

**CITY OF SHREVEPORT**

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PLAN**

**PY 2012-2017**

## **SECTION I. LOCAL/REGIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **A. Local/Regional Vision**

Governor Bobby Jindal took office in 2008 with a simple, clear mandate: Create an environment in Louisiana in which our businesses can grow and our people can prosper. Since he took office in 2008, the Governor has led reforms of multiple state agencies and systems to strengthen our workforce now and for the future, and making sure students are equipped to succeed at every step of their education, from early childhood through college. Governor Jindal initiated workforce development reforms through legislation converting the Department of Labor to the Louisiana Workforce Commission among a host of significant changes. The agency has been working continuously ever since to build a stronger demand-driven workforce system that more effectively helps workers by understanding and fulfilling the demands of employers. Governor Jindal also believes that meaningful business participation is key to the success of the workforce development system, as business and industry drive our system from the highest strategic level to the service delivery level in Louisiana's 18 workforce investment areas (See Attachment A). At the strategic level, business and industry representatives make up the majority of our statewide Workforce Investment Council, (WIC), 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 (BCSC's). By putting the targeting and delivery mechanisms 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 ensures maximum opportunities for job seekers.

Region 7's Workforce Boards will work together to provide strategic direction for the regional workforce system and guide investments in workforce preparation, skills development, education and training, and major initiatives supporting the Governor's vision. The Regional Workforce Investment Boards believe that in order for the WIA delivery system to reach its optimum effectiveness in the local communities, there must be maximum coordination between the partner services and regular communication with each partner; coordination with economic development entities; strong linkages with employers and maximum support from the various educational institutions.

In Louisiana, improving the competency of students, as well as, the preparedness of the workforce is especially challenging. A gap separates many of our residents from the demands of a modern workforce. Public schools have long underperformed, and while job seekers and workers often lack the skills or training to perform the work, employers need them to remain competitive. Improvements in education and workforce development have required the restructuring of agencies, and the enactment of new laws and policies across state government. This strategic approach to education and workforce development is taking place in five primary areas:

- The Louisiana Workforce Commission;
- Early childhood and K-12 education;

- Career and technical colleges and vocational training programs;
- State colleges and universities; and
- The state's economic development arm, Louisiana Economic Development

Region 7's Workforce Investment Board's (WIB) support Governor Jindal's vision and goals and the major initiatives supporting this vision, which include.

### **1. Early Childhood and K-12 Education**

Funding post-secondary education and job training based on performance and alignment with demand occupations identified by the WIBs. 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 our regional workforce system will produce enough job seekers to meet demand.

### **2. Career and Technical Colleges and Vocational Training**

Targeting and expanding community and technical college programs to prepare workers for demand occupations.

### **3. Colleges and Universities**

Improve alignment of post-secondary educational institutions through reforms in their funding formulas. Recognize the importance of higher education to Louisiana's future, by support of the GRAD Act, which provides incentives for universities and colleges to increase graduation and retention rates and completers, as well as, align academic programs with workforce needs critical to the region's economy.

### **4. Economic Development**

Region 7's Economic Development goals for attracting, retraining, and growing business and industry within the area are in line with those of the state as a whole, are listed below.

- Increase regional economic competitiveness;
- Cultivate top regional economic development assets;
- Enhance community competitiveness;
- Focus on business retention and expansion;
- Develop national-caliber business recruitment capabilities;
- Cultivate small business, innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Develop robust workforce solutions; and
- Tell the story of the region's economic renaissance.

Louisiana Economic Development (LED) offers services and incentives in an array of growing emerging industries that present important growth opportunities for Louisiana, including:

- Advanced manufacturing;
- Agribusiness;
- Clean-tech;
- Digital media and software;
- Energy;
- Entertainment;
- Specialty health care; and
- Water management.

LED's efforts are paying dividends for the state's workforce, such as:

- For the second year in a row, Louisiana ranked third in the U.S. in *Site Selection* magazine's annual Governor's Cup award as measured by the quantity of significant business wins in a calendar year.
- Louisiana ranked No. 7 in the U.S. for best state business climate according to *Site Selection* magazine. In the half-dozen categories used to compile the rankings, Louisiana landed No. 1 for per-capita project expansions, No. 1 in competitiveness and No. 3 in new projects in 2011.
- *Business Facilities* magazine named LED FastStart™ the nation's best state workforce recruiting and training program two years in a row.
- The number of women-owned businesses in Louisiana increased by 60.9 percent from 1997 to 2012, according to the American Express OPEN "State of Women-owned Business" report. Louisiana is now home to 113,500 women-owned businesses, ranking it 13th in the nation for growth.
- For the third straight year, *Southern Business & Development* magazine named Louisiana "State-of-the-Year" in the South thanks to significant growth in national rankings and economic progress.

##### 5. **Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC):**

Louisiana's comprehensive, integrated plans to improve education and workforce preparedness will guide the state for years to come. Already, those efforts are yielding encouraging results. Still, the LWC faces unprecedented challenges in pursuing its objectives of driving employment, improving the business climate, and providing excellent customer service. The agency is four years into sweeping reforms and consolidation, alignment of services and programs and a renewed resolve to work with and assist employers. This five-year plan is driven by the workforce needs of Louisiana's employers, and draws from and builds upon the plans of other agencies and systems within the state. It will guide the LWC's efforts, add additional discipline and

accountability, and support the larger priorities of the Governor: to prepare and guide the residents of Louisiana toward jobs that provide them with financial independence, career opportunities, and the kind of quality of life for which Louisiana has become famous. Region 7 shares Governor Jindal's vision for comprehensive workforce development reform in the state and is committed to making this vision a reality. Center staff, work closely with the LWC in developing and carrying out strategies to successfully attain this important mission. The need for reform is especially evident in this region of the state where automobile and forestry products, manufacturing, poultry processing, and other industries have experienced huge numbers of layoffs resulting in a very negative economic impact locally. Many of these jobs paid above average wages, therefore, the challenge will be to not only find employment for these workers, but also to assist them in securing employment at near their former wages.

The Governor's vision for aligning efforts among Region 7's workforce development's partners is to achieve accessible, seamless, integrated, and comprehensive service, which can be accomplished, by aligning Region 7's workforce and economic development efforts, by assisting business growth, by providing a skilled workforce, and by helping job seekers build a bridge to economic self-sufficiency through lifelong learning. This is Region 7's Workforce Boards' vision of how the workforce investment system will help Northwest Louisiana attain its strategic goals. To achieve these goals, the region has implemented demand driven strategies to create an education and workforce training system that operates seamlessly to support lifelong learning for all citizens of Northwest Louisiana and increases emphasis on workforce training focused on meeting the needs of business. The system has embarked on a business re-engineering project that has resulted in redesigned and reinvented employment and training services. This has led to a dramatic improvement in service delivery resulting in a shift from a task-based system to a process-based demand driven service delivery system. Through the shared vision of state and local elected officials in Region 7, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Region 7 Workforce Investment Boards, the education community, and faith-based and community organizations, these goals can continue to be achieved by integrating the services of the education and economic development systems with the workforce investment system.

The need to provide businesses and job seekers with a more comprehensive package of services is critical to our area's well being. Therefore, the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the Local Workforce Investment Boards have undertaken a restructuring of the delivery of employment and training services for our area and across the state. This service strategy has helped to eliminate duplication of services and reduce administrative overhead through integration of the Wagner-Peyser and the Workforce Investment Act delivery services. This integration model ensures that the business needs of hiring; retention, training, and advancement of workers are met, and help to connect businesses that are looking for qualified workers. It is expected that customers will secure more and better jobs in the region and increase their earnings potential; employers are expected to strengthen their competitiveness and add to their workforce better

educated and skilled employees; and the community as a whole is expected to derive a greater economic well-being.

In order to have a skilled workforce, Region 7 is continuing to create a customer-focused demand driven system which:

1. Meets the needs of job seekers by identifying the needs of business customers for new and upgraded workers; and
2. Meets the needs of businesses by identifying their job skill requirements and insuring that the types of education and training provided meet these needs. This enables workers to secure and retain jobs and advance in the workplace and help business grow.

The system will continue to encourage training programs to incorporate emerging and high growth job skills identified by businesses in flexible, responsive, and timely training programs that meet the changing needs of businesses. To provide flexibility, maximum use of Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) and On-the-Training (OJT) are used to provide training in high-demand/high-growth occupations. In addition, the system will continue to make maximum use of faith-based and community organizations. Common performance indicators are used to measure the effectiveness of each workforce development activity. Regional measurable performance standards across programs, such as completion rate, placement rate, salary, and retention rate, using independently verifiable outcomes data, are gathered through the Louisiana Virtual One-Stop (LAVOS) internet-based computer system. This is encouraging regional and interagency planning and service delivery. To insure the system is demand driven, incentives are based on integrated, regional service delivery to businesses, as well as performance data.

In Region 7, businesses, training programs, labor, education, and community and faith-based organizations are forging effective partnerships. There are two (2) workforce investment areas contained within Region 7. To insure regional coordination and collaboration, and insure that the system is locally operated, state agencies will decentralize delivery of workforce services and programs by appropriating the maximum funds allowable to regional levels. To help stem the tide of out-migration, Region 7 is focused on improving the educational attainments and career development of youth. Youth programs funded through WIA are implementing a new strategic approach targeting out-of-school youth and other youth at-risk including foster care, incarcerated youth, and those at-risk of dropping out. By developing a systematic approach to link available services with the neediest youth, the system is attempting to insure businesses continue to have a steady supply of workers that possess both the basic skills and technical skills needed to sustain economic growth. In addition, the workforce system is focused on the work ethic by instilling good work habits as the foundation for successful employment, encouraging job training programs to build the work ethic component into the education system.

The state has implemented Business and Career Solutions Centers, thereby eliminating isolated delivery programs. Savings realized through this streamlining of the workforce system, can be redirected toward investing in skill development

of Northwest Louisiana's citizens. The core of this system is a one-stop service delivery system with two customers, business, and job seekers. For the job seeker looking for a single physical location to access a full spectrum of local services, there are ten (10) Business and Career Solutions Centers in this region. This allows customers to make informed choices about service delivery options and access quality workforce information. They can decide which level of service center best suits their current needs based on the services available at that center. LAVOS will document services to customers as they flow from core to intensive to training services across programs.

The collaborative process used to develop the Local/Regional Plan provides a clear picture of what the workforce development system wants to be in the 21st century and how to get there. The ability to modify the plan as the system evolves will allow it to focus not only on current products and services but also on where it needs to be in the future and what needs to be changed today to get there. To streamline Louisiana's system of workforce development programs and make them more responsive to regional/local needs and economic development priorities, the Workforce Commission implemented the development of joint regional plans by the Local Workforce Investment Boards within each Labor Market Area.

1. Joint Regional Planning Process. LWC has established and issued criteria and a plan outline for joint planning by all Workforce Investment Boards within each Labor Market Area; with input from workforce training partners in conjunction with the local plan requirements.
2. Regional Plan Components. LWC has developed recommended components for the regional plan; including, but not limited to:
  - a. A method to use forecasting information, labor market information and employer surveys to identify demand occupations, identify academic/workplace competencies needed, and jointly prioritize or rank training needs in the Labor Market Area.
  - b. A commitment to focus all publicly funded education, employment and training programs on educating and training clients for jobs with career advancement pathways and higher levels of compensation.
  - c. The negotiating of regional performance measures which is a process for determining a minimum percentage of funding for training.
  - d. A process for the coordination of multiple Business and Career Solutions Centers within the Labor Market Area.
  - e. A commitment to align training programs.
  - f. A plan for working with other agencies and organizations to coordinate transportation, childcare, and other support services.

- g. A process for determining the criteria for Regional Incentive Grants.
- h. A regional leadership strategy to identify emerging issues, developing regional support strategies as needed, and keeping pace with federal and state regulations on changes.
- i. A plan for developing uniform criteria and application procedures among multiple WIBs' in a region to ensure easy access to programs by business

In summary, the LWC charges regional planners with jointly planning workforce development programs that;

- a. Better respond to industry demand,
- b. Maximize clients' career and earning potential, and
- c. Recover the investment in these programs in the form of revenue to the state.

The entire Business and Career Solutions delivery system has been developed through a regional planning effort. There is one comprehensive Business and Career Solutions Center in each LWIA. Each parish within Region 7 will have at least a point of contact center providing access to limited services and access to information on the system. This will allow customers to make informed choices about service delivery options. Employer services will be provided through the LWIAs Business Services teams. This coordination process will ensure that labor market information, training needs, employment opportunities, etc., is shared among all partner entities. Each partner entity in the region will be involved in the regional planning process.

## **B. Economic and Workforce Information Analysis**

**The Integrated Workforce Plan must describe the labor market and economic context in which the state's workforce system (including all the programs in the Integrated Workforce Plan) is operating, based on accurate and timely labor-market, demographic, and economic information, with particular attention given to high-need, under-served, under-employed, and/or low-skilled subpopulations. (WIA Sections 112(b) (4), 112(b) (17)(A)(iv), 112(b)(18), W-P Sections 8(b) and 15.)**

### **1. The current economic situation and projected trends of the state's economy, industries, and occupations:**

The economic situation in Louisiana is among the most promising in the nation. Currently, the national economy is the midst of an economic recovery that fights to regain the jobs lost in the latest recession. Louisiana on the other hand has recently regained and even surpassed pre-recession job levels. Although Louisiana was struck by both hurricanes and the oil spill disaster, our economy has remained resilient through these challenging times. Region 7 has a diverse economy

dominated by service, healthcare, and manufacturing industries. This diversity has helped stabilize the region's economy in the wake of the nation's economic woes and the large number of local layoffs, particularly in the automotive and other manufacturing industries. Total nonfarm employment for the Shreveport MSA was 179,700 for May 2012. This shows a gain of 100 jobs from last month and 800 from May 2011. Goods producing employment added 200 jobs over the month, but lost 1,600 jobs from May 2011. Service providing employment lost 100 jobs over the month but added 2,400 jobs over the year.

Below is a list of major industries in Region 7.

### Industry Employment Distribution

The table below shows the distribution of industries in Region 7 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2011.

Rank	Industry Sector	Establishments	Employees
1	Supersectors and Totals	15,165	228,999
2	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,495	43,583
3	Retail Trade	2,211	28,949
4	Accommodation and Food Services	1,062	20,942
5	Manufacturing	522	17,587
6	Education Services	130	19,461
7	Admin., Support, Waste Mgmt, Remediation	695	12,973
8	Construction	1,344	12,179
9	State Government, Exc. Education, Hospitals	456	11,075
10	Mining	449	8,827

Source: Labor Market Statistics, Quarterly Census of employment and Wages Program.

In Louisiana, economic development efforts have historically relied on natural resource extraction and processing and using the low cost of land and lower wage rates to attract manufacturing plants. Our large oil and gas extraction and refining industries have provided insulation from the economic hardships faced the rest of the country. While these areas continue to be a substantial portion of the state's economy, Louisiana has focused economic development efforts on bringing in additional capacity for extraction and processing, attracting new manufacturing plants, and developing new industries within the state, such as the movie industry. The distribution of current employment by industry in Louisiana, and the industries with the highest number of job opening advertised online in Northwest Louisiana are listed on the following tables.

## Current Employment Statistics in Louisiana

The table below shows the distribution of current employment, seasonally adjusted, not preliminary, by industry for Louisiana (no data available for Region 7 for July 2012).

Series Code	Industry	Employment
00000000	Total Nonfarm Employment	1,942,600
05000000	Total Private	1,584,600
10000000	Mining and Logging	57,200
20000000	Construction	121,600
30000000	Manufacturing	141,600
31000000	Durable Goods	71,000
32000000	Nondurable Goods	70,600
40000000	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	379,800
41000000	Wholesale Trade	75,200
42000000	Retail Trade	221,200
43000000	Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	83,400
50000000	Information	24,600
55000000	Financial Activities	98,900
60000000	Professional and Business Services	199,000
65000000	Education and Health Services	291,200
70000000	Leisure and Hospitality	206,800
80000000	Other Services	64,400
90000000	Total Government	358,000

Source: Labor Market Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program.

## Industries by Advertised Jobs

The table below shows the industries with the highest job openings advertised online in Region 7 on August 20, 2012.

Rank	Industry	Job Openings
1	Retail Trade	326
2	Health Care and Social Assistance	277
3	Accommodation and Food Service	245
4	Manufacturing	115
5	Professional and Technical Services	95
6	Transportation and Warehousing	93
7	Administrative and Waste Services	84
8	Finance and Insurance	70
9	Public Administration	63
10	Wholesale Trade	48

Job Source: Online Advertised Jobs Data

## Projected Trends

Based on LWC 2006-2016 occupational projections for Region 7, the top ten growth occupations are:

Retail Salespersons; Cashiers; Waiter and Waitresses; Customer Service Representatives; Registered Nurses; Laborers and Freight; Stock and Material Movers; Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer; Elementary School Teachers except Special Education; Office Clerks, General; Janitors and Cleaners except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners.

As evidenced by the growth occupations listed above, the growth industries will continue to be services and healthcare. Two emerging industries are motion picture production and mining, notably exploration of oil and gas related to the recently discovered Haynesville Shale natural gas field. The table below lists projected employment from 2008-2018, in Region 7.

