

Illinois Strategic Five-Year Plan

Title I-Workforce Investment Act of 1998 Wagner-Peyser Act

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009



[~~~~~June 30, 2009~~~~~]

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Section I. Context, Vision, and Strategy

Economic and Labor Market Context

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

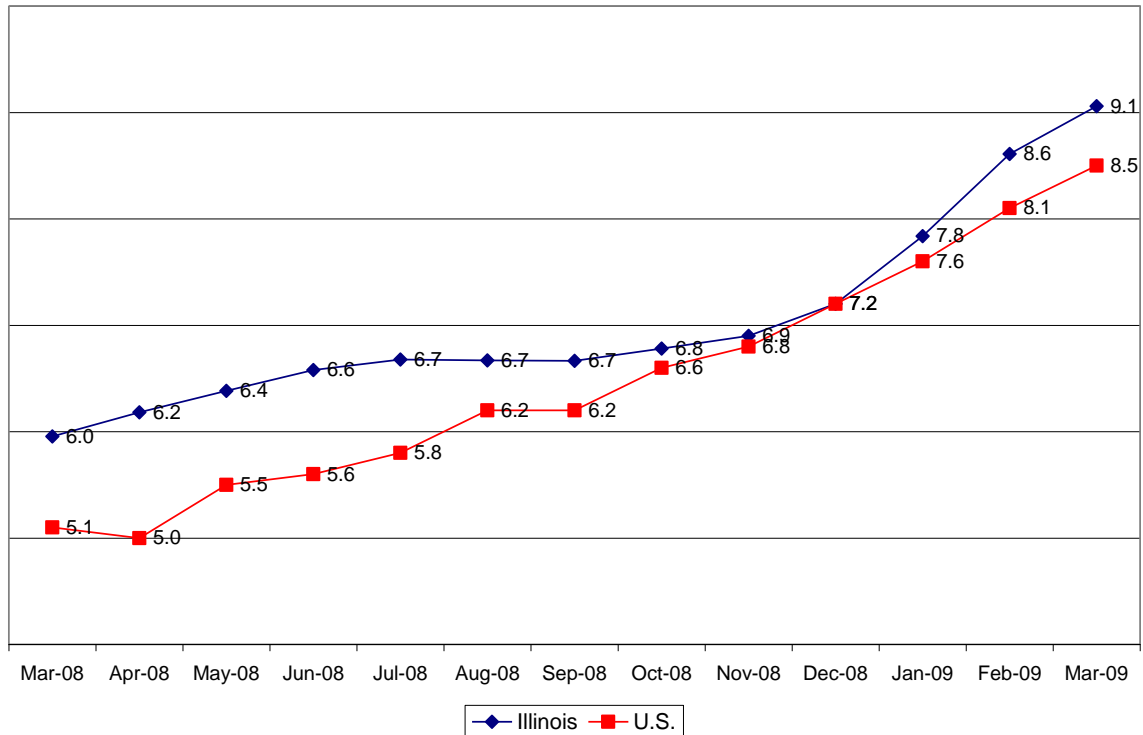
In responding to this question, the state should update its analysis to indicate how the economic downturn has impacted the state's economy and the labor market context. This analysis should include current and anticipated impacts on employment by sector, current and projected demographics of the available labor pool including income levels as appropriate, and describe any skills gaps the state faces, based on the skills held by current and expected dislocated workers and the skills demanded by industries and occupations expected to grow through economic recovery.

The current economic climate has created the need to address the impacts of the recession on the various aspects of the Illinois' economy. The following information has been provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) staff.

The national economic recession has had significant impact on the Illinois economy, labor market, and workforce. Since the onset of the recession (Dec07 – Mar09), total employment in Illinois has decreased by 246,900 jobs or -4.1 percent, fourth highest among the states. Through the end of the first quarter of 2009:

- Illinois ranked third among the states in the number of worker separations resulting from Extended Mass Layoff events.
- The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Illinois had increased for six straight months climbing to 9.1 percent in March, the highest level reported in over 23 years.
- The number of unemployed persons in Illinois swelled to 596,000, up almost 200,000 persons over the year and at its highest level since September 1983.
- One in four Illinois unemployed persons was out of work for more than 26 weeks.
- The Illinois unemployment rate has been above the U.S. unemployment rate for 27 of the last 28 months.

IL v. US Monthly Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates



Employment levels in almost all industry sectors dropped more drastically in Illinois than in the nation during the last quarter of 2008 and first quarter of 2009. Since the onset of the national recession, net job losses in Illinois have been concentrated in core industry sectors that drive the overall economy: Professional and Business Services (-72,300); Manufacturing (-68,400); Trade and Transportation (-45,700) and Construction (-34,500). In fact, over this period both the Construction and Manufacturing sectors have lost more than a tenth of their employment base, declining 12.9% and 10.2%, respectively. The loss of thousands of well-paying jobs in these two sectors and related industries in the Professional and Business Services and Trade and Transportation sectors have reverberated throughout the state's economy.

Recession's Impact on Employment Levels in Illinois

	Dec07 - Mar09	
	Employment	
	Change	Percent
Total Nonfarm Payroll Employment	-246,900	-4.1%
Mining	400	4.1%
Construction	-34,500	-12.9%
Manufacturing	-68,400	-10.2%
Durable Goods	-53,300	-13.0%
Non-Durable Goods	-15,100	-5.8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	-45,700	-3.8%
Wholesale Trade	-12,800	-4.1%
Retail Trade	-27,700	-4.4%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	-5,200	-1.9%
Information	-4,700	-4.1%
Financial Activities	-17,500	-4.4%
Finance and Insurance	-12,300	-3.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	-5,200	-6.3%
Professional and Business Services	-72,300	-8.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	-7,500	-2.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-3,000	-3.1%
Administrative and Support Services	-61,800	-15.1%
Educational and Health Services	13,900	1.8%
Educational Services	5,100	3.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	8,800	1.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	-19,500	-3.7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-7,500	-9.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	-12,000	-2.6%
Other Services	-300	-0.1%
Government	1,700	0.2%
Federal Government	-500	-0.6%
State Government	-3,600	-2.4%
Local Government	5,800	0.9%

While the Illinois economy is expected to continue to experience little or no job growth through 2010, long-term industry employment projections through 2016 indicate that several critical industry sectors will provide significant job opportunities. These high-demand industry sectors will require the skilled workforce necessary to satisfy critical occupational needs. Educational and Health Services will become the largest sector in the economy by 2016 employing over 1.4 million persons. Within this sector, Health Care and Social Assistance will expand by over

180,000 jobs. The Professional and Business Services sector is projected to add new jobs at the fastest rate as the economy rebounds growing at over 2.6 percent. Trade, Transportation and Utilities, the second largest sector in the state, will grow by over 65,000. While the Manufacturing sector is projected to contract, it will continue to employ over a half million persons in critical high-skilled positions.

Industry Employment Projections, 2006-2016

Industry Sector	Base Year Employment 2006	Projected Year Employment 2016	Change 2006-2016	Annual Compound Growth
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	6,354,094	7,094,886	740,792	1.11
Agricultural Production	75,983	70,401	-5,582	-0.76
Natural Resources and Mining	10,247	10,080	-167	-0.16
Construction	275,174	300,342	25,168	0.88
Manufacturing	682,736	608,474	-74,262	-1.14
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	271,836	251,378	-20,458	-0.78
Durable Goods Manufacturing	410,900	357,096	-53,804	-1.39
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,236,833	1,302,563	65,731	0.52
Wholesale Trade	308,329	319,766	11,437	0.36
Retail Trade	628,955	653,920	24,965	0.39
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	299,549	328,877	29,329	0.94
Information	116,806	115,947	-859	-0.07
Financial Activities	405,305	450,208	44,903	1.06
Professional and Business Services	855,192	1,112,764	257,572	2.67
Educational and Health Services	1,193,322	1,455,313	261,991	2.00
Educational Services, Private & Public	529,683	606,953	77,270	1.37
Health Care & Social Assistance	663,639	848,360	184,721	2.49
Leisure and Hospitality	522,951	614,946	91,995	1.63
Other Services	288,601	325,553	36,951	1.21
Government	374,517	393,461	18,944	0.49

In fact, all of these leading industry sectors will require skilled workers both today and in the future. The occupations that are most critical to these industries and the state's overall economy because of the average annual job openings generally require skilled training beyond high school.

Occupational Employment Projections, 2006-2016

Occupation	Average Annual Job Openings	Median Annual Wage	Most Common Training/Education Level
Customer Service Representatives	5,005	\$32,924.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Registered Nurses	4,710	\$62,386.	Associate degree
Secondary School Teachers	3,186	\$61,619.	Bachelor's degree
Team Assemblers	2,753	\$23,376.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Postsecondary Faculty	2,716	na	Doctoral degree
Truck Drivers, Heavy	2,576	\$40,953.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Bookkeeping & Accounting Clerks	2,505	\$33,800.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Elementary School Teachers	2,401	\$54,397.	Bachelor's degree
Business Operations Specialists	2,346	\$56,042.	Bachelor's degree
Executive Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	2,321	\$41,982.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Sales Representatives, Wholesale/Manufacturing	2,214	\$58,127.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Accountants and Auditors	2,053	\$62,292.	Bachelor's degree
Nursing Aides	1,816	\$23,322.	Postsecondary vocational award
Cooks, Restaurant	1,660	\$19,325.	Long-term on-the-job training
Secretaries	1,424	\$29,414.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
General and Operations Managers	1,376	\$96,066.	Bachelor's or higher degree
Sales Representatives, Services	1,302	\$50,381.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Computer Systems Analysts	1,278	\$81,333.	Bachelor's degree
Management Analysts	1,222	\$75,849.	Bachelor's or higher degree
Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,206	\$66,288.	Long-term on-the-job training
Carpenters	1,204	\$60,504.	Long-term on-the-job training
Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	1,193	\$37,837.	Postsecondary vocational award
Licensed Practical Nurses	1,186	\$40,624.	Postsecondary vocational award
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	1,147	\$86,312.	Bachelor's degree
Lawyers	1,068	\$120,938.	First professional degree
Computer Support Specialists	1,048	\$48,017.	Associate degree
Computer Software Engineers, Systems	992	\$93,883.	Bachelor's degree
Middle School Teachers	983	\$50,741.	Bachelor's degree
Construction Laborers	952	\$40,928.	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Pharmacy Technicians	900	\$26,826.	Moderate-term on-the-job training

The demographic breakout of the Illinois labor force is becoming more similar to that of the nation in several respects:

- 49 % Male
- 73 % White
- 12 % Hispanic
- 51 % Female
- 15 % Black

Furthermore, recent progress in non-traditional employment for women has several occupational categories approaching the 25 percent threshold, including Science, Engineering and Computer Professionals (24.9 percent) and Protective Service Workers (21.0 percent). However, occupational categories in which women remain under-represented are:

- Construction & Extractive Craft Workers 2.7%
- Installation, Maintenance & Repair Craft Workers 8.4%
- Transportation & Material Moving Workers 15.8%
- Laborers & Helpers 15.3%

Section I. Context, Vision, and Strategy

State Vision and Priorities

Question I.C. What is the Governor's vision for ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce? (§112(a) and (b)(4).)

In responding to this question, the state should review ETA's vision for implementing the Recovery Act in Section 4 of this TEGL, and describe the Governor's new vision since the economic downturn. The description should include the Governor's vision for economic recovery, touching on the Act's principles and the Governor's view of how the Recovery Act funds can be integrated into transformational efforts to achieve an invigorated, more innovative public workforce system capable of helping enable future economic growth and advancing shared prosperity for all Americans.

We understand that no unit of government can operate with the "business as usual" approach to implement the Recovery Act. We are challenging ourselves, other state agencies, and regional and local workforce development organizations to be innovative, strategically aligned, and nimble in the planning and execution of the Recovery Act. Recovery in Illinois, like much of the nation, will depend on keeping existing businesses competitive in their regional and the global economy. Workforce development must quickly adapt to the realities of the current economic situation, and also direct resources to provide for a skilled workforce that aligns with good paying employment opportunities expected to be available in the coming weeks, months and years.

