



# American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

## State Plan

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Comments concerning  
Louisiana's American  
Recovery and Reinvestment Act State Plan  
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# Context, Vision, and Strategy

## Economic and Labor Market Context

### **Question IV in PY 2009 Stand-Alone Planning Guidance: Provide a detailed analysis of the state's economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context. (§112(b)(4).)**

Through March 2009, the Louisiana economy remained resilient to the effects of the national economic downturn. However, in April, the state saw the first signs of the downturn: nonfarm payrolls fell by 8,300 jobs from a year ago and slipped 7,000 from March. In addition, the state's unemployment rate climbed to 6.2 percent, the first time it was above six percent since Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005. Claims for unemployment insurance benefits have doubled over the year and the trend is continuing. During the week of May 18th, the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) received seven WARN notices affecting nearly 500 employees. Additionally, recently the media reported a sizeable loss of jobs at Capital One Bank as well as a reduction in force at The Advocate, the Baton Rouge daily newspaper. It appears that the downturn is affecting a wide range of industries from manufacturing to leisure and hospitality. Thus, the skills sets of the dislocated workers will be just as varied.

It is anticipated that the recovery will be led by several industries, including primarily construction. Given the stimulus monies flowing into the state and the number of "shovel ready" projects to improve state highways and bridges, it is expected that the quantity of construction jobs will remain high. A second source of employment will be the movie industry as additional tax incentives are expected to be extended to the industry. Thirdly, the natural gas deposit called the Haynesville Shale has great potential for job creation in the oil and gas industry. Finally, a large facility in southwestern Louisiana will begin manufacturing components for the assembly of nuclear power plants in Asia.

In connection with an ongoing activity, LWC has partnered with major Louisiana universities to improve the quality of industry and occupational forecasts and to identify Louisiana's labor supply side. Through this partnership, LWC will be better able to match jobseekers with existing job openings and expand its role in the area of economic development since it will be able to identify the existing labor pool and better match it with needs of companies contemplating relocation to Louisiana. This partnership will also help the LWC identify and drive core training activities of our community and technical colleges.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has reported that the number of discouraged workers and others marginally attached to the labor force has risen during the recession. In an effort to address this, LWC is actively seeking to develop a program called "Real Time Jobs in Demand" based upon a similar program developed in New Jersey. It is anticipated that such a program will be in place by the end of 2009. The goal of this model is one of empowering our career one stops to be more responsive to business and job seeker needs.

Included below are unemployment insurance (UI) continued weeks claimed statistics for the week of the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2008 and of April 2009 to illustrate the increase in the number of individuals filing claims for UI benefits between the same time periods in 2008 and 2009. The statewide continued weeks claimed have almost triple from 18,026 in April 2008 to 51,457 in April 2009. The chart below is broken out by region to show the number of claims at the Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA) level.

The following graphs clearly show the difference between the two time periods. While weeks claimed rose slightly in the information, finance, and the real estate industry sectors, more substantial increases in mining, construction, and manufacturing were obvious between 2008 and

2009. The last graph of weeks claimed by major occupational groups reflects the increases in occupations found in the mining, construction and manufacturing industries. Installation, maintenance and repair; extraction; construction; and production occupations all had a spike in weeks claimed when comparing the two periods.

WIBs will be able to have this information updated on monthly bases to tract changes in unemployment claims in their areas. Using this data as a tool to align training programs to the needs of the citizens they serve. Transferring knowledge sets of unemployed workers to high growth occupations through retraining is the goal in establishing the unemployed in recession proof sustainable careers.

The newly established Occupational Forecasting Commission will be able to use this data along with the projections to tract industry shifts to better ensure that the citizens they serve are being trained in high growth, high demand jobs for the future.

Continued Weeks Claimed for UI Benefits by Industry Group:

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimant Characteristics**

**Based on UI Continued Weeks Claimed During the Week of the 19th of April 2008 Compared to April 2009**

	INDUSTRIES											
	Total	Agr/Forstery & Fishing/ Hunting	Mining	Utilities	Construction	Manufacturing	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Transportation Warehouse	Information	Finance & Insurance	Real Estate Renting/ Leasing
2008 Statewide	18,026	297	269	46	3,006	1,951	454	1,468	579	226	394	238
2009 Statewide	51,457	604	1,886	130	7,924	5,509	1,482	3,729	2,158	604	933	748
Net Change	33,431	307	1,617	84	4,918	3,558	1,028	2,261	1,579	378	539	510
2008 RLMA 1	3,464	7	41	10	517	231	114	300	121	49	93	57
2009 RLMA 1	13,315	16	99	60	1,570	703	483	1,140	618	169	278	205
Net Change	9,851	9	58	50	1,053	472	369	840	497	120	185	148
2008 RLMA 2	4,430	13	40	14	920	345	100	390	107	44	114	42
2009 RLMA 2	11,382	56	163	24	2,170	872	283	859	378	137	277	135
Net Change	6,952	43	123	10	1,250	527	183	469	271	93	163	93
2008 RLMA 3	625	6	23	1	121	98	23	49	23	0	9	14
2009 RLMA 3	1,642	16	120	2	273	191	39	83	98	8	13	40
Net Change	1,017	10	97	1	152	93	16	34	75	8	4	26
2008 RLMA 4	2,129	28	104	4	299	287	62	146	68	18	42	46
2009 RLMA 4	6,600	40	739	9	848	958	218	386	293	67	64	174
Net Change	4,471	12	635	5	549	671	156	240	225	49	22	128
2008 RLMA 5	1,197	26	14	1	413	56	18	69	46	8	18	10
2009 RLMA 5	3,407	49	146	4	1,004	451	73	142	175	24	30	36
Net Change	2,210	23	132	3	591	395	55	73	129	16	12	26
2008 RLMA 6	1,232	49	18	2	218	110	32	95	39	16	18	13
2009 RLMA 6	3,145	108	225	3	578	372	73	184	83	32	46	26
Net Change	1,913	59	207	1	360	262	41	89	44	16	28	13
2008 RLMA 7	3,592	40	40	10	381	800	63	277	96	82	49	39
2009 RLMA 7	8,151	86	330	14	824	1526	219	602	349	148	130	85
Net Change	4,559	46	290	4	443	726	156	325	253	66	81	46
2008 RLMA 8	1,760	130	18	6	234	169	51	176	77	15	52	22
2009 RLMA 8	4,631	248	155	13	730	642	99	371	179	27	96	52
Net Change	2,871	118	137	7	496	473	48	195	102	12	44	30

\*Statewide data has been aggregated to represent the total population. Data by RLMA (Regional Labor Market Area) and will not add up to state totals.

(Continued)

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimant Characteristics**

Based on UI Continued Weeks Claimed During the Week of the 19th of April 2008 Compared to April 2009

	<b>INDUSTRIES (continued)</b>									
	<b>Prof/ Science &amp; Technical Services</b>	<b>Mgmt of Companies &amp; Enterprises</b>	<b>Admin &amp; Support Waste Mgmt/ Remediation</b>	<b>Educational Services</b>	<b>Health Care Social Assist.</b>	<b>Arts, Entertainment &amp; Recreation</b>	<b>Accommodation &amp; Food Service</b>	<b>Other Services Except Public Admin.</b>	<b>Public Administration</b>	<b>INA</b>
<b>2008 Statewide</b>	827	61	1,246	251	1,404	322	948	702	260	3,077
<b>2009 Statewide</b>	2,451	198	3,300	529	3,204	732	2,255	1,505	774	10,802
<b>Net Change</b>	1,624	137	2,054	278	1,800	410	1,307	803	514	7,725
<b>2008 RLMA 1</b>	240	16	322	46	281	81	297	144	48	703
<b>2009 RLMA 1</b>	728	54	1,079	172	838	228	913	435	143	3,384
<b>Net Change</b>	488	38	757	126	557	147	616	291	95	2,681
<b>2008 RLMA 2</b>	262	21	328	94	350	49	176	184	76	761
<b>2009 RLMA 2</b>	740	45	826	143	787	105	395	319	249	2,419
<b>Net Change</b>	478	24	498	49	437	56	219	135	173	1,658
<b>2008 RLMA 3</b>	18	1	33	4	39	7	34	28	6	88
<b>2009 RLMA 3</b>	53	8	135	8	82	11	60	52	18	332
<b>Net Change</b>	35	7	102	4	43	4	26	24	12	244
<b>2008 RLMA 4</b>	63	5	141	21	179	45	102	85	24	360
<b>2009 RLMA 4</b>	211	44	393	46	341	76	215	196	68	1,214
<b>Net Change</b>	148	39	252	25	162	31	113	111	44	854
<b>2008 RLMA 5</b>	69	0	51	23	68	20	40	44	9	194
<b>2009 RLMA 5</b>	184	2	138	28	150	30	105	90	40	506
<b>Net Change</b>	115	2	87	5	82	10	65	46	31	312
<b>2008 RLMA 6</b>	109	3	70	43	89	16	54	43	23	172
<b>2009 RLMA 6</b>	131	6	123	26	193	17	115	94	80	630
<b>Net Change</b>	22	3	53	-17	104	1	61	51	57	458
<b>2008 RLMA 7</b>	88	6	212	32	247	118	163	152	45	652
<b>2009 RLMA 7</b>	290	28	421	85	476	246	337	221	103	1,631
<b>Net Change</b>	202	22	209	53	229	128	174	69	58	979
<b>2008 RLMA 8</b>	51	8	94	20	185	6	106	52	39	249
<b>2009 RLMA 8</b>	163	15	220	32	370	23	148	113	90	845
<b>Net Change</b>	112	7	126	12	185	17	42	61	51	596

Continued Weeks Claimed for Unemployment Benefits by Occupation:

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimant Characteristics**

Based on UI Continued Weeks Claimed During the Week of the 19th of April 2008 Compared to April 2009

	OCCUPATIONS											
	Total	Management	Business & Financial Oper.	Computer & Math	Architecture & Engineering	Life, Physical & Social Sciences	Community & Social Services	Legal	Educ./ Training & Library	Arts/ Design/ Entert. Sports & Media	Healthcare Practitioner/ Tech	Healthcare Support
2008 Statewide	18,026	1,073	418	149	93	30	164	130	302	221	219	771
2009 Statewide	51,457	2,769	1,145	431	907	89	445	293	711	577	599	1,792
Net Change	33,431	1,696	727	282	814	59	281	163	409	356	380	1,021
2008 RLMA 1	3,464	244	93	29	21	9	38	46	55	44	38	168
2009 RLMA 1	13,315	860	375	144	179	33	183	154	237	244	183	457
Net Change	9,851	616	282	115	158	24	145	108	182	200	145	289
2008 RLMA 2	4,430	252	114	41	24	9	51	30	119	43	54	209
2009 RLMA 2	11,382	630	291	109	317	19	102	51	207	104	130	427
Net Change	6,952	378	177	68	293	10	51	21	88	61	76	218
2008 RLMA 3	625	37	13	5	1	2	3	3	7	2	9	20
2009 RLMA 3	1,642	75	29	13	23	1	12	3	13	3	11	49
Net Change	1,017	38	16	8	22	-1	9	0	6	1	2	29
2008 RLMA 4	2,129	122	44	16	16	3	23	12	27	18	32	96
2009 RLMA 4	6,600	348	115	45	138	12	31	17	57	32	75	193
Net Change	4,471	226	71	29	122	9	8	5	30	14	43	97
2008 RLMA 5	1,197	62	15	6	3	0	7	8	19	24	12	41
2009 RLMA 5	3,407	121	48	25	54	8	22	9	55	25	21	77
Net Change	2,210	59	33	19	51	8	15	1	36	1	9	36
2008 RLMA 6	1,232	48	25	7	4	1	5	4	68	34	12	60
2009 RLMA 6	3,145	135	55	12	29	5	19	16	42	25	33	110
Net Change	1,913	87	30	5	25	4	14	12	-26	-9	21	50
2008 RLMA 7	3,592	192	53	30	18	2	27	8	47	67	29	124
2009 RLMA 7	8,151	440	146	58	68	8	40	24	96	136	87	285
Net Change	4,559	248	93	28	50	6	13	16	49	69	58	161
2008 RLMA 8	1,760	93	54	7	7	4	14	12	20	10	23	97
2009 RLMA 8	4,631	178	86	28	96	2	31	13	27	18	65	221
Net Change	2,871	85	32	21	89	-2	17	1	7	8	42	124

\*Statewide data has been aggregated to represent the total population. Data by RLMA (Regional Labor Market Area) and will not add up to state totals.