Industry Title	2008 Employment	2018 Projected Employment	Total Employment Change	Annual Percent Change	2008-2018 Total Percent Change
Food Services and Drinking Places	139,180	164,060	24,880	1.7%	17.9%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	80,480	102,550	22,070	2.5%	27.4%
Educational Services	168,580	183,650	15,070	0.9%	8.9%
Hospitals	99,920	114,820	14,900	1.4%	14.9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	83,680	94,900	11,220	1.3%	13.4%
Social Assistance	35,000	44,710	9,710	2.5%	27.7%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	41,340	49,560	8,220	1.8%	19.9%
Administrative and Support Services	89,700	97,600	7,900	0.8%	8.8%
General Merchandise Stores	51,610	58,320	6,710	1.2%	13.0%
Support Activities for Mining	41,990	48,570	6,580	1.5%	15.7%
Self-Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, Primary Job	141,900	144,840	2,940	0.2%	2.1%
Accommodation	23,870	26,750	2,880	1.1%	12.1%
Merchant	39,980	42,550	2,570	0.6%	6.4%

Wholesalers, Durable Goods Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	33,070	35,620	2,550	0.7%	7.7%
Water Transportation	9,940	12,420	2,480	2.3%	25.0%
Repair and Maintenance Support	20,740	23,210	2,470	1.1%	11.9%
Activities for Transportation Truck	21,180	23,450	2,270	1.0%	10.7%
Transportation Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	18,130	19,910	1,780	0.9%	9.8%
Health and Personal Care Stores	27,630	29,270	1,640	0.6%	5.9%
Specialty Trade Contractors	15,300	16,890	1,590	1.0%	10.4%
Rental and leasing Services	65,490	67,020	1,530	0.2%	2.3%
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	18,860	20,350	1,490	0.8%	7.9%
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	25,400	27,630	2,230	0.8%	8.8%
Personal and Laundry Services	21,090	23,230	2,140	1.0%	10.1%
	16,110	18,080	1,970	1.2%	12.2%

The following skilled workers currently in demand and projected to remain in demand over the next decade with the annual demand listed are:

Registered Nurses	240
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	190
Elementary Teachers	160
Bookkeeping/Accounting Clerks	130
Licensed Practical Nurses	120
Secondary School Teachers	110
Heating and NC Installers/Repairers	60
Carpenters	60
Maintenance and Repair Workers	60
Accountants and Auditors	50

Recognizing that all legal jobs are essential to the region's economy, the most critical jobs are those essential to keep a community thriving. They include the foundation jobs found in services, education, social services, healthcare, as well as the higher paying jobs found in manufacturing and

other industries. These include; Teaching Occupations; Skilled Trade Occupations; Professional Occupations; Healthcare Occupations; Higher Level Manufacturing Occupations; Oil and Gas Extraction Occupations; Timber and Wood Products Occupations; and Service Occupations.

Due to the recent large number of layoffs in Region 7, the Region's traditional economic sectors such as timber and manufacturing have been the most affected by the decline in the global economy. Occupations in the automotive manufacturing industry continue to decline. At the present time, the General Motors Shreveport plant will close in the August of 2012. The plant currently employs about 800 people, down from its peak of 3,000. When the Shreveport General Motors plant is closed, it will be devastating to the local economy in addition to its suppliers. It is possible this entire industry will disappear from the area. Occupations in businesses that provide goods and services to General Motors, such as food service, security, printing, office supplies, and others, will also see a decline.

The unemployment rate in Louisiana has fallen over the past year. From March 2011 to March 2012, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by 1.0% from 8.1% to 7.1%. In comparison, then national rate fell 0.7% over the year to 8.2% in March 2012. A related trend that we are experiencing both locally and nationally is a decline in the labor force participation rate. Meaning the rate at which people are entering the workforce is slower than the rate of population growth. The retirement of the baby boom generation is a key driver behind this trend as these individuals exit the labor force. The tables below list the unemployment rate in Region 7 and the workforce regions with the highest unemployment rate in Louisiana.

### Area Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment Data

The table below shows estimated labor force, employment and unemployment information in Region 7, June 2012. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

Area Name	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary Data
<b>Region 7</b>	272,446	248,171	24,275	8.9%	Yes
Louisiana	2,116,885	1,948,584	168,271	7.9%	Yes
United States	154,998,000	142,727,000	12,271,000	7.9%	No

Source: Labor Market Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program.

## Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Distribution

The table below shows the workforce regions with the highest unemployment rate in Louisiana for June 2012. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

Rank	Area Name	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary Data
1	8 <sup>th</sup> Regional Labor market Area	10.9%	Yes
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Regional Labor Market Area	9.0%	Yes
3	6 <sup>th</sup> Regional Labor Market Area	8.9%	Yes
4	7 <sup>th</sup> Regional Labor Market Area	8.9%	Yes
5	1 <sup>st</sup> Regional Labor Market Area	8.7%	Yes
6	5 <sup>th</sup> Regional Labor Market Area	8.4%	Yes
7	4 <sup>th</sup> Regional Labor Market Area	7.3%	Yes
8	3 <sup>rd</sup> Regional Labor Market Area	6.6%	Yes

### 2. Description of Region 7's workforce and what skills and knowledge individuals must possess to find current and future employment.

Technical requirements for current jobs and developing new jobs mandate that our workforce participate in lifelong learning in order to consistently upgrade their skills.

The local school boards need to continue and improve upon exposure to the world of work and career exploration that students receive K-12. Colleges, community colleges, the Louisiana Community Technical College System, proprietary schools, and apprenticeship programs must stay in tune with the demands of business and industry and be flexible and timely in recognizing the need to develop new programs to meet these demands.

In migration to the region is usually due to job transfers, such as with General Motors and other companies. There also been some in migration due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. While the majority of evacuees have left the region, some have chosen to live in work in the region. This group includes skilled, unskilled, technical, and professional workers. The area has also experienced a temporary in migration of workers in the Haynesville Shale Play. After a rig is completed, many of these workers move on to the next rig, which may or may not be in the area. Some of these workers are from out of state. Like the rest of Louisiana, the region is experiencing an out migration of workers. Although the out migration is not substantial, given that the region already is in need of skilled workers or workers who can receive skill training, any diversion of workers outside the region must be minimized. Improvements in the local educational system, more attractive skill training programs, and higher paying jobs are factors that can stem the outward flow of much needed workers.

WIA Title I Adult grant funds budgeted for intensive and training services are provided on a priority basis to TANF or other low-income individuals. The goal for LWIA s 70 and 71 is that either a majority of the participants

served are from target populations, or a majority of the Adult funds budgeted for intensive and training services are expended on the target populations. Region 7's Business and Career Solutions Centers work with TANF, and the disabled and ex-offender populations to remove barriers and assist them in obtaining, both work ready and job specific skills needed to enable them to compete in today's economy. The other Center partners involved in workforce development are working to develop strategies to overcome barriers to skill achievement and employment by special populations. The LEAP program, created through state legislation, provides TANF recipients with integrated services from LWC, Adult Education, and the Technical and Community College systems, helping them move from dependency to self-sufficiency. This collaboration assists the four entities improve services to all low-income individuals. The Center works with J-CORE project from the probation and parole system to implement a strategy to expand support and increase job opportunities for transitioning ex-offenders.

LWIA's 70 and 71 recognize that there is a high unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities, and that there are qualified shortages that businesses are facing. Our regional workforce areas are committed to providing reasonable accommodation to all programs, services, and facilities. Each Business and Career Solutions Center has self evaluated their current level of accessibility to meet the accessibility needs of customers with disabilities who come to Business and Career Solutions Centers for services.

### **Education Requirements on Advertised Jobs**

The table below shows the minimum required education level on job openings advertised online in Region 7 on August 20, 2012 (Jobs Duplication Level 1).

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Minimum Education Level</b>	<b>Job Openings</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	Not Specified	4,587	
2	No Minimum Education Requirement	71	7.3%
3	1st Grade Completed	1	.1%
4	High School Diploma or Equivalent	512	52.9%
5	1 Year of College or a Technical or Vocational School	13	1.34%
6	2 Years of College or a Technical or Vocational School	9	.93%
7	3 Years of College or a Technical or Vocational School	1	.1%
8	Vocational School Certificate	30	3.1%
9	Associate's Degree	71	7.3%
10	Bachelors Degree	224	23.1%
11	Masters Degree	30	3.1%
12	Doctorate Degree	4	.41%
13	Specialized Degree (e.g. MD, DDS)	2	.21%

Job Source: Online Advertised Jobs Data

## Education Level of Available Candidates

The table below shows the education levels of potential candidates in Region 7 on August 20, 2012.

Rank	Education Level	Potential Candidates	Percent
1	Less than High School	2,271	7.33%
2	High School Diploma or Equivalent	11,427	36.86%
3	1 to 3 Years at College or a Technical or Vocational School	8,742	28.2%
4	Vocational School Certificate	1,805	5.82%
5	Associates Degree	2,070	6.68%
6	Bachelors Degree	3,462	11.17%
7	Masters Degree	1,044	3.37%
8	Doctorate Degree	103	.33%
9	Specialized Degree (e.g. MD, DDS)	75	.24%

Candidate Source: Individuals with Active Resumes in the Workforce System

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. 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 provide the Centers with the skills needed to serve special applicant groups.

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

LWC's career exploration process provides a methodology at the regional 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.

A summary of the characteristics of the region's diverse sub-population from July 1, 2008 through July 31, 2012 including those from racial ethnic, linguistic groups, women, and individuals with disabilities indicates the following.

A. Age, Race, Ethnicity

Total eligible individuals enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	68,212
Total minority individuals enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	46,015
Actual percent of Minority individuals enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	67%
Minority percent of population for Region 7 (LAVOS)	40%
Total African American individuals enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	19,417
Actual percent of African American individuals enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	66%
Minority percent of African American individuals enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	97%
Total Hispanic individuals enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	4,572
Actual percent of Hispanic individuals enrolled in Region 7	7%
Actual percent of other population by ethnicity in LA. (LAVOS)	2%
Total Asians, American Indians, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian/other, Pacific Islanders each had 1% or less of the total individuals enrolled.	1%
Did not wish to answer	1%

B. Gender

Total females enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	30,366
Actual percent of females enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	45%
Percent of females of the total population (LAVOS)	52%

C. Disability

Total individuals with a disability enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	1295
Actual percent of individuals with a disability enrolled in Region 7 (LAVOS)	2%

**PARISH ANALYSIS OF MINORITIES AND FEMALES ENROLLED IN REGION 7 DURING THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1, 2008 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2010**

Parish	% Minority of Total Population	Actual Percentage of Minorities Enrolled	% Female of Total Population	Actual Percentage of Females Enrolled
Bienville	45.08	68.20	52.30	45.00
Bossier	25.34	41.94	51.00	43.12
Caddo	47.09	59.84	52.72	54.76
Claiborne	48.2	78.13	50.06	50.54
DeSoto	44.03	71.94	52.41	43.10
Lincoln	42.58	73.17	51.48	44.66
Natchitoches	42.15	65.20	52.48	37.33
Red River	42.13	54.44	52.42	38.54
Sabine	27.33	43.70	51.09	36.59
Webster	34.49	57.98	52.13	41.75
Average for Ten (10) Parishes in Region 7	39.84%	61.45%	51.81%	43.53%

Louisiana Works Labor Force Diversity Data Book for 2008

An analysis of the data for race by parish listed above indicates that minorities in the region are well represented. Continued active recruitment of minority applicants will be maintained regarding on-going training opportunities within our region. An analysis of the data for gender indicated that there is an under enrollment of females in our region. Continuous extensive recruitment will be made to insure that the applicant pool of females, linguistic groups, individuals with disabilities, older Americans, and minorities will be adequately represented in Region 7. WIA and Wagner-Peyser funded services for persons with disabilities are coordinated with other Business and Career Solutions 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, the Region 7 Business and Career Solutions Centers are committed to providing reasonable accommodation to all programs, services and facilities. Region 7 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 Business and Career Solutions Center 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 to all individuals, including those individuals with disabilities. Region 7's LWIAs continue to ensure that 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, the use of Braille and large print material and enlarged computer screens for individuals with visual disabilities, and 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 Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance will provide technical assistance to the Business and Career Solutions Centers, if necessary, and monitor the system for compliance.

The region integrates and coordinates WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser services offered through the Older Worker Programs. Applicants and participants are referred to services that are available and appropriate for the older worker. Title V of the Older Americans Act (SCSEP) staff, and Business and Career Solutions Center staff, work closely together to coordinate services to SCSEP participants. Training offered through the SCSEP is largely based on demand-driven occupations as documented at the Business and Career Solutions Centers. Business and Career Solutions Center and SCSEP staff jointly coordinate the application process, the referral process between partners, how services are to be accessed, and the sharing of job leads and job placement information.

One skill gap that is being addressed by the region is in the healthcare field. With a large number of hospitals, clinics, doctor offices, and nursing homes, there is a constant need for Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses. Recognizing this need, Region 7 has been proactive in reaching out to potential nurses and providing funds for their training. More than 100 nursing students are currently in training, and plans are to attempt to increase this number. The vast majority of students remain in the area following graduation.

One complaint of local employers is they cannot find workers to fill positions due to the inability of the applicant not being able to pass a background check or drug screening. They indicate that they can train them if they can pass these prerequisites for employment. This is a separate concern from the recurring complaint that employers cannot find skilled workers. LWIAs 70 and 71 can provide training to help remedy the complaint of unskilled workers, but overcoming the barriers of negative background checks and testing positive for drugs/alcohol will take a rethinking on the part of potential workers and their chosen lifestyles. Staff in Region 7's Business and Career Solutions Centers provide job search counseling, and make referrals to community organizations that provide substance abuse counseling.

**3. A description of the characteristics and employment-related needs of the Region's population and diverse sub-populations.**

Recognizing that the jobs essential to the region's economy, as identified by employers, are the most critical jobs essential to keep the region thriving. They include jobs found in government, education, social services, healthcare, as well as the high-paying jobs found in manufacturing and other industries. These include:

- Teaching Occupations;
- Skilled Trade Occupations;
- Professional Occupations;
- Healthcare Occupations;
- Higher Level Manufacturing Occupations;
- Oil and Gas Extraction Occupations;
- Timber and Wood Products Occupations; and
- Service Occupations.

Special emphasis is placed on serving the needs of special applicant groups. LWC's LMI section provides census information to each of the regions workforce boards on the population figures for these groups. Region 7 Business and Career Solutions Centers, in coordination with the system partners, develop service strategies designed to meet the specific needs of these groups.

**4. Analysis of the skill and education gaps for all individual in the Region.**

The Occupational Forecasting Conference creates the Top Demand Occupations List as a tool for developing long-term strategies in providing appropriate training to meet the needs of a skilled labor force related to the targeted cluster industries, as identified by LED. LWC and the Workforce Council have developed innovative strategies to address the workforce needs of businesses in these targeted industries. An example is based on information supplied by the Louisiana Health Works Commission, that trained health care workers are identified as a critical shortage area. LWC and the Workforce Council amended the ETPL

process to address this shortage and develop a process to address other industries facing skill gaps. Region 7's LWIAs have determined that, in addition to an inadequate number of eligible training providers in these shortage areas, there are also situations where there is a pattern of more applicants than openings, particularly in programs being implemented through the Health Works Commission initiatives.

LWC has developed a policy and procedure to allow both of Region 7's LWIAs to leverage resources by participating in class size training projects in programs with insufficient providers.

Region 7's training strategies may include:

- Strengthen collaborations and activities with the established education and training partners and create stronger ties with economic development agencies in an effort to better provide workers with skills that hold a common thread among all occupations that represent the full range of career opportunities in our economy;
- Use information about projected job growth to re-design service delivery to meet the needs of employers and job seekers using a hybrid of the present service delivery strategies and the traditional OJT model;
- Create stronger connections to employers if the services provided will be designed to meet the needs of employers as well as job seekers;
- Design and execute a plan to market Region 7's services to businesses; and
- Eliminate duplication and reduce costs through improved consolidation and coordination of Federal and State workforce dollars and programs will infuse a greater percentage of WIA Title I funds to direct training activities. There was considerable overlap in the services provided through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act (Job Service). However, through consolidation, duplicative efforts have been eliminated, and cost savings realized and/or services improved.

**5. Analysis of the challenges associated with the Region's population attaining the education, skills, and training needed to obtain employment.**

The Northwest Louisiana economy is creating jobs, but many of these jobs do not require a substantial investment in formal education or training. For most of the jobs found in Northwest Louisiana's dominant industries, employers will be seeking applicants with an established work history (work experience) and the possession of at least a high school

diploma. Furthermore, many of the demand occupations identified within the area do not offer workers earnings (incomes) that are above the region's self-sufficiency level. Most job growth in Northwest Louisiana will be concentrated in a limited number of industry sectors. Based on an analysis of available labor market information, the region will be targeting the following industry sectors as part of a strategy in maximizing WIA participants' chances of obtaining employment: health services, retail trade, amusement and recreation services, business services, manufacturing, and oil and gas. With the exception of manufacturing, these sectors are projected to be the source of a considerable portion of the growth in employment that will take place in Northwest Louisiana over the current decade.

Based on the above distribution it appears that one (1) out of (5) persons in Northwest Louisiana's potential or actual labor force may not have completed high school. This could become a "critical" workforce development issue if these persons do not have adequate basic education skills (e.g., writing, reading comprehension, and basic math skills) as a result of not having completed requirements for a high school diploma. These are the persons in the labor force who are most likely to experience unemployment or, if employed, hold "low wage" and unstable jobs. A high secondary school dropout rate is possibly one "skill gap" that may require the attention of Northwest Louisiana's workforce investment system. With a third of Northwest Louisiana's population having at least a high school diploma, and eighteen percent (18%) having a college (B.A., B.S.) or advanced/professional degree, there appears to be a good match with the education and skill requirements of most occupations (jobs) found within the region's dominant industries. Region 7's existing educational institutions and its workforce investment system have performed fairly well in responding to the human resource needs of its major industries and employers.

**6. Discuss the ability of Integrated Workforce Plan Program to meet the skill needs of employers in the Region and close any skill gaps.**

As demands increase and the regions WIA funding continues to sharply decrease, the workforce system requires ever more effective service delivery strategies and tools to assess, remediate, train, and place a very large number of job seekers (473,000 total registrants in Louisiana's system). Job seekers who remain in the system can impact the overall rate of unemployment and potentially higher rates of poverty locally, statewide, and nationally. Louisiana ranks in the top 10 states with the highest levels of poverty. Job seekers have barriers to employment that include lack of soft and basic skills, computer literacy, and job-ready credentials, as well as specific occupational skills. Paths to credentials and longer-term career pathway entry points are needed. Employers state that the region's workers are especially lacking in skills related to technology, literacy, communications, work ethic, and civic responsibility. They stress the need for educators to build more of these skills into their curricula and raise learning standards where they exist.

Although not definitive, the region's position is, that actual work experience (work history), a high school diploma (or GED), and soft skills are of primary importance in meeting the qualifications of most Region 7 employers labor force needs. However, this still does not lessen the importance of a Region 7 labor force with occupational skills acquired through formal education and training (e.g., vocational schools, community colleges, universities), as can be seen in many of the demand occupations. One skill gap that has been identified by Region 7 is in the health care field. With a large number of hospitals, clinics, doctor offices, and nursing homes, there is a constant need for Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses. Recognizing this need, Region 7 has been proactive in reaching out to potential nurses and providing funds for their training. One complaint of local employers is they cannot find workers to fill positions due to the inability of the applicant not being able to pass a background check or drug screening. They indicate that they can train them if they can pass these prerequisites for employment. This is a separate concern from the recurring complaint that employers cannot find skilled workers. Region 7 can provide training to help remedy the complaint of unskilled workers.

