will mean increased job opportunities for young people who have had exposure to work experiences that equip them with the appropriate “green” knowledge. Central Arkansas will identify regional and local environmental resources, businesses, and pre-apprenticeship programs promoting “green” jobs and products to provide youth summer work experiences that prepare them to compete in a “green” economy.

Conservation and sustainability efforts representing existing green work may be used to provide training and work opportunities in areas such as the retrofitting of public buildings, the construction of energy-efficient affordable public housing, solar panel installation, reclaiming of public park areas, or the recycling of computers. Mapping “green” educational and career pathways – both short term and long term – may be used as a way to provide youth opportunities to align their skills with those required by the “green” industries and prepare them for entry into registered apprenticeship or technical training. As a part of mapping these pathways, Central Arkansas will work with Pulaski Technical College and other institutions of higher education to ascertain how training opportunities and coursework are being infused with “green” components. Central Arkansas will develop a jobs directory that details the community’s “green” industries as another possible way youth can learn more about “green” career opportunities.

Connections to Registered Apprenticeship

Registered apprenticeship programs represent collaborative partnerships with schools, employers, labor organizations, community groups, and state apprenticeship offices. In order to better tap into the older, out-of-school pipeline of youth, Central Arkansas will work with employers to develop and implement “pre-apprenticeship” training programs. Pre-apprenticeship programs represent a hands-on training experience that provides an introduction to the skills and knowledge needed in a potential career field and prepares young adults to be eligible for formal apprenticeship programs.

Summer employment opportunities may include these introductory programs and combine basic technical skills training in the classroom with experience on the worksite or through a work experience or internship. Pre-apprenticeship programs also provide specific life skills training, work readiness or employability skill training, financial literacy classes, and even individual or group counseling. Central Arkansas will connect with registered apprenticeship program sponsors and their individual state apprenticeship office to better determine how best to coordinate a pre-apprenticeship or pre-employment training program. Central Arkansas will attempt to expand work experience opportunities to registered apprenticeships offered by employers in the information technology, health care, and financial services sectors.

Integration of Work-Based and Classroom-Based Learning Activities

In some situations, states and local areas may want to complement work experience with classroom-based learning so that the youth are provided with assistance in developing and refining attitudes, values, and work habits which will contribute to their success in the workplace. As stated earlier, some states and local areas have integrated work experience activities and learning to the point that all learning is acquired on the job. While this is an acceptable model for older youth who already possess the necessary academic skills, it may not be appropriate for younger youth and older youth with educational deficiencies. For these youth, a combination of

work-based and classroom-based learning activities may be warranted to provide basic skills instruction, career exploration and life skills training. In these situations, classrooms may be transformed into interactive, work-related environments to complement the work experience activities.

Academic and Occupational Linkages

Under WIA regulations at 20 CFR 664.600, local areas are required to offer summer youth employment opportunities that link academic and occupational learning. However, under guidelines provided in TEGL 14-08, Central Arkansas will exercise the granted flexibility to determine for each youth participant whether academic learning must be directly linked to a summer employment opportunity. Central Arkansas will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to have a direct link between summer employment and academic learning when deemed appropriate for individuals. Central Arkansas may link summer employment to academic learning for summer employment participants who do not have a high school diploma.

Continued Services Supporting Older/Out-of-School Youth During Non-Summer Months

Out-of-school youth, ages 16-24, experience among the highest rates of unemployment and their future labor market prospects are poor given their lack of education and work experience. Central Arkansas will develop strategies to engage this population. For older and out-of-school youth who are not returning to school following the summer months, Central Arkansas will consider work experiences and other appropriate activities beyond the summer months including training opportunities and reconnecting to academic opportunities through multiple education pathways. Additionally, Central Arkansas will consider transitional job models that combine short-term subsidized work experience with support services and career counseling.

Central Arkansas will investigate using ARRA funds to support new and innovative strategies for out-of-school youth. Central Arkansas will also consider co-enrolling such youth in adult training services, particularly youth ages 22-24. For older and out-of-school youth transitioning to the workplace following work experiences, the WOTC may be promoted as an incentive for employers to hire disconnected youth. The Recovery Act expands the WOTC to disconnected youth ages 16-24 who are not regularly attending school, not readily employed, and lacking basic skills.