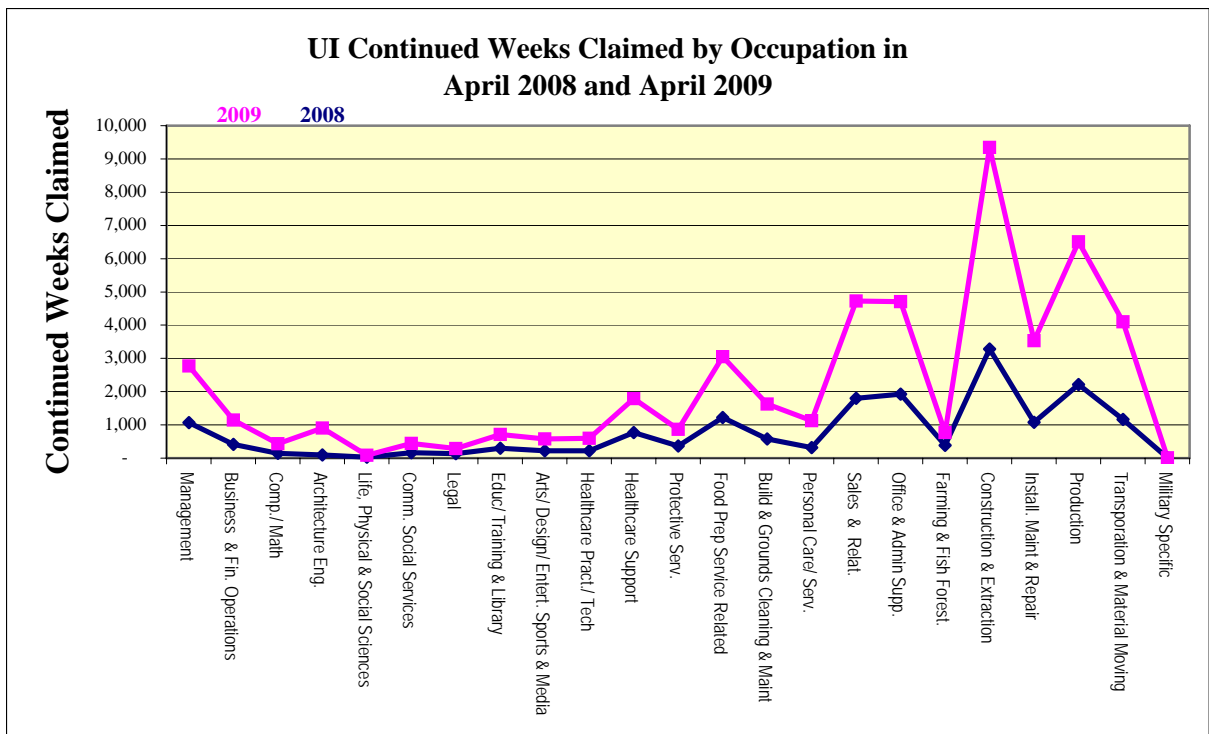
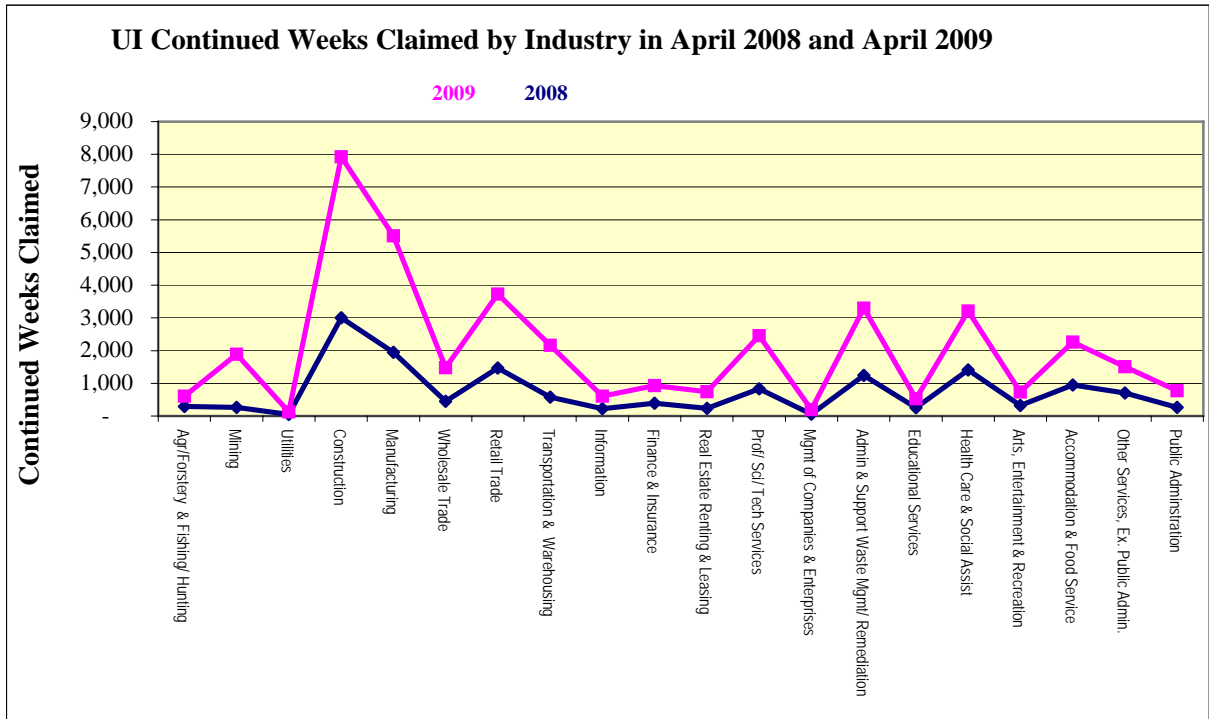
(Continued)

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimant Characteristics**

Based on UI Continued Weeks Claimed During the Week of the 19th of April 2008 Compared to April 2009

	OCCUPATIONS (continued)												
	Protective Services	Food Prep. & Service Related	Build & Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	Personal Care & Service	Sales & Related	Office & Admin. Support	Farm, Fishing, & Forestry	Construction & Extraction	Installation, Maintenance & Repair	Production	Transportation & Material Moving	Military Specific	INA
2008 Statewide	368	1,226	573	322	1,796	1,926	382	3,279	1,079	2,209	1,161	11	124
2009 Statewide	870	3,051	1,623	1,129	4,728	4,710	771	9,344	3,531	6,504	4,097	14	1,327
Net Change	502	1,825	1,050	807	2,932	2,784	389	6,065	2,452	4,295	2,936	3	1,203
2008 RLMA 1	114	322	125	77	370	467	25	616	203	311	236	0	34
2009 RLMA 1	404	1,068	437	304	1,532	1,531	55	1,660	883	887	1,138	1	366
Net Change	290	746	312	227	1,162	1,064	30	1,044	680	576	902	1	332
2008 RLMA 2	97	242	142	82	463	495	24	929	290	456	233	7	24
2009 RLMA 2	187	582	375	251	1,076	1,257	62	2,267	754	1,033	760	5	386
Net Change	90	340	233	169	613	762	38	1,338	464	577	527	-2	362
2008 RLMA 3	10	55	13	9	49	66	28	133	43	73	41	0	3
2009 RLMA 3	17	98	37	23	111	122	35	392	116	186	168	0	105
Net Change	7	43	24	14	62	56	7	259	73	113	127	0	102
2008 RLMA 4	31	164	54	36	200	220	73	415	121	253	144	2	7
2009 RLMA 4	72	335	164	95	514	552	102	1,284	498	1,180	553	1	187
Net Change	41	171	110	59	314	332	29	869	377	927	409	-1	180
2008 RLMA 5	23	50	41	12	90	92	42	401	79	85	72	2	11
2009 RLMA 5	37	131	104	52	179	247	78	1,120	302	407	237	2	46
Net Change	14	81	63	40	89	155	36	719	223	322	165	0	35
2008 RLMA 6	24	78	27	31	106	94	49	224	83	148	92	6	2
2009 RLMA 6	38	155	116	82	218	195	98	762	238	473	243	5	41
Net Change	14	77	89	51	112	101	49	538	155	325	151	-1	39
2008 RLMA 7	59	224	133	63	349	301	40	520	186	863	232	0	25
2009 RLMA 7	86	477	284	204	766	543	84	1,116	515	1,851	708	1	128
Net Change	27	253	151	141	417	242	44	596	329	988	476	1	103
2008 RLMA 8	29	148	53	34	170	154	116	233	105	223	146	0	8
2009 RLMA 8	40	253	133	132	378	292	267	897	298	746	360	1	69
Net Change	11	105	80	98	208	138	151	664	193	523	214	1	61

For comparison purposes these graphs represent the same continued weeks claimed data by industry and occupation:



## State Vision and Priorities

### **Question I.C. 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).)**

The Louisiana vision for implementing the workforce development of the ARRA is an overlay to the vision for implementing comprehensive workforce reform in the state beginning in summer 2008. This reform requires Louisiana to build a demand driven system that supplies the workforce businesses need, when and where they need it. This is particularly critical for two reasons:

1. Finding qualified employees was identified as one of the top obstacles to business growth for existing Louisiana companies.
2. Workforce issues have been among the top two concerns for roughly 70 percent of Louisiana's business development prospects.

Louisiana's comprehensive workforce development reform includes short-term and long-term initiatives in the following areas:

- Targeting and expanding community and technical college programs to prepare workers for demand occupations.
- Enhancing rapid response capacity to support business expansions and relocations.
- Realigning and integrating workforce programs at state and regional levels based on business input.
- Cultivating alternative career pathways.
- Increasing workforce participation.
- Reforming public education to better prepare students for the next level – jobs, job training or post-secondary education.
- Improve alignment of post-secondary educational institutions through reforms in their funding formulas.

Meaningful business participation is important to the success of the workforce development system, and business and industry drive our system from the highest strategic level to the service delivery level in Louisiana's 18 workforce investment areas. At the strategic level, business and industry representatives make up the majority of our statewide Workforce Investment Council, which is responsible primarily for integration strategy and for occupational forecasting. Business and industry also make up the majority of each Workforce Investment Board, ensuring the responsiveness of our network of Business and Career Solutions Centers.

By putting the targeting and delivery mechanisms of workforce development largely in the hands of business and industry, the governor is building a sustainable workforce development system aimed directly at economic growth and job creation. This in turn ensures maximum opportunities for job seekers.

Other aspects of Louisiana's workforce development reform will lead to a sustainable, first-class system:

- Funding post secondary education and job training based on performance and alignment with demand occupations identified by the WIC. This ensures job seekers will be prepared for their opportunities when they arise.
- Reforming K-12 education and expanding our workforce by recruiting from among those who are not fully engaged. This ensures over time that the Louisiana workforce system will produce enough job seekers to meet demand.

ARRA implementation is an overlay to this vision for two reasons. First, recovery funds must be spent concurrently with other WIA and Wagner-Peyser funding, and secondly, they support a greater response to rising unemployment through the use of the same framework build under Louisiana's comprehensive reform effort.

The ARRA implementation is laced with certain major themes: re-education, re-training and re-employment of those unemployed as a result of the economic downturn and those are otherwise disadvantaged. Our vision is to re-aim job seekers much faster than ever before at opportunities in the marketplace.

To do this, the ARRA must be implemented expeditiously and effectively, with full transparency and accountability. We fully recognize that each Business and Career Solution Center must “take an expansive view of how the funds can be integrated into the transformational efforts to improve the effectiveness of the public workforce system.” This effort will yield increased services and training for workers in need, especially in light of Louisiana’s approximately 9% cut in its Program Year 2009 WIA and Wagner-Peyser allocations.

Workforce Boards are expected to partner with each other regionally and across political jurisdictions to align workforce development services with strategies for regional development. The additional workforce funding must substantially increase the number and proportion of customers who are receiving training.