But overcoming the barriers of negative background checks and testing positive for drug/alcohol will take a rethinking on the part of potential workers and their chosen lifestyles. Staff at the region's Business and Career Solutions Centers, provide job search counseling, and make referrals to community organizations that provide substance abuse counseling.

### **C. Local/Regional Strategies**

**The Local/Regional Integrated Workforce Plan must describe the key strategies the Local Workforce Investment Board's (LWIB's) intends to implement, based on its economic analysis, and key strategies (located in the State Workforce Investment Plan, to achieve the Governor's vision and goals.**

#### **Key Strategies**

The mission of the Region 7 WIB's is to put people to work by continuously improving our demand-driven system that responds quickly to the immediate and long-term needs of employers. The core focus is to fill job vacancies by connecting skilled and credentialed job seekers to employers in demand occupations. This section describes the strategies Region 7's LWIAs' 70 and 71 will implement to achieve the Governor's vision and goals of improving employer engagement, cultivating regional labor market intelligence to drive services, targeting workforce recruitment to meet employer demand, integrating all services, and reducing administrative costs.

During the fall of 2011, the LWC developed five strategic initiatives aimed at transforming the way Louisiana's workforce system delivers services to employers and job seekers. These strategic initiatives included: (1) Integrated Fraud, (2) OWD/ Unemployment Insurance (UI) Integration, (3) Louisiana Job Ready, (4) Re-employment, and (5) Business Engagement.

These initiatives often referred to as the AiM Initiatives, have become the central focus of the LWC's efforts to improve customer service, drive employment, and create a collaborative culture. Recognizing the need to transform from a human service-focused culture into a demand-driven system, these initiatives serve to strategically address core challenges to ensure more efficient and effective use of Region 7's LWIAs 70 and 71's limited resources. Of the five AiM initiatives, four (OWD/UI Integration, Louisiana Job Ready, Re-employment, and Business Engagement) directly impact Region 7's LWIAs, and the services provided to employers and job seekers. Three initiatives (OWD/UI Integration, Job Ready, and Re-employment) unite the OWD and UI divisions within LWC, connecting UI claimants to services offered at the local Business and Career Solutions Centers across the state in an effort to reduce the time claimants receive benefits and return to the workforce.

The goals AiM Initiatives include:

- **AiM Integrated Fraud**
- **AiM OWD/Unemployment Insurance (UI) Integration**
- **AiM Louisiana Job Ready** – will implement new online, computer-based services to provide job readiness assessments and remedial curricula to prepare individuals with the foundational skills needed for work, create customized employment plans for all job seekers, and increase the number of job-ready credentials attained. A Job Ready-credentialed human capital pipeline will help gain the confidence of business in the state's workforce system and increase the number of new and repeat business customers. Free basic computer literacy training offered through the Louisiana Community and Technical College System will be leveraged to increase the use of self-service tools and allow job seekers to be more self-directed in remediation and job search activities.
- **AiM Initiative - Re-employment** – Re-employment which has been launched statewide, requires recipients of unemployment compensation to directly access an array of BCSC services to help them become re-employed more quickly, thereby reducing the duration of unemployment benefits and hasten their ability to regain employment. Claimants receiving re-employment services also will be participants in the Job Ready initiative. To diminish institutional and program silos and fragmentation, an existing governor-supported Workforce Cabinet will ensure state-level leadership and buy-in for the AiM initiatives, as well as other statewide workforce development initiatives, and provide support and guidance to regional innovation efforts. The Workforce Cabinet is comprised of executive level representatives of LWC, K-12, and economic development, as well as the community and technical college, and higher education systems.

To advance and leverage the regional consortia of LWIBs, LWC will encourage and support Regional Business Innovation Teams (RBITs) throughout the state. These teams will be led by talented business professionals with experience in policy innovation, business process re-engineering and data analysis. They will serve as change agents to help continue the transformation into a demand-driven system and inform and galvanize relationships with business. Development of RBITs will be supported by technical assistance and will include regional partners who can initiate and lead system change efforts and collaborate on the provision of business services.

An online social learning Community of Practice will enhance staff skill development and expertise in advancing system transformation. Virtual and peer-to-peer coaching and technical assistance will help develop leaders and experts who can serve as champions and mentors to protégé leaders and staff throughout the region. Region 7 will be supported to pilot promising products and services from the statewide menu, adapted to local needs.

- **AiM Business Engagement** – The Aim Business Engagement initiative is focused on garnering and utilizing input for business to build a package of services and strategies to meet business needs today and into the future. There will be special effort to grow relationships with small businesses and targeted industry sectors and to develop a custom package of services for these customers. AiM Business Engagement is expected to increase overall business utilization and value received from the workforce system, reduce employer costs to recruit and hire qualified workers, and decrease the time it takes to fill vacancies. Business engagement with the system has been lackluster over the years. This is due in large part to an overemphasis on job seekers' perceived needs rather than on employers' assessed actual needs and available industry sector and occupational forecasting data. In a job vacancy survey conducted in 2011, employers identified the top two challenges to filling vacant positions as (1) unable to find qualified applicants and/or applicants with experience, and (2) unable to find applicants with specific experience, training, skills, and/or certification that employers are seeking. These responses clearly show the need to better align training/education and workforce development investments to the skill and competency requirements identified by business customers, particularly those in growth industry sectors. This alignment ensures that Region 7 can better meet the full spectrum of human capital needs and proactively respond to changes caused by technological advances, globalization, and transitions in supply and demand of goods and services. The current random, transactional engagement of business must be changed to a systematic, regionally based approach to develop human resource strategies for specific business growth sectors.

## Logic Model and Theory of Change Goals

Region 7's overarching goal is to accelerate the piloting, evaluation, and expansion of promising structural and service innovations to transform the Region 7 workforce system, and to serve as a model of a cost-efficient, demand-driven system with evidenced-based innovations that can be replicated and scaled easily. Region 7 identified four major longer-term goals it will seek to achieve over the duration of this plan, numbered 1-4 below. Relevant short-term and intermediate goals are provided in the context of each long-term goal.

1. Make the workforce system truly demand-driven.

Short-term:

- Designate at least one full-time business services representative in Region 7.
- Develop new guidance for soliciting and responding to employer/ customer feedback on service quality and value at the regional level.

Intermediate:

- Region 7 will identify at least three target industry sectors using a combination of databased and leader-driven decision-making.
- Provide training and professional development on a sector-driven employer services model to all business-facing staff.
- Ensure that all local workforce system strategic and operational plans reflect an industry sector-focused, demand-driven approach.

2. Provide additional, more effective, more diverse, more market-driven, and more efficient tools for job seekers.

Short-term:

- Understand and aggregate employers' key skill and certification priorities at the regional level, especially in the targeted industries.
- Identify a body of promising tools for regional piloting and evaluation.

Intermediate:

- Improve job seekers' job readiness through implementation of WorkKeys® assessment, remediation, and certification.
  - Investigate and purchase online, occupation-specific credentialing service, e.g., Prove It!
  - Improve workforce supply/demand match and fit through UI, Wagner-Peyser, and WIA program alignment and integration activities designed to foster rapid re-employment.
3. Fully align the resources of all talent development-related agencies and institutions to meet the needs of key employment sectors.

Short-term:

- Improve awareness of available resources, financial and otherwise, by conducting asset-mapping at the state and regional levels and sharing results.
- Enhance alignment among complementary agencies and programs by conducting an analysis of existing strategic and operational plans and identifying opportunities for improved coordination and leveraging.

Intermediate:

- Wherever possible, ensure that partners with complementary missions are operating from a set of shared goals and outcome targets across programs and funding streams.
  - Provide policy guidance and related technical assistance to staff and training to empower regional partners to operate with improved cross-functionality and better braid and leverage resources for shared customers.
4. Catalyze regionally focused resource alignment and leverage investment in multi-partner, private sector-led Regional Business Innovation Teams.

Short-term:

- Identify RBIT team leaders and staff regional teams.
- Empower, support and build regionally focused partnerships and operations through revised policy and operational guidance, supplemented by expert technical assistance.

Intermediate:

- Support knowledge transfer and staff development through identification of experts to serve as peer mentors and coaches, augmented by a Community of Practice.
- Establish or grow regionally focused partnerships with employers in target industry sectors.

### **Assumptions and Hypotheses**

Region 7's approach uses the following key assumptions and hypotheses, as aligned with core goals:

1. With sufficient leadership, empowerment, training, and coaching support, staff will become more competent and confident in meeting employers' needs within an industry sector-focused framework, thus ensuring more positive outcomes for job seekers.
2. Providing new and more diverse self-service and staff-assisted tools and strategies for job seekers will enable workforce system partners to meet the needs of more job seekers and dramatically improve their employment, earnings, and career advancement outcomes.
3. Improved state, regional and local alignment of program policies, goals, planning, and services will minimize duplication and inefficiencies while significantly enhancing scalability, return on investment, and outcomes.
4. Incentivizing local workforce areas to transition to a regionally based, integrated, employer-driven workforce development model will ensure faster, more comprehensive and more effective systemic and sustainable transformation.

### **Challenges**

1. Reduced resources and capacity in a higher-demand environment.

Like all other workforce systems in the country, Region 7 faces the challenge of significantly reduced system funding, resources, and staff in the face of significantly increased demand for services from job seekers and employers. To address this challenge, Region 7 seeks to get to the heart of the matter by:

- Aggressively enhancing resource alignment
- Supporting regional partnerships that successfully aggregate employer demand and achieve economies of

scale in resource deployment for business and job seeker customers

Region 7's focus on economically vital industry sectors, combined with its commitment to enhance job seeker outcomes through a focus on employer-aligned training and credential attainment, ensures that the region is positioned to address resource and capacity obstacles for the long term.

## 2. Cultural/systemic resistance to change.

Louisiana's state and local workforce system field staff have always sought to do right by their job seeker customers. This orientation is founded in a deep commitment to customer service. However, it still leaves room for better alignment with the employer-demand side of the equation. Region 7 will address this challenge through its efforts to incentivize employer-driven, regional collaboration. We also will make a significant and sustainable investment in private sector leadership that can model and lead demand-driven workforce system staff and leadership through a process of innovative, transformational change. These efforts will be complemented by intensive but cost-effective staff knowledge building and professional development enhanced by peer-to-peer coaching. Mentors will support protégés in replicating promising and proven models and provide critical insight and guidance to overcome common stumbling blocks. For example, Region 7 has already established WIB partnerships that are supported by LWC. LWC will provide technical assistance and guidance as needed, all designed to propel the transformation process. Through this peer-to-peer process, LWC will develop and distribute planning tools, templates and guides, produce periodic webinars to facilitate understanding and maintain momentum in the regions, host discussion boards and copies of regional plans, foster peer-to-peer exchanges, announce any policy changes, and facilitate messages from the LWC to continually encourage staff at all levels. In order to preserve limited resources, any onsite technical assistance will be carefully targeted to those whose performance data illustrates particular needs.

## 1. **Cross-Program Strategies**

**The plan must discuss integrated cross-program strategies for specific populations and sub populations identified in the discussion of the region's economic analysis, strategies for meeting the workforce needs of the employers, and regional and sectorial strategies tailored to the region's economy.**

- **Improve workforce recruitment strategies.** Region 7 must expand the quality of job seekers utilizing the system if it is to improve employer customer satisfaction. We currently operate without an effective or, in some instances, an existing recruitment system to

engage skilled and qualified job seekers. In order to become more responsive to employers and meet their immediate and long-term needs, it is essential that we understand the skills that are in demand and market our services to a more diverse job seeker pool through more aggressive outreach and recruitment.

The Occupational Forecasting Conference (OFC) projects job growth and demand. The official information disseminated by the OFC includes projections for the state as a whole, as well as for the eight Regional Labor Market Areas (RLMAs). The official forecast and final report of the "Top Demand Occupations List" serves as a tool for developing long-term strategies in providing appropriate training to meet the needs of a skilled labor force.

The OFC allows for data-driven strategies for promoting and disseminating the final report to the appropriate stakeholders, as determined by the OFC. By way of example, one of the critical areas is trained healthcare workers. Within this sector, there are a large number of projected openings. Additionally, trained healthcare workers represent the highest percentage of openings in the healthcare industry.

Louisiana's Workforce Investment Council (WIC), in partnership with the OFC and LWC has established the criteria for identifying top demand occupations for the state and eight Regional Labor Market Areas (RLMAs). The connection between WIC's occupational forecasting activities and its role in driving funding for community and technical colleges is another critical integration component that was developed during the past year and is currently in phased implementation. The first input into the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) formula for the courses it will fund at its campuses across the state will be the list of demand occupations certified by the WIC. Now, campuses are encouraged to recruit students for the programs that will be funded, with those programs aimed at preparing students for demand occupations.

Region 7 has coordinated a well-integrated statewide Re-employment Services (RES) initiative connecting UI services with BCSC services through three service points: Re-employment Services, Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) and Emergency Unemployment Compensation Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment (EUC REA).

RES focuses on connecting UI claimants with re-employment and training services offered through the BCSC system. RES is provided by both WIA/Wagner Peyser (WP) integrated staff in the BCSCs.

Though the implementation of Louisiana Job Ready, which utilizes WorkKeys®, participants in several workforce development programs - Veterans, WIA, Rapid Response, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) - may be tested and their scores matched to specific jobs and

training opportunities. Louisiana agencies participating in the state's National Career Readiness Certificate initiative provide participants a portable credential that assures businesses that the job seeker possesses the basic cognitive skills needed for specific jobs.

When there are gaps between the participant's basic skill levels and those required by the business profile, workplace literacy assistance is provided through the BCSC system by various partners (Adult Education, LCTCS, BCSCs, etc.). This coordination of services avoids duplication and reduces costs.

The WIC has convened an Industry-Based Certification (IBC) committee that tracks and oversees the development and integration of IBCs into training curriculum. All of the agencies involved in workforce development participate on this committee. Membership on the IBC committee includes representation by labor, business, LWC, Louisiana Economic Development (LED) and education.

Region 7, will work with the Governor's Task Force on Workforce Competitiveness by examining the use of sector-based approaches to meeting the needs of businesses on a local level.

Another concept that may be piloted in the near future by the state is the use of regional intermediaries to serve as a One-Stop entity, working to identify gaps in workforce solutions and develop solutions for these gaps. These intermediaries would work to bring together all the resources a business would need, working with chambers, WIBs', educational entities, and community organizations. The intermediary would play a vital role in the middle of supply and demand, aligning local workforce resources to meet businesses needs. Coordinated by LWC and the WIBs', WorkKeys is being integrated into all workforce development programs. All Veterans, WIA, Rapid Response, TAA, LEAP, and NEG participants are tested and scores matched to specific jobs and training opportunities. All agencies participate in the Work Ready Certificate initiative providing participants a transferable credential that assures businesses that the job seeker possesses those basic skills needed for specific jobs. When there are gaps between the participant's basic skill levels and those required by the profile, adult education provides workplace literacy assistance through the One-Stop system. The coordination of services avoids duplication of services and reduces cost.

## 2. Partnerships

**Discuss key strategic partnerships that are necessary to successfully implement the strategies, and discuss how the strategies will meet the needs of employers of each sub-population.**

- **Cultivate a collaborative regional approach for the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs).** It is imperative that Region 7 promotes stronger collaboration between the WIBs' and other partners.

Resources are scarce, so we must ensure more uniformity in serving employers and avoid duplication of effort and resources wherever possible. To this end, Region 7 will facilitate, through technical assistance, guidance, and support, the regional collaboration of WIBs' in our region. Our local areas will be required to demonstrate, by direct evidence, how they work collaboratively with the other WIB and workforce partners within our region. This will be reflected in the local/regional plan, and contracts between LWC and the two WIBs' in the local area, which will include negotiated performance and accountability measures that will set the standard of expectations in the area.

- **Focus on job placement as the key outcome.** In keeping with Region 7's mission of putting people to work, all efforts within each program and service shall have a primary focus of putting people to work. We will measure our success based largely upon this key outcome. Whether it is improving employer engagement, collaborative partnerships, strategic utilization of labor market information reports, or functional alignment of the regions programs and services, the mission is to put Northwest Louisiana residents to work. To the greatest extent feasible, all Region 7's programs will have performance outcomes established to help gauge their contributions toward job placement.

All of the agencies in the region involved in workforce development have the same goal, to provide businesses with workers who possess the skills needed in today's competitive economy.

Through the local workforce boards and youth councils, programs are being integrated and coordinated to provide youth with the resources and skills necessary to succeed in the region's economy and to assist in closing the poverty gap in Northwest Louisiana. The system will broaden and enhance youths' connections to post-secondary education opportunities, leadership development activities, mentoring training, community service, and other community resources.

Region 7 is also partnering with the state's juvenile justice program to develop a system that links incarcerated youth being paroled back to their local area WIA youth programs. As the youth connected to their parole officer, they will register in LAVOS and be linked to a supportive adult in the local BCSC to help them determine if employment and/or training/education is appropriate. This will assist the youth in linking career planning and goal setting as part of their reattachment process. BCSC staff work to identify youth, ages 18 –21, who apply for unemployment insurance as potential WIA participants, provide them with linkages to high demand/growth occupations, and assist them in building career plans that provide training and entry to jobs with career ladders.

Region 7's Workforce Investment Board(s) have been granted considerable authority and flexibility in determining how and to what level their required partners can be integrated into the comprehensive

Business and Career Solutions Centers. Required partners operate within the One-Stop Delivery System in the area to provide a full array of services for all populations and sub-populations.

LWC and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council have worked with Region 7s' WIBs' to become more strategic than programmatic by providing assistance to the WIB's to write strategic plans in a similar manner as the state. Following Task Force on Workforce Competitiveness recommendations, the state has worked with the WIBs in order for them to be more demand driven and responsive to employer needs in the area by integrating and utilizing all Business and Career Solutions Center partner services.

Within many of the local areas, required partners have representatives assigned to and housed within local Business and Career Solutions Centers on a full-time basis. Staff are fully integrated into operations and are available to service customers. Customers have a myriad of resources available to them through these collaborative partnerships. In other local areas, partners maintain a part-time physical presence on scheduled days or times. In still other circumstances, partners are linked electronically. This is normally determined by customer volume, geographic distance, and availability of space or resources.

The integration of WIA and Wagner-Peyser programs within the local area has been a work in progress. Our Business and Career Solutions Centers are entering into a new era of cooperation and integration with their partners, working to create a seamless service delivery system.