In Illinois, Governor Quinn appointed the Chief Operating Officer to be the point person on implementing the Recovery Act. Because of this executive level attention, Illinois has begun efforts to improve alignment of state programs responsible for Recovery Act funds. This began publicly with regional meetings on workforce development co-sponsored by DCEO and the Illinois Workforce Partnership that included: the Department of Transportation; the Community College Board; the Department of Employment Security; DCEO bureaus of Business Development, Community Development, Energy, Technology and Industrial Competitiveness; the Weatherization program; and statewide labor. Further, a technical assistance training effort passed on this regional roundtable information to local workforce area staff that will be largely responsible for direct client services. DOL Region V staff also described how local area staff can incorporate WIA funding and activity to support registered apprenticeship programs.

DCEO has already begun working directly with state agencies not normally directly associated with workforce development, such as the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Transportation. Working with these departments has provided hundreds of potential summer

employment opportunities for local WIA summer youth employment programs. This trans-departmental effort is a direct result of an intent to transform how state agencies partner by becoming aware of how multiple agencies can coordinate their resources to provide for a greater overall impact.

Illinois is also working to incorporate transformational service delivery to clients through the local workforce investment areas (LWIAs). DCEO stressed to the LWIAs they need to use Recovery Act funding to increase the number of clients served and that the expectation is that the vast majority of Recovery Act funding is to be used for training and supportive services that complement training opportunities for clients in need. LWIAs were specifically advised to consider the short-term of Recovery Act funds, and structure their programs and services to provide as much impact in the summer of 2009 as possible.

DCEO has begun a new local plan analysis process that will allow local board staff and members to put their local area's plan into context with statewide high, low, and averages for planned training enrollment percentages and cost per client data, among other data elements. By providing more *information*, rather than raw data, DCEO is helping the local boards self-monitor their planning and better understand how they compare to the rest of the state.

At the state level DCEO will support continued investments in regional sector strategies, adjusted to include emphasis on current economic conditions. Recovery Act priorities such as green activities will also be supported.

STRATEGY FOR USE OF STATEWIDE ACTIVITY FUNDS

Major Objective:

Prevent dislocation, address short-term needs and shortages, and position the state for post-recovery growth in key sectors by accelerating investment in the skills of Illinois workers.

Approach:

Partner with industry organizations and employers and education and training providers to utilize incumbent, customized, OJT, and class-sized training mechanisms to accelerate training and provide transitional employment opportunities for workers while in training where possible. State funds will be targeted to incumbent worker training because of current limitations in the use of LWIA funds for incumbent worker training. DCEO will work with LWIAs to coordinate state and local accelerated pre-employment training in targeted sector. In addition, Illinois will use regular state WIA funds to expand access to sector-based bridge programs to provide opportunities for low-skilled workers to access accelerated training opportunities in the targeted key sectors. This will be done through the Shifting Gears initiative.

Key Sectors:

Healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, information technology (focusing on healthcare applications), and green initiatives across all sectors of the Illinois economy.

Illinois is also working to incorporate transformational service delivery to clients through the local workforce investment areas (LWIAs). DCEO stressed to the LWIAs they need to use Recovery Act funding to increase the number of clients served and that the expectation is that the vast majority of Recovery Act funding is to be used for training and supportive services that complement training.

In order to better help struggling employers, the state has requested an increase in the percent of local formula funds allowable for Incumbent Worker training for business and job retention. Incumbent worker training is an excellent strategy for keeping Illinois employers competitive. It also builds relationships between workforce development and the private sector and may help facilitate placement of WIA participants in job openings that result from Incumbent Worker promotions.

For those individuals that are out of high school, but not quite qualified to enter certain key

sector training, we will promote the use of bridge programs. These flexible programs will allow individuals to receive skill upgrades in reading and math quickly so that they are able to enter bona fide training and education programs and be on their way toward employability in higher level occupations.

The current economic environment requires the workforce development system to be agile, innovative, and results-oriented. The actions we take together with other state and federal agencies and our local workforce investment areas will determine whether the workers of Illinois are prepared to lead the way to economic recovery and the prosperity that lies beyond.

Section I. Context, Vision, and Strategy

State Vision and Priorities

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

In responding to this question, the state should review ETA’s vision for implementing the Recovery Act in Section 16 of this TEGL to reconnect disconnected youth through multiple pathways to education and training that enable them to enter and advance in the workforce. The state should describe its strategy for serving youth with funds from the Recovery Act, as well as how its strategies will be adjusted to respond to the economic downturn. What activities will the state focus on (i.e., primarily focus on summer employment opportunities, the full range of WIA youth services, or a combination)? Describe how plans for the Recovery Act youth activities will complement the state’s overall vision for serving youth under WIA.

The initial effort in Illinois is targeted at summer employment for youth. At the State level, DCEO is coordinating with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to provide summer employment opportunities for as many as 1,300 youth. These Public Service Summer Youth Programs will address three public service areas:

- Natural Resource Conservation (with Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Illinois Historic Preservation Agency)
- Transportation (with Illinois Department of Transportation)
- Food and Nutrition (Local Foods Focus)

All of these programs will have three major components:

- Work Projects—Individual and team projects supervised by professionals that provide students with career-related work experience and career exploration opportunities.
- Education Program—Education program developed by education curriculum specialists that apply and integrate language arts, math, science and other subject areas in the context of the public service area. This program also will provide students with information on related careers in the public and private sectors.

- Work Readiness Program--provided through Illinois workNet™, the program will provide students with the work readiness skills needed for employment.

Additionally, youth programs that are not directly linked to one of the three statewide projects will incorporate elements of the three major components mentioned above. The first project, the Community Gardens/Local Foods Summer Youth Program, has already accepted applications for funding.

DCEO is working with LWIAs on establishing local program infrastructure and ensuring that youth improve their labor market prospects and long-term career pathway. Formal policy was provided to the LWIAs on youth programs and addresses the Governor's vision and state and federal policy that must be followed in implementing the youth component of the Recovery Act. The complete policy can be found at www.ildceo.net. Emphasis has been placed on providing as many youth as possible with summer employment opportunities, especially in 2009. Based on local plan modifications submitted to DCEO, LWIAs plan to serve approximately 14,000 youth with Recovery Act formula funds.

WIA Eligibility applies, except the upper age limit is extended to include youth through 24 years of age. LWIAs should focus on youth most in need and must give priority for services to veterans and eligible spouses pursuant to 20 CFR 1010 and the requirements of WIA Policy Letter No. 00-PL-12, Change 2. Given the youth age range expansion through 24 under the Recovery Act, LWIAs may encounter a significant increase in the number of veterans to be served. LWIAs may also consider co-enrolling youth in adult training services, particularly youth ages 22-24.

Supportive services (such as stipends during classroom-based training hours, transportation, etc.) should be made available to ensure youth are able to participate in a youth program, specifically summer youth programs. Follow-up services can be provided when deemed appropriate.

Summer employment must include a work experience component that increases work readiness skills and provides a meaningful work experience. It should also be designed to include age appropriate activities. Summer employment may also include a combination of classroom-based training activities along with the work experience component to allow, especially the younger youth population, additional training to develop and refine skills that will help them succeed in their work experience opportunity.

Because all 10 youth program elements will be available through existing WIA youth funds, local areas will not be required to use Recovery Act funds for all 10 program elements. LWIAs

may consider transitional job models that combine short-term subsidized work experience with support services and career counseling for out of school youth. Basic skills for Out-of-School Summer Youth is not required for Stimulus-only clients.

LWIAs should provide opportunities in "green" work experiences and pre-apprenticeship programs when they are available to expose youth to those educational and career pathways. All youth programs are required to ensure that worksite agreements and worksite activities adhere to safety, labor, workers compensation, priority of service for veterans, and other applicable laws.

In addition, LWIAs should provide as many youth as possible with work experiences throughout the year.

To ensure programs are made available as soon as possible, the local areas were granted the authority to utilize an expedited grant procurement process if necessary. Local grant recipients/fiscal agents have the option of administering summer youth employment opportunities themselves.

LWIA's have been made aware of Reporting and Performance requirements that will help in accurately documenting each participant's eligibility for the program, services and activities received, and progress towards achieving an improvement in their work readiness skills and completion of their work experience. Reporting and performance measures will be based on the enrollment status of the youth. It will be critical that youth be enrolled in the proper service level (i.e. summer youth service level when they meet the requirements vs. work related, academic, or case management levels when they do not) to ensure accurate tracking of these participants and their services.

LWIAs will be required to track the number and completion rates of participants in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS). Exits must be documented in IWDS in a timely manner. Work readiness will be the only indicator for summer only employment participants. Youth who are not considered as part of the summer youth only employment program will be included in regular WIA reporting and measures. A separate Youth Recovery Act report will track the enrollments and progress of all of the youth provided with opportunities supported by Recovery Act funds.

To ensure worksites adhere to the requirements of the policy, a monitoring plan has been developed that outlines the frequency of on-site monitoring visits, the elements to consider when conducting on-site monitoring, and maintenance of accurate records of visits to assure the State of ongoing compliance.

Section I. Context, Vision, and Strategy

State Vision and Priorities

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

In responding to this question, states should reflect on shifting priorities necessitated by the economic downturn and areas of focus for economic recovery. States should identify the Governor’s key workforce investment priorities for the use of the Recovery Act funds infused into the state’s workforce investment system and how each will lead to actualizing the Governor’s new vision.

Governor Pat Quinn recently launched www.recovery.illinois.gov, a website created to help ensure that Illinois takes full advantage of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act. “Our recovery team is ready to carry out the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act here in Illinois,” said Governor Quinn.

Recovery.illinois.gov, is the portal to Illinois’ implementation of the federal stimulus plan and will: keep track of projects, spending and job creation; list state run programs receiving supplemental funding including unemployment benefits, food stamps, vocational rehabilitation and other services; connect to agency sites where proposed project lists will be posted as they become available; and allow Illinoisans to suggest a project that is eligible for federal stimulus funds.

“We are moving as quickly as possible to get projects going so that we can get the people of Illinois back to work,” said Governor Quinn. “This website will help them learn about important programs and track our progress.”

The State held a series of Recovery Act regional roundtables co-sponsored by DCEO and the Illinois Workforce Partnership where the top workforce investment system priorities were communicated to local leaders and LWIAs. The top five workforce investment system priorities are:

- 1) Funding must be spent *quickly* and *effectively*;
- 2) *Transparency and accountability* of Recovery Act investments;

- 3) The majority of WIA Recovery Act funding should be spent on *training*;
- 4) Priority on youth summer employment is for *2009*;
- 5) Activity should focus on preparing for post-recession economic opportunities in particular *green jobs* and *healthcare*.

Additionally, it was stressed that LWIAs need to use Recovery Act funding to increase the number of clients served and the percentage of clients receiving training.

Investment priorities for WIA Recovery Act Statewide Activity funds include preventing dislocation, addressing short-term needs and shortages, and positioning the state for post-recovery growth in key sectors by accelerating investment in the skills of Illinois workers. The State encourages LWIAs to partner with industry organizations and employers, and education and training providers to utilize incumbent, customized, OJT, and class-sized training mechanisms to accelerate training and provide transitional employment opportunities for workers while in training where possible. State funds will be targeted to incumbent worker training because of current limitations in the use of LWIA funds for incumbent worker training. DCEO will work with LWIAs to coordinate state and local accelerated pre-employment training in targeted sectors. In addition, Illinois will use regular state WIA funds to expand access to sector-based bridge programs to provide opportunities for low-skilled workers to access accelerated training opportunities in the targeted key sectors. This will be done through the Shifting Gears initiative.

The targeted key sectors include healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, information technology (focusing on healthcare applications), and green initiatives across all sectors of the Illinois economy.

Healthcare

- Improving Healthcare and Preventing Dislocation - Invest in incumbent worker training to support efforts by hospitals to improve quality and patient safety and reduce costs as well as improve the working conditions of front-line healthcare workers.
- Upgrading Front-Line Healthcare Workers - Partner with healthcare employers and organizations to provide incumbent worker training funding to upgrade existing front-line workers in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and home healthcare to fill critical high-demand skilled allied healthcare positions.