Under a dual-customer approach, seamless career pathways will be developed and offered. Additionally, support services and needs-based payments should be made available making it easier for young people and adults, particularly those most in need, to advance and persist through progressive levels of the education and job training quickly to gain the education and workforce skills needed for the workforce. The success of each Business and Career Solution Center in implementing the Recovery Act will be gauged partly by the progress it achieves in using annual appropriations, along with recovery Act funds, to help unemployed, under-employed, and dislocated workers find new, good jobs. Additionally, it must be the goal of each Business and Career Solution Center to give these workers access and an opportunity to remain in the middle class. Further, it is a necessary objective of each Business and Career Solution Center to help low-skill or low-income workers acquire 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, find family-supporting jobs in healthy industries and access the middle class; and to help enhance the education pathways for disadvantaged and disconnected youth to improve their labor market prospects and long term career success.

In developing a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, we will focus particular attention on occupations in green industries and in health care.

**Question I.E. What is the Governor’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 farmworker youth, youth with disabilities, and other youth at risk? (§112(b)(18)(A.))**

In the aggregate, and despite more than twice the number of unemployed people receiving benefits as this time last year, Louisiana’s economy has so far not sunk into recession. However, the longer the national recession persists and the deeper it gets, the greater its effect will be on our state. Already some parts of the state, particularly in North Louisiana, are already feeling recessionary pressures, while south Louisiana still has among the strongest labor markets in the country. More industries are softening as credit and out-of-state and foreign markets are tightening, but many industries and employers in Louisiana are still growing and hiring. In fact, our non-farm employment has outpaced 2008 in every month so far this year. Across the state, we have more than 70,000 unfilled jobs, many of them entry-level.

Recovery funds will be added to other funds to expand our reach under certain existing initiatives that are aimed at or will include a substantial number of our youth. The first is the EMPLoY program, which addresses struggling high school students whose options would otherwise be extremely limited.

Second, LWC is building the LouisianaReady! framework for ensuring all job seekers, including youth, will be career ready. It has many of the same components as EMPLoY, in as much as it will arm job seekers with a National Career Readiness Certificate, a career interest and job fit profile through LAePortal, soft skills certification, industry-based certification in a marketable skill in their region of the state and, for those who consent to testing, a drug-free certificate. In addition to ensuring job seekers will be employable, this initiative also addresses the key criticisms by business and industry voiced during our workforce summits in 2008 and ensures that LWC and the workforce delivery system is providing workable solutions to the most important challenges of our primary customers.

Finally, the LWC has selected and is awarding a contract to an intermediary to work through a grassroots network of community and faith-based organizations across the state to recruit up to 10,000 Louisiana citizens who are under-engaged in our workforce. Many of these people are in their late teens or early 20s and are not employable because of the types of deficiencies LouisianaReady! will address this year. The LouisianaReady! framework will be in place for these recruits this summer, and they can be assisted in becoming employable for many of these job vacancies with minimal additional education and training.

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

Gov. Jindal’s workforce investment priorities are captured in the comprehensive workforce reform legislation approved in 2008, almost a year ago. The reforms include short-term and long-term initiatives in the following areas:

- Targeting and expanding LCTCS programs.
  - Restructure LCTCS funding formula to align enrollments with demand-driven workforce priorities at regional level.
  - Dramatically increase LCTCS enrollments.
  - Provide “Day One Guarantee” that workers with LCTCS degrees will meet job performance standards or be retrained for free.
  - Establish regional “centers of excellence” focused on key industries.
- Enhancing rapid response capacity.
  - Establish a significant supplemental training fund to rapidly and strategically target LCTCS programs toward high-priority workforce needs. \$10 million of state funds have been placed into this fund.
  - Create “Fast Start” program to provide customized, turnkey workforce solutions for qualifying business development projects. Approximately \$4 million of state funds have been dedicated to this effort.
- Realigning and integrating federal workforce programs based on business input.
  - Create high-profile, state-level Workforce Investment Council to work with LCTCS and WIBs to set training priorities according to regional, data-driven input.
  - Transform the Louisiana Department of Labor into the Louisiana Workforce Commission charged with integrating and overseeing the workforce development system.
  - Integrate and coordinate other key workforce development programs and support services (e.g., vocational rehabilitation, LaJET and STEP).
  - Develop robust capacity for market intelligence (i.e., current and future occupational demand).
- Cultivating alternative career pathways.
  - Aggressively expand career and technical education program offerings in public schools
  - Implement robust marketing/communications campaign to educate students and their families on viable career tracks that involve vocational and technical education
- Increasing workforce participation.
  - Launch national marketing campaign on pilot basis to recruit job-ready workers in high-demand areas from other states. The framework for such a campaign has been developed, but the downturn in the economy alleviated much of the need for it at this time.
  - Implement aggressive state and regional efforts to recruit targeted populations to workforce (e.g., unemployed or underemployed citizens)

Much progress has been made in under one year on many of these initiatives, as described above and in other parts of this document. even though 2008-09 was intended to be a planning year with heavy implementation expected in 2009-10. Although implementation on each of these initiatives has begun, much more is to be expected to be accomplished.

Despite the tightening economy in Louisiana, we believe that substantial implementation will result in significant increases in economic development and job opportunities. It will:

- Substantially increase our ability to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses.
- Increase the alignment between workforce programs and market demands.
- Dramatically increase compensation for tens of thousands of Louisiana workers.
- Create better job opportunities for workers currently in low-paying positions.
- Reduce the reliance on public assistance programs.
- Increase graduation rates at 4-year institutions.

The increase in unemployment Louisiana is facing forces us the state place even greater emphasis on re-education, re-training and re-employment of those who have lost their jobs as a result of the economy. The strides made in implementing reforms in the past year make that goal much more attainable for many more people.

Louisiana agrees with USDOL that the opportunity presents itself to move forward in developing the Workforce Development System. According to TEG 14-08:

“ The significant investment of stimulus funds presents an extraordinary and unique opportunity for the workforce system to accelerate its transformational efforts and demonstrate its ability to innovate and implement effective One-Stop service delivery strategies. As states and local areas plan how their One-Stop systems will make immediate use of the Recovery Act funds, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) strongly encourages them to take an expansive view of how the funds can be integrated into transformational efforts to improve the effectiveness of the public workforce system. In this system, the needs of workers and employers are both important in developing thriving communities where all citizens succeed and businesses prosper. The system’s implementation of the Recovery Act should yield not only increased services and training for workers in need, but also an invigorated, more innovative public workforce system capable of helping enable future economic growth and advancing shared prosperity for Americans.

Louisiana is moving forward with its priorities to leverage the resources from the Recovery Act and other funding streams so as to quickly implement them.

## Overarching State Strategies

### **Question V.B. What strategies are in place to address the national strategic direction discussed in [Section 4] 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 Louisiana vision for implementing the workforce development component of the ARRA is an overlay to the vision for implementing comprehensive workforce reform in the state which began in the summer 2008. This reform required Louisiana to build a demand driven system that supplies the workforce businesses need, when and where they need it.

First, Recovery Act Funds must be spent concurrently with other WIA and Wagner-Peyser funding, and secondly, the recovery funds support a greater response to rising unemployment through the use of the same framework built under Louisiana's comprehensive reform effort.

The ARRA implementation is laced with certain major themes: re-education, re-training and re-employment of those unemployed as a result of the economic downturn and those who are otherwise disadvantaged. Our vision is to re-aim job seekers faster than ever before at current and developing opportunities in the marketplace.

LWC has emphasized to the LWIAs, through issuing the summary of TEGL 14-08, technical assistance, and statewide meetings of WIBs Directors and Local Area Coordinators the importance of implementing expeditiously and effectively, with full transparency and accountability, the spending of both the Regular Formula dollars along with ARRA dollar resources. We fully recognize that each WIB must "take an expansive view of how the funds can be integrated into the transformational efforts to improve the effectiveness of the public workforce system." This effort will yield increased services and training for workers in need, especially in light of Louisiana's approximately 9% cut in its Program Year 2009 WIA and Wagner-Peyser allocations.

Workforce Boards are expected to partner with each other regionally and across political jurisdictions to align workforce development services with strategies for regional development. The additional workforce funding must substantially increase the number and proportion of customers who are receiving services and training.

The strategy in using both resources is to target certain regional demand occupations, green jobs, and health care occupations for ARRA funding and other regional demand occupation funding will funnel through the regular formula funding.

In each of the 8 regions in the state WIBs were required to develop a SWOT analysis to determine the needs and resources available in their region. With this analysis, they can strategically plan on how needed services will be provided to dislocated workers and low-income adults.

Under a dual-customer approach, the nineteen Business Service Representatives (BSR) throughout the state serve not only as a marketing arm, but also provide a connectivity to the pool of a skilled labor force that has been laid off as well as with newly trained job seekers who have accessed services at the Business and Career Solution Centers (B&CSC). The BSR have been given a new directive to be active in making business contacts within the communities they service. Their goal is to match skilled job seekers to the job openings in the region. They are also to identify the skill sets of which employers are in need so that the B&CSC can develop training for the under-skilled workforce in order to meet the needs of industry.

The State has provided policy for the LWIBs concerning priority for enrollment in Title 1 intensive and training services which should be given to recipients receiving public assistance or other low income individuals. Along with the priority of service, the State has also issued a support services policy which includes guidance on needs-based payments. It was highly recommend that LWIAs develop regional policy. The LWIAs intensive and training services as well as support services should make it easier for young people and adults, particularly those most in need, to advance and persist through progressive levels of the education and job training quickly in order to gain the education and workforce skills needed for the workforce. The success of each Business and Career Solution Center in implementing the Recovery Act will be gauged partly by the progress it achieves in using annual appropriations as well as Recovery Act funds to service unemployed, under-employed, and dislocated workers in the location of new and appropriate jobs. Additionally, it must be the goal of each Business and Career Solution Center to provide these workers with access and an opportunity to remain in the middle class. Further, it is a necessary objective of each Business and Career Solution Center to help low-skilled or low-income workers acquire 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, find family-supporting jobs in healthy industries and accessing the middle class. Furthermore, B&CSC will encourage job seekers to connect with adult education in order to help to enhance the education pathways for disadvantaged and disconnected youth, thus improving their labor market prospects and long term career success.

In the aggregate, and despite more than twice the number of unemployed people receiving benefits as this time last year, Louisiana's economy has so far not sunk into recession. However, the longer the national recession persists and the deeper it gets, the greater will be its effect on our state. Already, some parts of the state, particularly North Louisiana, are already feeling recessionary pressures, while south Louisiana still has among the strongest labor markets in the country. More industries are softening as credit and out-of-state and foreign markets are tightening, but many industries and employers in Louisiana are still growing and hiring. In fact, our non-farm employment has outpaced 2008 in every month so far this year. Across the state, we have more than 70,000 unfilled jobs, many of them entry-level.

Recovery funds will augment other funds in order to expand our reach under certain existing initiatives that are aimed at or will include a substantial number of our youth. The first is the EMPLoY program, which addresses struggling high school students, who but for a targeted approach to attract and provide specific legitimate educational and employment opportunities, would otherwise be extremely limited as to their advancement in an economically sustainable lifestyle.

Second, the LWC is building the LouisianaReady! framework for ensuring all job seekers, including youth, will be career ready. It has many of the same components as EMPLoY, inasmuch as it will arm job seekers with a National Career Readiness Certificate, a career interest and job fit profile through LAePortal, soft skills certification, industry-based certification in a marketable skill in their region of the state and, for those who consent to testing, a drug-free certificate. In addition to ensuring job seekers will be employable, this initiative also addresses the key criticisms by business and industry voiced during our workforce summits in 2008 and ensures that the LWC and the workforce delivery system is providing workable solutions to the most important challenges of our primary customers.

Finally, the LWC has selected and is awarding a contract to an intermediary to work through a grassroots network of community and faith-based organizations across the state to recruit up to 10,000 Louisiana citizens who are under-engaged in our workforce. Many of the young people are in their late teens or early 20s and are not employable because of the work place deficiencies that the LouisianaReady! program will address. The LouisianaReady! framework will be in place for these recruits this summer, and they will be assisted in becoming employable for many of these job vacancies with minimal additional education and training.