This will allow all of the partners to be housed within the same facility so that they may better integrate their services. In addition, Wagner-Peyser staff is assuming more responsibility for providing core services across the system in an effort to eliminate duplication of services. Louisiana has submitted a waiver to better coordinate provision of core services.

Coordination is now taking place with regard to job fairs and mass recruitment events. There is universal access to job orders, workforce information, and training providers through LAVOS.

Close coordination of services will continue with the partner agencies (i.e. Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Louisiana Commission for the Blind, Goodwill Industries, The Betty and Leonard Phillips Deaf Action Center of Northwest Louisiana, Parish Mental Health/Mental Retardation) to provide appropriate access to all services for all customers.

A new approach to business services has been developed to create seamless service delivery to employers. The state has created a training package aimed at providing business resource staff from all partners with the skills to market the One-Stop Delivery System to employers. Region 7 utilizes its On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Work Experience (WE) components in conjunction with the LWC's Business Service

Representatives (BSRs) as the methods of service delivery to local businesses.

The OJT component addresses the need of businesses for short-term, experiential training. Region 7 also offers Customized Training tailored to specific industry requirements. The Work Experience component is also very helpful to businesses seeking short-term, on-site training through the WIA program. The LWC Business Service Representatives are in contact with local businesses and are very familiar with the services offered through Region 7. The BSRs are an excellent source of referral for WIA clients for the OJT or WE components. Region 7 will seek a closer and better coordinated relationship with the local BSRs.

Region 7 utilizes Workkeys and other interest and aptitude assessments as the common assessment instruments for WIA clients. Region 7 has attempted to make the assessment process as customer-friendly as possible by offering the assessment every day as needed. This allows the client to fit the process to their schedule thus making for an efficient and streamlined assessment. Region 7 requires all job seekers to sign-in before utilizing the Resource Room. However, a minimum of information is gathered on the sign-in form. Job seekers are initially greeted and asked if they need assistance, if not, they are allowed to use Resource Room facilities at their own pace. They may, however, seek assistance at any time. All rules of use for the Resource Room are posted at each workstation.

### **3. Leveraging Resources**

**Discuss how the region will coordinate discretionary and formula-based investments across programs and in support of the Governor's vision. Describe how the Region 7 WIBs' will use program funds to leverage other federal, state, local, and private resources, in order to effectively and efficiently provide services.**

One of the best ways to leverage federal, state, and local resources to insure a skilled workforce is to make the most of the dollars going to education and training in our region. The state currently has an Incumbent Worker Training Program to assist businesses to upgrade the skills of their current workers. Region 7 leads the state with 217 employers assisted from the inception of the program in June 1998 through the current program year.

Region 7 is second only to Region 1 (New Orleans) in number of dollars awarded with \$50,416,227 dedicated to training for local businesses during the same time period. Regions 7's WIBs' also leverage their dollars with Adult Education Programs, TAA (Trade Adjustment Assistance), TOPS (Louisiana's Tuition Opportunity Program), PELL, Incumbent-Worker Program, NEG, Senior Employment funds, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services training dollars, and economic development programs.

The region's WIBs' are responsible for ensuring that all allocated WIA funds are used for maximum effectiveness. The WIBs' also have the responsibility

of determining if services for eligible Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth are successfully administered. The use of WIA funds for such activities as Workkeys assessments, On-the-Job Training, customized training, and occupational training reinforces this.

Also, the region 7 WIBs' annually review their budgets for Title I programs to determine available system resources. In order to maximize the effectiveness of other federal, state, local, and private resources, and to expand the participation of business/employees, and individuals in Region 7's workforce investment system, the WIBs' will utilize, to the extent allowable by law, the funding streams of the required One-Stop partners to support service delivery through the One-Stop System. In addition, youth providers in Region 7 make in-kind contributions to augment their WIA funds.

Additional policies and collaborations between workforce and economic development will be developed throughout the implementation of this Plan to expand these training options. The region's WIBs will recommend that service providers utilize resources from economic development, trade associations, educational institutions, and other WIA partners, to enhance OJT and customized training ventures.

- **Integration of OWD programs into BCSC operations.** There are programs currently at the state level that have tremendous potential to have greater impact on job seekers, employers, and employees if implemented regionally and transitioned and fully integrated into the normal operations of the local BCSCs. Two of these programs are TAA and IWTP, both of which can become effective tools to engage employers and train employees impacted by trade decisions (TAA) as well as incumbent workers who employers seek to train for skill upgrades leading to promotions or job retention (IWTP). Local staff will be trained and receive technical assistance on how to grow these programs and increase employer participation, while state merit staff continue to perform federally required functions. In turn, it is expected that TAA funding will increase as more people are identified, qualified, and enrolled in training, and IWTP contracts will be awarded to more employers across each region, with an emphasis on recruiting employers currently unfamiliar with the program.
- **Increase the number of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and BCSC co-locations.** Efforts have been made to co-locate LRS with BCSCs. These efforts have had several challenges, including leases and facilities requirements of the LRS program by virtue of the special needs of many of its customers.
- At a minimum, OWD will ensure that LRS has a presence in the local BCSCs and/or Community Action Agencies, and wherever possible, co-location of LRS and BCSCs will take place. This effort will decrease administrative costs through cost sharing and increase the ability of eligible customers to access multiple services.

During the 2004 session of the Louisiana Legislature, legislation relative to self-employment was enacted (R.S. 23:1553(b)(12) and 1604) to provide for the non-charging of benefits in order to establish a self-employment assistance program where an individual participates for the purpose of establishing a business and becoming self-employed. OWD is working with LED and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in assisting individuals who may be interested in pursuing self-employment. LWC is working toward expanding its Educational Consumer Information database to include entities that provide entrepreneurial training, business counseling, and technical assistance.

As a direct result of meetings with small businesses, the state enacted in 2004 the Small Business Employee Training Program. The purpose was to provide incumbent worker training to Louisiana-based businesses that have 50 or fewer employees. Employers can be reimbursed up to \$3,000 per trainee per state fiscal year. This program is funded at 2.3 percent of the funds available for the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP).

The state has university offices staffed by the SBA to assist small businesses with information on how to access funds to enhance their business operations. Additionally, the state has Small Business Development Centers throughout the state that provide services to small businesses. LED has an Entrepreneurship Division that assists Louisiana citizens in starting a new business, including providing such services as Angel Investor tax credits and business incubator opportunities.

#### **4. Policy Alignment**

**Discuss how the Region's WIBs' will align policies, operations, administrative systems, and other procedures to assure coordination and avoid duplication, of workforce programs and activities outlined in WIA Section 121(b).**

- **Improve utilization of labor market information (LMI) in a regional framework.** Occupational forecasting and LMI in the Region have immensely improved over the years and have many benefits if used strategically. However, both have been grossly underutilized in local, regional, and state planning in terms of career counseling; prioritization of WIA training dollars; training curriculum development, expansion and reduction at technical and community colleges, etc. Focus will be on ensuring each region has a clear understanding of how to use the available LMI data. Each region will receive ongoing training and updates on regional LMI data, and WIBs' will be expected to use this information in its budget planning process, with flexibility to make necessary and appropriate adjustments. Through these efforts, we should see strategic planning and expenditure of WIA funding at the local and regional levels.
- **Improve training and technical assistance to local BCSC staff.** One of the many federal regulations under (WIA), and policy mandates placed upon OWD is to provide technical assistance to

local areas to promote continuous improvement in providing services to customers and to ensure performance measures are met or exceeded. OWD management and staff will provide ongoing technical assistance via conference calls, intranet, webinars, and periodic site visits.

- **Reduce the financial burden of monitoring WIA sub-recipients without adversely impacting the quality of monitoring conducted.** Federal regulations (WIA), mandate that Region 7's WIBs' conduct programmatic and financial monitoring reviews of its sub-recipients. Specific to WIA-funded programs, ongoing monitoring via annual onsite reviews is required. OWD will request a waiver of the requirement to conduct annual onsite visits and propose an alternative that combines onsite visits and desk reviews.

OWD continues to bring together all ETA-funded employment and training programs, including WIA Title I, Rapid Response, Wagner-Peyser, TAA, Veterans, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW), Apprenticeship programs, and Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Also, OWD manages the Community Services Block Grant program and since 2010, rehabilitation services through LRS With workforce development programs centrally managed regardless of funding stream, the OWD is able to build integrated work processes and assist the local LWIAs in modeling similar strategies.

Region 7's service integration and system alignment model has reduced program requirements, made more efficient use of limited resources, and equalized work across staff. Region 7 is working to determine the most cost-effective service delivery methods. Region 7 is also developing solutions to provide services at locations that meet the needs of their citizens, ranging from small neighborhood centers to community college campuses to separate business centers.

In order to ensure that Region 7 is aligned with both the federal/USDOL and the Governor's workforce development priorities, and to keep business as the primary customer, the regions LWIBs' are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that services are business focused and outcome based. Consequently, Region 7 must ensure that organization and processes are in place so that a quality connection is made between businesses looking for qualified workers and individuals seeking gainful employment.

#### **D. Desired Outcomes/Performance**

**The Integrated Workforce Plan must describe and provide specific quantitative targets for the desired outcomes and results for the programs included in the plan. Table 1 may be used for WIA/W-P programs.**

The goals and outcomes of this plan are transformational in nature, and conform to the problems discussed above, as well as to LWC's objectives. Quantitative goals for the various initiatives will be set consistent with metrics that continue to be established at the state level and subsequently negotiated with the Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs). Some of those key metrics include:

**Employer Market Penetration:**

- Increase the number of new business customers.
- Increase the number/percentage of repeat business customers using workforce services (retention).
- Increase the number/percentage of directly posted jobs in LWC's job board.
- Increase the number /percentage of employers posting multiple job vacancies

**Service to Employers:**

- Reduce the time to fill job vacancies.
- Increase outreach to employers in regional demand industry sectors resulting in direct job postings.
- Increase the number of employers utilizing employer-based training.

**Relevance to Employers:**

- Increase the percentage of hires that result from staff-assisted services.

In its paper on re-inventing One-Stops, the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) states, "One-Stops struggle to meet today's needs with a model designed for a different economy. Based on customer demand, many One-Stops today attempt to do both job matching and provide educational attainment help, and lack the resources and focus to do both well." Region 7 embraces CSW's principle that "focusing One-Stops as places where work and learning intersect to lead toward market-relevant credentials is the path to achieving a more sustainable and effective workforce development system."

It is important to emphasize that Region 7 places the highest value on the regular analysis of diverse data sets to gauge the region's progress in the goals identified here. To that end, project stakeholders (e.g., AiM committees, Workforce Advisory Teams) will be tracking and analyzing both "hard" and "soft" data on at least a quarterly basis to evaluate progress in identified short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. This analysis will be fed back to state, regional and local leadership for purposes of course correction, ongoing continuous improvement, systemic talent development and improved program alignment and service delivery for all system customers.

In addition to the afore-listed business goals, Region 7 will focus on continuous improvement of the job seeker goals including, but not limited to, the approved WIA common measures. LWC seeks to increase the targets of many of the common measure negotiated goals for PY 12. The state will negotiate

performance goals for each of the 18 LWIAs using a combination of regression targets published by the U.S. Department of Labor, most recent actual LWIA results (PY 11 Qtr 3), and the state's PY 12 targets.

As part of LWC's re-employment strategies for unemployed individuals receiving UI benefits, the state sets forth two additional measures that are aligned with UI goals:

- **Increase facilitation of re-employment**

Increase the percentage of UI claimants who received a first payment in a calendar quarter who are re-employed in the subsequent quarter.

- **Decrease of the average UI duration**

(See Attachments B and E)

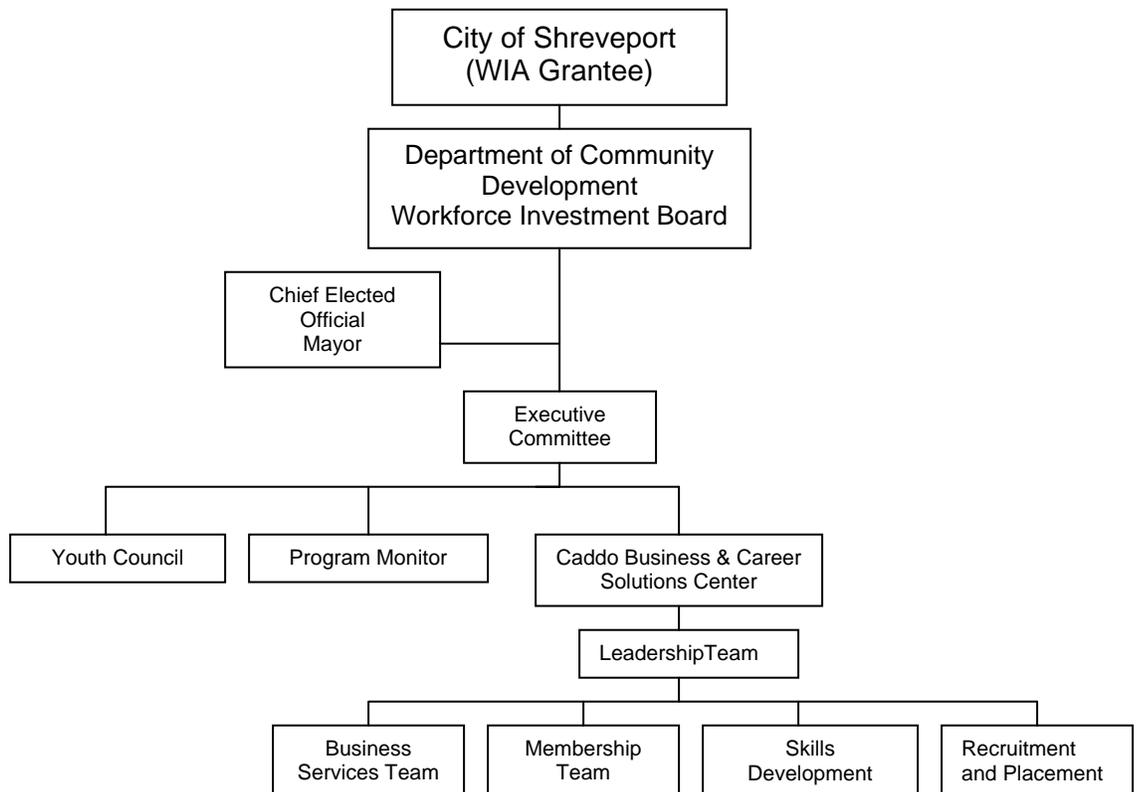
## SECTION II. LOCAL OPERATIONAL PLAN

### A. Overview of the Workforce System:

The Local Operational Plan must present an overview of the workforce system in the state.

- 1. Organization:** The overview must describe organization and delivery systems at the local level for the programs covered in the plan, particularly how this organization effectively supports the coordination and alignment of the state's workforce programs and supports integrated service delivery. The overview must include a description of the organizational structure and membership roster of members and their organization affiliation.

The organizational chart (below) describes the organization and structure of the City of Shreveport Workforce Investment Board under which the Local Board operates.



The function of the City of Shreveport Workforce Investment Board through its WIB staff, One-Stop operators, and youth service providers, carries out its functions as required in Section 117112(b)(6), 1117(b).

The City of Shreveport Workforce Investment Board is charged with providing coordination, strategic planning, and oversight of the One-Stop system at the local level.

The role of the WIB is to convene partners, facilitate conversations, and to insure an integrated framework for how LWIA 71 will participate in regional planning and develop the local delivery system. One goal of the Seventh Planning District Consortium Workforce Investment Board is to create a coordinated framework for service delivery that includes a variety of strategies that are planned and responsive to customer needs.

The development of multiple strategies that balance the needs of the job seeker and the business customer will address the training and skill building needs of these customers both for the present and the future. These strategies will enable the system to always be ready to respond regardless of the economic climate. (See Attachment B – City of Shreveport WIB Membership Matrix)

**2. Local Board: The Local Operational Plan must describe how the LWIB effectively coordinates and aligns the resources and policies of all the programs included in the plan.**

The City of Shreveport Workforce Investment Board connects with the local area Chamber of Commerce, the major industries and employers within its region and those public entities that play a major role in LWIA 71's economic and employment picture. Recommendations for nominations have been, and are, made by the local area Chambers of Commerce, the economic development agencies, educational institutions, other training providers, service provider employer connections, and by other members of the WIB. LWIA 71's WIB Director meets with the individuals who have been recommended to discuss the WIB's vision and mission and meeting schedules; to determine if the individual is responsible for policy making and hiring within their organization; and to ascertain whether he/she would be an active and positive addition to the WIB. The WIB Director then makes recommendations to the Chief Local Elected Official for nominations and the Chief Local Elected Official confirms or rejects the nominations. Each member is assigned a term of service as a member of the WIB.

The City of Shreveport's WIB is constituted to create diversity in membership representing businesses, key workforce partners, stakeholding organizations, and private individuals. With the WIB's emphasis on demand-side strategies, business service, and recognizing business as a primary customer, we currently have 29 members, 15 of whom are representatives from the private sector. This ratio helps to create a culture on the WIB that prioritizes beneficial service intervention with employers.

Within this constituency, small businesses and business members who are prominent in economic development organizations are represented. Members from the education community (including post-secondary

education), labor unions, economic development members, and rehabilitation services, assure that the WIB maintains a dual focus on the training and education programs for people most in need to become better equipped to find employment which will provide them with a sustainable wage and the appropriate benefits to increase both individual and community prosperity and growth.

The LWIB has taken an active role in providing leadership for the establishment of the Region's workforce development system and implementation of WIA. The WIB has been designated to serve as the review and policy making body for all issues relating to workforce development in the local area.

The LWIB meets at least four times a year to discuss broad policy issues. The LWIB is identified as the entity to establish workforce priority needs so that appropriate training opportunities can be developed to meet demand.

Moreover, the vision is to align all programs to the highest priority needs as defined by the LWIB.

All WIB meetings are held in accessible buildings. Any individual with a hearing impairment may request an interpreter if sufficient notice is provided to the WIB before the meeting is held. Notices of quarterly meetings of the WIB are provided in advance to all members, participating partners, and upon request to people who are added to the WIB's distribution list.

The WIB's quarterly meetings are posted in at least one newspaper as a "public notice" (area newspapers). Summaries/Minutes of WIB quarterly meetings are sent automatically to all WIB members, to people attending the meeting, to those on the distribution list, or by e-mail and/or hard copy on request. Summaries of committee meetings are given at each quarterly meeting and are available on request. Members of the WIB receive copies of all summaries and minutes at both WIB and committee levels.