- Conversion to Electronic Medical Records - Work with healthcare employers and organizations to upgrade and retrain healthcare workers (e.g., medical records clerks, medical billing and coding) to effectively use electronic healthcare records to improve quality and safety and reduce costs in healthcare services.
- Nursing Programs - Work with the Illinois Center for Nursing and other state agency partners to update nursing shortage estimates in all regions and provide funding to increase the number of nurses entering and remaining in healthcare employment.

Manufacturing

- Improving Competitiveness and Preventing Dislocation - Work with DCEO's Employment Training Investment Program to invest in incumbent worker training to support Illinois manufacturers who are retraining workers to remain more competitive and fill critical shortages in skilled positions.
- Manufacturing Training Programs - Work with IDES and industry associations to update CSSI shortage estimates (e.g., machining, welding, and industrial maintenance) in all regions and provide funding to industry-led projects.

Transportation and Logistics

- Improving Competitiveness and Preventing Dislocation - Work with industry associations to conduct outreach to employers and identify opportunities to invest in incumbent worker training to support Illinois transportation and logistics companies who are training workers to remain more competitive and fill critical shortages in skilled positions.
- Transportation and Logistics Training Programs - Work with IDES and industry associations to update CSSI shortage estimates (e.g., machining, welding, industrial maintenance) in all regions and provide funding to industry-led projects.

Information Technology

- Improving Competitiveness and Preventing Dislocation (Incumbent Worker Training) - Work with industry associations to conduct outreach to employers and identify opportunities to invest in incumbent worker training to support Illinois information technology companies who are retraining workers on company time to remain more competitive and fill critical shortages in skilled positions.

- Accelerated Transportation and Logistics Training Programs (Class-Sized Training--Incumbent and Pre-employment) - Work with IDES and industry associations (e.g., AeA, Illinois Information Technology Association) to estimate shortages based on Information Task Force targeted occupations in all regions and provide funding to industry-led projects (e.g., TMA project) that have identified employers wishing to hire in regions with verified shortages to launch accelerated 18 month programs in which the final semester of enrollment is no later than Fall, 2010. Models should provide for non-incumbent workers to begin working in information technology while still enrolled in training programs to provide transitional employment opportunities.

Green Initiatives

- Define Green Industries and Occupations - Work with IDES and other state agencies to define those industries and occupations which are critical to green-related economic development efforts and opportunities in Illinois.
- Green Training Programs - Invest in innovative green training programs targeted at identified industries and occupations.

Other Statewide Funding Priorities specific to Youth projects include transportation, natural resources, and local foods. DCEO will work with education and training providers and other partners to develop and manage a statewide local foods summer youth program for teams of WIA-eligible disadvantaged youth in areas throughout Illinois. This summer youth program will serve approximately 200 youth over an 8-12 week period between June 1 and September 30, 2009.

The program will have three major components:

- **Work Projects**--Local foods work projects supervised by local foods professionals in which students grow and distribute fresh foods to organizations serving low-income populations.
- **Education Program**--Local foods education program developed by DCEO-identified education curriculum specialists.
- **Work Readiness Program**--Provided through Illinois workNet. The program will provide students with the work readiness skills needed for employment.

ICCB-Shifting Gears-Establish Sector Bridge Programs

DCEO partners with ICCB to support the statewide deployment of bridge programs to serve

lower skilled individuals. The Shifting Gears program was underway prior to the Recovery Act, but it will serve as the model for bridge programs funded by the Recovery Act.

The model has two main components:

Statewide Sector-based Bridge Program Curriculum Materials - Develop statewide model sector-based bridge program curriculum materials for healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and information technology for both blended on-line and regular classroom instruction and make widely available to all eligible providers and provide free access to employers and workers through Illinois workNet. Curriculum materials already developed under CSSI and ICCB-funded curriculum materials will be used as a starting point for programs.

Outreach and Training to LWIAs - Provide outreach and training to LWIAs on how to use sector-based bridge programs as access points to occupational skills training programs for adults with low language and literacy skills so that they have access to stimulus training provided through WIA formula funding and other funding sources.

IDES BIS Redesign: IDES is investing in a major redesign effort that will better link the unemployment insurance (UI) and employment service (ES) systems. IDES is currently in the process of testing and implementing its new Benefit Information System (BIS). The new BIS will provide greater access for individuals in filing unemployment claims and will interface with the Illinois Skills Match (ISM) system, an online system that provides skills-based job matching services for employers and jobseekers and will be linked to DCEO's Illinois workNet portal.

The new BIS system already provides online UI filing for claimants, offering them a means of access in addition to the phone and in-person filing services. Moreover, the system will create a partial registration for the client in ISM. The client will then be notified that they must complete their registration with ISM within two weeks to qualify for UI benefits. Failure to complete a full registration can result in denial of UI benefits. Currently, partial registration takes place for claims filed on the internet. When the new system is completely implemented, all claims filed will be partially registered.

The newly redesigned BIS system will be rolled out in phases over the coming year. Internet UI claims were featured in the first major release which is already in production and ISM enhancements will be included in future releases.

IDES Special Programs: In addition to regular labor exchange functions, IDES also invests in special programs that support Illinois' overall workforce strategy of serving those most in need, including youth and the formerly incarcerated.

Hire-the-Future (HTF) -This program provides youth with job finding and career development skills by integrating with local workforce development systems, educational partners and its own career and labor market information products. The program continues to work with school counselors, major corporations and other business to place students into part-time and summer jobs, as well as, serving as a resource to help local educational systems and their students to better utilize IDES career information products available at <http://www.ilworkinfo.com/icrn.htm>. These online systems not only support the long-term career and educational development of youth so that they can acquire high demand skills needed for the future, they can also help youth seeking employment to achieve their more immediate goal of finding a job.

The Illinois Safety Net Works is a direct service response initiative that encompasses a preventive and rehabilitative approach to addressing youth violence in Illinois. The purpose of this initiative is to engage, cultivate, and mobilize youth for leadership as agents of social change. The Safety Net Works has the responsibility of coordinating existing state service providers in the Safety Net Work communities, while leveraging resources to youth and community coalitions in these targeted areas. IDES participates in this program by providing technical assistance, within the scope of the agency, to these coalition groups.

Re-Entry Services Program (RESP) - IDES serves the formerly incarcerated through its Re-Entry Services Program (RESP). This program serves individuals on parole or being released from penal institutions. Operating in partnership with the Illinois Department of Corrections, RESP provides best practice service delivery to clients participating in this program. Staff receives ongoing training that identifies resources, available technical assistance and employment approaches.

With the assistance of qualified and trained staff, clients will have the opportunity to find gainful employment and the overall recidivism rate will be reduced.

Developing policy initiatives and conducting research will support the employment and retention of the formerly incarcerated. It establishes performance goals and monitors success in achieving these goals. This program functions much like the RESP program except that it serves veterans exclusively.

Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) - IVTP concentrates in those areas of the state that have the greatest number of individuals returning after incarceration and works with incarcerated individuals on job finding skills before their release.

These population centers account for over 80% of the state's entire reentering adult parole population and include:

- Cook County
- Chicago Metro Area Collar Counties
- St. Clair and Madison Counties
- Winnebago County
- Champaign and Vermillion Counties
- Macon County
- Peoria County
- Sangamon County
- Rock Island County
- Jefferson and nearby counties

IDES coordinates with the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Safer Foundation, local WIA partners, and faith based and community organizations to provide job finding workshops for inmates nearing the end of their incarceration. Workshops are conducted in Illinois correctional facilities and emphasize providing inmates with techniques and resources to help them address the unique employment barriers and other obstacles they face when attempting to acquire employment.

The Re-Entry Employment Service Program (RESP), with the use of ARRA funds, will ensure that local office staff is cross-trained on ES and additional staff is hired and trained to perform these functions. As well as improving our overall service delivery, IDES plans to enhance its current electronic systems for better monitoring and collecting of “services provided” data and “job placement” information.

These improvements in staffing and electronic systems will directly impact IDES’ ability to serve reentry clients using reentry best practices, maintain and improve relationships with corrections institutions and other reentry partners, and provide better tracking of these services along with their intended results.

Fidelity Bonding Program - Complimenting RESP is IDES’ Fidelity Bonding Program, which assists employers in securing bonding for formerly incarcerated individuals. Similarly, the Worker Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), also administered by IDES, helps support the RESP program by providing tax credits to employers for hiring the formerly incarcerated. WOTC also provides employer tax credits for other hard to place groups, including TANF recipients.

Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) - Each IDES office or Illinois workNet Center offers Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) a full range of employment services. Offices designated as “Significant MSFW Offices” provide bilingual Outreach Worker staff trained to provide specific U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration MSFW-mandated program services. The Illinois “Significant Offices” also provides, or arranges for, field outreach and service to MSFW's.

With the Recovery Act funding, IDES will increase its efforts to provide services to MSFW customers and their families by:

- Ensuring that services to MSFWs be “qualitatively equivalent” and qualitatively proportionate” to services to non-MSFWs
- Providing training on employment service roles and responsibilities specific to meeting the needs of the MSFW which will in turn, increase the outreach to MSFWs, their families, and agricultural employers significantly
- Increasing and improving quality MSFW registrations in ISM with the goal of increasing the placement of MSFWs in long term non-agricultural jobs offering benefits and wages above the minimum standard
- Expanding on the promotions of the complaint system by increasing distribution of information to the MSFW communities on their employment rights and the complaint process.

Section I. Context, Vision, and Strategy

Overarching State Strategies

Question V.B. What strategies are in place to address the national strategic direction discussed in [Section 4] of this guidance, the Governor’s priorities, and the workforce development issues identified through the analysis of the State’s economy and labor market? (§112(b)(4)(D) and 112(a).)

The state’s response to this question should describe the state’s key, actionable strategies it is deploying to achieve the Governor’s vision for the use of Recovery Act and regular formula funds. ETA is interested in how the state is connecting and integrating recovery activities to ongoing workforce investments. The responses should provide actionable direction to local areas.

- How workforce investment system resources, both stimulus and regular formula funds, can be deployed to serve increased numbers of workers in need.
- How adults and dislocated workers, including low-income adults, who need to acquire new skills will have increased access to education and training opportunities.
- How the state will address a dual-customer approach, meeting the skill needs of existing and emerging employers and high-growth occupations as well as the needs of under-skilled adults.
- How workforce activities (e.g., adult education, job training, postsecondary education, registered apprenticeship, career advancement, needs based payments, and supportive service activities) will be aligned in career pathways both now in implementing the Recovery Act and in the transformed workforce system of the future.
- How the state will partner to develop workforce solutions with community colleges, business and labor organizations, registered apprenticeship program sponsors, civic groups, and community organizations to align workforce development strategies and align workforce strategies with strategies for regional development and shared prosperity.

Resources must be targeted at direct customer service activities that add value for customers from all parts of the WIA client continuum. Illinois workNet Centers must prepare to help the unemployed mechanical engineer as well as the unskilled high school dropout or immigrant with limited English skills. Local case managers must recognize each client’s individual situation, strengths and weaknesses; and then guide the client to appropriate services to reenter the workforce quickly or enroll in skill-upgrading training or education. Skill upgrades should be targeted at skill sets that will lead to expected employment opportunities.

Increased funding should immediately allow for increased opportunities for:

- 1) Incumbent Worker training to keep our businesses competitive and employees working;
- 2) Ready funding for class size training projects with community colleges or private training providers;
- 3) Summer employment programs for unemployed and unskilled youth;
- 4) Bridge programs that provide for rapid increases in key skill sets.

DCEO asked LWIBs to review their local policies for class size projects, Incumbent Worker training, ITAs, supportive services and needs related payments. Areas were asked to consider updating or creating any local policies necessary to take full advantage of Recovery Act funding.

DCEO strongly encouraged LWIAs to consider the use of contracts for training with institutions of higher education and other qualified training providers. In March 2009, LWIAs were specifically encouraged to reach out to their community colleges to investigate innovative methods of partnering to provide increased access to training.