## Service Delivery Strategies, Support for Training

**Question IX.G. 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.**

**(§112(b)(17)(A).)**

Louisiana's vision is to build a demand driven system that supplies the workforce businesses' needs, when and where they need assistance. The state's strategic intent and guiding principles include:

- Demand-driven responsiveness
- Better customer service
- Improved performance
- Efficient use of limited sources
- Expansion of services
- Improved service access
- Reduced program requirements
- Equalization of work across staff
- Increased number of customers

With the concurrent spending of the ARRA and WIA Title 1 funding, Louisiana will build capacity not only with staff in the field but will expand, as needed, the variety of educational, supportive, intensive and training services to the youth, adults, and dislocated workers. Strategies within this system include:

- Demand driven alignment: regional targeted sector strategies and regional collaboration to respond to workforce crises
- Evolution of "One-stop" system to "workforce system"
- Enhanced Role of WIBs: Regional strategic planning with local response and design is creating a better balance between state, parish and local strategies

The LWIAs have developed regional and local plans that identify high demand/high growth occupations, green job opportunities, and health care jobs in their community. An inventory of existing services was conducted and LWIAs have developed strategic plans to meet the diverse needs of the employers and jobseekers.

The LWC has already implemented an integrated service delivery model that:

- Implements a Regional Business Perspective including Regional Business service delivery strategies and structure
- Refocuses on core mission of "employment **and** training"
- Reinvents services and delivery by aligning funding streams to create an integrated employment and training system

The integration of WIA, Title 1, Wagner Peyser, Veterans, Rapid Response, TAA services in the state have resulted in streamlining services to job seekers as well as increased number of customers receiving services at the Business and Career Solution Centers. These customers now receive facilitated self-services at the sites. Furthermore, with the Integrated Service Delivery model, the LWIAs are able to provide:

- Assessments of job skills and needs
- Educational and Training services
- Placement and Re-employment services

It is the responsibility of each LWIA to evaluate their staffing capacity in order to provide appropriate services. The state of Louisiana has policies to cover priority of service to individuals

receiving public assistance and low-income and supportive service which align with the intent of ARRA.

With the above-mentioned strategies in place, the LWIAs will be able to identify those individuals who are unemployed, receiving public assistances or are low income and these customers with appropriate training and placement services along with supported services.

ARRA summer programs are being integrated and coordinated to provide youth with the resources and work readiness skills necessary to succeed in bridging the gap in our state's workforce pipeline. The summer youth program will enhance the opportunity for youths' to connect to post-secondary education opportunities, leadership development activities, mentoring training, community service, and other community resources.

LWC is working with the East Baton Rouge WIA to create the first LWC Internship Program. The program will serve as a model for future statewide Summer Youth Internship programs.

The local WIAs required ratio is 50% in-school youth and 50% out- of -school youth. The in-school and out -of -school youth will register in LAVOS and the out-of-school youth will be linked to supportive services in the Business and Career Solutions Center (B&CSC) to help them determine if employment and/or training/education is appropriate. Local Community Service Block Grant's Community Action Agency will partner with the local WIA to provide the wrap-around services needed by both in-school and out-of-school youths and young adults. The wrap-around service partnership should eliminate any barriers to a successful outcome. The services provided by the B&CSC will assist them in linking short term and long term career planning and goal setting as part of their reattachment process. The LWC has implemented a Youth Portal and LAePortal on its website, [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net), to display workforce information in a format appropriate for younger users linking career planning in high school and reattachment to education for out-of-school youth.

Business and Career Solutions Centers youth staff will work to identify youth 14-24 to link them to high demand/growth occupations and green jobs. Developing marketing strategies for connecting youth job-seekers with employers can take many forms. Brochures, posters, websites, and Job Fairs are a few of these mechanisms. Another strategy to be used will be the development of a "learning event/conference" that targets employers and youth and includes breakout sessions that introduce and reinforce employability skills needed by the current labor market. When youth can have 'face-to-face' time with an employer representative, it helps to de-mystify the job application process and build a better understanding of the skills and aptitudes employers seek.

The Local WIA will provide public, business, and non profit work experience opportunities within each region. The LWC is expecting the Local WIA to spend 70% of the state allocation on High demand/High Growth occupations. Funding streams supporting youth development and job training and employment are often fragmented, unconnected, and have different reporting and outcome expectations. Part of our strategic planning and collaboration process is to identify all of the available sources of funds dedicated to youth training and employment and deciding how to blend or coordinate those resources to reduce services systems gaps and duplication. Blending will include public and private funding sources or diversifying funding sources such as local/state grants. An example of the Blended Program is the EMPLoY Program in which the staff assists youth in building career plans that provide training and entry to jobs with career ladders utilizing the Career Ready 101 assessment tools.

The youth and young adults participating in the Summer Youth Program will learn from the Life-Skills curriculum: Financial Literacy, Resume Writing, and Interviewing Skills. The Career Skills curriculum will include learning all skills necessary for the National Career Readiness Certificate: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. Work Ready Skills

curriculum will include soft skills and other work-ready skills such as Teamwork, Observation, Writing, Applied Technology, Listening, Work habits, Communication Skills, Workplace Effectiveness, Business Etiquette, and The Job Search.

### **Summer Youth Assessments**

Each Local Workforce Investment Area should assess every participant who engages in the Summer Youth program that utilizes stimulus funds allocated under the American Recovery and Re-employment Act (ARRA). All in-school youth can be assessed (pre-test and post-test) with any recognized assessment. All out-of-school youth must be assessed with the KeyTrain CareerReady 101 assessment tool.

Youth who are currently in or transitioning from foster care are a particularly vulnerable population in these uncertain economic times. With low education levels, high unemployment rates, and pressing economic needs, older youth in foster care are among the most immediately affected in an economic downturn. Given the intention and scope of ARRA, the needs of older youth transitioning from care are legitimate concerns for state and community leaders to address in conversations about how best to use federal stimulus funding.

LWC is connecting with Department of Social Services to support older youth in foster care related to health care coordination, educational stability, and youth-led transition planning, among others. We are also supportive of DSS opt-in provisions, including the extension of Title IV-E eligibility up until age 21 as well as extension of Title IV-E reimbursement for subsidized guardianship placement. This will increase the success ratio of the youth.

The Local WIA will provide public, business, and non profit work experience opportunities within each region. LWC is expecting the Local WIA to spend 70% of the state allocation for the summer of 2009 and 30% for 2010.

## **Service Delivery**

### **State Governance and Collaboration**

#### **Question III.A.2. 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).)**

During the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, Governor Bobby Jindal successfully led the effort to adopt comprehensive reform legislation, Act 743, to address the state's workforce development system. The previous Department of Labor has become the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC). Act 743 charges the LWC with integrating, to the extent practical, the administration and functions of the various workforce development programs of the state to achieve efficient, effective, and demand-driven delivery of services.

In the spirit of collaboration, Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, in its April, 2009 meeting, invited other agencies to make presentations regarding their plans with ARRA funding. Such agencies were Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Louisiana Housing Finance Agency, and Higher Education.

The LWC has demonstrated its collaborative intent with the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency and its weatherization program. Community action agencies head the program and are partnering with the LWIAs in filling openings for individuals working with the weatherization program (training is involved). After the program is complete, the LWIAs will be able to provide placement services for participants.

**Question III.C.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) of WIA, 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).)**

Policy Nine series to start the process of integration of WIA Title 1, Wagner Peyser, and Veterans services. In 2007, a policy was issued to move the Trade Act services to the local Business and Career Solution Center. LWC is continued its move toward stream-lining services through integration by relocating the Registered Apprenticeship Program from the Office of Regulatory Services to the Office of Workforce Development. With the addition of ARRA funding, LWC has incorporated a strategy to integrate Unemployment Services with WIA and Wagner Peyser through ARRA funds. LWC intends to implement Career Coaches as part of a Reemployment Strategies effort within workforce investment regions by January of 2010. LWC will use UI and Wagner-Peyser funds to create these positions responsible for identifying, developing and monitoring career action plans for those within targeted populations seeking opportunities within designated demand occupations and sectors. LWC has outlined policies emphasizing coordination amongst our workforce programs such as Policy 9.

LWC participates in several interagency initiatives to enhance and expand access to workforce services such as partnerships with Department of Social Services on Neighborhood Place and Department of Education on EMPLoY. LWC has also redefined our Business Service Representatives duties and responsibilities to ensure more effective and timely engagement and coordination with the business community.

## **Reemployment Services and Wagner-Peyser Act Services**

**Question IX.C.4.b. Describe the reemployment services the state provides 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. (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)**

Currently Re-employment services to claimants, in accordance with the Wagner-Peyser Act, utilize assessment as part of the core services in the Business and Career Solutions Centers to determine the level of service needed to rapidly assist the claimant in returning to work. Re-employment services available to worker profiling and reemployment services claimants include the full array of core, intensive, and training services. Current job openings are reviewed and appropriate referrals made, if possible. If no current openings are available, Business and Career Solutions Center staff conducts job development activities. Claimants receive intensive placement services by the Recruitment and Placement team, when indicated by assessment. Intensive group activities and job clubs are an integral part of the service mix for worker profiling and reemployment services claimants. The Wagner-Peyser services are similar except that the staff in B&CSC tries to identify the UI claimants up front when they come, in order to quickly provide reemployment services strategies.

With integration and WIA and Wagner-Peyser staff sitting side by side, claimants are quickly and easily able to be referred to intensive or training services as need.

All UI claimants are mailed a letter informing them that they must register for work with the Business and Career Solutions Center within 21 days of filing a claim. If a claimant fails to register, the claimant is disqualified from receiving benefits until s/he comes in and registers for work. When a claimant visits the Business and Career Solutions Centers, he or she is greeted and asked six questions which serve as a quick assessment of why they have arrived, history of the last place of work, what type of work they are looking for and their computer literacy. With this quick assessment the staff can very easily identify the customer as a claimant and start him/her on re-employment services, such as job search workshops and supportive services, as needed. The full array of core, intensive, and training services are made available to the claimant through the Business and Career Solutions system. With integration access to intensive and training service is seamless and quick.

With the ARRA funding the LWC has developed strategies to identify UI claimants based on number of weeks of UI benefits. Using this real time data, the staff will be able to quickly engage in providing UI clients with intensive and training services. Fifty (50) career coaches will be employed to focus on the hard-to-place claimants. Furthermore, worker profile models will be developed which will be an accurate model of identifying those claimants who would most likely exhaust their benefits.

**Question IX.C.1.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 includes: (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. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)**

The Louisiana Virtual One-Stop System (LAVOS), is an internet based system providing job seekers, businesses and workforce development staff with access to workforce information, job openings, training providers, O\*Net data, resumes, transferable skill matching, assessment tools and other features 24/7, helping them make informed career decisions. Job seekers can become customers of LAVOS from home or any internet accessible location. This allows faith based/community based organizations to utilize

Business and Career Solutions services for their clients' on-site. Job seekers can build their resume and attach it to specific job openings for employers to view. They can search for jobs using eight different search criteria ranging from key word search, to skill matching, to industry or specific employer searches. Job seekers can also match their WorkKey scores to specific job openings. Employers can manage their entire recruitment process on-line, entering their own job orders, determine referral methods and view resumes online and record hires. The LWC Staff uses LAVOS to document and manage job seeker and program participant activities as well as business services. The system can also spider employer websites as well as other job banks, providing Business and Career Solutions system customers with access to most online resources in the state.

Louisiana is committed to providing seamless service delivery to all job seekers through the Business and Career Solutions system. Through LAVOS all job seekers have self-service access to jobs, training opportunities, and workforce information at any location with internet access. Job seekers may also access Staff Facilitated services through the Business and Career Solutions Center where personnel can also provide limited one-on-one services to those job seekers, including Veterans, who may require additional assistance. The LWC is working to provide services based on customer need, not program delivery; grouping staff by services delivered rather than by funding stream.

Within LAVOS, The LWC has developed the ability to input, monitor, and provide reports on jobs that are subsidized through the Recovery Act, including Green Jobs. Staff have been trained to identify as well as input both Recovery Act jobs and Green jobs.