Focus on the Neediest Youth

Consistent with ETA's strategic vision for the delivery of services under WIA (as stated in TEGL No. 28-05), Central Arkansas will focus services on the youth most in need including: out-of-school youth and those most at risk of dropping out, youth in and aging out of foster care, youth offenders and those at risk of court involvement,

homeless and runaway youth, children of incarcerated parents, migrant youth, Indian and Native American youth, and youth with disabilities.

Twelve-Month Follow-up

Follow-up services are one of the 10 required youth program elements as indicated in 20 CFR 664.410(a)(9) and a minimum of 12 months of follow-up services are generally to be provided to participants. Given that summer employment programs usually run for six to eight weeks, Central Arkansas will have the flexibility to determine if and when the 12-month follow-up requirement will be required for youth served with Recovery Act funds during the summer months only (May 1 – September 30). Local areas should provide follow-up services when deemed appropriate for such individuals.

Performance and Reporting

In accordance with the accountability guidelines in the Recovery Act, Central Arkansas will collect and report information as conveyed in an upcoming Recovery Act Performance and Reporting TEG. For the WIA Youth program, because of the requirement that the work readiness performance indicator be the only measure of performance to assess the effectiveness of summer employment for youth served with Recovery Act funds, a new reporting form, separate from the current data collection instruments, will be used to track youth served with Recovery Act funds. Further details will be provided in the upcoming Performance and Reporting TEG.

Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative

Central Arkansas will continue to participate in the Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative (AYDC), which evolved out of the State's desire to respond to the Federal Shared Youth Vision. Participation in AYDC provides an opportunity to address and seek solutions to the many service challenges to prepare the neediest youth.

The AYDC Initiative seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- To engage youth service providers, high growth industry employers, and local workforce investment boards in maintaining 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 high growth industries; and
- To focus on connecting youth with high quality secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities, high growth and other employment opportunities.

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

The AYDC seeks 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.

Veterans' Priority of Service

11. What policies and strategies does the local area 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 (and certain spouses) who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor?

Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses

Central Arkansas will incorporate priority of services for veterans and eligible spouses sufficient to meet the requirements of 20 CFR part 1010, published at Fed. Reg. 78132 on December 19, 2008, the regulations implementing priority of service for Veterans and eligible spouses in Department of Labor job training programs under the Jobs for Veterans Act.

Under sec. 1010.310(b)(3) of these regulations, when the Veterans priority is applied in conjunction with another statutory priority like the Recovery Act's priority for recipients of public assistance and low-income individuals, Veterans and eligible spouses who are members of the Recovery Act priority group will receive the highest priority within that priority group, followed by non-Veteran members of the Recovery Act priority group.

Central Arkansas will ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry and given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service. Workforce center staff will ensure that covered persons are aware of:

- Their entitlement to priority of service;
- The full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service; and
- Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/ or services.

The State of Arkansas is in the process of rewriting its policies regarding services to veterans. Central Arkansas will ensure that workforce center staff are aware of the specific requirement that any staff member serving veterans will ensure that the client is not only fully enrolled with current demographic information, but they are also required to ensure that the veteran client has an electronic resume on file within the MIS for ease of referral to employers, and to provide the client better visibility by employers using the “Self Service” module of our system.

Service Delivery to Targeted Populations

12. Describe the local area’s strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the local’s One-Stop delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farm workers, women, minorities, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, limited English proficiency individuals, and people with disabilities). (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)

As described in the sections above detailing how Central Arkansas will provide services to adults, dislocated workers and youth, Central Arkansas will effectively implement the Recovery Act priority of service for low-income individuals and recipients of public assistance under the WIA Adult program.

Central Arkansas is committed to ensuring that the programs, services, and facilities of each One-Stop delivery system are accessible to all of Arkansas’ workers, including individuals with disabilities. Central Arkansas remains committed to the seamless delivery of workforce development services, accessible to and appropriate for all customers, while maintaining the financial integrity of each Partner’s program(s). Customers have access to a variety of services intended to address their needs, including:

- a listing of local service providers and how those services may be accessed;
- information on the UI filing and claims update processes;
- current job openings;
- employment statistics;
- career guidance and occupational information;
- assessment;
- information on education, employment and training services available;

- initial eligibility information on programs available in the community for which they may qualify; and
- assistance with job search, including resume writing, interviewing, seeking nontraditional employment positions, using labor market information.