DCEO requested a waiver that expands the criteria for exceptions to how training services are provided in Section 663.400. The exception will allow local areas to augment the use of Recovery Act funds with regular WIA formula resources for the purchase of class size training projects.

Bridge program training allows under-skilled clients to quickly improve their reading and math skills so that they may enter employment or bona fide training programs that lead to meaningful, self-sustaining employment.

LWIAs should also consider partnering with community-based organizations with proven performance over time to provide services to eligible WIA clients where appropriate.

The influx of Recovery Act funding should provide adequate resources to allow workforce systems to address the dual-customer approach. The State's intent is to focus on preventing dislocation, addressing short-term needs and shortages, and positioning the state for post-recovery growth in key sectors by accelerating investment in the skills of Illinois workers.

The State encourages LWIAs to partner with industry organizations and employers, and education and training providers to utilize incumbent, customized, OJT, and class-sized training mechanisms to accelerate training and provide transitional employment opportunities for workers while in training where possible. DCEO will work with LWIAs to coordinate state and local accelerated pre-employment training in targeted sectors.

The Illinois workforce system will make greater use of Incumbent Worker training, which is directly targeted at making existing employers more competitive and not only help them survive the current economic downturn, but help them thrive when the eventual recovery begins.

If the workforce system can simultaneously target high-growth occupations in the near, mid and long-term, it can focus resources and clients at skill upgrades that will create a continuum of services. In this scenario, some unemployed workers may take short-term skill upgrade training and be prepared to reenter the workforce quickly; while others may need or desire longer term training or education that will allow them to be ready by the time the recovery creates new job openings. In the meantime, unskilled clients may take advantage of social enterprise or other OJT programs, or bridge programs to allow them to enter the workforce and remain gainfully employed.

The Illinois Workforce Investment Board created task forces for the following key sectors of the economy: healthcare, manufacturing, transportation & logistics, information technology, and most recently agriculture. These task forces based their initial effort on established career pathways used by the education community. The findings and recommendations of each task force are our guideposts for current and planned workforce development activities and investments. This means that various program models and strategies are used to address an issue identified by the task forces as relevant to creating or improving career pathways.

DCEO and the Illinois Workforce Partnership sponsored a series of Recovery Act regional roundtable meetings with leaders of in each of the aforementioned categories. Attendees included the state AFL-CIO, the Illinois Community College Board, community-based organizations, economic and workforce development professionals and board members, local elected and appointed officials and business leaders in key sectors such as healthcare and manufacturing. These meetings spawned numerous new connections and relationships all across Illinois, and has already improved the alignment of programs and resources.

Illinois will use regular state WIA funds to expand access to sector-based bridge programs to provide opportunities for low-skilled workers to access accelerated training opportunities in the targeted key sectors. This will be done through the Shifting Gears initiative via our ongoing collaboration with ICCB.

DCEO is also working with ICCB to develop programs targeted at providing locally grown foods. There is a great demand for organic and specialty crops in many regional economies in Illinois.

This demand provides a largely untapped sector of employment prospects, including entrepreneurial opportunities that the workforce system is now actively pursuing.

DCEO invited DOL Region V field representatives for registered apprenticeship to provide information to LWIA staff. This effort has led to increased interest for incorporating registered apprenticeships into the continuum of state and local training options.

Section I. Context, Vision, and Strategy

Service Delivery Strategies, Support for Training

Question IX.G. Describe innovative service delivery strategies the state has or is planning to undertake to maximize resources, increase service levels, improve service quality, achieve better integration or meet other key state goals. (§112(b)(17)(A).)

In answering this question, the state should describe innovative state strategies to accomplish the state's vision and achieve the goals of the Recovery Act, including how the state will:

- Increase services to workers in need.
- Support the full range of One-Stop Career Center customers in acquiring the skills needed to attain jobs in high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations, including such supports as needs-based payments, basic skills remediation, English as a second language, and supportive services.
- Ensure education and training delivered through the workforce system results in education and workforce skills of demonstrated value, and focus assessments and certifications towards the next level of education and employment.
- Strategically use youth, dislocated worker and adult statewide funds to quickly deliver innovative services.
- Provide targeted work experiences in order to prepare individuals for job opportunities in new industries or occupations, particularly using registered apprenticeship and on-the-job training for all jobseekers, and summer work experience for youth.
- Align workforce activities with education strategies and economic and community development strategies to meet skill needs of jobs and industries important to the local and regional economies and meet the needs of under-skilled adults.

The State of Illinois is emphasizing the need to increase service levels to our customers. The great influx of Recovery Act funding should allow a tremendous increase in the number of WIA clients served. The state workforce system understands the vast majority of Recovery Act funding should be earmarked for direct client services, training in particular. The state is committed to providing the necessary programs, technology and willingness to try innovative approaches to provide more comprehensive services to more workers in need. To accommodate the increased number of individuals filing for UI, IDES and DCEO through the LWIAs, will be providing reemployment workshops in locations off-site from the IDES local

offices or Illinois workNet Centers. An increased number of these workshops will be held statewide to address job seeker issues due to the recent downturn in the economy.

DCEO encouraged all LWIBs to update or create local policies, especially those related to needs related payments and supportive services. The Recovery Act provides unprecedented funding and program flexibility and LWIAs must be positioned to take full advantage of this opportunity. The State Partners are working with LWIAs to ensure all Illinois workNet Center customers have full access to key information, knowledgeable case managers, and a wide array of possibilities so that customers have viable options for seeking reemployment or training based on their circumstances.

The State of Illinois is committed to providing a skilled workforce ready to meet the needs of employers and workers. DCEO continues to support meaningful training that is goal oriented and provides tangible credentials that employers recognize as important.

All training, whether that provided by a transitional employment social enterprise bakery to lean manufacturing training for incumbent worker engineers is meant to take the trainee to the next level of his or her potential. WIA clients run the gamut of highly skilled but unemployed to those with no skills and limited or no ability to even speak English. However, each person has the capacity to learn and the potential to make himself more employable if they are committed to the program.

Illinois will build on the lessons learned in the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative to fund sector projects for critical skill shortage occupations. The State will also partner with industry organizations and employers and education and training providers to utilize incumbent, customized, OJT, and class-sized training mechanisms to accelerate training and provide transitional employment opportunities for workers while in training where possible. In addition, Illinois will use regular state WIA funds to expand access to sector-based bridge programs to provide opportunities for low-skilled workers to access accelerated training opportunities in the targeted key sectors. This will be done through the Shifting Gears initiative.

DCEO is also working with ICCB to develop programs targeted at providing locally grown foods. There is a great demand for organic and specialty crops in many regional economies in Illinois. This demand provides a largely untapped sector of employment prospects, including entrepreneurial opportunities that the workforce system is now actively pursuing.

Illinois supports the use of OJT, Incumbent Worker, Registered Apprenticeships and transitional employment programs and projects especially in critical skill shortage occupations. This broad arsenal of targeted work experience program models is necessary to reach the full spectrum of

WIA clients.

DCEO will continue to support planning and development of transitional employment social enterprises as a means to provide limited skill workers with income while they receive important employment skills. DCEO invited DOL Region V field representatives for registered apprenticeship to provide information to LWIA staff. This effort has led to increased interest for incorporating registered apprenticeships into the continuum of training options.

Incumbent Worker training is a critical component to keeping workers on the job, and their employers competitive in the global economy. DCEO strongly encourages all LWIAs to aggressively reach out to build relationships with local employers and provide meaningful IW training opportunities that will help retain existing jobs. DCEO requested a waiver to increase the use of LWIA formula funds available for IW projects from 10 percent to 25 percent of the Adult and Dislocated Worker formula allocations. DCEO also seeks to allow Youth formula funding to be used for Incumbent Worker projects.

DCEO continues to partner with ICCB and the Illinois State Board of Education (K-12) to help align our respective programs so that career awareness and development lead students into higher education for critical skill shortage occupations and sectors, especially in healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics and information technology.

We are also investigating the possibility of helping to expand existing community based programs with good performance records to meet the needs of under-skilled adults who face multiple barriers to employment. Bridge programs will be utilized as another short term training opportunity to provide key skills quickly to remove barriers to employment or further training and education. Many under-skilled adults are dedicated, hardworking employees and may be helped by Incumbent Worker training projects.

Section II. Service Delivery

State Governance and Collaboration

Question III.A.2. Describe how the agencies involved in the workforce investment system interrelate on workforce, economic development, and education issues and the respective lines of authority. (§112(b)(8)(A).)

In responding to this question, the state should describe how the Governor is ensuring cross agency collaboration so that workforce investments are fully tied to other investments funded by the Recovery Act outside of workforce development.

In Illinois, Governor Quinn appointed the Chief Operating Officer to be the point person on implementing the Recovery Act. Because of this executive level attention, Illinois has begun efforts to improve alignment of state programs responsible for Recovery Act funds. This began publicly with regional meetings on workforce development that included: the Department of Transportation; the Community College Board; the Department of Employment Security; DCEO bureaus of Business Development, Community Development, Energy, Technology and Industrial Competitiveness; the Weatherization program; and statewide labor. Further, a technical assistance training effort passed on this regional roundtable information to local workforce area staff that will be largely responsible for direct client services. DOL Region V staff also described how local area staff can incorporate WIA funding and activity into registered apprenticeship programs.

DCEO has already begun working directly with state agencies not normally directly associated with workforce development, such as the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Transportation. Working with these departments has provided hundreds of potential jobs including summer employment opportunities for local WIA summer youth employment programs. This trans-departmental effort is a tangible result of the intent to transform how multiple state agencies partner to coordinate their resources to provide for a greater overall impact.

DCEO asked local leaders and LWIAs to go beyond their normal operating routine and reach out to organizations with which they may not normally partner. Recovery Act funding will reach communities from a variety of sources, and the local workforce system must be proactive in establishing relationships and partnerships to provide for greater coordination of services.

Section II. Service Delivery

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

In responding to this question, states should describe how collaboration will be supported and sustained between state agencies, particularly between the organizational entities responsible for WIA, Wagner-Peyser Act, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act services, and Registered Apprenticeship.

Operational Collaboration: WIA Title I-B programs (i.e., adult, dislocated workers and youth programs) and the Trade Adjustment Assistance program are housed in the state's economic development agency, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) which helps ensure that WIA programs are demand driven and programs collaborate with economic development initiatives on an ongoing basis. These programs supplement other state funded programs administered by DCEO including the Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP), High Technology School-to-Work (HT-STW) Program, Bridging the Digital Divide Grant Program, Technology and Industrial Competitiveness & Energy Employment Opportunities Grant Program, Community Services Block Grant Program, Low Income Energy Assistance Program, Illinois Home Weatherization Program, Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant Program, State Energy Program, Small Business Assistance Program, and the Job Training and Economic Development (JTED) grant program (a state funded program). Additional grant opportunities will be available through some of these programs as a result of Recovery Act funding.

The DCEO worked closely with the Illinois Workforce Partnership to organize regional meetings on Recovery Act planning and implementation. Other state agencies participating in the meetings included the Department of Transportation (IDOT), Community College Board, and Department of Employment Security (IDES). The Illinois AFL-CIO also was on the agenda and involved in the discussions. Further, a statewide technical assistance training effort passed on regional roundtable information to local workforce area staff that will be largely responsible for direct client services. DOL Region V staff were in attendance to instruct local area staff on how to incorporate WIA funding and activity into registered apprenticeship programs.

Meetings have been ongoing with IDES on Veterans issues and those may lead to substantive dialogue on other issues. IDES will continue to be included in training opportunities and participate as trainers in any workshops related to Trade.

Another strategy to improve operational collaboration across state agencies is the ongoing planning activities of the IWIB and IWIB task forces created to undertake specific projects. With few exceptions, the IWIB includes representatives from the agencies operating programs outlined in Section 112(b)(8)(A).

Other Activities to Foster Collaboration: Actions to ensure collaboration with key partners of the statewide investment system are always being explored. Such actions are numerous and varied in purpose. For example, at the State level, DCEO is coordinating with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the IDOT to provide summer employment opportunities for youth. DCEO is working with the Illinois Community College Board to develop Bridge Programs that may be deployed across the state with Recovery Act funding.