LWC has developed a series of policies outlining the standardization of an Integrated Service Model Work Process in order to fully develop a seamless integrated system. The goal of this redesign project is (1) the restructuring of the delivery of employment and training services to eliminate duplication of services, (2) ensuring that the business needs of hiring, retention, training, and advancement of workers is the driving force for a system design and (3) connecting businesses who are looking for qualified workers with individuals seeking employment. This strategic vision required alignment of workforce services functions across Wagner Peyser and WIA programs.

Additionally, in each Workforce Investment Areas, WIA and Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff work in integrated teams providing seamless service delivery to job seeking and business customers. LWC has developed a strategic vision for USDOL funded employment and training services as well as integrated work processes that allows for local flexibility based on state policy guidance. Consolidation and integration empowers local WIA directors to set the overall policy and vision for the operation of their programs in the Business and Career Solutions Centers in each local jurisdiction, within WIA and Wagner-Peyser regulations, and in cooperation with the State. In all LWIAs there is a connection, either through co-location or electronic connectivity, of the One-Stop system and the community, as well as the technical college system. All Business and

Career Solutions Centers in Louisiana provide the required core services to both job seekers and employers.

All positions resulting from ARRA will be listed on LAVOS and identified as either a green job or stimulus occupation, should they meet certain criteria.

There is no official Federal definition of Green Jobs; however there is a fair consensus of the characteristics of Green Jobs or, as they are sometimes referred to, Green Collar Jobs.

Examples of Green Jobs include:

Sustainable Manufacturing, or Green Products and Services (related to the manufacture of products that reduce environmental impact and improve use of resources such as energy efficiency, water conservation, use of environmentally preferred materials, and land/property reclamation):

## **Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**

### **Question IX.C.1.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 Louisiana Workforce Commission is committed to providing seamless service delivery to all job seekers through the Business and Career Solutions system. Through Louisiana Virtual One Stop all job seekers have self-service access to jobs, training opportunities, and workforce information at any location that with internet access. Job seekers may access Staff Facilitated services through the Business and Career Solutions Center. Personnel at the Business and Career Solutions Centers can also provide limited one-on-one staff services to those job seekers, including Veterans, who require additional assistance. LWC is working to provide services based on customer need rather than program delivery and grouping staff by services delivered rather than by funding stream.

Universal accesses for core services are provided to all jobseekers including participants receiving public assistance or other low-income individuals. The goal for each local area is that either a majority of the participants served are from the target populations, or a majority of the adult funds budgeted for intensive and training services are expended on the target populations.

The Grassroots RFP initiative is being funded with ARRA dollars. It is a strategic plan to work with community and faith-based organizations, other state agencies, and directly in communities across the state to recruit, from the identified target populations, those who are not in the workforce. This initiative is to provide universal access to core services.

LWC goal is to place emphasis on serving the needs of special applicant groups. The LAVOS Labor Market Information section provides census information to each local workforce board on the population figures for these groups. The Business and Career Solutions Center operator, in coordination with the system partners, must develop service strategies designed to meet the specific needs of these groups. LAVOS gathers information on placement and retention of special applicant groups to determine the best service strategies. LVERs and DVOPs are utilized to the maximum extent possible to provide all-inclusive case management services to Veterans throughout the Business and Career Solutions system. To the extent feasible, services will be taken to the Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. Faith-based and Community-based organizations are being involved in the process both as a provider of services and as a resource to the Business and Career Solutions Centers.

The following populations with special needs have been identified:

- Offenders
- Disabled individuals
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Migrant and seasonal farm workers
- Individuals training for nontraditional employment
- Veterans
- Individuals with multiple barriers to employment
- Older Workers

LWCs career exploration process provides a methodology at the local level to structure processes, identify services needed, and make decisions as to who will be responsible for ensuring the services are available across system partners. It serves as a planning guide that system partners can use in deciding who is responsible for given sets of services to ensure comprehensive, non-duplicated services to customers across the system. It can assist with recommended service strategies (employment express, career development, career advancement) needed to assist customers in growing their income and making a successful transition into the labor market and up the career ladder.

LWC is piloting a program in Lafayette, LA with the LAJet, STEP, and other food stamp recipients as well as youth aging out of foster care by referring them to the B&CSCs as well as existing integrated programs from the Department of Social Services. Literature and information on the LWC web based services will be provided to individuals receiving services at other organizations as well as through community based organizations for the purpose of educating and informing customers of workforce services provided by LWC.

**Question IX.C.1.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. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)**

The Louisiana Workforce Commission has developed an integrated service delivery model in which the WIA Title I, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, and Trade Assistance Adjustment programs are totally integrated in order to provide the resources through Recovery Act. The Business and Career Solutions Centers utilize a team-based triage service delivery strategy for all job seekers. Services at each center are delivered through facilitated self-help and group activities. In addition, customers not needing staff assistance may access services outside of the centers through LWC's internet based Management Information System. The system provides job seekers direct access to employer listings through the self-service component as well as the ability to complete skill based resumes. At the Business and Career Solutions Centers, the Skills Development team assists customers to develop such skills as learning how to apply for jobs using the internet, developing resumes that match specific jobs, analyzing job skills, determining life-long training needs etc. By matching customers with identifiable cohorts of services (Employment Express, Career Advancement, Career Development), staff can quickly determine customer needs and direct customers through the system to intensive services, as required. Those customers needing more intensive services have access to career aptitude/interest assessments and more intensive counseling services. The system encourages customer choice, thereby facilitating a better match to needed services, resulting in a more rapid entry into the workforce.

The Career Exploration Process helps provide staff with the skills, knowledge, and tools to provide customers a choice in service, delivery, and design. This approach helps job seekers first develop a financial plan and then use workforce information to build a career plan. This will enable them to ensure the job/training they choose will match their financial needs and is part of a career ladder. Each local workforce development plan addresses the mix of services in the region and local area delivery strategies. With this strategy, job seekers who are low income and low skilled can develop a plan using the resources in the Business and Career Solutions Center to help pursue a job that would be family-supporting job.

Through the use of Wagner-Peyser funds, youth have access to the Business and Career Solutions Centers. The matrix of services offered by the Centers includes appropriate educational and training services. All WIA youth contractors are required to coordinate their services with Business and Career Solutions Centers in their area to ensure that youth can access all appropriate services. LWC believes that youth, particularly out-of-school youth, should be introduced to the services available through the Business and Career Solutions system early in their development and encouraged to use the Business and Career Solutions system as an entry point to obtaining education, training, and job search services. The overall task of the Grassroots RFP is to deliver job-ready or training-ready members of the targeted, hard-to-serve populations and untapped labor pools to the Louisiana Workforce Commission Business and Career Solutions Centers across the state of Louisiana. Those centers will coordinate the delivery of job placement, training or other workforce development services to the recruited individuals.

**Question IX.C.3.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. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)**

LWC requires regional planning and the identification, development, implementation, and monitoring of sector initiatives. Regional incentives will be created and awarded to encourage and support desired regional activities. LWIBs are expected to coordinate, plan, assess, and outline capacity of training needs related to targeted occupations in demand. Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are also expected to ensure appropriate coordination with other workforce partners and programs, including but not limited to, Incumbent Worker Training Program, Community Development Block Grant, Apprenticeship, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Department of Transportation Development, Community Based Organizations and Faith Based Organizations to maximize access, timely and relevant services with projected outcomes. ARRA funds are to be designated for investment in priorities outlined in the regional plans, regional development, and sector initiatives. Regional policies are required for Employer Based Training, Needs Based Payments, and Supportive Services that are aligned with designated regional priorities. LWIBs are expected to expend at least 70% of these funds IAW regional priorities and demand occupations within targeted sector initiatives.

Access to training in regionally targeted industry sectors will be supported by funding and other resources from the Louisiana Workforce Commission, agencies responsible for K-12, adult, and post-secondary education, and agencies responsible for other funding for job training received through the ARRA (such as funding for transportation, related On-the-Job Training/Supportive Services, funding to address health profession workforce shortages, funding for weatherization training, etc). Additionally, the Louisiana Workforce Commission will provide incentives so that resources from these sources, as well as others including businesses, may be brought together to support and sustain regional sector initiatives.

**Question IX.A.5. What models/templates/approaches does the state recommend and/or mandate for service delivery in the One-Stop Career Centers? For example, do all One- Stop Career 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 Career Center? Are all One-Stop Career Centers required to have a resource center that is open to anyone? (§§112(b)(2) and 111(d)(2).)**

For the business community, Regional Business Sector Initiatives will coordinate services regionally for employers and provide them with a single point of contact with the employment and training system. Each Center has dedicated staff providing services to businesses. The Business Service Representatives (BSRs) work with employers in their community as part of an initiative coordinated across the region. This coordination process will ensure that labor market information, training needs, employment opportunities, etc., are shared among all partner entities. Each partner entity in the region will be involved in a regional planning process utilizing their local staff. Employers are assigned an account representative through the local Business Solutions system. This individual is responsible for connecting employers with all workforce development services. As the LWC refines this model, services will be streamlined to avoid having businesses contacted by multiple programs, providing a single point of contact for service delivery. To make Business Service Representatives most effective, their efforts will be focused to support regional sector initiatives.

In addition, steps are being taken, and progress made, in our efforts to integrate registered apprenticeships more closely with our Business & Career Solution Centers. Short term plans include hosting a statewide conference on Registered Apprenticeship which will be specifically tailored and directed towards our workforce delivery system, from Workforce Investment Board members down to front line Business & Career Solutions Center staff. The goal of this conference, the first of its kind in Louisiana, is to give this target group detailed information and knowledge about Registered Apprenticeship, suggestions for working more closely with program sponsors in each region, and how referrals to Registered Apprenticeship programs can enhance the performance measures of our Centers. Last fall, 60% of our centers received an hour long workshop on Registered Apprenticeship during staff development meetings, although much more detail needs to be delivered to the Workforce Investment Areas in order for them to develop a true appreciation for the benefits of integration with this program. The participants of this conference will then be able to take this knowledge back to their local areas and understand the value of applying stimulus funds to Registered Apprenticeship related activities. In turn, the Centers will be better equipped to expand Business services and increase the number of opportunities available to their customers.

The Rapid Response Team will implement state-wide business retention strategies to reduce the economic impact on businesses in declining industries and workers dislocated by layoffs. Key strategies will include:

- Anticipating layoffs by analyzing economic and labor market trends
- Developing an early warning network to trigger Rapid Response services
- Averting layoffs by mobilizing workforce and economic development resources
- Helping dislocated workers find new jobs as quickly as possible through community partnerships and improved assessments
- Training laid-off workers for new jobs and careers by exploring flexible training strategies and drawing on various federal and state resources.

Business Service Representatives will serve as members of an early warning network to detect at-risk businesses. Additionally formal networks of businesses, unions, local elected officials, and government agencies will be organized to analyze economic trends and provide advance warning of business failures and worker dislocation.

Finally, business retention plans will be developed which will contain a comprehensive set of solutions and aversion strategies.

Another state-wide initiative is to utilize WorkKeys assessments to assist businesses in finding qualified skilled workers. Businesses will have the ability to help make hiring decisions based on assessment results. WorkKeys further allows businesses in emerging sectors and workers to measure skill sets and training needs.

To ensure that job seekers get to “the right service the first time” all Business and Career Solutions provides a standardized framework when a customer visit one of the centers. They are greeted within thirty seconds and assessed for service needed, instructed in how to access services, including job placement, and how the offices are designed and staffed to meet the needs of job seekers and employers.

Through the assessment, an appropriate mix of services is recommended to each customer based upon their needs. Each Center’s customer flow design incorporates a methodology to identify customers’ needs up front and move quickly into the Resource Area to be able to access services. Resources available include job search activities, evaluation of skills, interest inventory and work preferences assessments, and exploration of career ladders.

One-Stop Career Center resources, such as staff support for recruitment and enrollment, intensive services, and related support services, training resources, as well as other resources available to the LWIA, will be prioritized to support regional sector initiatives.

## Youth Services

### **Question IX.E.1. Describe the state's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need. (§112(b)(18).)**

ARRA summer programs are being integrated and coordinated to provide youth with the resources and work readiness skills necessary to succeed in bridging the gap in our state's workforce pipeline. The summer youth program will enhance the opportunity for youths to connect to post-secondary education opportunities, leadership development activities, mentoring training, community service, and other community resources. A range of services that help young people build self-esteem, make better decisions, and develop goals and hope for the future are also needed. When youth development activities are coordinated with training and employment opportunities they help young people achieve better lives for themselves, provide alternatives to risky behavior, and help them contribute to the economic and social well-being of their communities.