As part of the ongoing efforts of the partners of the Local Plan, input and open communication has been consistently sought. The LWIB ensures that the public has access to board meetings and information regarding its activities. All meetings are subject to the state public meeting law, which stipulates that all meetings are open to any citizen. (R.S. 42:4,1 et seq). Members of the council are recused from voting on matters that would be a violation of

A conflict of interest would arise when a WIB member, any member of that individual's immediate family or the individual's partner, or an organization which employs, or is about to employ any of the above, has a financial or other interest in the firm or organization selected for an award, grant or contract by the WIB. No member of the WIB shall cast a vote or attempt to influence the body on any matter that has direct bearing on services to be provided, or which would financially benefit

such member or any organization with which such member is affiliated. WIB members shall make every attempt to avoid personal conflict of interest in awarding financial assistance and in the conduct of procurement activities involving funds under the Act.

In order to avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict, each member shall disclose any potential conflict of interest to the appropriate committee, thereby complying with the By-Laws as adopted by the WIB membership. Minutes of meetings shall record the abstentions of members who are prohibited from voting due to conflict of interest.

These prohibitions shall apply to regular, special, and committee meetings of the WIB.

Duties of the members: It shall be the duty of all WIB members to:

1. Excuse themselves from their official WIB duties if there is a conflict of interest.
2. Advise the WIB of any potential conflicts of interest.
3. Ask the WIB for an opinion if they have any doubts that a specific situation involves a Violations of the Conflict of Interest Code. If, after an investigation, the WIB believes that this Code has been violated it can recommend to the Chief Local Elected Official that the individual who has violated the Code be removed as a member of the WIB. The Chief Elected Official has the authority to remove a member of the WIB for a violation of this Code, even if the WIB has not made such a recommendation.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission has specifically charged LWIA 71's Workforce Investment Board with the responsibility to provide coordination, strategic planning and oversight around five (5) key elements to insure success of the local system. These key elements are:

- Maximize efficiency by eliminating the duplication of services through the creation of standard sets of services and by expanding unique services with Louisiana Works One-Stop Centers.
- Coordinate delivery of current services and collectively create additional services that have been identified as valuable by businesses and job seekers.
- Develop a common framework for service delivery regardless of the funding stream and include multiple strategies to insure the success of the business and job seeker customer.

- Identify strategies to insure the consistent delivery of a "core" set of services that are promised and delivered to both customer groups, businesses, and job seekers.
- Establish integrated locations that are easily identifiable as Business and Career Solutions Center locations so businesses and job seekers can gain access to all workforce development services, no matter where they are in the state.

There is a strong link between LWC and the LWIA. LWC staff is in regular communication with the field leadership and the network of BCSCs, offering guidance and technical assistance/support. LWC staff regularly attends LWIA board meetings and WIA directors' meetings. Communication with the LWIAs occurs on numerous levels. New information and changes to policy and procedures are disseminated through Workforce Investment Policies. These policies and pertinent information are available to the LWIA electronically. LWC organizes semi-annual statewide meetings that engage the various programs that support workforce development, including the WIB Director, and Local Area Coordinator. The LRS Field Manager, the Community Action Agency Director, and LWC Program Manager. In addition, Veterans, TAA, and Management Information System (MIS) program staff regularly visit BCSCs.

**3. Labor Board: The Local Plan must also describe the WIA Title I local areas. (An identification of the local area designated in the state, and the process used for designating local area.**

The City of Shreveport, which is the grant recipient for LWIA 71, is also the Fiscal Agent for the WIB. The City makes available to the WIB, the staff necessary to carry out its functions. The Assistant Director for the Department of Community Development serves as the WIB Director. The Community Development accounting staff keeps the WIB abreast of its financial responsibilities. The secretary for the Workforce Bureau handles all of the WIB's secretarial duties including coordination of meetings, training, and other obligations. The Department's Monitor assists the WIB in its function of oversight and monitoring duties. The Board has also been given functional management of the Wagner-Peyser funded staff. Staff assignments can be generated by the Board.

- **Key principles regarding Local Workforce Investment Board Implementation**

Strong, business-led boards are essential for leadership in developing a comprehensive workforce investment system at the local level. In accordance with Act 743 of the 2008 Regular legislative Session, a WIB shall be comprised by a majority of individuals in the business community. Members should be key principals with decision-making authority and represent high-demand industries within their respective areas. The majority of membership and the chair should be from private sector and be

appointed by the chief elected official. The board shall develop and regularly upgrade performance measures to assess the effectiveness of workforce training and employment in its area to ensure outcomes consistent with statewide goals, objective, and performance standards established by LWC. The Governor deems it important that these boards demonstrate on a local level that our nation's workforce development system has undergone significant change since the passage of the Workforce Investment Act. As a result, the local board has a broader scope of influence on the management of Louisiana's workforce development system and workforce education and training resources within a geographic area.

The local board is encouraged to focus their activities on strategic, not operational, management of the local system. This allows for a wider range of key partners to help shape a clear, local vision that is consistent with the governor's goals and responsive to local needs. The board is selected based on key principles established by the governor, in partnership with the WIC.

- **The following are key principles for member appointments to the LWIB by the Chief Elected Official (CEO)**

The LWIB has a majority of business representatives and the balance of representation from education, organized labor, all One-Stop partners, community-based organizations, economic development agencies and others, utilizing the following guidelines:

- Business members are appointed from among nominations by business and trade organizations, each of which may submit a list of up to three nominees for consideration.

The Chief Elected Official appoints:

- at least one member who represents a woman-owned business; and
- at least one member who represents a minority-owned business.
- Business representatives selected represent the varied employment opportunities/industries in the area and should be owners of businesses, chief executives, or operating officers of businesses, and other business executives for employers with optimum policymaking or hiring authority.
- There should be representatives of the local education community. Of the members appointed, the local chief elected

official appoints at least one member from each of the following:

- a local public education entity (K-12, including adult education and literacy)
- a post-secondary entity

The K-12 education representative(s) is appointed by the Chief Elected Official from a list of up to three nominees, jointly agreed upon by school superintendents in the area.

The post-secondary education representative is appointed by the Chief Elected Official from a list of up to three nominees, jointly agreed upon by local post-secondary entities.

- Representatives of each of the One-Stop partners in the local workforce investment area are appointed by the Chief Elected Official from among a list of up to three nominees, submitted jointly by the participating One-Stop partners, identified through the local memorandum of understanding. LRS is a member of each LWIB. Under Section 121(b) (1)(A) of the WIA, a Community Action Agency is a required member of the system. The WIC and LWC have worked with the local Chief Elected Official and the LWIB to define its local representation as well as to add members as appropriate.
- The representative(s) of labor organizations is appointed from among a list of up to three nominees, submitted jointly by local labor federations, or (for a local area in which no employees are represented by such organizations) other representatives of employees.
- The representative(s) of community-based organizations is appointed from a list of up to three nominees, submitted jointly by area community-based organizations, including organizations representing people with disabilities and veterans.
- The representative(s) of economic development agencies is appointed from a list of up to three nominees, submitted jointly by area economic development agencies, including private-sector economic development entities.
- Other individuals or representatives of entities that the Chief Elected Official deems to be appropriate may also be appointed.

These representatives may serve in a capacity that enable one person to be responsible for multiple categories.

The structure of the One-Stop partner committee requires approval by the WIB. Current requirements result in large, unwieldy boards that experience difficulties conducting business. One reason for the large number of public-sector members is the requirement that the local board must contain at least one member representing each One-Stop partner. This has the potential to require 17 public and 18 private-sector members, before the other required members. The large number of public sector members is one of the reasons private-sector members frequently do not attend meetings. The One-Stop partners already meet as part of Business and Career Solutions committees to discuss workforce development issues, coordination, and organization as part of the MOU process.

Regional planning shall be a required activity of the LWIB within our designated labor market planning area. As part of LWC's initiative, all LWIBs in the Region 7 are developing regional business sector services and strategies by integrated teams through the BCSC system.

Duties of the LWIB, in partnership with the CEO, shall include:

- Development of local/regional plan
- Selection of the Business & Career Solutions Center operator
- Selection of youth providers
- Identification of eligible training providers
- Program oversight
- Negotiation of local/regional performance measures
- Development of employer linkages

The CEO in the local area serves the grant recipient and shall be liable for misuse of grant funds allocated to the local area. To assist in the administration of grant funds, the CEO may designate an entity to serve as a local grant sub-recipient for such funds or as a local fiscal agent. Such designation shall not relieve the local CEO of liability for any misuse of grant funds.

**B. Operating System and Policy Supporting State Strategies:**

The Local Operation Plan must describe:

- 1. Local operating systems that support and coordinate implementation of state strategies (e.g. labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, etc.).**

The local system is delivering employment and training services that must be proactive by responding to economic drivers in moving to a service delivery system that:

- a. Ensure that the business needs of hiring, retention, training, and advancement of workers is the driving force.
- b. Connect businesses that are looking for qualified workers and individuals seeking employment.
- c. Eliminate duplication of services and reduce Administrative overhead through integration of local programs.

The "Comprehensive Labor Market Information System", called for in Act 743 of the 2008 Louisiana Legislature, includes four components:

- 1. A consumer information component on employment and training,
- 2. A report card on training programs,
- 3. Information on projected workforce and job growth and demand, and
- 4. An automated job-matching information system. The third component includes an occupational forecasting system that forecasts new and replacement needs of occupations.

The fourth component is accessible to employers, job seekers, and other users via the Internet. All efforts toward the long-term industry and occupational projections are coordinated under the guidance of the Louisiana Occupational Forecasting Conference, which is staffed jointly by the Workforce investment Council and LWC. In accordance with the legislation creating the comprehensive labor market information system, occupational information on targeted cluster industries is to be identified by the Louisiana Department of Economic Development (LED). LWC has been designated as the agency responsible for the SCORECARD system to calculate performance outcomes of postsecondary training programs and is used in the Eligible Training Provider List certification process. The provider list is a part of MA/SCORECARD and is published on the Internet. It is available in all Business and Career Solutions Centers through LAVOS/LOIS. The system currently displays information on all public and most private training providers in the state, including contact information, course offerings, tuition, and supportive services (such as childcare, transportation, financial aid, job placement, etc.). Quality employment statistical information using the ALMIS format is delivered through LAVOS/LOIS.

Louisiana's information delivery system, Louisiana Occupational Information System (LOIS), is designed as an electronic resource for retrieving information from ALMIS for research and analysis. LAVOS integrates ALMIS with electronic tools to help job seekers match workforce information with career tools. The O'Net Interest inventory and Work Importance Locator are embedded in the system and are linked to occupational information, including job openings and training opportunities. All job openings are also linked to specific occupational

information. LOIS and LAVOS are enhanced as new data tables and/or products are introduced. Staff participates in all available system-training opportunities.

LOIS and LAVOS, both developed as Internet-based systems, ensure that labor statistics are timely and provide relevant information about the local labor market area. LWC continually strives to improve the accuracy of the LMI system by working with both state and local economic entities.

## **2. Local policies that support the coordination and implementation of the state's strategies.**

Historically, most BCSCs were viewed as unemployment offices with the primary function being the registration and processing of unemployment claims. Consequently, job seekers and employers seeking labor solutions didn't view BCSCs as a relevant resource and were not being adequately served. As part of the transformation process, much focus has been placed on providing critical employment and talent development services aided greatly by technological advances that facilitate the automation of most of the UI claims process. The redesign of services to business and job seeker in Louisiana has been well received, with ongoing enhancements in the form of staff training and facility improvements factoring into the improvements. LWC has developed a series of policies outlining the standardization of OWD's Integrated Service Model Work Processes in order to fully develop a seamless integrated system.

The goals of the redesign project are:

- a. Restructuring the delivery of employment and training services to eliminate duplication of services;
- b. Ensuring that the business needs of hiring, retention, training, and advancement of workers is the system's driving force; and
- c. Connecting businesses that are looking for qualified workers with individuals seeking employment. This strategic vision required alignment of workforce services functions across Wagner-Peyser and WIA programs, as well as workforce programs funded through these federal/state monies.

Integrated team-based service delivery provides an increased opportunity for true universal access. The state will continue to develop and refine strategies to meet the needs of targeted populations in its workforce system and improve upon the overall delivery of services at the BCSCs throughout the state, and in keeping with the strategic goals and processes previously described in this Plan.

In order to enhance and promote the concept of an integrated service delivery system, the Local Workforce Investment Board has been working with the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Office of Workforce Development on redesign that provides a single staff structure for Wagner-Peyser staff and WIA staff through the Local Workforce Investment Board, thus creating a more efficient, streamlined system.

Additionally, with the Unemployment Insurance service removed from the field, Business and Career Solutions Centers can concentrate more on employment and training services. The Local Workforce Investment Boards have functional authority over the Wagner-Peyser staff, including Veterans service staff who work in or Business and Career Solutions Centers. The realignment of staff functions has helped to reduce multiple layers of supervision and eliminate duplication of efforts.

The redesign structure has provided a standardized framework for how customers enter the system; how they are assessed for service need; how they access services, including placement, and how offices are designed and staffed to meet the needs of the job seekers and employers.

LWC will continue to provide technical assistance to support the coordination and implementation of state strategies. Technical assistance staff housed in the administrative office review performance reports and financial expenditure levels. The MIS section has staff assigned to assist all LWC employment and training programs within each local workforce investment area. This approach serves as the primary means to assist each LWIA with understanding their performance data, entering participant and employer data into the system, utilizing reports, and using case management functions in the system.

Quarterly programmatic, performance and fiscal reviews are conducted to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations, determine if WIA funds are being fully utilized, and to determine if the full array of services is available to all populations in an integrated seamless manner. The state also conducts the annual WIA Data Element Validation and uses these findings to provide necessary technical guidance and feedback to the locals.

LWC issues integrated policy guidance and assistance to the local WIA grant recipient and Wagner-Peyser programs and service providers. The LWIA is responsible for disseminating these instructions to their staff and service providers. LWC has developed a password-accessible electronic extranet, which provides access for the LWIA to directives, reports and training information, and serves as a communication portal between the state and the LWIA. Additionally, an intranet service is in the developmental stage and made possible through a grant provided by USDOL.

LWC has hired a training director to work on staff development opportunities agency-wide. The director is working with OWD to develop

staff development training in an effort to improve services to customers. Courses are being developed to meet the needs of the collective workforce development system and its partners, and will be made available to state and local workforce staff statewide.

**3. How the delivery of services to jobseeker customers and employer customers, including Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, will be aligned across programs.**

For the business community, RIBTs will coordinate services regionally for employers and provide them with better access to the employment and training system. These teams will work with targeted employers as part of a coordinated effort to build sector strategies across each 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.

An integrated employer account system, accessible by all local partner entities through H.I.R.E., will provide a comprehensive database of employers' needs. This will allow the system to build a portfolio of employer services that match business needs. Wagner-Peyser traditional employer relations programs have been integrated into the LWIA business sector teams using business teams assigned to the local Business and Career Solutions Centers; thus broadening their employer contact capabilities.

LWIA 71 utilizes its On-the-Job Training Program (OJT) and Work Experience (WE) components in conjunction with the LWC's Business Service Representatives (BSRs) as the methods of service delivery to local businesses. The OJT component addresses the need of businesses for short-term, experiential training. LWIA 71 also offers Customized Training tailored to specific industry requirements. The Work Experience component is also very helpful to businesses seeking short-term, on-site training through the WA program. The LWC's Business Service Representatives are in contact with local businesses and are very familiar with the services offered through LWIA 71. The BSRs are an excellent source of referral for WIA clients for the OJT or WE components. LWIA 71 will seek a closer and better-coordinated relationship with the local BSR's. LWIA 71 utilizes Workkeys and other interest and aptitude assessments as the common assessment instruments for WIA clients. LWIA 71 has attempted to make the assessment process as customer-friendly as possible by offering the assessment every day as needed. This allows the client to fit the process to their schedule thus making for an efficient and streamlined assessment.

Use of non-traditional methods to generate quicker turnaround and broader exposure for high-demand occupations include unfiltered job openings, employers listing job openings directly on the Internet and exposure and access to these job openings in non-traditional locations, such as community-based and faith-based organizations. All partner

agency staff will share job information that will provide employers with access to a broader range of possible employees. Business services are coordinated so that employers will not be approached by representatives from multiple One-Stop partners.

The Customized Workforce Solution concept addresses the workforce challenges of large employers, industry sectors, regions, and agencies across the state through the development of detailed workforce plans, leveraging the various resources available through the LWC, LED and other agencies as necessary. Each plan will identify the specific challenge and include a detailed action plan, establishing stakeholder responsibilities, timelines for execution, and the anticipated outcome. The goal is to draw from its full complement of available resources in the area of employee recruitment, training, and funding availability to best serve the dynamic needs of business and industry in Louisiana.

BCSCs utilize a team-based triage service delivery strategy for job seekers. The newly instituted AiM Job Ready and Re-employment initiatives will serve as the catalyst to drive more qualified job seekers to the BCSCs and create a pipeline of qualified workers with the skills, credentials, and attitudes employers are seeking. Services at the centers are delivered through facilitated self-help and group activities. In addition, customers not needing staff assistance can access services outside of the centers through the Internet-based MIS System. Through H.I.R.E. customer choice is maximized by providing the ability to directly enter the labor exchange process by either self-identification or through staff assistance. The system provides job seekers direct access to employer listings through the self-service component, as well as the ability complete skill-based resumes. At the Business and Career Solutions Centers, the skills development team assists in the development of 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 services, 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, facilitating a better match to needed services for a more rapid entry into the workforce. The career exploration process in the centers include the following.

The career exploration process provides staff with the skills, knowledge and tools to provide customer 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 enables customers to ensure the job/training they choose matches their financial needs and is part of career ladder.

The local workforce development plan addresses the mix of services in the local area and delivery strategies.

Certain services, resources, and procedures are mandated for all BCSCs. Where feasible, centers are staffed by four integrated teams, each providing discreet services to system members. The Career Solutions sector has membership services and skills development services. The Business Solutions sector is composed of recruitment and placement services and business services. Smaller offices must provide the same services, but without the use of teams.