Section II. Service Delivery

Reemployment Services and Wagner-Peyser Act Services

Question IX.C.4.b. Describe the reemployment services the state provides to Unemployment Insurance claimants and the worker profiling services provided to claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their Unemployment Insurance benefits in accordance with section 3(c)(3) of the Wagner-Peyser Act. (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)

In responding to this question, states should describe:

- The Governor's vision for Reemployment Services (RES), including how they differ from Wagner-Peyser core services.
- How RES will be coordinated with other services provided at the One-Stop Career Center under WIA.
- How UI claimants will be identified quickly and RES provided as early as possible following initial receipt of UI benefits or referrals through UI profiling systems.
- The services that will be provided under RES, including in-depth services such as skill assessment, career guidance, individual service plans, and labor market information.
- The specific population among UI claimants (e.g., those most likely to exhaust benefits) that the state intends to target with Recovery Act funds for RES.
- How the state intends to integrate information technology into its RES program to better identify and serve UI claimants, including the percentage of funds that will be used for integrating ES and UI technology requirements to identify and serve the needs of UI claimants.
- Any labor market information tools that will be funded and integrated into RES.

Special Populations: Dislocated workers and displaced homemakers make up the eligible population for services provided through the Title I-B dislocated worker grant to the state. Therefore, these two populations will be targeted for the full range of Title I-B services throughout Illinois.

Low-income adults and veterans are provided priority access to WIA Title I-B services. WIA Title I-B adult grant funds budgeted for intensive and training services must be provided on a priority basis to TANF or other low-income individuals who do not otherwise have access to these services through other funding sources. Similarly, local workforce investment areas (LWIAs) are required to ensure that eligible veterans are given priority over non-veterans for WIA intensive

and training services. In addition, LVER/DVOPS staff located in Illinois workNet Centers and IDES local offices provide Veterans' priority for Wagner-Peyser services. IDES and DCEO are working together on an ongoing basis to ensure that "Veterans' Priority of Service" is understood and implemented at the local level by all WIAs and service providers. To allow for provision of services to the increased number of veterans filing for unemployment due to the economy and in anticipation of those veterans that will be returning from duty, IDES has intensified its hiring process for staff to ensure that priority of service can continue to be delivered to the veteran population by the entire IDES staff.

Pursuant to the requirements of 29 CFR Part 37, *Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Final Rule*, the state works with each LWIA to develop and approve a "methods of administration" (MOA) document. Among other requirements, the LWIA must include a plan to provide universal access to Title I-B financially assisted programs and activities, which will be included in the state-level MOA. Steps taken locally must include reasonable efforts to include members of both sexes, various racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals in differing age groups. The state will provide necessary technical assistance and training to local areas to facilitate development of local MOAs.

The state also contractually obligates Title I-B fiscal agents to comply with all federal equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation. The state's planning procedures and participant tracking systems provide for measurement of the registration of individuals from various populations as well as their access to various Title I-B services. Using these systems and on-site reviews, the state will regularly monitor compliance with the relevant federal laws and MOA provisions. Corrective action will be taken and technical assistance provided, as needed.

UI Claimants and Worker Profiling: IDES reemployment services have been established to provide more intensive, personalized services to a targeted group of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants - those with identified skills for high-demand industries and occupations. The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and its Illinois workNet partners work closely to implement UI Reemployment and Eligibility Assistance (REA) programs and services in Illinois.

The specific goals of the UI REA are to:

- Identify high-demand occupations and the skills required by those occupations;
- Identify UI claimants who have skills (either immediate or transferable) that meet those needed by identified employers in high-demand industries and occupations;
- Reduce the time between initial UI claims and delivery of reemployment services;

- Speed up claimants return to work through in-person and individualized job assessment and services that avoid a "one size fits all" approach;
- Enhance orientation and assessment services to targeted claimants;
- Improve data-sharing between UI, reemployment services, and Illinois workNet partners; and,
- Promote cross-office training of best practices and information exchange to share innovative and successful reemployment practices.

Illinois offers a unique advantage in the structure of its UI and Illinois workNet Centers. Whereas many states separate the functions and location of the UI and Illinois workNet Centers, Illinois co-houses these two services. Research has shown that better links between UI, Employment Services, and WIA systems and staff are imperative to successful reemployment systems (see, for instance Karen Needels, Walter Corson, & Michelle Van Noy, "Evaluation of the Significant Improvement Demonstration Grants for the Provision of Reemployment Services for UI Claimants: Final Report." Mathematica Policy Research, inc., July 2003). This co-location ensures smooth coordination of services and a continuous feedback of information and exchange between all programs. This highly coordinated system also eliminates the need for the client to visit several offices for services. Illinois also cross-trains its UI and employment services staff in all locales to be able to provide both services to claimants. This coordination also ensures that the claimant information is up-to-date, and that all service providers have the same information and understanding when it comes to the claimant's needs and background.

Under the UI REA program, the state intends to further enhance and strengthen this coordinated personal service approach by ensuring that Illinois workNet staff has the capacity to provide UI information to customers in all offices. This will be accomplished by cross-marketing the Illinois workNet Centers and UI job support materials and by promoting more cross training of UI and Illinois workNet Center staff, including keeping each abreast of any changes and program improvements in both UI and Illinois workNet Centers.

Illinois has also chosen an innovative approach to identifying UI claimants for reemployment services. This method will use an existing tool, the Illinois Skills Match (ISM) program, along with labor market information and a skills gap analysis, to pinpoint those UI claimants who have skills that match those needed in high-demand occupations and industries. Those individuals identified as at risk of exhausting benefits will be given priority in the process. By directing reemployment services to this group, the system will both fill employer demands for skilled workers and move UI claimants quickly into new jobs. By alerting claimants to the availability of jobs (which they might not be aware exist), or by identifying skills that are transferable to these

high-demand areas, the state serves both worker and employer, thus promoting economic growth. This method will encourage UI claimants to consider their transferable skills rather than feeling locked into one specific occupation.

Reemployment workshops will be conducted by IDES to assist the increased number of unemployed workers filing for UI in Illinois. IDES will employ a methodology that identifies UI claimants for attendance at reemployment workshops through the use of an existing tool, the Illinois Skills Match (ISM) program. Along with labor market information and a skills gap analysis, IDES will pinpoint those UI claimants who have filed new claims for UI and who have skills that match those needed in high-demand occupations and industries. Those individuals identified as at risk of exhausting benefits will be given priority in the process. By directing reemployment services to this group, the system will both fill employer demands for skilled workers and move UI claimants quickly into new jobs. By alerting claimants to the availability of jobs (which they may not be aware exist), or by identifying skills that are transferable to high-demand areas, the state serves both worker and employer, thus promoting economic growth. This method will encourage UI claimants to consider their transferable skills rather than feeling locked into one specific occupation.

IDES is conducting research to determine which option would be most beneficial: 1.) a new labor exchange system to replace the current system, Illinois Skills Match (ISM), or 2.) enhancing ISM to allow greater flexibility in skills matching, make the system more user friendly for both job seekers and employers, and other areas of enhancement. The use of Recovery Act funds will allow for either option, and both options will assist in the integration of ES and UI technology requirements to identify and serve the needs of UI claimants.

IDES and DCEO are partnering to integrate the existing labor exchange system, Illinois Skills Match (ISM), and the Illinois workNet system. The goal is to have one system that serves the needs of both job seekers and employers. Use of ISM, with necessary enhancements for tracking and reporting performance for the Recovery Act will continue as IDES is investigating additional labor exchange and reporting system options.

To assist in the provision of reemployment services to UI claimants in the most timely manner possible, IDES staff will participate and be an integral part of the state's Rapid Response teams by providing reemployment workshop information at the rapid response on-site visits for layoffs and closings of businesses.

Section II. Service Delivery

Question IX.C.1.b. Describe how the State will ensure the three-tiered service delivery strategy for labor exchange services for job seekers and employers authorized by the Wagner-Peyser Act includes: (1) self-service, (2) facilitated self-help service, and (3) staff assisted service, and is accessible and available to all customers at the local level. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)

In order to ensure that jobs generated through the Recovery Act are accessible and available to all customers, describe how the state will facilitate the listing of such jobs on the State Job Bank.

Three-Tiered Strategy for Labor Exchange Services: The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as the Employment Service (ES) with the mission to assist job seekers in finding jobs and employers in finding qualified workers. ES provides a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to: (a) job search assistance, (b) job referral and placement assistance for job seekers, (c) reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and (d) recruitment services to employers with job openings. Depending on the needs of the labor market, other services such as job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities and aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate, job search workshops, and referral to training may be made available. ES services are co-located in Illinois workNet Centers and local Illinois Department of Employment Security offices. ES staff completes the Illinois workNet training and uses the portal with their service strategy.

Registrations of job seekers for services are delivered in one of three modes: self-assisted, staff-assisted, and totally assisted service delivery approaches.

- **Self-assisted Registration Service:** The Illinois Skills Match (ISM) system is a computerized, self-service, job matching system that allows individuals to enter their own employment registration followed by an automatic search of employer job orders. ISM is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via the Internet. This self-service strategy allows customers to execute the labor exchange process without IDES staff involvement.

ISM maintains a growing pool of thousands of available, qualified job seekers, plus an extensive variety of jobs at every skill level in hundreds of industries and occupations in Illinois. The system automatically selects and matches qualified job seekers with suitable employers. The job seeker's skills and educational background are matched with the employer's requirements. Once a job seeker indicates interest in a job or an employer in a job seeker, immediate communications are sent out via email, telephone, or mail. The job

seeker and employer decide how much or how little information to send to the prospective candidate and ISM sends the communication.

The IDES Phone Notification System (PNS) places calls to jobseekers registered with Illinois Skills Match to inform them about job matches, employer recruitments, local job fairs, and other events that may benefit them in their job search. In addition to a standardized message which notifies ISM registrants of successful job matches, each Illinois workNet Center has the ability to customize additional messages to promote local events of interest. The system, which can make up to 2000 calls per day, will be used to support the marketing of Illinois workNet Center events, partner events, and, where appropriate, significant business recruitment needs. In areas where there is a significant limited-English speaking population, the PNS message is also recorded in Spanish.

- **Staff-assisted Registration Service:** This service includes assistance by state employees who provide assistance in coaching individuals on the use of ISM or the America's Job Bank suite of systems. This registration service may involve staff assistance in any stage of the registration process such as: (a) identifying and/or entry of the individual's skills, education or personal information, (b) providing services to screen job seeker qualifications for referral to job opportunities, and (c) interviewing matched candidates, and/or providing information to the individual on behalf of the employer.
- **Totally Assisted Registration Services:** Totally staff-assisted registration services are available to job seekers who have barriers that limit their ability to register by computer. Such barriers may include: (a) not having access to a computer or the Internet, (b) not being familiar with how to use the ISM system, (c) lacking reading skills, or (d) physical limitations that preclude or limit the individual's ability to use a computer.

IDES also undertakes extended recruitment efforts on behalf of employers when requested. In such cases, total staff assistance with job seeker registrations may be necessary. For example, where a computer with access to the Internet is not available, job seekers complete a paper application and staff follow-up by entering the job seeker's registration into the ISM, on their behalf. This situation may occur when conducting job fairs, mass recruiting efforts, and advertising to recruit candidates through newspapers, trade journals, television, and radio.

Job seekers who are Veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance. In addition, the system provides specialized attention and service to individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm-workers, ex-offenders, minorities, older workers, and youth.

Section II. Service Delivery

Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

Question IX.C.1.a. Describe state strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers have universal access to the minimum required core services as described in §134(d)(2).

In its response, the state should address core services for adults, dislocated workers, and target populations, especially those given preference in the WIA Adult program in the Recovery Act – recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals.