The LWC is working with the East Baton Rouge WIA to create the first LWC Internship Program. The program will serve as a model for future statewide Summer Youth Internship programs.

The local WIAs required ratio is 50% in-School youth and 50% Out-of-school youth. The in-school and out-of-school youth will register in LAVOS and the out-of-school youth will be linked to supportive services in the Business and Career Solutions center (B&CSC) to help them determine if employment and/or training/education is appropriate. Local Community Action Agencies will partner with the local WIA to provide the wrap-around services needed by both in-school and out-of-school youths and young adults. The wrap-around service partnership should eliminate any barriers to a successful outcome. The LWC will use stimulus allocation to fund the development of bi-lingual online resources to be included in the language regarding requested waiver that would allow older youth to continue work experience beyond summer time frame. The services provided by the B&CSC will assist them in linking short term and long term career planning and goal setting as part of their reattachment process. The LWC has implemented a Youth Portal and LAePortal on its website, [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net), to display workforce information in a format appropriate for younger users linking career planning in high school and reattachment to education for out-of-school youth.

Business and Career Centers youth staff will work to identify youth 14-24 to link them to high demand/growth occupations and green jobs. Developing marketing strategies for connecting youth job-seekers with employers can take many forms. Brochures, posters, websites, and Job Fairs are a few of these mechanisms. Another strategy to be used will be the development of a "learning event/conference" that targets employers and youth and includes breakout sessions that introduce and reinforce employability skills needed by the current labor market. When youth can have 'face-to-face' time with an employer representative, it helps to de-mystify the job application process and build a better understanding of the skills and aptitudes employers seek.

The Local WIA will provide public, business, and non profit work experience opportunities within each region. The LWC is expecting the Local WIA to spend 70% of the state allocation on High Demand/High Growth occupations. Funding streams supporting youth development and job training and employment are often fragmented, unconnected, and have different reporting and outcome expectations. Part of our strategic planning and collaboration process is to identify all of the available sources of funds dedicated to youth training and employment and deciding how to blend or coordinate those resources to reduce service systems gaps and duplication. Blending will include public and private funding sources or diversifying funding sources such as local/state grants. An example of the Blended Program is the EMPLoY Program in which the

staff assists youth in building career plans that provide training and entry to jobs with career ladders utilizing the Career Ready 101 assessment tools.

The youth and young adults participating in the Summer Youth Program will learn from the Life-Skills curriculum: Financial Literacy, Resume Writing, and Interviewing Skills. The Career Skills curriculum will include learning all skills necessary for the National Career Readiness Certificate: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. Work Ready Skills curriculum will include soft skills and other work-ready skills such as Teamwork, Observation, Writing, Applied Technology, Listening, Work habits, Communication Skills, Workplace Effectiveness, Business Etiquette, and The Job Search.

### **Summer Youth Assessments**

Each Local Workforce Investment Areas should assess every participant who engages in the Summer Youth program that utilizes stimulus funds allocated under the American Recovery and Re-employment Act (ARRA). All in-school youth can be assessed (pre-test and post-test) with any recognized assessment. All out-of-school youth must be assessed with the KeyTrain CareerReady 101 assessment tool.

Youth who are currently in or transitioning from foster care are a particularly vulnerable population in these uncertain economic times. With low education levels, high unemployment rates, and pressing economic needs, older youth in foster care are among the most immediately affected in an economic downturn. Given the intention and scope of ARRA, the needs of older youth transitioning from care are legitimate concerns for state and community leaders to address in conversations about how best to use federal stimulus funding.

The LWC is connecting with Department of Social Services to support older youth in foster care related to health care coordination, educational stability, and youth-led transition planning, among others. We are also supportive of DSS opt-in provisions, including the extension of Title IV-E eligibility up until age 21, as well as extension of Title IV-E reimbursement for subsidized guardianship placement. This will increase the success ratio of the youth.

The Local Workforce Investment Areas will provide public, business, and non profit work experience opportunities within each region. LWC is expecting the Local WIA to spend 70% of the state allocation for the summer of 2009 and 30% for 2010. The total number of youth who will participate in the summer youth program will be 6000 in 2009 and 2000 in 2010.

## Veterans' Priority of Service

**Question IX.C.5.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 (and certain spouses) who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor?**

The Jobs for Veterans Act Program is monitored at least annually by the LWC Audit and Security team. They analyze and report on veterans' service delivery and program compliance, particularly in the area of Priority of Service for veterans. The audit results are communicated to the LWIB Director, State Veterans Employment Representative (SVER), and the USDOL/VETS State Director. Findings are identified and deadlines for corrective action are issued as appropriate.

The Program Trainer and SVER works closely with Business and Career Solutions Center management and staff to inform, advise, and coordinate the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act Program in their office. Visits will be made to Centers, whether veteran staff are in place or not, to educate all staff on the necessity of observing Priority of Service. A power point presentation has been developed specifically for this purpose. All Veteran staff meets to assess the training needs at each LWIA to ensure that follow up services are provided as needed.

### VETERANS PRIORITY OF SERVICE POLICY

We have had in place since January 16, 2007, Workforce Development Policy Number 18. This policy set the standard for implementing Public Law 107-288, The Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA), throughout the state workforce system, including Local Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Career Centers and State Workforce Agencies. Policy #18 mandates that veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service in all USDOL funded employment and training programs, as long as the program requirements are met.

We have received additional guidance in priority of service since 2007. Priority of Service For Covered Persons; Final Rule, 20 CFR Part 1010, and The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), have both promised extensive guidance and technical assistance to be separately issued.

Essential to the successful implementation of priority of service is identifying the veteran at the point of entry to the workforce system. The JVA policy has been in effect since 2003. State and local staff have been trained since it's the JVA policy inception. Veteran staff attend state meetings three times a year and the practical elements of point of entry identification are extensively covered.

The Veteran's Program utilizes a train the trainer presentation which equips equips LVER and DVOP staff to train local staff in all aspects of priority of service.

We continue to work with LWIBs and other partners to assist and ensure that their strategic local plan for all offices under their control includes the implementation of veteran's priority of service from the initial contact at point of entry.

## Service Delivery to Targeted Populations

**Question IX.C.4.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, 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).)**

Paramount to a successful strategy of a seamless service delivery under conditions of significant increases in traffic to the local One Stop systems is the adherence to LWC developed series policies (Policy 9 series) outlining the standardization of OWD’s Integrated Service Model Work Processes. The policies and structure were created with the goal of restructuring the delivery of employment and training services to eliminate duplication of services and to ensure that the business needs of hiring, retention, training and advancement of workers is the driving force for a system design. This strategic vision established in advance of ARRA funding will only serve to enhance performance and improve the delivery of services to an expanded participant population, and is a required alignment of workforce services functions across Wagner Peyser and WIA programs.

Through the additional of ARRA funding, greater resources will be available for the employment and training needs of all job seekers will be met through the provision of Core, Intensive and Training services accessible through Louisiana’s Business and Career Solutions system. To ensure that special populations are appropriately served and that non-traditional career opportunities are presented, local WIBs have been previously encouraged to provide professional development training to all front-line personnel and also encouraged to include service providers and community-based organizations that serve special populations on the local board, or its groups and subcommittees.

Each Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) must pay strict attention to adherence to its policies regarding priority of service for the provision of Intensive and Training services to Adults and Dislocated Workers under WIA Title I. The Adult priority of service policy must provide priority to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals. Local plans must also clearly define how the needs of displaced workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans and individuals with multiple barriers to employment including older workers, individuals with limited English-speaking abilities and individuals with disabilities, will be met.

Each LWIBs must develop a local policy regarding priority of service for the provision of Intensive and Training services to Adults and Dislocated Workers under WIA Title I and this policy must be incorporated into the local plan. The Adult priority of service policy must provide priority to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals. Local plans must also clearly define how the needs of displaced workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans and individuals with multiple barriers to employment including older workers, individuals with limited English-speaking abilities and individuals with disabilities, will be met.

A local board may elect to provide training without the use of Individual Training Accounts to special low-income participant populations facing multiple barriers to employment, with

agreement from LWC and the WIC. Those special participant populations may be individuals with significant cultural or language barriers, ex-offenders, homeless individuals or many include individuals from other locally defined populations. To provide such training, the local board must develop criteria to determine the “demonstrated effectiveness” of the training provider, which must include the financial stability of the organization, demonstrated program performance and explanation of how the program relates to the workforce investment needs identified in the local plan.

LWC’s career exploration process provides a methodology at the local level to structure processes, identify services needed, and make decisions on who will be responsible for ensuring the services are available across system partners. It serves as a planning guide that system partners can use in deciding who is responsible for given sets of services to ensure comprehensive, non-duplicated services to customers across the system. It can assist with recommended service strategies (employment express, career development, career advancement) needed to assist customers in growing their income and making a successful transition into the labor market and up the career ladder.

All grants under WIA will contain non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions. LWC’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance will monitor compliance with these provisions.

WIA and Wagner-Peyser funded services for persons with disabilities are coordinated with other One-Stop system partners, especially Vocational Rehabilitation. Wagner-Peyser services are available to all persons, including persons with disabilities. All Business and Career Solutions centers are fully accessible in accordance with USDOL TEIN 16-99.

Recognizing the high unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities and the qualified employee shortage businesses are facing, LWC is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to all programs, services and facilities. Each Business and Career Solutions center utilizes the One-Stop Disability Access Checklist to self evaluate their current level of accessibility and plan to meet the accessibility needs of customers with disabilities who come to Business and Career Solutions centers for services.

Louisiana assures that all Business and Career Solutions centers are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requirements that accessibility encompass physical accessibility of the One-Stop sites including the removal of barriers in addition to program accessibility for the various partner programs and service providers. Access to the provision of services offered at each of the Business and Career Solutions centers is equitably available universal population, including those individuals with disabilities. LWC continues to ensure all materials and delivery methods are appropriate to diverse cultures, languages and education. This program accommodation includes, as appropriate, the provision of interpreters for individuals with hearing impairments who require such assistance in order to participate in a center program, use of Braille and large print material and enlarged computer screens for individuals with visual disabilities, earphones with enhanced sound for individuals with hearing disabilities, etc. LAVOS is JAWS enabled to assist individuals with visual disabilities access employment and training services via the Internet. LWC’s EEO office will provide technical assistance to the Business and Career Solutions centers if necessary and monitor the system for compliance.

Recognizing the current needs of military veterans living in or returning to Louisiana, the Louisiana Workforce Commission has established an integrated delivery system through our statewide Business and Career Solutions centers. The Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002, as well as 38 U.S.C. 41 (as amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act), and the Workforce Investment Act, as amended, all provide guidance and intent for the provision of employment and training services to veterans in our Business and Career Solutions system.

Locally, the DVOP and LVER staff is in contact with the veteran population, as well as other Business and Career Solutions staff throughout the statewide system. DVOP and LVER staff is available to work with the Business Services team and other partners, to coordinate and offer a full array of networked or direct services for veterans. Outreach to employers, veterans, and community service providers are one of the most important program segments that benefit veterans.

Many veterans with barriers to employment are in homeless shelters, VA Hospitals, Veterans' Centers, half-way houses, and other community-based facilities. The DVOP staff, in the interest of assisting veterans in need of intensive services, makes personal visits, network and develops relationships with community providers in order to locate and assist veterans who otherwise would not make themselves available to a Business and Career Solutions center.

The Office of Equal Opportunity ensures compliance with all federal and state regulations; however, all of LWC has been proactive in meeting the needs of job seekers with limited English proficiency. Critical documents have been translated into Spanish, which is the primary language among the state's limited English proficiency population. Each office has identified staff and/or local contacts that can assist with service delivery for job seekers of other languages.