Customers with disabilities will receive the full range of One-Stop services, including registration, referral to appropriate job openings, supportive services, and other core services. In each One-Stop center, efforts have been made to assure that the buildings are physically accessible to individuals with disabilities. Assistive technology is in place and has been purchased with WIA funds and other partner programs funding. Central Arkansas will coordinate these services with the State Lead Disability Navigator to ensure that staff will have the tools needed to assist customers with their appropriate employment and training activities.

All individuals entering a One-Stop location will have access to core services. These services will be delivered to all customers and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farm workers, women, minorities, individuals training for nontraditional employment, Veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

Central Arkansas will pay particular attention to targeted populations that are most in need in the development of implementation strategies for Recovery Act funds. Local workforce development strategies will include robust approaches to helping these workers access training and employment services that advance them along career pathways in high-growth industries. Central Arkansas will make certain that supportive services and needs-related payments are available through Recovery Act funds to support the employment and training needs of these priority populations.

Transparency and Public Comment

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

The Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Area Workforce Investment Act Local Plan Modification for Program Year 2009 was approved by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board on June 23, 2009, and by the Central Arkansas Chief Elected Officials on June 25, 2009.

The plan will be available for review and public comment for 30 days beginning June 29, 2009, through July 28, 2009. Notice of the plan's availability for comment will be announced in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette on the weekend of June 27-28, 2009. The plan will be available for review at the Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. at 902 North Center Street, Lonoke, Arkansas during

normal business hours, 8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. The plan will also be available on the Web site www.capdd.org beginning June 29, 2009.

A public hearing on the plan will be held on July 17, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. at 902 N. Center Street, Lonoke, Arkansas 72086. Comments on the plan may be made in writing to the following address: Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, P.O. Box 300, Lonoke, AR 72086. All comments made during the public hearing and all written comments received before the close of business July 28, 2009, will be included with the plan when it is submitted to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board on July 31, 2009.

Procurement

14. Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the local 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).) (Note: All procurements must comply with OMB requirements codified in 29 CFR Parts 95.40-95.48 and 97.36.) In answering this question, the local area should describe:

Procurement of ARRA Summer Work-Experience Program Operator

In accordance with WIA regulations at 20 CFR 664.610, the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) and the local workforce investment board of Central Arkansas are responsible for ensuring that the local youth program provides summer employment opportunities to youth. The chief elected officials are the grant recipients for local youth funds, unless another entity is chosen to be the grant recipient or fiscal agent. The grant recipient/fiscal agent has the option of administering summer youth employment opportunities themselves. If providers other than the grant recipient/fiscal agent are used to provide summer employment, these providers must be selected by awarding a grant or contract on a competitive basis.

To comply with the regulations cited above, the Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board advertised a request for proposals (RFP) to operate the ARRA summer youth work-experience program. The RFP was published in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette on April 15, 2009. The board received two responses to the RFP.

On May 11, 2009, the Central Arkansas CEOs and the Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board evaluated proposals submitted in a competitive process to operate the ARRA summer youth employment program and selected the Central Arkansas Planning and Development District to operate the ARRA summer program.

Contracts with Institutions of Higher Education and Other Training Providers

To increase the availability of training to workforce system customers, as sanctioned in the Recovery Act, the Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Area will award contracts to institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, or other eligible training providers, if the board determines it would facilitate the training of multiple individuals in high-demand occupations and if the contracts do not limit customer choice. Direct contracts with institutions of higher education and eligible training providers will allow Central Arkansas to quickly design training to fit the needs of the job seekers and employers.

Training services will include the full range of occupational skills training, adult education and literacy services, and customized training as described in WIA section 134 (d)(4)(D). Before entering into such contracts, Central Arkansas will assess current training offerings to ensure that the contracts do not duplicate existing training courses and curricula. These training contracts may be performance-based to ensure that they result in real outcomes for the students.

As part of the contract, the institution of higher education or eligible training provider may develop curricula for emerging sectors and enhance the capacity of the institutions to ensure quality training within limited timeframes. The development of curriculum by institutions of higher education can be considered a training activity under WIA, if it is developed in the context of providing training to WIA participants. To be consistent with the timely spending of Recovery Act funds, curriculum activities must focus on adapting existing or creating new curriculum that will result in a short-term increase in training capacity, rather than long-term curriculum development activities.

Institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, need not be on a state list of eligible providers of training services in order to be awarded a contract with Recovery Act funds. Other providers of training that are not institutions of higher education must be on the state list of eligible providers in order to be awarded a contract.

Attachment A: Central Arkansas Economic Forecast for 2009