All services are provided through facilitated self-help and workshops. All offices have computers with Internet access. H.I.R.E. contains all of the USDOL tools, including interest inventories, work importance profiler, career explorer and skills matching. The skills development area at centers includes telephone, fax, and copier for customer job search use, as well as books, pamphlets, newspapers and videotapes to enhance an individual's job search. Membership staff triages customers to determine the appropriate mix of services: Employment Express, Career Advancement, or Career Development. Once the membership team has completed the membership process, customers are sent to the skills development team to develop an approach for employment skill development. The goal is for all customers to receive value-added services within 15 minutes of entering a center and have tangible results from all visits to the centers. Customers have access to services provided by all mandatory partners.

All unemployment insurance claimants must be registered and receive job search assistance. Special emphasis is placed on those claimants most likely to exhaust their benefits. Re-employment Services offered to claimants focuses on better integration and connection between the UI claimant and BCSC services. Early connectivity between the claimant and employment and training opportunities yields rapid re-employment and a reduction in claim duration.

Services mandated by the Jobs for Veterans Act are required. BCSCs must be accessible to all individuals. Beyond the mandatory components, BCSCs are urged to provide workshops on specific job search issues to all customers. Outreach to specific populations, such as ex-offenders and persons with disabilities, are being implemented. Centers work with the probation and parole system to assist ex-offenders.

In 2010, the OWD Apprenticeship Division developed the first LWC statewide policy (policy number LWIA 05-10) regarding apprenticeship, titled WIA Certification and Implementation Process for Registered Apprenticeship Programs as Eligible Training Program Providers. It specifies how registered apprenticeship programs on the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) are eligible to receive WIA funding. It was approved and issued by OWD in late 2010 and presented at the January 2011 quarterly OWD statewide meeting to WIB leadership. In addition, the Apprenticeship state law and administrative rules have been revised to attain compliance with recent changes in federal regulations 29 CFR Part 29. The amendments to the law (Louisiana R.S. 23:381-392) were made official in August 2010 by Governor Jindal. The substantial modifications

to the administrative rules have also been made and are currently moving through the Louisiana Division of Administration's process for promulgating new or amended rules. The revised rules were modified to require the integration of apprenticeship programs with BCSCs.

LWC's Scorecard staff has gone to great lengths to ensure that the statewide ETPL contains a broad array of apprenticeship programs. Ongoing discussions have taken place with apprenticeship program sponsors to encourage new and continued partnerships with their local BCSCs, despite continuing funding challenges. The Apprenticeship Division conducts workshops and webinars to communicate changes in the ETPL and provides ongoing technical assistance to program sponsors who need assistance with the application procedures in LAVOS.

**4. How the local area will support and coordinate with WIA state rapid response activities to dislocated workers.**

The Rapid Response delivery system coordinates services with an employer and employee to quickly maximize efforts to avert a planned layoff and/or minimize disruption for individuals and communities experiencing dislocation events. The LWIA 71 will operate under these guiding principles:

- Timeliness
- Leverage Resources
- Convenience
- Seamless Service Delivery
- Customer Choice
- Active Promotion
- Layoff Aversion
- Consistent and Accurate Information
- Results Driven

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Unit is integrated with the Rapid Response Unit. LWC has moved delivery of the TAA program to the LWIA's with state oversight.

LWIA 71 and LWIA 70 staff participate in Rapid Response orientations in order to allow certified trade-impacted workers to receive seamless employment transition services through the same delivery system. All TAA funded participants are being co-enrolled in the Dislocated Worker program.

This integration provides greater flexibility and maximizes limited resources to provide efficient services to the job seekers, displaced workers, and the employer community.

Once the LWIA gets word that a company is laying off, and verifies it, they communicate with the company by fax, email, or face-to-face meeting to determine their exact needs. Then an orientation meeting with the employees is set up. Afterwards, customized workshops are set up. Lastly, workforce transition centers are set up if needed. Then follow-up and tracking are provided.

The Rapid Response Unit quickly and efficiently gathers the appropriate state and local resources and works the employer/management to provide a package of services and activities that will help the affected workers get and keep subsequent jobs. These services range from assessment to career exploration to resume preparation to job search to educational opportunities. The breadth of services for dislocated workers can be categorized along the following continuum:

1. Workers with transferable skills and find job with minimal services;
2. Worker only needs reemployment services such as resume prep and job search assistances; and
3. Worker needs reemployment and training to get a job

Rapid Response is administered through OWD, which provides statewide program oversight and technical assistance. Rapid Response activities are decentralized regionally to better meet local and regional needs. Rapid Response coordinators are housed within most regions of the state to lead and manage activities, as well as to promote customized responses to businesses and workers within their regions.

The state has a partially integrated MIS system to capture data on RR, TAA and NEG dislocated worker services. Business services are tiled manually through an access database. Rapid Response funds are contracted to the local workforce investment boards for the provisions of additional assistance during multiple or massive layoffs. An application is made for a National Emergency Grant during Rapid Response activities if local funds cannot support the capacity of the dislocation.

The TAA program is an integral part of Rapid Response and is fully integrated with WIA. In October 2007, the state incorporated a trade integration policy, which decentralized trade operations to local WIB. The policy contains co-enrollment guidance. All trade-impacted workers initially receive services through Rapid Response intervention and are transitioned to their local career centers to continue accessing services. Administration and oversight is provided through the Rapid Response/Trade Unit, which is housed within OWD. In order to be in compliance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter, No. 1-10, each region adopted an operational plan that went into effect October 1, 2010. As required by TEGE NO.1-10, only state merit staff make now decisions regarding TAA benefits so as to avoid any adverse reactions for the participants.

**5. Common data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities present in One-Stop Career Centers. (WIA Section 112(b)(8).)**

LWC has an integrated Internet-based management information system which includes common intake, case management and data tracking components to meet the reporting requirements of and provide a single interface for WIA Title I, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, Business Services, TAA, Rapid Response, MSFW, and One-Stop system requirements. The system provides the LWIB with the tools it needs to deliver WIA services through an income growth model, integrating workforce information, transferable skill sets, and career paths into the case management system. With data from other One-Stop partners, LWC data provides seamless information sharing and data exchange and increased customer service. This connectivity forms the basis for the development of enhanced interagency data exchange.

**6. Local performance accountability system developed for workforce investment activities to be carried out through the LWIA workforce investment system.**

**(WIA Sections 111(d)(2), (d)(6)-(8), 112(b)(3), 136; W-P Section 15; 20 CFR 666.205(f)-(h), 661.220(c), and 20 CFR part 666.)**

This integrated intake system and resulting tracking system provides LWC other agency funded One-Stop partners and local entities, the WIC, and most importantly, the local workforce board with the data necessary to locally operate and coordinate programs effectively. From this data, the LWIA is able to evaluate how its systems are functioning, which helps the local boards make programmatic and funding decision. The local workforce board continues to be involved in the development of the MIS system. The LWIA 71 is fully prepared to provide USDOL with any data it requires.

Helping Individuals Reach Employment (H.I.R.E.) (LAVOS) is a comprehensive data collection and management operating system that all BCSCs use to enter participant and employer data, case notes, activities, assessments, exits, and follow-ups. It contains online, real-time case management reports, providing local staff with demographic, activities, soft exit, youth goals, and case management information. The system also provides predictive performance reports based on staff entered data as well as the quarterly and annual WIA reports and 9002 and veteran reports based on wage record data. The predictive reports the LWIA to determine performance and implement corrective action in a timely manner without having to wait for wage record data. The system can track services provided by partner agencies. The system can also track services provided to businesses by all partners to prevent duplication. This information includes contacts, services, industries, occupations, skill requirements, and company size.

**7. Local strategies for collecting and using other information to measure the progress on local performance measures. (WIA Section 136(f)(2), 20 CFR 666.150**

Each LWIA can access their own WIA quarterly report that incorporates Louisiana wage records and data from the Wage Record Interchange System. In addition, MIS staff assigned to the local area continually review local reports and work with the program advisors to provide technical assistance. At the state level, a data extract is run through the Mathematica Data Validation software to eliminate errors and produce the required federal reports. The State continues to provide training and technical assistance to WIA, Wagner-Peyser, veteran and TAA staff on performance management.

**C. Services to Employers:**

**In Louisiana's Demand Driven Workforce Investment Plan Office of Workforce Development(OWD) mission is to put people to work. This is accomplished by continuously improving our demand-driven system by quickly responding to the immediate and long-term need of employers. The Local Operational Plan must describe how the service delivery. system will coordinate with the different programs, to meet the needs of business customers in order, to find qualified skill workers. (i.e. hiring plans, training needs, and skill development). Also, describe how the LWIAs will use program funds to expand the participation of business in the statewide workforce investment system.**

For the business community, regional business sector initiatives will coordinate services regionally for employers and provide them with a single point of contact to the employment and training system. Each center will have dedicated staff providing services to businesses. The business services teams will 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.

An integrated employer account system, accessible by all local partner entities through LAVOS, will provide a comprehensive database of employers' needs. This will allow the system to build a portfolio of employer services that match business needs. This system will also assist the LWIBs in working with training providers to ensure that skills training, workplace literacy skills training and employability enhancements provided to job seekers meet employer requirements.

Wagner-Peyser traditional employer relations programs have been integrated into the LWIA business sector teams using business teams assigned to the local Business and Career Solutions Centers, thus broadening their employer contact capabilities. Use of non-traditional methods to generate quicker turnaround and broader exposure for high-demand occupations include unfiltered job openings, employers listing job openings directly on the Internet and exposure and access

to these job openings in non-traditional locations, such as community-based and faith-based organizations, etc. All partner agency staff will share job information that will provide employers with access to a broader range of possible employees.

Administration of the WOTC program will be streamlined by localizing and automating the methods of document input in order to make integrated intake process. WOTC will be a part of the portfolio used by the business sector teams, which will broaden exposure in the business community.

The Customized Workforce Solution concept was developed to address the workforce challenges of large employers, industry sectors, regions, and agencies across the state through the development of detailed workforce plans, leveraging the various resources available through the LWC, LED and other agencies as necessary. Each plan will identify the specific challenges and include a detailed action plan, establishing stakeholder responsibilities, timelines for execution, and the anticipated outcome. The goal is to draw from its full complement of available resources in the area of employee recruitment, training, and funding availability to best serve the dynamic needs of business and industry in Louisiana.

**D. Services to Local Target Populations:**

The Local Operational Plan must describe how all the Business and Career Solutions Center (BCSC) programs will work together to ensure that customers who need a broad range of services receive them. This is an opportunity for the LWIAs to describe how BCSC services will address more specific needs of targeted sub-populations identified in the economic analysis. The Local Operational Plan must describe how the local will serve: re-employment, training needs of unemployment compensation claimants; the long-term unemployed; the under-employed; dislocated workers (including trade-impacted dislocated workers and displaced homemakers); low-income individuals (including recipients of public assistance); migrant and seasonal farmworkers; veterans (priority of service); individuals with limited English proficiency; homeless Individuals; ex-offenders; older workers; individuals training for nontraditional employment; individuals with multiple challenges to employment; employment and training needs of individuals with disabilities. The discussion must include the LWIA's long-term strategy to improve services to and employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, Including plans for the promotion and development of employment opportunities, job counseling.

Special emphasis is placed on serving the needs of special applicant groups. LMI provides census information to the LWIB on the population figures for these groups. The BCSCs, in coordination with the system partners, will 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. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff are maximized to provide all-inclusive case management services to veterans. To the extent feasible, services will be given to migrant seasonal farmworkers. Faith-based and community-based organizations are involved in the process,

both as a provider of services and as a skills resource for special applicant groups.

The following populations with special needs have been identified:

- Ex-offenders
- Disabled Individuals
- Displaced Homemakers
- Low-Income Individuals (recipients receiving public assistance)
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- Individuals Training for Nontraditional Employment
- Veterans
- Individuals with Multiple Barriers to Employment
- Homeless
- Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

The employment and training needs of all job seekers will be met through the provision of core, intensive and training services accessible through the BCSC system. It is the policy of LWIA 71 to prohibit all forms of unlawful discrimination in employment and in the delivery, provision of and access to any LWIA service, program, resource, or opportunity. To ensure that special populations are appropriately served and that non-traditional career opportunities are presented. The LWIB will provide professional development training to all front-line personnel. The LWIB include service providers and community-based organizations that serve special populations on the local board, or its groups and subcommittees.

The LWIB will 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 will be incorporated into the local plan. The Adult priority of service policy will provide priority to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals. The local plan will 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.

The 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 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.

One partner of the BCSCs that works very closely with the low-income population is the Community Action Network (CAN). The CAN which is made up of private non-profit and public agencies assist with employable skills and education as well as provide supportive services (i.e., child care, transportation, nutrition, emergency services, health care, income management, medical assistance, energy and weatherization services, etc.) to remove obstacles from individuals moving toward self-sufficiency. In an effort to mobilize resources, collaboration is important to fill identified gaps in services that cannot be met with on-site programs and/or activities. The Community Action Agencies provide the needed connections to help link low-income individuals to the BCSCs through information and referral.

Along with pre-employment readiness training in job-seeking skills, job matching services, job training and placement, etc. to assist individuals with gaining or maintaining employment and provide youth with work experience to improve employment skills and provide additional funds coming into the household. In collaboration with the LWIB, the Community Action Agencies sit on the board of the LWIA, providing insight into the need of the low-income population.

- **Serve the employment and training needs of individuals with disabilities.**

WIA funded services for persons with disabilities are coordinated with other Business and Career Solutions Center partners, especially Vocational Rehabilitation. WIA services are available to all persons, including persons with disabilities. All Business and Career Solutions Centers will be 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, LWIA 71 is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to all programs, services, and facilities.

Each Business and Career Solutions Center will continue 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 Center for services.

LWIA 71 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 Business and Career Solutions Center 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 to all individuals, including those individuals with disabilities.

## **1. Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS).**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services' mission is to assist persons with disabilities in their desire to obtain or maintain employment and/or to achieve independence in their communities by providing rehabilitation services and working cooperatively with business and other community resources.

## **2. Vocational Rehabilitation**

As a mandated partner in the Workforce Investment Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is instrumental in meeting the workforce needs of individuals with disabilities in the City of Shreveport. The purpose of the VR Program is, in part, "to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society". The VR Program operates a comprehensive program to assess, plan, develop, and provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, so that such individuals may prepare for and engage in gainful employment." Other programs under LRS are as follow:

- Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program
- Independent Living Part B
- Independent Living for Older Individuals who are Blind
- Integration of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services into Workforce Commission.

The integration of LRS into the Louisiana Workforce Commission resulted in the placement of LRS under the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), thereby creating better outcomes for Louisiana's citizens with disabilities and enhancing service delivery in the local area such as skills development and job placement to increase their likelihood of financial independence. This structural alignment supports the shared goal of putting people to work.

LRS is governed by Title 4 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and joined the other WIA programs and several state-funded programs in the City of Shreveport which is appropriate since the intent of WIA is "to consolidate, coordinate, improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs". Fully integrating LRS with these workforce programs will produce better results for Louisianans with disabilities.

LRS continues to collaborate with LWIA 71 in identifying effective ways to integrate services in BCSCs. LRS is represented on the LWIB and attends meetings as scheduled. The Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) established with the WIB is update annually. LRS continues to pay expenses to the local centers for participation, as per the local cost allocation plans.

Long-range goals are to fully integrate LRS field staff members into the BCSCs. As leases expire for current LRS facilities, options for space within the BCSCs are explored for potential co-location of staff. Currently, LRS counselors are assigned to each BCSC to take referrals and applications for those individuals with disabilities who wish to apply for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. These counselors also provide information and cross-training to BCSC staff concerning the VR program in addition, LRS consumers who are determined eligible but placed on a waiting list due to budget restrictions, are referred to the local BCSCs for assistance in preparing for and obtaining employment.

To improve knowledge regarding assistive technology and address other accessibility issues, LRS' Program Coordinator for Rehabilitation Technology continues to provide consultation to the BCSCs. LRS and other agencies within the City of Shreveport are committed to the success of the BCSCs and continue to work collaboratively to serve individuals with disabilities.

### **3. Veteran's Program**

In recognizing the current needs of military veterans living in or returning to Northwest Louisiana, an integrated delivery system has been established through the BCSCs in the City of Shreveport. Any reference to "veteran" in the context of this plan also means "other eligible persons", "eligible spouses", or "covered persons" as defined by regulation. In accordance with 38 USC, § 4103A and § 4104 full-time DVOP specialists and LVER staff to ensure Veterans receive quality employment and training services.

LWIA 71 recognizes the Jobs for Veterans Act mandate for priority of service for veterans in all USDOL funded programs operated at BCSCs. The WIB will develop local procedures to identify veterans and provide priority of service across the full spectrum of operations (policy OWD 2-2).

LWIA 71 seeks to strike a balance between the roles of the DVOP specialist, the LVER, and other BCSC staff; fully integrating JVSG funded staff into the BCSC system, while retaining their distinct function by locating staff domicile based on demand-driven metrics, defining specific outreach requirements, and monitoring production. As a result, DVOP specialists and LVER staff members are integrated into the overall operation of the BCSC where they are domiciled.

This allows the local area to experience the added benefit of a specialized cadre of staff to assist Veterans to achieve improved employment outcomes, while remaining in compliance with statutory priorities for service delivery by emphasizing that the majority of a JVSG funded staff effort is focused on the primary role of DVOP specialists providing intensive services to targeted Veterans and LVER staff providing employer outreach and job development services.

The role of the LVER/DVOP staff locally is to contact the veteran population, as well as other Business and Career Solutions Center staff throughout the City of Shreveport. DVOP and LVER staff is available to work with the Business and Career Solutions Center job developers, program advisors, 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. DVOP and LVER roles and duties have been amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002, implementing a clearer distinction between their duties. Additionally, priority of service for veterans was extended to all Workforce Investment Area offices that are funded by USDOL. The DVOP/LVER is directly involved with other Business and Career Solutions Center staff to offer direct services, and coordinate services to veterans. They are available to assist, advise, inform, and train WIANVP Business and Career Solutions Center staff, and fully network with all Business and Career Solutions Center partners, employers, and community providers. While DVOPs are primarily involved with staff-assisted intensive services, including case management, to meet the needs of economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans with barriers to employment, the LVERs conduct outreach to employers to develop jobs or training opportunities for veterans, as well as coordinate with the Business and Career Solutions Center partners to assist, facilitate, or act directly to serve the needs of veterans. The LVER is an advocate for veterans, by enhancing employer knowledge and recognition of the skills and abilities of military veterans, and conducts seminars and networking events with employer organizations and trade associations.