## Transparency and Public Comment

**Instruction from Section II of State Planning Guidance Plan Development Process: 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) and 112(b)(9).)**

*The Recovery Act places a high priority on transparency. The state should describe:*

- *State efforts to promote transparency.*
- *The process used to make the Plan modification available to the public and the outcome of the state's review of resulting public comments.*

The draft of the ARRA state plan was circulated to every member of the Workforce Investment Council (WIC), which is a representative body of all of the major public and private stakeholders in workforce development. It was also forwarded to all of the 18 Workforce Investment Boards, which represent many other stakeholders on the local level, as well as their staff and local elected officials across the state. Additionally, the draft plan was posted on the LWC web site with a solicitation for input and feedback. Input received after seven days was collected, discussed with the Governor's Office and the WIC and incorporated where appropriate.

## Increasing Services for Universal Access

### Question VI.C. What state policies are in place to promote universal access and consistency of service statewide? (§112(b)(2).)

To improve the overall operations, effectiveness, and outcomes of workforce development in Louisiana, LWC has implemented a service integration and system alignment model. This system is envisioned to impact the State's workforce and economy through better linkages between employers and workers, and overall improvements and enhancements toward workforce skill development. The Business and Career Solutions system is the primary service delivery vehicle for LWIBs to fulfill their workforce development role.

<b>Business Solutions</b>	<b>Career Solutions</b>
A strategic approach to develop and maintain relationships and partnerships with the business community	Funding and staffing integration to advance the efficiency and maximize the resources of the one-stop centers processes.
Ensure services and service delivery methods meet business demands, including improvement of existing services and development of new business services	Move from a focus and delineation on “ <i>programs</i> ” to well-structured and customer-appropriate sets of “ <i>services</i> .”
Move to exceptional high quality standards for delivery of employer services, focused on <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) job vacancy processing from receipt to follow-up,</li> <li>2) recruitment services, and</li> <li>3) optimum connections between the business and job seeker community</li> </ol>	Create highly satisfying services and processes that <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) remove wait time and get customers started on services immediately,</li> <li>2) are clearly identified and easily accessed from start to finish, and</li> <li>3) provide options for direct entry into the labor market and/or training to build skills to advance in the labor market</li> </ol>

With the downturn in the economy and increased traffic in the Business and Career Solutions Center, the State will assess the needs of where to increase the Wagner-Peyser staff through ARRA funding to support the increase in traffic at the local centers.

## Local Planning Process

### **Question VIII.D. Describe the state-mandated requirements for local areas' strategic planning, and the assistance the state provides to local areas to facilitate this process. ((§112(b)(2) and 20 CFR 661.350(a)(13).))**

With additional funding provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, LWC's leadership has been aggressive in communicating its vision for the expansion of services. Initially, each LWIA has been required to provide its action plan for the implementation of Stimulus funding for its served area. As part of the plan, each LWIA was asked to tailor its response around the identification of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats relative to the successful expansion of services. Additional interface occurred through the distribution of a USDOL provided assessment document which allowed both LWC and each LWIA the opportunity to respond to questions specifically crafted to measure readiness to comply with the intent of ARRA. This assessment document was used in the on-site visits performed in conjunction with USDOL staff at selected LWIA locations across the state. Through multiple mediums, LWC has provided the direction, support, and critical follow up necessary to ensure that strict attention is given to both the urgency and importance of successfully implementing programs that are outcome based and productive toward achieving a positive lasting experience for participants. Through the use of webinars and face-to-face encounters, LWC continues its quest to highlight successes, answer questions, and provide direction to its local partners. LWC's goals and accomplishments include the following:

- Convene a regional leadership group to provide an initial identification of the region based on an initial assessment of a concentration of industry sectors, high-growth sectors, and emerging sectors; existence of workforce challenges in them, and opportunities for the regional workforce to become employed and advance in employment in them. Additionally, provide monitoring of regional implementation of the LWC's ARRA plan.
- Convene one or more core leadership group for a regional sector initiative and seat representatives of them on the regional leadership group.
- Conduct a regional economy-wide SWOT analysis to support creation of a regional identity and to market it; concentrating on assets
- Conduct one or more analyses of an industry sector, its workforce, the capacity of entities that provide services to the industry sector's employers, workers, and job seekers, and needed systems changes, including SWOT, to support design of one or more sector initiatives
- Develop shared regional identity and vision of success for regional vitality, employers in target industry sectors, and the workforce for those sectors
- Develop a shared regional identity and vision of success for regional vitality, employers in target industry sectors, and the workforce for those sectors
- Market regional identity and vision, through efforts of the regional leadership group and the regional sector initiative leadership group(s)
- Design sector initiatives, building in plan for systems change and sustainability
- Identify funding to market regional identity, vision of success, and successes
- Identify funding for start up and first two years of sector initiatives' operations
- Build capacity of the region's organizations to operate the sector initiatives
- Implement sector initiative operations.

## Procurement

**Question VIII.F.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).)** (Note: All procurements must comply with OMB requirements codified in 29 CFR Parts 95.40-95.48 and 97.36.)

The competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the state level to award grants and contracts for ARRA activities as well as activities under Title I of WIA are prescribed under "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments" which is codified in USDOL regulations at 29CFR part 97.

All WIA procurement transactions in Louisiana are conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with the standards at 29 CFR §97.36, including proper notice to potential bidders. When procuring property or services under WIA, the State follows the policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its nonfederal funds (LSA-R.S. Titles 38 and 39, as applicable). These state level policies and procedures are very similar to those set forth at 29 CFR §97.36 identified below. Other grantees and sub grantees will use their own procurement procedures that reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified at 29 CFR §97.36.

Non-competitive processes used at the State level to award grants and contracts for youth and adult activities under Title I of WIA are as follows:

(A) Contracts for social services that would include adult and youth activities under Title I of WIA may be awarded without the necessity of competitive bidding or competitive negotiation only if the Director of the Louisiana State Office of Contractual Review (OCR) determines that any one of the following conditions is present. The using agency shall document the condition present and such documentation shall be part of the contract record submitted to the Office of Contractual Review.

1. The services are available only from a single source (sole source). Sole source procurement shall be determined by the State OCR Director. A contract shall also be considered as sole source if a request for proposals is issued and only one or no proposals are received.
2. The State legislature has made an appropriation for that particular contractor or contractors via the appropriation bill or other statutes.
3. A quasi-public and/or nonprofit corporation, such as a parish voluntary council on aging, an area agency on aging, or an association of retarded children or equivalent, has been established in accordance with the State to provide the particular service involved in the contract.
4. Local matching funds of greater than ten percent of the contract amount are required to be contributed by the contractor. Such matching funds may be in the form of cash, certified expenditures or in-kind contributions, where applicable to the funding source.
5. The nature of the services being provided necessitates that a continuity of contractors be maintained as in, but not limited to, therapeutic and crisis support to clients and employment and training programs.
6. An emergency exists which will not permit the delay in procurement necessitated by the request for proposal procedure. Such emergency shall be determined by the State OCR Director.
7. The total contract amount is less than one hundred fifty thousand dollars per twelve-month period. Service requirements shall not be artificially divided so as to exempt contracts from the request for proposal process.
8. The contract is with another governmental entity or governmental body.

9. Funds are specifically designated by the federal government for a particular private or public contractor or political subdivision.

10. The contract is with a social service contractor who supplies services under a contract in existence as of November 30, 1985, as long as such contractor continues to supply substantially the same services and the using agency certifies:

(a) The services are satisfactory.

(b) They intend to continue contracting with that contractor.

(B.) If none of the conditions given above are determined by the State OCR Director to be present in a contract for social service, then that contract shall be awarded through a request for proposal (RFP) process, under rules and regulations issued by the Office of Contractual Review.

For social service contracts not qualifying under the non-competitive procedures adequate public notice of the request for proposals shall be given by advertising in the official journal of the State, in the official journal of the parish in which the services are to be performed and such other newspapers, bulletins, or other media as are appropriate in the circumstances. Such advertisements shall appear at least twice in the official journal of the State and twice in the official journal of the parish. If the services are to be performed in or made available to residents of a multi-parish area, advertising in the official journal of the State and in one or more newspapers of general circulation in the State at least twice shall be sufficient to meet this requirement. In all cases, the first advertisement shall appear at least fourteen days before the last day that the proposals will be accepted. In addition, written notice shall be mailed to persons, firms, or corporations who are known to be in a position to furnish such services, at least fourteen days before the last day the proposals will be accepted. This last requirement is subject to reasonable limitation at the discretion of the using agency.

Local workforce investment areas will describe their procurement policies in their local WIA plans. These policies will conform to the standards identified at 29CRP97.36. Based on recommendations of the youth councils, local boards will identify eligible providers of youth activities by awarding grants or contracts on a competitive basis utilizing the local procurement policies described in their plans. LWC has requested a waiver, described elsewhere, to allow LWIAs to use the Eligible Training Provider List to select training providers to provide Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for out of school and older youth and youth 16-17 years of age.

Institutions of high education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations are required, for both ARRA funding as well as regular WIA formula funds, to follow OMB Circular A-110 that is codified in the USDOL regulations at 29 CFR part 95.

In addition to the requirements at 29 CFR §95.48 and 29 CFR §97.36(l), all procurement contracts and other transactions between local boards and units of State or local governments shall be conducted only on a cost reimbursement basis. No provision for profit shall be allowed.

In connection with youth services to be procured under the Recovery Act, the grant recipient/fiscal agent will have the option of administering summer youth employment opportunities themselves. If providers other than the grant recipient/fiscal agent are to be used to provide summer employment, these providers will have to be selected on a competitive basis and awarded a grant or contract through the state's normal procurement process.

## Technical Assistance

### **Question VIII.G.2. Describe how the state helps local areas identify areas needing improvement and how technical assistance will be provided. (§112(b)(14).)**

The Louisiana Workforce Commission has been working with Geographic Solutions to update the Louisiana Virtual One Stop operating system in order to capture elements outlined in the Recovery Act Technical Guidance Letter, TEGL 14-08. Updates include the ability to identify green jobs from various aspects of the labor exchange process, from tagging the job vacancies to identifying employment outcomes ascertained through follow-up with its members.

Case management function updates include the ability to capture services provided under stimulus customer groups: Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, including those enrolled in summer employment only.

Each LWIA has a dedicated staff person in the Management Information Systems (MIS) unit that is responsible for providing technical assistance including, but not limited to, providing clarification on proper recording of data and technological issues that relate to LAVOS. The MIS staff works with local staff as well as the program advisors who serve as the eyes and ears of LWC to ensure that any challenges and issues relating to program implementation are communicated to LWC. This infrastructure helps ensure that program and data elements are in alignment.

The MIS unit has and will continue to provide training and guidance on changes as they relate the implementation of ARRA through various delivery methods. Most advantageous is the presentation of materials via webinars. The webinars have allowed multiple staff in the field to hear and see the changes and learn how these changes should be implemented. Follow-up documentation of the webinar will be distributed as a summary and reinforcement of the materials covered. Questions submitted during or after the webinars are and will be reviewed to provide response to all LWIA. Questions and issues that are programmatic in nature are referred to the Deputy Director of Field Operations for appropriate response.

LAVOS also provides a platform to provide all field staff one-stop linkages to various websites that provides USDOL guidance and policies issued by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, as well as other resources.

To support regional sector initiatives, training will be provided to state level partner staff, who will be working with regional staff and constituents, building their capacity to plan and operate sector initiatives. The training will include the alignment of the roles of staff from all state agencies that provide support to regional sector initiatives.

State staff will provide initial and on-going training and individual capacity-building support to staff at the local and regional level who partner to support regional sector initiatives. Additionally, cross-regional team learning will be facilitated by convening the regions on a regular basis for shared learning, identifying promising practices, and discussions centered on challenges that regional sector initiatives identify.

The only required performance measure for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is work readiness. A pre- and post-assessment of work readiness skills must be administered to each SYEP applicant to determine whether a measurable increase in work readiness skills has occurred. Local areas are required to use Career Ready 101 by KeyTrain as the primary assessment instrument to determine pre- and post-work readiness skills. The nationally recognized assessments of work readiness will identify the foundation skills, competencies, and personal qualities youth need to compete successfully in the workplace. In addition to above assessment, a checklist completed by a worksite supervisor, or a documented evaluation by a public or private employer before the experience and again after the experience will demonstrate the youth's acquisition of essential work readiness skills.