Core and Intensive Services: Illinois provides the following types of core and intensive services to adults and dislocated workers, delivered through physical Illinois workNet Centers, state agency partners, including the Illinois Department of Employment Security; a broad range of community partners; and via the Illinois workNet portal (www.illinoisworknet.com):

- Job Search Skills Training
- Job Search Assistance
- Job / Career Counseling
- Employability Skills Training
- Resource Room / Internet Access
- Resume Workshops
- Local Labor Market Orientation
- Interviewing Skills Training
- Job Fairs
- Assessment
- Job Clubs
- Placement Assistance
- Job Coaching
- Other Core Services

Delivery of services through physical centers will be supplemented through Illinois workNet, which is currently being deployed statewide. The One-Stop Redesign Task Force of the Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB) recommended developing a Web-based portal to expand the delivery of workforce services throughout the state. The state has undertaken an ambitious effort to use advanced computer and telecommunications technology to expand access to universal (core) services and improve access to intensive and training services. This project is providing an effective and cost efficient strategy to create greater access to these services. Implementation of the portal has leveraged current technology investments in state education and workforce development agencies. The task force recommendations were endorsed by the IWIB and state education and workforce development agencies.

A number of strategies have emerged in Illinois workNet centers across the state to avoid duplication of core services. These strategies include: Designing Illinois workNet Centers to facilitate easy access to all customers through appropriate rebranded signage, shared waiting rooms, and greeters to assist clients to quickly navigate Center services. All Centers have

updated signage to reinforce the Illinois workNet Center brand and to communicate the range of workforce services to customers. These signs are visible outside and inside Centers.

- Inviting all partners to complete Illinois workNet training, including the Certified Illinois workNet Advisor Online Course, and to use the integration and other training resources for staff available through the portal's Workforce Professional's Pathway.
- Using a statewide marketing plan that assures a consistent message, look and feel. Each LWIB/LWIA can download locally customizable marketing materials ranging from brochures and flyers, to print advertisements and billboards, to banners, posters, and web ads.
- Introducing new customers to Center services through orientation workshops hosted by all partners, so clients are made aware of the complete range of services and related eligibility requirements. Jointly delivered job search workshops are also typical. Local partner staff use Illinois workNet portal and program resources to advertise workshops and as a component of workshops. For example, job search workshops feature using the portal to find jobs.
- Supporting a resource room where consistent access to labor market information, job search tools, and other web-based resources are provided through the Illinois workNet portal. Staff completes the Certified Illinois workNet Advisor Online Course to assure a consistent quality of information. Resource rooms are set up to guide users to the portal through use of quick tips, posters, information sheets, and setting the portal as the default home page.
- Establishing business service teams (BSTs) to ensure that local businesses have easy access to all Illinois workNet Center services. Teams typically include representatives from the WIA program, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), and the local community colleges. Other partners are also frequently included, such as representatives from Adult Education, the Department of Human Services (DHS), DHS' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS-DRS), and operators of Title V, Older Americans programs. BST services typically include: Coordinated employer outreach, basic labor exchange services, customized applicant recruitment, employment and training services (e.g., on-the-job and customized training), job fairs, labor market information, and workshops on issues such as ADA compliance, Unemployment Insurance, OSHA requirements, and tax credits. The Illinois workNet portal and program offer BSTs Certified Illinois workNet Business Advisor Online Training and a set of value-added services they can offer employers. These services include: No cost job postings to the Illinois workNet CareerBuilder Key Sector Job Board, business branding pages used to educate the public on key sectors and related jobs, marketing materials, and training and access to post business information to the portal.

ES Employer Services: As with job seekers, employer services use both self-accessed and staff-assisted delivery strategies. Employer services include Web-based systems to access: (a) labor market information, (b) employment rules and regulations, and (c) tools to help employers to self manage their workforce needs.

Staff-assisted employer services include an array of labor exchange services. Labor exchange services offered to employers, in addition to referral of job seekers, include: (a) assistance in development of job order requirements, (b) matching job seeker experience with job requirements, skills and other attributes, (c) assisting employers with special recruitment needs, (d) arranging job fairs, (e) assisting employers analyze hard-to-fill job orders, (f) assisting with job restructuring, and (g) helping employers deal with layoffs.

Intensive staff-assisted services include responding to individual employer business needs. This may include assistance with major workforce shifts and/or reductions in the workforce. For example, ES participates in rapid response efforts to assist the downsizing employers to meet their legal responsibilities and to speed the transition of the workforce to new employment opportunities. Due to the economy, ES staff will present reemployment workshop information during the on-site rapid response events. In-addition, the ES can provide or facilitate employer access to human resource information and consultation visits. Subjects ranging from a focus on reducing absenteeism, development of apprentice programs, workforce training resources to meeting Equal Employment Opportunity regulations, to Unemployment Insurance information, TQM, and specialized labor market studies are available from local and/or state resources.

Section II. Service Delivery

Question IX.C.1.c. Describe how the state will integrate resources provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIA Title I for adults and dislocated workers, as well as resources provided by required One-Stop partner programs, to deliver core services. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)

In its response, the state should address how it will integrate resources provided under the Recovery Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and WIA Title I for adults and dislocated workers, as well as resources provided by required One-Stop partner programs. For example, how will the state use these resources to provide significant funding for low-income and low-skilled workers that help them access the services and training needed to pursue family-supporting jobs.

Integration of Resources: Illinois workNet partners' services are coordinated locally through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process. The Illinois Workforce Investment Board issued policy guidance on cost sharing and MOU negotiations. This guidance contained recommendations as to the structure and content of MOUs. The IWIB encourages maximum flexibility in Illinois workNet system design, while still requiring local partners to address a comprehensive range of service delivery and operational issues (e.g., avoidance of duplication). See Section VII of this plan for a detailed discussion of the IWIB MOU related recommendations.

To assist local partners negotiate MOUs, the state provided a service matrix (see Attachment C), which describes the minimum core services to be made available in at least one comprehensive center in each workforce area by each partner. The matrix is designed to serve as a starting point for local negotiations concerning additional programs and services that will be made available through the local Illinois workNet delivery systems.

All Illinois workNet partners must participate in the MOU process. This applies to the coordination of Wagner-Peyser services with other Illinois workNet services as well as services provided through the TANF and Food Stamp Employment and Training programs (i.e., the state mandated optional partners). However, more specific to Wagner-Peyser services, a number of strategies have emerged in Illinois workNet Centers across the state to avoid duplication of core services. These strategies include:

- Designing Illinois workNet Centers to facilitate easy access to all customers through appropriate signage, shared waiting rooms, and greeters to assist clients to quickly navigate center services. In Illinois workNet Centers and IDES offices with queues waiting at the reception counter, staff will ascertain customers' needs and refer them to the resource

room, update their ISM registration, and provide available employment services to facilitate prompt assistance.

- Introducing new customers to center services through orientation workshops hosted by all partners, so clients are made aware of the complete range of services and related eligibility requirements. Jointly delivered job search workshops are also typical.
- Supporting a resource room where a wide range of labor market information and job search related products are available. The resource rooms are open to all populations and staff is available to assist customers who need help to access the computer systems or other materials. Recovery Act funding will provide for additional resources, including staff.
- Establishing business service teams (BSTs) to ensure that local businesses have easy access to all services of the Illinois workNet system. Teams typically include representatives from the WIA program, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), and the local community colleges. Other partners are also frequently included such as representatives from Adult Education, the Department of Human Services (DHS), DHS' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS-DRS), and operators of Title V, Older Americans programs. BST services typically include: coordinated employer outreach, basic labor exchange services, customized applicant recruitment, employment and training services (e.g., on-the-job and customized training), job fairs, labor market information, and workshops on issues such as ADA compliance, Unemployment Insurance, OSHA requirements, and tax credits.

Section II. Service Delivery

Question IX.C.3.a. Describe the Governor's vision for increasing training access and opportunities for individuals including the investment of WIA Title I funds and the leveraging of other funds and resources. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)

In its response, the state should describe how the state will increase training access and opportunities for individuals, including the investment of WIA Title I funds and Recovery Act funds, and the leveraging of other funds and resources. How will the state use contracts with institutions of higher education and other training providers (as described in Section 6 of this TEGL) to maximize funds to the greatest benefit?

Illinois is strongly committed to increasing access to training. To align with informal guidance from the legislative and executive branches of the federal government, DCEO encouraged all LWIAs to devote the vast majority of Recovery Act funds toward direct training costs. DCEO analyzed the planned commitment to Recovery Act training in both funding and WIA enrollments in each LWIA. This analysis was provided to each LWIB to let the local policymakers in each area know how their area compared to the statewide high, low and average rates.

DCEO embarked on an unprecedented level of outreach and cooperation with new state agency partners such as: the Department of Transportation, Department of Human Services, Department of Natural Resources and the Historic Preservation Agency. Together these agencies continue to investigate opportunities to leverage or align resources to create greater access to training.

In March and April, LWIAs were informed how Recovery Act funding would be distributed across the various agencies. Key to this was to highlight which programs were expected to create job openings or demand for specific training. This early warning effort has generated discussion among the local areas on how to best target their investments to take advantage of Recovery Act funds earmarked for energy and IT infrastructure improvements, among others.

DCEO strongly encouraged LWIAs to consider the use of contracts for training with institutions of higher education and other qualified training providers. In March 2009, LWIAs were specifically encouraged to reach out to their community colleges to investigate innovative methods of partnering to provide increased access to training. Our partners at the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) reiterated this message of communication, cooperation and alignment and leveraging of resources to increase access to training.

LWIAs were also made aware of “green” programs of instruction already in place across the State. ICCB provided information on the type of training, degrees or certificates that could be earned, and identified the community colleges with specific green programs. LWIAs were encouraged to investigate opportunities for placing WIA participants in these programs.

DCEO requested a waiver that expands the criteria for exceptions to how training services are provided in Section 663.400. The exception will allow local areas to use regular WIA formula funding for the purchase of class size training projects.

DCEO and ICCB have recently partnered on innovative demonstration projects for bridge programs. This is training that allows under skilled clients to quickly improve their reading and math skills so that they may enter bona fide training programs that lead to meaningful, self-sustaining employment. These demonstration projects have positioned Illinois to be ready to implement additional bridge programs using Recovery Act funding, again increasing access to training to some of our harder to serve clients.

IWP has begun discussions with ICCB to expand the use of bridge programs throughout the State. To assist the expansion of bridge programs and class size training projects in general, DCEO is interested in helping streamline the process for procuring contracted training services to the extent prudent and possible. DCEO will also consider how reporting requirements on class size projects may impact how quickly and widespread they are used by the LWIAs and community colleges while keeping in mind federally mandated reporting requirements.

DCEO asked LWIBs to review their local policies for class size projects, Incumbent Worker training, ITAs, supportive services and needs related payments. Areas were asked to consider updating or creating any local policies necessary to take full advantage of Recovery Act funding.

DCEO also requested LWIAs to update their youth provider list to incorporate any provider new to the system by May, 2009. This list is posted on the DCEO website and Illinois workNet as another resource for individuals to identify training providers.

Section II. Service Delivery

Question IX.A.5. What models/templates/approaches does the state recommend and/or mandate for service delivery in the One-Stop Career Centers? For example, do all One-Stop Career Centers have a uniform method of organizing their service delivery to business customers? Is there a common individual assessment process utilized in every One-Stop Career Center? Are all One-Stop Career Centers required to have a resource center that is open to anyone? (§§112(b)(2) and 111(d)(2).)

In its response, the state should describe its models/templates/approaches for service delivery in the One-Stop Career Centers, particularly whether the state is adjusting its approach to deliver increased levels of services with funds received under the Recovery Act.

- Do all One-Stop Career Centers have a uniform method of organizing their service delivery to business customers?
- Is there a common individual assessment process utilized in every One-Stop Career Center?
- What approaches will be used to ensure funds are targeted to those most in need, including low-income, public assistance recipients, persons with disabilities, etc.?

How will states streamline the sequence of service to facilitate individual access to needed services and training?

Recommended Models, Templates, and Approaches: The state does not mandate standardized WIA procedures across centers. Local areas have the flexibility to design their own service delivery strategies. However, the state supports a variety of strategies to facilitate sharing of best practices among the centers, such as monthly Illinois Workforce Partners meetings. Illinois workNet Center operators are quick to learn from each other and adopt service strategies that have been proven in other areas of the state. As a result, a number of common strategies have emerged over time, which are typically used in Illinois' workNet Centers. These strategies include:

- Designing Illinois workNet Centers to facilitate easy access to all customers through appropriate rebranded signage, shared waiting rooms, and greeters to assist clients to quickly navigate Center services. All Centers have updated signage to reinforce the Illinois workNet Center brand and to communicate the range of workforce services to customers. These signs are visible outside and inside Centers.