DVOP specialists the flexibility to cover more than one location by being either "physically present" on a scheduled or as needed basis to provide intensive services to veterans, or "electronically present" to guide and advise veterans and other staff in the provision of intensive services to veterans with "barriers to employment".

Similarly, LVER staff members are available to "job ready" veterans and are within functional range of employers allowing them to conduct employer outreach activities throughout their

assigned area for job development activities, and to provide employment services to Job Ready Veterans.

Veteran applicants may be introduced into the system from several sources; application for UI benefits, self-service registration, participation in Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Workshops, referral from supportive services, Veterans Affairs(VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment(VR&E), Veterans Retraining Assistance Program(VRAP), DOL website, ReaLifelines, or other sources, and are identified separately in the LAVOS database such that they may be targeted for priority service, special programs, initiatives, electronic job referrals, outreach, and case management. The LAVOS system also provides data used to track Performance Measures and determine performance outcomes, and reporting data for ETA 9002 and VETS 200 reports.

DVOP specialists and LVER staff run regular registration reports from LAVOS and perform targeted outreach and assessment to veterans who approach services electronically rather than in person, determining what services may be necessary and directing the veteran to their nearest BCSC for service.

BCSCs have procedures in place where the Membership team identifies "walk-in" veterans as early as possible in the registration process. The Skills team, through the course of processing the veteran determines existing barriers to employment, then refers those veterans to the nearest DVOP specialist (may be domiciled at another location) for evaluation and service

LWIA 71 recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the DVOP specialist are defined at 38 USC, § 4103A, and further refined in Veteran's Program Letter (VPL) 07-10, focusing the majority of their effort on meeting the needs of Veterans who are unable to reach their employment goals without intensive services.

LWIA 71 targets certain veteran categories as most in need of specialized services. Service-connected disabled Veterans, Veterans who have completed training or education under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), VR&E program, returning wounded or injured service members, potential applicants for, and completers of, the VRAP, Post 9/11, "Gold Card Initiative" veterans, and ReaLifelines participants.

The roles and responsibilities of LVER staff are defined at 38 USC, § 4104, and further refined in Veteran's Program Letter (VPL) 07-10. LVER staff provide employment, training, and placement services for veterans and outreach to employers.

LVER staff act as an advocate for veterans with business, industry, and other community-based organizations.

LVER staff focuses on their primary role of employer outreach, conducting employer seminars, job search workshops, and establishing job search groups. LVER staff shall also facilitate employment, training, and placement services (including individualized job development) to job ready veterans who have received intensive services from a DVOP specialist. LVER staff conducts outreach and job development throughout their area of responsibility.

A reporting system is in place that ensures intensive services, case management, and outreach to veterans and employers are properly captured and reported, regarding: Initial contact and assessment of veterans registered in Wagner-Peyser, Job Orders reviewed for Qualified Veteran Candidate Searches, Customer Service Survey results, Employer and Supportive Agency Contacts, and veterans provided intensive services, enrolled in case management and veterans exiting the program, with details on exit outcomes.

LWIA 71 maintains a goal to increase the number of Veterans receiving intensive services from a DVOP specialist with a corresponding increase of the number of Veterans entering employment after receipt of intensive services; and an increase in the numbers of Veterans receiving individualized job development services with a corresponding increase in the number of Veterans entering employment and retaining employment, after receipt of those services.

#### **4. Re-Employment and Unemployed**

LWC has created a well-integrated statewide Re-employment Services Initiative connecting UI services with center services through three service points: Re-employment Services, Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) and Emergency Unemployment Compensation Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment (EUC REA).

Re-employment services (RES) focuses on connecting UI claimants with re-employment and training services offered through the BCSC system. RES offered to claimants, in accordance with the Wagner-Peyser Act, will utilize assessment as part of the core services in the BCSC 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, BCSC staff conduct job development activities. Based on assessment results, claimants receive intensive placement services by the recruitment and placement team. Intensive group activities, including orientations and

workshops are an integral part of the service mix for worker profiling and re-employment services.

Along with RES, Louisiana was awarded a Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) grant in May 2010 to provide services in four pilot areas within the state. The purpose of this pilot program was to focus on better integration and connection between UI services and BCSC services. The REA program pro-actively integrates RES and other WIA-funded services geared towards rapid re-employment and reduction in claim duration. The state benefits by having a reduction in erroneous overpayments as well as a reduction in the depletion of the Louisiana Trust Fund. From the success of this pilot program, Louisiana was awarded funding in 2011 to continue services in the selected pilot area and funding in 2012 to implement the REA program statewide.

Claimants, selected through the state's profiling system, based upon defined variables and who are most likely to exhaust their benefits, participate in the statewide REA program within LWIA 71.

Re-employment and eligibility assessments are provided to UI claimants who have been profiled through the state's statistical profiling model. These claimants receive one-on-one services for eligibility review and the development of an individual re-employment plan informing and referring claimants to the full array of services available at local BCSCs. The RES and REA programs ensure that UI services delivered through BCSC system are well integrated with other services offered.

Louisiana is actively participating in the federal mandated Emergency Unemployment Compensation Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment program (EUC REA) enacted in March 2012. Job seekers filing emergency UI claims are selected to participate in REA services similar to the currently implemented REA program. Claimants filing in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 are required to participate.

LWC is currently developing a comprehensive plan that will address the process from the point a claimant files for benefits up to and including the point of exhaustion Throughout the claimant's duration of benefits, the full array of services available through the BCSCs are offered. Claimants will have the accessibility of re-employment services through various entry points including these three programs, Re-employment Services (RES) and Re-employment and Eligibility Accessibility (REA), and Emergency Compensation Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment (EUC REA).

Through services available in the BCSCs, the claimant is referred to appropriate group and one-on-one orientations, and job search workshops, and supportive services as needed.

Wagner-Peyser continues to provide a fully integrated work test program on all unemployment insurance claimants, linking claimant applicants to employers' job orders, referring qualified applicants to appropriate openings whenever possible. Wagner-Peyser will report work test failures to the unemployment insurance division within 24 hours.

Unemployment Insurance call center staff and REA and EUC REA field staff provide an eligibility review process that meets the requirements under the unemployment insurance law.

## **5. Persons with limited English Proficiency**

LWIA 71 will insure compliance with all Federal and State regulations, and upon request, each office offers Language Line Services who can assist with service delivery for job seekers of limited English proficiency.

LWIA 71 continues to insure all materials and delivery methods are appropriate to diverse cultures, languages, and education. This program accommodation includes, as appropriate upon request, the provision of interpreters, through Language Line Services, for individuals with hearing impairments who require such assistance in order to participate in a Business and Career Solutions Center program, use of Braille and large print material, and enlarged computer screens for individuals with visual disabilities, and earphones with enhanced sound for individuals with hearing disabilities. LWIA 71's EO Coordinator will provide technical assistance to the Business and Career Solutions Centers if necessary and monitor the system for compliance.

## **6. Migrant and seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWS)**

LWIA 71 will continue to comply with the requirements of 20 CFR 653, Subpart B, Service to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs). LWIA 71 will continue to make use of all available resources to accomplish the task of providing information and services to MSFWs. LWIA 71 is not designated as a significant MSFWs area. We will continue to make sufficient penetration into the farm workers' community so that as large a number of MSFWs as possible are made aware of the full range of services available to them, through our area's network of Business and Career Solutions Centers, including job referrals, counseling, testing, and training referrals. These services are readily available through the Business and Career Solutions Centers or LAVOS. In order to promote and facilitate the provision of services to MSFWs, LWIA

71 through the Business and Career Solutions Centers will coordinate the services of Business and Career Solutions Centers and partners, community-based organizations, the state MSFWs contracts, MSFWs groups, state cooperative extension service, and county agents to do the following:

1. Give local presentations on BCSC services, including the LWC Growing Green job and career portal, accessible online and through smart phones;
2. Set up and utilize an integrated referral system to provide maximum services to MSFWs;
3. Encourage employers to utilize the Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS);
4. Provide required employer posters and other handouts in the English language and in Spanish;
5. Meet on a regular basis to exchange information, discuss problems, and coordinate efforts;
6. Offer to distribute their information pamphlets during outreach contacts and provide materials for them to distribute to MSFWs;
7. Offer services that are relative to their needs; and
8. Advise them of all employment changes affecting their community.

LWC has partnered with Motivation, Education and Training (MET) to assist Louisiana in providing increased services to MSFWs and farm worker employers. Two MET offices are co-located in BCSCs One MET office manager is a WIB member.

The Monitor Advocate will work with LWC administrative and local office staff on issues of concern (compliance with indicators, reviving local interest, proper documentation of services, etc ) This technical assistance is provided to all BCSC staff as needed.

The Monitor Advocate will provide training and follow-up on the outreach and provision of services to MSFWs to BCSC staff throughout the state. The staff will be encouraged to query clients to better identify MSFWs and record them in the Louisiana Virtual One-Stop System (LAVOS). Staff will provide the full array of BCSC services, including the labor exchange system, of which the ARS is a part. The labor exchange system provides job openings in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment. Other services, such as training or supportive services, provide a pathway for MSFWs to transition to higher wage jobs & permanent year round employment in non-agricultural work.

All complaints from MSFWs alleging violations of employment-related standards and laws shall be taken in writing by the State agency and referred to the Monitor Advocate for timely resolution. The Monitor Advocate will make referrals as appropriate or cooperate with the USDOL Wage & Hour Division or other agencies and organizations that may play a role in resolving complaints.

## **7. Youth**

LWIA 71 follows LWC's strategy for providing comprehensive integrated services to eligible youth; therefore, that policy is included in this Regional Plan and described below.

Through local workforce boards and youth councils, programs are being integrated and coordinated to both provide youth with the resources and skills necessary to succeed in the local area's economy and assist in closing the poverty gap in LWIA 71. The system will broaden and enhance youth connections to post-secondary education opportunities, leadership development activities, mentoring training, community service, and other community resources. LWC is working with juvenile justice to develop a system to link incarcerated youth being paroled back to their local area with WIA youth programs.

As the youth are connected to their parole officer, they will register in LAVOS and be linked to a supportive adult in the Business and Career Solutions Center to help them determine if employment and/or training/education is appropriate. This will assist them in linking career planning and goal setting as part of their reattachment process. LWC has implemented a Youth Portal on its website 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 Center staff are working to identify youth 18-24 who apply for unemployment insurance as potential WIA participants and provide them with linkages to high-demand/growth occupations and assist them in building career plans that provide training and entry to jobs with career ladders.

The vision is to create a future for LWIA 71's youth by creating a system that provides the right interventions at the right time, ensuring the regions acquire the necessary skills for success in education and employment, and businesses gain a skilled workforce. The guiding principles/ goals of this vision are:

**a. A System Dedicated to the Success of Young People**

All young people will have access to a wide range of "youth-friendly" services and activities which provide "just-in-time" service interventions, training, and supports which guarantee successful transition into adulthood. Youth will have positive interactions with peers and knowledgeable, caring adults in success-oriented environments which foster holistic educational, leadership and employment skills development.

**b. A System Designed by Young People**

Young people are active partners in the design of the system and feel a keen sense of ownership in their community. Youth are empowered to take leadership roles in defining the full range of services that are responsive to both their needs and wants.

**c. A System that Includes an Emphasis on Out-of-School Youth**

For those young people who have dropped out-of-school or completed high school but lack employability skills, we will assist them in establishing a career path to further education and a rapid attachment to work. The system will continue to assist youth build transferable skills through post employment strategies not only on their first job, but also their second job and beyond, including service interventions that assist young people attain, retain, and advance to better jobs. The system will design interventions that provide employability and skills training to succeed at each step of a young person's career development.

**d. A System that is Locally Driven**

To transform our current system, we will develop progressive Programming strategies within each of the defined workforce investment areas. A Proactive Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council will spearhead the governance of the system by taking a clear, no-nonsense approach to identifying and addressing youth issues. These governing bodies will oversee the system by convening partners and advocating strong youth policy and quality programming practices.

**e. A System of Committed Partners**

No single agency or system partner can single-handedly achieve our vision. It will require all youth-oriented programs and providers to rally together in support of our vision. All partners must come to the table with their expertise in youth programming, putting aside individual interests. We must develop strong linkages among partners to optimize human and financial resources, create a continuum of service interventions, and leverage funds to ensure a variety of educational, developmental, and employment-related activities and service interventions are accessible to all youth.

**f. A System Responsive to Business Needs**

In order for our system to lead to quality employment outcomes, local business participation in the design and delivery of programming activities is essential. Business can greatly benefit the system by articulating the skills young people need for success in the work world, share with education and training providers how these skills are used in real work situations, and help us understand the opportunities available to first time job seekers and the skill needed for next jobs as young people develop their individual career paths.

**g. A System Built on Promising Practices**

Louisiana has invested a great deal in changing the way we do business as it relates to youth education and development. Many innovative designs and practices have proven successful from education reform efforts to Tech Prep to employment and training activities. Our goal now is to bring together all of the quality practices of Louisiana's workforce investment system as well as build on lessons learned from other states and communities.

**h. A System Committed to Continuous Improvement**

The needs of young people and the needs of business are constantly moving targets. What we develop as a system today will not be the system of tomorrow.

Partners in the system must have commitment to collecting feedback from its customer groups (young people and business), using customer feedback to make modifications to program design and service interventions, and responding to economic and environmental variables. We must start with the best of what we know about youth development today and make it even better for the future.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission's youth and young adult's State's Plan effectively integrates three essential themes that will position the local area well:

- **Positive Goals.** The state youth and young adult plan looks above and beyond traditional deficit-focused visions (e.g., preventing teen pregnancy; preventing gang violence; preventing drug use) toward an affirming and engaging vision: to "maximize the potential of each of our state's youth.")
- **Investment in Youth and Involvement by Youth.** Advocacy efforts often focus either on providing more resources to youth, or increasing the involvement of youth. The state youth and young adult's plan will effectively incorporate both critical themes, advocating for increasing both investments in youth and young adults and involvement by youth and youth adults.
- **An Overarching Policy Framework.** Across the country, states are working to increase the coherence and effectiveness of their youth policies. All states have myriad programs, policies and initiatives devoted to changing outcomes for young people; many are now working to develop an overarching "youth policy" that serves as a lens or framework used to coordinate and align these various efforts. This work is not easy and there are important historic reasons why youth policies have not been viewed in a comprehensive fashion through a single lens. Lack of clarity can help protect turf and obscure gaps and overlaps in services and resources. It allows policy makers and advocates taking on any one piece, no matter how small, and declaring victory. During these times of budget crunches, we are looking to make our investments more strategically. And more often than not, when it comes to investments in young people, making more strategic investments means moving from the standard disjointed array of youth and young adult policies toward a more aligned and better coordinated approach based on an overarching plan. The integration of services between agencies will eliminate the duplication of services.

## 8. Youth Eligibility Criterion

Each local workforce board will determine which youth, age 14-21, located in their area require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment and determine what the barriers to success are. They will use this information to determine a locally defined barrier. This local barrier will be defined in each local WIA plan as their nine youth eligibility criterion and will be in addition to those defined in section

101(13)(C) which includes deficiency in basic literacy skills; school dropout; homeless, runaway, or a foster child; pregnant or a parent; or an offender. Each local WIB will be required to include documentation supporting their decision.

Louisiana continues to build a system to provide comprehensive services to eligible youth who are recognized as having significant barriers to employment especially out of school youth, school dropouts, and other youth facing serious barriers to employment. The Youth Councils include representatives with expertise in serving these population groups. As the LWIBs design programs for youth they are encouraged to maximize resources dedicated to meeting the needs of youth with significant barriers to employment, including linking to and coordinating with current programs in their area addressing these population groups. To meet the accessibility needs of youth with disabilities who access the Career Solutions centers for services, LWC is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to all programs, services and facilities.

Louisiana's youth vision is predicated on providing "just in time" service interventions, training, and supportive services. The strategy is to provide youth with positive interactions with knowledgeable, caring adults in success-oriented environments which foster holistic educational, leadership, and employment skill development. LWC is working with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Shared Youth Vision workgroup on youth, local workforce boards, youth councils, and community-based organizations to continue development of the systems needed to provide these comprehensive services to eligible youth, including coordination with Job Corps and other youth programs within each local workforce investment area. TANF and vocational rehabilitation are involved in the development of these service strategies to ensure that youth with special needs, including those who are pregnant, parenting, have disabilities or other barriers to employment are included in the comprehensive service strategy.

LWC remains committed to the funding of the Job Challenge program that is part of the Youth Challenge program operated by the National Guard that provides talent development training in demand occupations for at-risk youth. This program provides work experience and work readiness skills in a structured residential environment coupled with long-term follow-up and one-on-one mentoring for enrolled participants. WIA funds initiatives utilizing the Jobs for Americas Graduates (JAG) model for both in-school and out-of-school youth. LWC is working with partner agencies to continue to identify additional programs to assist dropouts and out of school youth. The Business and Career Solutions system will be linked to the youth service system to ensure a seamless delivery system. Core services including training provider information and job listings will be available to youth.

Each participant is provided with information on the full array of appropriate services available through the Business and Career Solutions system and will receive an objective assessment (WorkKeys) of academic and occupational skill levels, service needs, and will develop an individual service strategy that tailors services to effectively meet each youth's specific needs. Any youth served under WIA will receive some form of follow-up services for at least twelve months. Local programs will determine the specific mix of services for each youth based on each participant's objective assessment and service strategy. The mix of activities for each youth will be tied to their service need and maturity level. Programs will emphasize the connections between school and work as well as linkages to work activities as appropriate. Expenditures for out-of-school youth must be a minimum of 50% of total youth expenditures. Youth aged 18 and over may be co-enrolled in both adult and youth programs.

Programs are designed to meet the individual needs of each youth. The special needs or barriers to employment of youth, including pregnant or parenting youth and disabled youth will be identified during the objective assessment and service strategy design. These youth may be jointly case managed with other appropriate One-Stop partners or community based organizations. Communication and collaboration between the various funding sources identified in the service strategy are critical for a successful outcome. This is a critical function of the local WIBs and youth councils.

Coordination with all entities serving youth, including foster care, education, and TANF assistance, occurs on many levels. Such coordination may include but not be limited to: membership on the youth council or local WIB, sharing documentation for eligibility determination, sharing assessment and case management notes on joint clients; joint service provision and joint technical assistance sessions and training for staff.