## Monitoring and Oversight

**Question VIII.H. 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 *American Recovery Reinvestment Act of 2009* has made it clear that every taxpayer dollar spent on our economic recovery must be subject to unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability. Five objectives have been identified, to ensure that:

- Recovery funds are awarded and distributed in a prompt, fair, and reasonable manner;
- The recipients and uses of all recovery funds are transparent to the public, and that the public benefits of these funds are reported clearly, accurately, and in a timely manner;
- Recovery funds are used for authorized purposes and every step is taken to prevent instances of fraud, waste, error, and abuse;
- Projects funded under the recovery legislation avoid unnecessary delays and cost overruns; and,
- Programs meet specific goals and targets, and contribute to improved performance on broad economic indicators.

The **Compliance Division** of the Louisiana Workforce Commission/Office of Workforce Development serves as the monitoring agent for all *WIA* subrecipient grants, including the *American Recovery Reinvestment Act of 2009*. Thus, LWC's Compliance Division conducts all auditing/monitoring of *WIA* fiscal and programmatic requirements. Compliance audits/monitoring are designed to provide reasonable assurance that an entity's program(s) outcomes and fiscal processes/reports conform to Federal/State, statutes and regulations. These reviews will serve as an early warning device, which will address problem areas before they become severe and provide for corrective action plans.

The Compliance Division is evaluating specific program provisions of *WIA* services i.e. *Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker*, and will incorporate best practices processes to ensure increased oversight, monitoring and compliance with the provisions under the *American Recovery Reinvestment Act of 2009*. Additionally, the Compliance Division performs a risk analysis of Recovery Act programs in order to determine and identify any high risk programs. Using the aforementioned risk assessments, the Compliance Division will define strategies, developed with input from the Inspector General for the agency, to prevent or timely detect waste, fraud, or abuse.

The Compliance Division will work with Louisiana Workforce Commission staff to assess current performance evaluation and review processes to include the ability to report periodically on completion status of the program or activity, and program and economic outcomes, consistent with Recovery Act requirements. This will be accomplished by collaboration between the Compliance Division and LWC *WIA* program and field staff to survey summer employment worksites.

In order to achieve these standards the Compliance Division of the Louisiana Workforce Commission has assess its current level of personnel to manage existing *WIA* operations. Accordingly, it will be investing in human capital, adding additional staff to monitor local programs and *American Recovery Reinvestment Act of 2009*.

To ensure the seamless delivery of effective and efficient services to LWIA and Business and Career Solutions customers, the State reviews both the operation and management of its

Business and Career Solutions Centers and the function of Local Workforce Investment Boards.

There are specific regulations and pronouncements and circulars from the federal government that dictate the scope of the monitoring, and in some cases, how often they are monitored. Monitoring consist of programmatic review, financial review, Internal Controls review, and a review to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements by conducting desk and on-site and monitoring.

Desk monitoring consists of quarterly or annual fiscal, programmatic and/or performance monitoring of *WIA* and/or *Wagner-Peyser* operations. On-site monitoring consists of quarterly or annual fiscal, programmatic and/or performance monitoring of *WIA* and/or *Wagner-Peyser* operations and a review of how the grantees monitor their sub-recipients.

The analysis of the fiscal, programmatic and/or performance monitoring is developed in accordance with Federal rules and regulations by a team, which includes field staff, monitors, programmatic and fiscal specialists.

The ***Management Information Systems (MIS) Division*** of LWC's Office of Workforce Development will serve as the monitoring agent for Data Validation of *WIA* and *Wagner-Peyser* subrecipient grants programmatic/performance requirements.

The ***Integrated Field Services Division*** of the Office of Workforce Development will serve as the monitoring agent for *WIA* and *Wagner-Peyser* subrecipient grants, whereby conducting monitoring of programmatic/performance requirements.

LWIA and Business and Career Solutions Centers are monitored to:

Ensure the Center is operating in compliance with WIA law and regulations;

Ensure the services provided by the Business and Career Solutions centers meet a consistent level of quality across the State; and

Identify best practices, which include policies, procedures, and structures that facilitate service delivery or remove barriers to the receipt of services.

*WIA*

#### **Fiscal Monitoring**

The ***Compliance Division*** will perform fiscal monitoring of selected reports to source documents including reviewing the primary fiscal system and any subsidiary systems used in the preparation of reports. A random sample of invoices is checked to ensure supporting documentation is present, costs are reasonable and allowable and payments are correct and timely.

Reviewing internal controls to ensure they are adequate including separation of duties and an adequate review and approval process.

Reviewing obligational controls to ensure the grantee neither over nor under commits or expends funds in completed during the period reviewed.

#### **Programmatic Monitoring**

The ***Compliance Division*** will perform programmatic monitoring which includes a review of the number of WIA Adults and Dislocated Workers in training, number of WIA Youth enrolled in programs, number of the most at-risk youth served, and whether the local area is meeting the WIA performance measures with the scope of the monitoring review.

A letter is developed for each local director, including areas of effective practice, potential problems and existing problems or concerns. If major problems are identified, a corrective action plan is required. As part of LWC monitoring activities, to ensure that all mandated One-Stop partners have a presence in the One-Stop Delivery System.

#### **Programmatic Monitoring – Data Validation**

The **Management Information Systems (MIS) Division** will perform a data validation sample from the prior year is pulled for each local area using the Mathematica Validation Software. Data is validated to ensure local areas are properly documenting services and outcomes. In addition, a sample of current participants is pulled and the same eligibility and services information is validated.

An in-depth review of the operation of the Business and Career Solution Centers will address staffing, customer flow, cost sharing, linkages and referral and level of involvement of the One-Stop partners. In addition a key component is observation of services including those provided at the Business and Career Solutions Centers and a sample of vendors. This observation includes: ensuring that Core services are universally and easily accessible, that customers needing Intensive services receive them in a timely manner and that staff are trained and knowledgeable about the services available through the Business and Career Solutions Centers as well as other community resources.

An Equal Employment Opportunity review is done. The review ensures that policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with EEO requirements. Participant data is reviewed to ensure there are equitable services and outcomes.

#### **Grantee Sub-Recipient Monitoring**

The **Compliance Division** will perform reviews of the grantee's sub-recipient monitoring instruments to ensure appropriate fiscal and programmatic areas are monitored. Obtain the list of sub-recipients that were monitored last year and the schedule of sub-recipients to be monitored during the monitoring period. Review a sample of the sub-recipient monitoring reports to include noting any problems identified and corrective actions taken by the local entity.

#### **Reports**

The **Compliance Division** will draft monitoring reports and hold exit conference within 30 days of the completion of desk review and on-site visit. Grantee has 15 days to respond to the report.

Issuance of final monitoring report which incorporates or takes into consideration the Grantee response to the draft monitoring report. This is completed within 60 days of the draft report.

A corrective action response is required within 15 days of receipt of final report, if corrective action is necessary. A desk or on-site review, whichever is appropriate, is performed to ensure corrective action steps are taken. The timeframe is dependent on the severity of the problem.

#### *WIA and Wagner-Peyser*

The **Integrated Field Services Division** will conduct programmatic/performance monitoring which includes a review of new job seekers, services received number of exiters and entered-employment and retention rates for both Wagner-Peyser and Veterans programs.

Programmatic monitoring includes the same in-depth review of Business and Career Solutions Centers as described for WIA entities.

#### *Workforce Investment Board Monitoring and Oversight*

Local WIB monitoring and oversight is designed to ensure local boards meet the membership and function requirements of WIA, Section 117. This is done through a biennial board recertification process. It is important that local boards serve as both change agents and drivers of the accountability effort at the local level. In order for the local board to successfully support integration and collaboration,

the State must ensure the appropriate stakeholders are represented and the board is fulfilling its mandated role.

During the recertification process, the State Board reviews:

- The composition of each local board and adherence to established membership criteria as outlined in Section 117 (b);
- The satisfactory performance of required board functions as outlined in Section 117 (d);
- The establishment and appropriate composition of a Youth Council or alternative entity, as specified in Section 117 (h), that carries out the required duties; and
- The performance of the local area on WIA performance measures.

Local boards are recertified for a two-year period, unless they have failed to meet all established requirements. In such cases, the local WIB must develop an improvement plan to address any deficiencies and receive technical assistance from LWC. The State will monitor the local board's progress and, if satisfactory, will recertify.

The President has made it abundantly clear that every tax payer dollar spent on economic recovery through the *American Recovery Reinvestment Act of 2009* must be subject to unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability.

In order to achieve the above standards, the Compliance Division of Louisiana Workforce Commission has assessed its current level of personnel to manage existing *WIA* and *ARRA* operations. Accordingly, we are investing in human capital, adding six additional staff members to the Compliance Division to monitor program operations. The addition of six staff member equates to a sixty percent increase in monitoring staff for the Compliance Division.

## Accountability and Performance

**Question X.C.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. (§§112(b)(3) and 136(b)(3).)**

Louisiana will utilize the current state MIS system, Louisiana Virtual One Stop (LAVOS), to track all activities funded with stimulus dollars. A weekly report will be developed and reviewed on a biweekly basis to monitor activities in all LWIA's to ensure that the strategic vision of the American Recovery Act (ARRA) is fulfilled. The state will closely monitor enrollments to ensure that the individuals being served with these funds are not the same individuals previously being served with WIA regular formula funds.

The state's MIS system has been modified to track all activities according to ARRA funding/customer groups allocate to the LWIAs. Expectations with these funds are to increase the number of individuals who are placed in occupational specific training, focus on serving at a minimum 50% out-of-school youth, and increase the number of dislocated workers most impacted by the recession.

The focus of these funds being expended on training will be directed to those occupations that have been identified, leading to green jobs as well as any other high demand occupation as determined in the state or region. Reports will be generated on a biweekly basis in order to monitor that a majority of individuals enrolled into training meet these criteria.

In addition, the state's MIS system has been updated to include whether employment obtained through staff assisted services are green.

The state will ensure ARRA funds are expended on priorities outlined in the Regional Plans and activities are aligned with sector initiatives and regional coordination, development, and implementation. We will also monitor the increase in utilization of supportive services, Employer Base Training and Needs Base Training. Other performance priorities include portable credentials/certifications, increased percentages within targeted populations, and percentages employed in targeted demand occupations or sectors. Our expectations are to begin implementing and capturing the regional metrics by January 1, 2010.

The state's accountability and performance system will require reporting on regional sector initiatives including measures of outcomes for workers, impact on businesses, quality of partnerships, and systems change. These will include measures such as:

- Number and/or percentage of individuals who enrolled in sector initiative training
- Number and/or percentage of individuals who acquired a formal certificate and/or credential that is recognized within the sector
- Number and/or percentage of job seekers who entered employment through regional sector initiatives
- Number and/or percentage of job seekers who retained employment through regional sector initiatives
- Number and/or percentage of new hires achieving locally-defined self-sufficiency wage

- Referral to hire ratio for employers participating in sector initiatives
- Reduction of vacancy rates in areas of highest regional need for employers participating in sector initiatives
- Number of employers provided employer based training
- Extent of partnership development, management and capacity
- Success at implementing a worker pipeline aligned with industry needs
- Sustainability of partnership
- Improved education, training, social and business supports and/or partnerships among providers of them
- Improved public policy
- Improved employer practices

The only required performance measure for the SYEP is work readiness. A pre- and post-assessment of work readiness skills must be administered to each SYEP applicant to determine whether a measurable increase in work readiness skills has occurred. Local areas are required to use Career Ready 101 by KeyTrain as the assessment instrument to determine pre- and post-work readiness skills. This is for Out of School (Summer) Youth employment program only. The current work readiness assessment in use at the local level is an acceptable measurement for in school youth. Identify the foundation skills, competencies and personal qualities youth need to compete successfully in the workplace to a checklist completed by a worksite supervisor, or a documented evaluation by an employer (public or private) before the experience and again after the experience showing the youth's acquisition of essential work readiness skills. In all cases, the same instrument must be used for the pre- and post-assessment.

Recognizing that local areas currently use a number of reliable work readiness assessment instruments and because time is of the essence in recruiting youth and developing appropriate worksites, LWC has selected the Career Ready 101 as its primary assessment tool, and must be used for the assessment of youth participants that do not qualify as "in school" or are served beyond the summer employment time frame..