- Inviting all partners to complete Illinois workNet training, including the Certified Illinois workNet Advisor Online Course, and to use the integration and other training resources for staff available through the portal's Workforce Professional's Pathway.
- Using a statewide marketing plan that assures a consistent message, look and feel. Each LWIB/LWIA can download locally customizable marketing materials ranging from brochures and flyers, to print advertisements and billboards, to banners, posters, and web ads.
- Introducing new customers to Center services through orientation workshops hosted by all partners, so clients are made aware of the complete range of services and related eligibility requirements. Jointly delivered job search workshops are also typical. Local partner staff use Illinois workNet portal and program resources to advertise workshops and as a component of workshops. For example, job search workshops feature using the portal to find jobs.
- Supporting a resource room where consistent access to labor market information, job search tools, and other web-based resources are provided through the Illinois workNet portal. Staff completes the Certified Illinois workNet Advisor Online Course to assure a consistent quality of information. Resource rooms are setup to guide users to the portal through use of quick tips, posters, information sheets, and setting the portal as the default home page.
- Establishing business service teams (BSTs) to ensure that local businesses have easy access to all Illinois workNet Center services. Teams typically include representatives from the WIA program, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), and the local community colleges. Other partners are also frequently included, such as representatives from Adult Education, the Department of Human Services (DHS), DHS' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS-DRS), and operators of Title V, Older Americans programs. BST services typically include: Coordinated employer outreach, basic labor exchange services, customized applicant recruitment, employment and training services (e.g., on-the-job and customized training), job fairs, labor market information, and workshops on issues such as ADA compliance, Unemployment Insurance, OSHA requirements, and tax credits. The Illinois workNet portal and program offer BSTs Certified Illinois workNet Business Advisor Online Training and a set of value-added services they can offer employers. These services include: No cost job postings to the Illinois workNet CareerBuilder Key Sector Job Board, business branding pages used to educate the public on key sectors and related jobs, marketing materials, and training and access to post business information to the portal.

Targeting Funds to Those Most in Need: Following is the state's policy for giving priority of service to low-income adults and public assistance recipients served with adult funds under

Title I-B of WIA. Guidelines consistent with the following policy have been issued to the local areas.

- WIA adult funds are generally considered to be limited, as that term is used in Section 134(d)(4)(E) of the Act. Therefore, WIA Title I-B adult grant funds budgeted for intensive and training services must be provided on a priority basis to TANF or other low-income individuals who do not otherwise have access to these services through other funding sources.
- The local area must discuss and quantify how the area will comply with this requirement as part of the submission of the local plan required by Section 118. Compliance with this requirement may be demonstrated by the local area in one of two ways: either 51% or more of WIA adult participants enrolled in intensive and training services are from the target population, or 51% or more of the adult WIA funds spent on intensive and training services are expended on the target population.
- Fifty-one percent (51%) is considered to be a minimum percentage of enrollees or expenditures, not a maximum or a ceiling. Local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) are encouraged (and expected) to closely examine their local conditions and to determine what specific percentage (and/or additional program elements) are necessary to meet the requirements and intent of Section 134(d)(4)(E) of the Act and Sections 663.600, 663.610 and 663.620 of the WIA regulations. As part of this examination of local conditions, the LWIB should not only consider the total amount of funds available for TANF recipients, but should consider the flexibility of the use of available grants. If WIA adult funds can provide needed intensive or training services that are not allowed under other programs, priority should still be given to TANF recipients to receive those unique WIA services.
- Compliance with this policy is evaluated on an annual basis and is tracked on an ongoing basis using regular monitoring and reporting systems.
- The local area may request a waiver to the targeting requirement to the extent that empirical evidence can be presented that demonstrates that, due to the availability of sufficient alternative funds or insufficient demand from the priority population, the needs of the low-income adult population can be adequately met without targeting. The waiver may be requested as part of the local plan submission, or at a later date.

Each LWIB is responsible to make a determination regarding the local priority system. If the LWIB wishes to establish a priority system under which either 51% or more of WIA adult participants enrolled in intensive and training services are from the target population, or 51% or more of the adult WIA funds spent on intensive and training services are expended on the

target population, then the local plan must discuss and quantify how the area will comply with this requirement in the local plan submission.

If the LWIB wishes to establish a priority system under which less than 51% of WIA adult participants enrolled in intensive and training services are from the target population, and less than 51% of the adult WIA funds spent on intensive and training services are expended on the target population, then it must submit a waiver request. This waiver request must either be part of the initial local plan submission or of a subsequent plan modification.

Sequence of Service: The state requested a waiver of the requirement for delivering services to adults and dislocated workers in a prescribed sequence (core, intensive, and training) with services at one level being a prerequisite to receiving services at the next level. USDOL Region V staff informed the state that a waiver for sequence of service was not required.

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

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

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

The state communicated ETA's clarification during a technical assistance meeting in late April.

Section II. Service Delivery

Youth Services

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

In responding to this question, the state should include the following:

- Describe the anticipated program design for the WIA Youth funds provided under the Recovery Act. Include in this description a program design for both younger, in-school, and older or out-of-school youth (including the 22-24 year olds that can be served with Recovery Act funds).
- Will the state use the Recovery Act funds to fund only a 2009 summer youth program or some combination of 2009 and 2010? If using the funds over two summers, what percentage of funds does the state anticipate using for the first summer?
- If using the funds for summer employment opportunities, describe how the state will deliver summer youth employment opportunities. Will the state operate the program or allocate the funds?
- Describe the types of worksites that will be developed for summer employment, including a mix of public and private sector work experiences, and how the state will ensure that meaningful work experiences will be developed.
- Describe the state's policy for developing the mix of classroom versus worksite time in a summer employment opportunity. Describe the state's policy for determining that summer employment opportunities are connected to academic and/or occupational learning and the types of connections that will be utilized.
- Describe any policies or strategies that the state is implementing to ensure that local areas implement activities that support out-of-school youth during summer and/or non-summer months, such as supportive services, needs-based payments, or day-care.
- Provide the anticipated number of youth to be served with Recovery Act funds, including the anticipated number of summer employment opportunities created with Recovery Act funds.

Planning Youth Services: At the state level, planning for youth services through the Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB) is proceeding. State agencies serving youth represented on the State Board include the: Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE); Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE); Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO); Illinois Community College Board (ICCB); Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES); Illinois

Department of Human Services (DHS); and DHS' Division of Rehabilitation Services (separately represented). Local youth serving agencies are also represented on the IWIB.

At the local level, Youth Councils required by Section 117 of WIA provide the focal point for comprehensive planning. Illinois will continue to support local Youth Councils as long as those councils are required by statute. Illinois intends to support their ongoing development throughout the period of this plan. In particular, Illinois will emphasize the ongoing role of Youth Councils in a continuing and comprehensive youth planning process. If the requirement for Youth Councils is eliminated due to reauthorization legislation, the state will continue to support such councils where they are voluntarily continued.

The local areas have been directed to operate their youth programs supported by Recovery Act funds just as they do with those supported by WIA funds with exceptions only as outlined in the States policy on Youth Programs supported by Recovery Act funds. The intent is that the local areas will design programs that expend a majority of funds (and in some local areas all of the funds) provided by the Recovery Act within the summer of 2009.

The local areas are allowed the flexibility in designing their youth programs according to the needs of the youth population they serve. This flexibility is especially critical to the design of a youth program supported with Recovery Act funds. The diversity of participants to this program including the hard-to-serve youth and the extended age range to include youths aged 14-24 provides a unique challenge to tailor the program design to identify age-appropriate career goals.

The state has allocated the Recovery Act funds to the local areas to develop summer youth programs. An additional \$6 million of the state's allotment has been set aside for statewide summer activities with a portion potentially earmarked for the statewide initiatives. DCEO is working with other state agencies and government and non-profit partners to provide summer public service employment opportunities to disadvantaged youth that will allow them to gain valuable work experience and education and explore careers and volunteer opportunities.

DCEO is currently developing initiative projects in three public service areas:

- Natural Resource Conservation (with Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Illinois Historic Preservation Agency)
- Transportation (with Illinois Department of Transportation)
- Food and Nutrition (Local Foods Focus)

All Public Service Summer Youth Program will have three major components:

- **Work Projects**—Individual and team projects supervised by professionals that provide students with career-related work experience and career exploration opportunities
- **Education Program**—Education program developed by education curriculum specialists that apply and integrate language arts, math, science and other subject areas in the context of the public service area. This program also will provide students with information on related careers in the public and private sectors.
- **Work Readiness Program**--provided through Illinois workNet, the program will provide students with the work readiness skills needed for employment.

Additionally, youth programs that are not directly linked to one of the three statewide initiative projects will incorporate elements of the three major components mentioned above.

The State's youth policy requires the local areas to develop a policy on the provision of supportive services including transportation, stipends, day care, and needs related payments (when appropriately co-enrolled as an adult). The local areas are to utilize these supportive services to enable youth to participate in programs that they might not otherwise be able to, including out-of-school youth.

The state policy regarding a mix of classroom versus worksite time is that all youth programs must consider: incorporation of green job work experiences, connections with local organized labor, integration of work-based and classroom-based learning activities, and strategies to engage out-of-school youth. These strategies are to include: work experiences, training opportunities, transitional job models, support for new and innovative strategies, and co-enrollment in adult training services.

According to data submitted to DCEO in local plans, the LWIAs plan to serve approximately 14,000 youth under the Recovery Act. At least hundreds more will be served by statewide activity projects funded directly by DCEO.

Section II. Service Delivery

Veterans' Priority of Service

Question IX.C.5.b. What policies and strategies does the state have in place to ensure that, pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L.107-288) (38 USC 4215), priority of service is provided to veterans (and certain spouses) who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor?

In answering this question, the state should outline the changes to state and local policies and strategies that make them sufficient to meet the requirements of 20 CFR 1010.230, published at 73 Fed. Reg. 78132 on December 19, 2008, of the Jobs for Veterans Act regulations issued on December 19, 2008 implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in Department of Labor job training programs. This includes providing the following information and/or attachments to the State Plan modification:

- A description of the changes to policies for the delivery of priority of service by the State Workforce Agency or Agencies, Local Workforce Investment Boards, and One-Stop Career Centers for all qualified job training programs delivered through the state's workforce system. The description must include how:
 1. The state policies ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry and given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service.
 2. The state policies ensure that covered persons are aware of:
 - a. Their entitlement to priority of service;
 - b. The full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service; and
 - c. Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/ or services.
- A description or copy of the state's policy requiring Local Workforce Investment Boards to develop and include policies in their Local Plan to implement priority of service for the local One-Stop Career Centers and for service delivery by local workforce preparation and training providers.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued new regulations implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, as provided by the Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA), and as specified by the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006. JVA calls for priority of service to be implemented by all "qualified job training programs," defined as "any workforce preparation, development or delivery program or service that is directly funded, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor." Since enactment of JVA in 2002, priority of service has been implemented under policy guidance issued by the Employment and Training Administration. The purpose of these regulations is to further articulate how priority of service

is to be applied across all new and existing qualified job training programs. The new regulations appear in the December 19, 2008 edition of the *Federal Register* and are effective as of January 19, 2009.

Identifying and Informing Covered Persons

- The regulations require all recipients of funds for qualified job training programs to identify covered persons at the *point of entry* to programs and/or services so they can take full advantage of priority of service. Point of entry includes physical locations, such as Illinois workNet Centers, as well as web sites and other virtual service delivery resources.
- The regulations require all recipients to implement policies to ensure that covered persons are aware of:
 - Their entitlement to priority of service;
 - The full array of programs and services available to them; and,
 - Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services

The new law established a priority of service requirement applicable to all DOL programs offering employment and training related services. "Priority of service" means that a "covered person", as described below, who is eligible for a program, is to be given priority over non-veterans for the receipt of program services, notwithstanding any other "priority" provisions of the law.