Coordination occurs among WIA youth programs, Job Corp programs operating in the state, apprenticeship programs, and other youth programs operated through community and faith based organizations. Such coordination may include joint marketing to youth for all programs, building upon the assessment results of one program rather than doing an entirely new assessment, enrollment into all programs that will assist the youth, any of the programs referring the youth to entities that may assist the youth with support services, placement credit toward performance standards for all programs in which the youth is enrolled and follow-up conducted to ensure the youth stays employed.

## 9. Youth Program Design

LWC has developed strategies to implement various youth program designs. LWC will continue working with the local workforce boards, the State Workforce Commission, Youth Councils, and youth providers to further develop guidelines, coordination strategies, and specific guidance. Louisiana is committed to a fully integrated system of education, training, skill development and employment opportunities for all youth. This commitment is based on its vision of creating a statewide system that provides that right intervention at the right time, ensuring youth acquire the necessary skills for success in education and employment, and businesses gain a skilled workforce. The State Plan addresses the overall, comprehensive strategies for youth.

### Preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities

The State is emphasizing articulation across program and funding streams, summer and year-round. WIA Title I youth programs will be strongly coordinated with the following statewide initiative to create a viable youth system:

Career Majors — a primary goal for education in Louisiana is to provide our students with opportunities to develop skills that will prepare them to meet the demands of a global economy. Thus, the Career Options Law (Act 1124) was passed in 1997 by the Louisiana legislature. The law acknowledges career awareness must begin early in a student's education and stipulates that the guidance process will include grades 6-8. . The law mandates the implementation of Five-year Education Plans for all high school students. Students throughout the state complete their five year plan using the LA ePortal System. This law serves as the foundation for career preparation and a jump start to postsecondary educational opportunity.

The legislation parallels the Southern Regional Education Board's *High Schools That Work* initiative key practices, stipulating the following:

- Having students complete a challenging program of study with an upgraded academic core and a major
- Involving each student and his/her parent in a career guidance and individualized advisement aimed at completion of an accelerated program of study with a career major

TOPS — to further enhance the Career Options programs, TOPS (Tuition Opportunity Program for Students) offers scholastic aid for Louisiana's graduates who plan to attend post-secondary institutions within the state, providing the link to carry them into the fifth year of their plan.

Perkins III — Tech Prep and Secondary — One of the major goals Perkins III — Tech Prep is to strengthen articulation between secondary and post-secondary education, further expanding opportunities for youth. Louisiana made the decision to merge its Tech Prep funding into the Basic Grant program. This merger of funds is intended as an opportunity to strengthen the connection of secondary and postsecondary CTE programs, particularly with implementation of Louisiana Career Pathways.

Under the new arrangement, there will be an intensive focus on outreach activities and recruitment. To coordinate these outreach and recruitment activities, the State has designated College and Career Transition Coordinators located around the State. The role of the College and Career Transition Coordinator will be to work with professional staff from the colleges and school districts, providing knowledge and resources, in order to enhance the knowledge of students, parents, teachers and administrators about CTE opportunities available to secondary students at the postsecondary level. Other focus areas will include: dual enrollment, professional development, career awareness, and collaboration and communication.

In cooperation and collaboration with regional state, and local entities the coordinators will:

- Assist in promoting linkages between secondary and postsecondary CTE programs;
- Facilitate professional development opportunities for CTE teachers, postsecondary faculty and counselors related to CTE;
- Facilitate increased information sharing to counselors, teachers, students, and parents regarding opportunities at the postsecondary level;
- Place a greater emphasis on career guidance and planning;
- Help staff members from colleges, schools and community organizations expose students to information about high-skill, high-wage, high-demand occupations: and
- Enhance and build partnerships with business and industry to support the development of Career Pathways/Programs of Study in high-wage, high-skill and high-demand occupations.

The key outcomes that the College and Career Transition Coordinators will focus on are:

- To increase the number of students dually enrolled;
- To increase CTE enrollment at the postsecondary level in all areas of the State;
- To better inform counselors, teachers, faculty and staff regarding CTE opportunities;
- To increase involvement of business and industry in the development of high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand Career Pathways/Programs of Study.

## 10. Ten Elements

1. *Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;*

All youth programs funded under WIA will provides tutoring, homework assistance, study skills, and instructions with the overall goal of helping students perform well academically and complete secondary school. Counseling, family coaching and school visitations are also encouraged to help prevent dropout.

2. *Alternative secondary school offerings;*

LWC, LDOE and the Workforce Investment Council are working to ensure adequate state and local funding is available to alternative education programs. WIA Title I entities work with the local school system to identify true dropouts and provide the needed service strategies to help with dropout recovery. The long-term goal of the local systems is to ensure that the services provided in the alternative setting are available as needed to all youth within the local area.

3. *Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning;*

Summer employment opportunities are used as a linkage between academic and occupational learning and as an entry point for out of school youth to serve as a dropout recovery option. LWC and the LWIBs continue to build a summer youth employment opportunity system that coordinates resources from multiple local funding streams.

4. *Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing, as provided in 664.460 and 664.470;*

The same strategies used for summer employment opportunities will be used for both paid and unpaid work experience.

5. *Occupational Skills Training;*

Occupational skill training is linked to high growth/high demand occupations in the region. Where feasible, occupational skill training is linked with work experience to ensure relevance. Through the Career Exploration process, youth build career ladders and understand the need for life long learning often referred to as “just in time interventions” that ensure learning is both timely and relevant to the skills needed today in the workplace. LWC provides training to local workforce development staff on O\*NET to enable them to better identify and link training to the skills needed by specific businesses in their region.

For PY 2010 Louisiana is requesting a waiver to allow the use of the Eligible Training Provider List by LWIAs to provide Individual Training Accounts to Older Youth, Out-of-School Youth and youth 16 to 17 years of age. The Eligible Training Provider System requires that training providers meet rigid requirements for certification to provide training for Adult and Dislocated Workers. Louisiana believes that the Older Youth, Out-of-School Youth and youth 16 to 17 years of age would benefit from the services provided by these certified training providers through the ITA system. Allowing the LWIBs to use the ETPL to provide ITAs for these youth will result in streamlining services and increasing flexibility. In addition it will help increase the number of participants who receive training and ensure that training services for youth will be available in a faster and more efficient manner. Many LWIBs find it difficult to secure training providers willing to competitively bid to provide youth training. In addition, the time period for matching training providers to youth who are in need is lengthened considerably. Use of the ETPL to provide ITAs will improve youth services through increased customer choice in accessing training opportunities in demand occupations, increase the number of training providers for youth, provide LWIBs more flexibility in securing training providers, promote better utilization of service providers in rural areas and eliminate duplicative processes for service providers.

6. *Leadership development opportunities, which include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors;*

Through local models such as JAG which include opportunities for youth to participate in leadership roles, youth have the opportunity to develop leadership and team building skills needed in the workplace. As part of the goal of a system built on promising practices, the system brings together the quality practices learned by programs such as JAG to help build local capacity. The Louisiana Department of Education is committed to assisting LWC and the LWIBs and youth councils identify best practices and share the information. In addition, the State's vocational youth organizations and non-profit organizations serve as valuable resources for leadership opportunities.

7. *Supportive services, which may include the services listed in 664.440*

Louisiana is building a youth system across local entities to provide needed services not programs. The comprehensive plan described above and the local linkages developed through the youth councils ensure that all youth receive the supportive services necessary to achieve their career goals. The goal of developing a system of committed partners envisions that through the youth councils, each area will develop strong linkages among partners to develop a continuum of service interventions accessible to all youth. Local boards are encouraged to formulate partnerships with such agencies as TANF, Child Care, and Juvenile Justice, to provide needed support services to youth, including transportation. The Community Service Block Grant agencies have long been part of Louisiana's Business and Career Solutions system. These entities are assisting the local areas identify available services and identify service gaps. The local planning guidance requires each youth council to inventory and catalog local resources and makes this information to service providers. The system is then be able to better direct scarce resources toward filling the gaps to ensure youth receive the supportive services needed to achieve their individual goals.

8. *Adult mentoring for a duration of at least twelve (12) months, that may occur both during and after program participation.*

All youth programs funded under WIA will encourage a strong role for youth mentors. From Groundhog Day job shadowing to summer employment experiences, all youth will be able to clearly see the linkages between education and employment. Local boards and youth councils are encouraged to include mentoring in all youth services contracts. LWC and the Workforce Investment Council work with the local areas to identify best practices in this area and share this information and training across regions.

9. *Follow up services, as provided in 664.450 and*

All youth are provided follow-up services for 12 months after they complete the program. The intensity of this follow-up will be dependent on the service strategy needed by the youth. However, the system ensures that the youth remains connected to the system to assist the youth attain, retain, and advance in both post secondary education and employment to meet their career goals. This includes linking the youth to the Business and Career Solutions system so they will have available a link to employment and training assistance and a connection to life long learning. Several current programs that are part of the youth system emphasize long-term follow-up. Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) and Youth Challenge both have 12-month follow-up requirements. As part of the goal of a system built on promising practices, the system brings together the quality practices learned by these programs to help build local capacity. The goal is for each youth partner to identify what is working in their piece of the system and learn how to share it with all the other partners

10. *Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.*

One of the State's emphasis areas is for all youth to have a five-year career plan or individual service strategy. Therefore each youth, either through in-school career options planning requirements or out-of-school Career Exploration process, develop a comprehensive strategy that will identify the services needed to either stay in school or return to school, develop the skills needed to be successful in the

workplace and devise a plan for life long learning. Each individual service strategy will identify not only career goals but also the work readiness skills needed to be successful in the workplace. This front door assessment is the key to identifying the appropriate intervention. LWC has built a statewide comprehensive assessment system. Each workforce investment area has a computerized aptitude assessment system. WorkKeys is available in all Business and Career Solutions centers. This will ensure basic skills assessments are linked to actual skill requirements for specific jobs and industries. The system emphasizes experiential assessment (through “work first” participation where feasible). By building an integrated system not just a series of programs, youth will have positive interactions with peers and caring adults.

**E. Modifications of Existing Waivers**

The State was previously granted a waiver with Section 123 that requires providers of Youth program elements be selected on a competitive basis, specifically Louisiana was granted the waiver of the requirement of competitive procurement of service providers for two of the ten youth program elements: supportive services, and follow-up services. The State has been granted an extension of this waiver through December 31, 2012. Under this waiver, the State is permitted to allow its Business and Career Solution Centers or partner agencies to directly provide the above youth program elements. In utilizing this waiver, the State and the local area must still meet Office of Management and Budget requirements (codified in 29 CFR 95.40-95.48 and 97.36) and all state and local procurement laws and policies.

This will provide greater flexibility by allowing BCSCs to improve the continuity of services to youth, implement a more cost-effective and integrated service delivery system, and develop stronger ties with the LWIA and local employers. Modification and extension of this waiver will allow LWIA 71 to continue achieving efficiencies in the delivery of all youth services; keep the administrative costs of competitive procurement processes at a minimal level; and direct more funds to program activities that lead toward performance improvement.

The state has also received an extension of the waiver to allow use of Eligible Training Provider System for Older and Out-of-School Youth as well as a waiver to allow youth participants 16 to 17 years of age to use Individual Training Accounts. The Eligible Training Provider System requires that training providers meet rigid requirements for certification to provide training for Adult and Dislocated Workers. Louisiana believes that the Older Youth, Out-of-School Youth, and youth 16-17 years of age would benefit from the services provided by these certified training providers. Allowing the LWIB to use the ETPL for Older Youth, Out-of-School Youth and youth participants 16-17 years of age will result in streamlining services and increasing flexibility. In addition, it will help increase the number of participants who receive training and sure that training services for

youth will be available in a faster and more efficient manner. In addition, the time period for matching training providers to youth who are in need is lengthened considerably. Use of the ETPL will improve youth services through increased customer choice in accessing training opportunities in demand occupations.

**F. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**

LWC has policy LTEGL 11-02 supporting co-enrollment for WIA and TAA, and has integrated the Rapid Response unit with the WIA Dislocated Worker(DW) unit and the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) unit. The cross-program strategic planning and the integration of services requirements in TEGE No. 21-11 are currently being implemented by LWC through planning and through the provision of core and intensive services through the Rapid Response unit as well as by co-enrolling TAA certified participants in need of training in WIA and TAA. The Rapid Response unit provides the initial contact with employers when a lay-off of employees is to occur, and the TAA unit organizes the orientation session for employees to present information on the TAA program.

WIA staff initiate enrollment of eligible laid off employees for case management at local Business and Career Solutions Centers (BCSC) that are located statewide. Enrollment involves housing the laid-off employee's data - including program budget obligations and expenditure records - in the Louisiana Virtual One Stop (LAVOS) online system (the statewide electronic system used to track and integrate benefits and services for dislocated workers). The LAVOS system also allows seamless integration of employment transition services through the same service delivery system, and reduces administrative costs and burdensome paperwork. Once trade impacted employees are certified, local merit staff at the BCSC approve and enter the TAA program budget obligations and expenditure records on LAVOS and complete the co-enrollment of these participants in TM training.

Certification of a dislocated worker for TAA includes determining eligibility by matching the laid-off employee to the USDOL certified petition and the employer's lay off list, as well as approval of the individual using the six TAA criteria for eligibility to be placed in training along with other steps. The TAA criteria requires assessing the emotional, spiritual, financial, and intellectual abilities of the trade impacted worker to demonstrate that individual's qualification to undertake, complete, and benefit from the planned training. Supporting the assessment are testing tools (SAGE, TABE, WorkKeys etc.) administered at the LWC's local BCSC level. If the assessment identifies a TM certified participant's need for adult education or remedial services, these programs can be offered by local merit staff. The assessment tool also can be used to identify educational gaps and to pinpoint work-related aptitudes and interests. Approval for TAA training services and selection of a training method or program is based on matching these factors to the participant for appropriate training for a demand occupation.

Guidance is given to local merit staff in the TM manual for delivering TAA services, and a written form is used to develop a case management Individual Employment Plan which then is entered on LAVOS. The LWC TM unit provided

training to local merit staff in 2011 as the pilot program to switch all services and benefits to LAVOS and reimbursements to the LAVOS Individual Funds Tracking. In 2012 TM continues work to complete the transition to electronic case management and payments which will integrate data on benefits and services with other units to ensure consistent program administration and fiscal integrity.

**G. WIA Waiver Request**

Louisiana has granted the following waiver requests. The rationale, justification and implementation of each waiver request are included in the related section of the plan. LWC firmly believes that the approval of these waivers will enhance the state's ability to move in USDOL's national strategic direction.

1. Waiver of the funds transfer limitation at WIA section 133(b)(4) to permit states to approve local area requests to transfer up to 50% of local area formula allocation funds between the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. (granted)
2. Waiver of the required 50% employer match for customized training at WIA section 101(8)(C) to permit a match based on a sliding scale as follows: (a) no less than 10% match for employers with 50 or fewer employees, and (b) no less than 25% match for employers with 51-250 employees. For employers with more than 250 employees, the current statutory requirements (50%) continue to apply.
3. Waiver of WIA section 101(31) (B) to permit LWIAs to reimburse the employer for on-the-job training on a graduated scale based on the size of the business. The following reimbursement amounts will be permitted' (a) up to 90% for employers with 50 or fewer employees, and (b) up to 75% for employers with more than 50 but fewer than 250 employees. For employees with 250 or more employees, the current statutory requirements will continue to apply. (modified with specific scale)
4. Waiver to permit implementation of, and reporting only for, the common measures in place of the current WIA measures. The common measures have become the basis of the workforce system's performance accountability Louisiana Workforce Commission requests a waiver of the current performance measures referenced in WIA Section 136(b) in order to implement the common performance measures.
5. Waiver of the prohibition on the use of Individual Training Accounts for youth. This waiver provides increased flexibility in the provision of training services to youth, and may be particularly useful to states in light of the Recovery Act provision that raises the eligible youth age range to 24 Louisiana Workforce Commission requests a waiver of the prohibition of the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for older and out-of-school youth (WIA 123, WIA 134(d)(4), 20CFR 661.305(a)(3), 20 CFR 664.510)
6. Waiver of the time limit on the period of initial eligibility for training providers. This waiver has addressed barriers for meeting eligible training provider requirements, thereby increasing the number of community

colleges and other entities that are available to deliver training to WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker participants. LWC requests a waiver regarding the requirement that training providers meets subsequent eligibility based on performance data and allow the state to use initially eligibility determination at (WIA 122(c)(5), 20 CFR Section 663.530)

7. An exemption from the competitive procurement requirement for the follow-up and supportive service elements and inclusion of these elements in the design framework of youth services. (WIA 123, 20CFR 664.405(a) (4), 20 CFR 661.305(3).
8. Waiver from the requirement to provide incentive grants to local areas (WIA Section 134(a)(2)(B)(iii) and 20 CFR 665.200(e));
9. Waiver from the requirement to disseminate training provider performance and cost information (20 CFR 665.200(b)(3));
10. Waiver from the requirement to monitor local boards annually for compliance with applicable laws and regulations, where said monitoring must include an annual review of each local area's compliance with the uniform administrative requirements (20 CFR 667.400(c)(2);
11. Waiver from the requirement to disseminate the list of eligible training providers for adults and dislocated workers (WIA Section 134(a)(2)(B)(i)), and CFR 665.200 (b)(1), and youth activities (20 CFR 665.200(b)(4));
12. Waiver from the requirement to monitor EEO Compliance
13. Waiver from the requirement that a state must engage only state government personnel to perform TAA-funded functions under the TAA Program (20 CFR 618.890);
14. Continuation and expansion of existing waiver of WIA Section 123 that requires providers of youth program elements to be selected on a competitive basis. Specifically, Louisiana was granted a waiver of the requirement of competitive procurement of service providers for two of the ten youth program elements - supportive services and follow-up services. LWC is requesting to expand this waiver to include Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling, Leadership Development Opportunities which includes community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors, and Adult Mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation. Under this waiver, the State is permitted to allow its One-Stop Career Centers or their partner agencies to directly provide youth program elements.

#### **H. Branding**

A recent Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL), No. 36-11, dated June 14, 2012, from the Employment and Training Administration, encourages states and local workforce investment areas to begin using the American Job

Center brand immediately. The American Job Center network, is a unifying name and brand that identifies virtual and in-person publicly-funded workforce development services as part of a single network. In the future, USDOL intends to work closely with states and local areas to move to a requirement to use the brand. The State of Louisiana and the Louisiana Workforce Commission have not made a decision on whether to use the brand, as of the completion of this Plan. LWIA 70 will monitor this situation closely and will follow the state's direction concerning branding.