Under the Act, a "covered person" is entitled to priority of service under twenty DOL-funded workforce programs including WIA Title I-B adult, dislocated worker and youth programs, statewide activity programs, National Emergency Grants (NEG), and the Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA). A covered person is defined as:

- A veteran, or
- The spouse of any of the following individuals:
 - ▶ Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
 - ▶ Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days: missing in action, captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;

- Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability; or,
- Any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

For purposes of this policy, the term “veterans’ priority of service” means that a covered person, who meets program eligibility requirements, is to be given priority over non-veterans for the receipt of all services provided under the program, notwithstanding any other provision of law. Local areas are not required to change their allocations among services to reserve funds for veterans, but are required to ensure that eligible veterans are given priority over non-veterans for all available services. Veterans’ priority of services cannot be waived.

IDES has implemented policies pertaining strictly to employment services for veterans and eligible persons and they are as follows:

- Upon entering any state Employment Office, all veterans must complete a Veterans’ Information Form that is used as an initial screening tool to determine if the veteran has immediate barriers to employment and/or a need to be referred to supportive services.
- Veterans identified by their Veterans’ Information Form as needing assistance are then referred to the Veterans’ Employment Representative for assessment interviews to determine possible barriers to employment. If training or educational needs are identified, the veteran is referred to the local WIA staff for these services.
- Illinois’ Labor Exchange System, Illinois Skills Match, automatically populates all registered and matching veterans to the top of all job match lists based on their entered employment data.

Veterans are referred to supportive service WIA programs for training. All veterans’ employment representatives have a working knowledge of the basic eligibility requirements for these types of available training.

In addition, all IDES local office staff are mandated to provide priority of service to veterans.

Within WIA Title I-B, the Adult program has mandatory priority provision established by law requiring priority of service for intensive and training services to low income and public assistance individuals. Veterans meeting program eligibility requirements are to be served within the context of giving priority to public assistance and low-income persons for intensive and training services. In implementing Veterans’ priority in the Adult program, the first population to receive intensive and training services would be public assistance and low-income veterans; then public assistance and low-income non-veterans; then veterans who are not low-income or receiving public assistance; and, lastly would be adults who are non-veterans who are not low-income or receiving public assistance.

DCEO will reinforce the need to provide priority of service for covered persons within WIA Eligibility policy that is currently being revised. Additionally, DCEO is developing a "NOTICE" of priority of service poster that is going to be distributed to all Illinois workNet centers with guidance that this poster at a minimum must be displayed at the point of entry of Illinois workNet centers. DCEO and IDES staff met in May 2009 to discuss how the two departments can collaborate to ensure veterans priority of service standards are met.

State policy requires that all WIA grantees and subgrantees include grant language in their grants and contracts to ensure that those entities are fully aware of the law's requirements and of their obligation to design service delivery strategies accordingly. All requests for proposals (RFPs), grants/contracts, and (where feasible) memoranda of understanding, or other service provision agreements, must be administered in compliance with the Veterans' priority provisions and must include DOL's required language stating such.

Section II. Service Delivery

Service Delivery to Targeted Populations

Question IX.C.4.a. Describe the state's strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the state's One-Stop delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farm workers, women, minorities, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, limited English proficiency individuals, and people with disabilities). (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)

In responding to this question, the state should:

- Describe the strategy the state will use to effectively implement the Recovery Act priority of service for low-income individuals and recipients of public assistance under the WIA Adult program.
- Indicate how the state will use Wagner-Peyser resources to support individuals with disabilities, such as funding disability program navigators in One-Stop Career Centers, or assisting other targeted populations.

Special Populations: Dislocated workers and displaced homemakers make up the eligible population for services provided through the Title I-B dislocated worker grant to the state. Therefore, these two populations will be targeted for the full range of Title I-B services throughout Illinois.

Low-income adults and veterans are provided priority access to WIA Title I-B services. WIA Title I-B adult grant funds budgeted for intensive and training services must be provided on a priority basis to TANF or other low-income individuals who do not otherwise have access to these services through other funding sources. Similarly, local workforce investment areas (LWIAs) are required to ensure that eligible veterans are given priority over non-veterans for WIA intensive and training services. In addition, LVER/DVOPS staff located in Illinois workNet Centers and IDES local offices provide Veterans' priority for Wagner-Peyser services. To allow for provision of services to the increased number of veterans filing for unemployment due to the economy and in anticipation of those veterans that will be returning from duty, IDES has intensified its hiring process to ensure that priority of service can continue to be delivered to the veteran population by the entire IDES staff.

All IDES staff provide Wagner-Peyser funded services to all populations, including individuals with disabilities. In addition, the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) is available in each IDES local office or Illinois workNet Center to provide employment services to any disabled veteran. Intensive case management services are also provided for any disabled veteran with a barrier to employment.

Pursuant to the requirements of 29 CFR Part 37, *Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Final Rule*, the state in partnership with the LWIAs develops a comprehensive “methods of administration” (MOA) document that provides a unified message throughout the state to ensure equal access to services. A large component of the MOA, addresses how the LWIA provides universal access to Title I-B financially assisted programs and activities. Steps taken locally must include reasonable efforts to include members of sexes, various racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals in differing age groups. The state provides technical assistance and training to local areas to ensure appropriate implementation of the MOA.

The state also contractually obligates Title I-B fiscal agents to comply with all federal equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation. The state’s planning procedures and participant tracking systems provide for measurement of the registration of individuals from various populations as well as their access to various Title I-B services. Using these systems and on-site reviews, the state will regularly monitor compliance with the relevant federal laws and MOA provisions. Corrective action will be taken and technical assistance provided, as needed.

UI Claimants and Worker Profiling: IDES reemployment services have been established to provide more intensive, personalized services to a targeted group of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants - those with identified skills for high-demand industries and occupations. The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and its Illinois workNet partners work closely to implement UI and Eligibility Reemployment Assistance (REA) programs and services in Illinois.

The specific goals of the UI REA are to:

- Identify high-demand occupations and the skills required by those occupations;
- Identify UI claimants who have skills (either immediate or transferable) that meet those needed by identified employers in high-demand industries and occupations;
- Reduce the time between initial UI claims and delivery of reemployment services;
- Speed up claimants return to work through in-person and individualized job assessment and services that avoid a "one size fits all" approach;
- Enhance orientation and assessment services to targeted claimants;

- Improve data-sharing between UI, reemployment services, and Illinois workNet partners; and,
- Promote cross-office training of best practices and information exchange to share innovative and successful reemployment practices.

Illinois offers a unique advantage in the structure of its UI offices and Illinois workNet Centers. Whereas many states separate the functions and location of the UI and Illinois workNet Centers, Illinois co-houses these two services. Research has shown that better links between UI, Employment Services, and WIA systems and staff are imperative to successful reemployment systems (see, for instance Karen Needels, Walter Corson, & Michelle Van Noy, “Evaluation of the Significant Improvement Demonstration Grants for the Provision of Reemployment Services for UI Claimants: Final Report.” Mathematica Policy Research, inc., July 2003). This co-location ensures smooth coordination of services and a continuous feedback of information and exchange between all programs. This highly coordinated system also eliminates the need for the client to visit several offices for services. Illinois also cross-trains its UI and employment services staff in all locales to be able to provide both services to claimants. This coordination also ensures that the claimant information is up-to-date, and that all service providers have the same information and understanding when it comes to the claimant’s needs and background.

Under the UI REA program, the state intends to further enhance and strengthen this coordinated personal service approach by ensuring that Illinois workNet Center staff has the capacity to provide UI information to customers in all offices. This will be accomplished by cross-marketing the Illinois workNet Center and UI job support materials and by promoting more cross training of UI and Illinois workNet Center staff, including keeping each abreast of any changes and program improvements in both UI and Illinois workNet Centers .

Reemployment workshops will be emphasized by IDES to assist the increased number of unemployed workers filing for UI in Illinois. Through the use of Illinois Skills Match, labor market information and the skills gap analysis, IDES will identify UI claimants for attendance to reemployment workshops. This will allow IDES to pinpoint those UI claimants who have filed new claims for UI and who have skills that match those needed in high-demand occupations and industries. Those individuals identified as at risk of exhausting benefits will be given priority in the process. By directing reemployment services to this group, the system will both fill employer demands for skilled workers and move UI claimants quickly into new jobs. By alerting claimants to the availability of jobs (which they may not be aware exist), or by identifying skills that are transferable to these high-demand areas, the state serves both worker and employer, thus promoting economic growth. This method will encourage UI claimants to consider their transferable skills rather than feeling locked into one specific occupation.

To assist in the provision of reemployment services to UI claimants in the most timely manner possible, IDES staff will be an integral part of the state's Rapid Response teams by providing reemployment workshop information at the rapid response on-site visits for layoffs and closings of businesses.

Section III. Operations

Transparency and Public Comment

Instruction from Section II of State Planning Guidance Plan Development Process: Include a description of the process the state used to make the Plan available to the public and the outcome of the state’s review of the resulting public comments. (§§111(g) and 112(b)(9).)

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

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

1. Transparency

Illinois is promoting transparency through a variety of measures. In the larger context, the Illinois federal stimulus team will establish procedures for tracking and reporting on stimulus grants and programs that meet and exceed the federal

requirements. These data and reports will be published on recovery.illinois.gov.

Recovery Act Public Presentations including Planning and Transparency Issues

ARRA Regional Roundtables

- Ina IL March 20
- Lisle IL March 26
- Springfield IL April 3
- Chicago IL April 8

State Workforce Staff Briefing

- Springfield/Chicago/Marion April 17

Local Workforce Staff Conference

- Springfield April 20-21

In addition, the Illinois federal stimulus team is planning to provide users with the ability to directly download raw data on projects and programs as data becomes available, possibly including: description, location, status, and budget.

DCEO and the Illinois Workforce Partnership co-sponsored a series of four Recovery Act Regional Roundtables with Local Leaders. These meetings were held between March 20 and April 8, and provided local decision makers with key information about the Recovery Act, how DCEO was working to implement Recovery Act provisions, and an overview of the DOL/ETA and State of Illinois strategic vision.

DCEO staff briefly outlined the planned strategy for the state and local planning process, and described the WIA waivers under consideration. The transparency and accountability provisions of the Recovery Act were highlighted. This public discussion

served two purposes: 1) to make attendees aware they will be able to track Recovery Act projects and grant awards; and 2) workforce development staff and leaders on notice that their organizations must adapt to provide the required levels of transparency.

These meetings were attended by nearly 700 individuals from businesses in key sectors, community based organizations, local elected and appointed officials, economic and workforce development. Each session provided the opportunity for attendees to ask questions. Questions were recorded from each session and answers were posted online as official federal guidance became available.

The regional local leaders meetings were quickly followed by briefings for workforce development staff. A briefing was held for DCEO Bureau of Workforce Development staff to provide the same information that had been discussed at the regional meetings, and to give them the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues. This meeting stressed the importance of transparency and accountability and also the need to heighten communication both internally and externally.

Local workforce staff were offered a two day mini-conference that provided technical assistance on April 20-21, 2009. This conference targeted information to key LWIA staff responsible for fiscal, planning, policy, reporting and case management. Again, the need for transparency, accountability and open communication was emphasized. The plenary and breakout sessions included discussions related to the State Plan modification process, as well as an in-depth discussion on requested WIA waivers.

The Illinois Workforce Investment Board State Plan Task Force reviewed the plan modification process and preliminary versions of the draft modification document. Upon final review from the Task Force, the draft plan modification was posted online with instructions for submitting public comment to DCEO. Comments received are listed as an addendum to the plan modification along with responses.

The Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) was invited to submit their ideas for consideration for inclusion in the plan modification. IWP provided valued input on six questions from TEGL 14-08.

2. Process for Public Availability

The draft plan modification was posted online May 29, 2009, following the final review of the State Plan Task Force. A notice was published in the newspaper of record and the

draft plan available for public review. IWP was sent a copy for distribution to their membership consisting of the local workforce development areas. A period for meaningful public comment was provided and comments submitted to DCEO are included with the plan modification.

Section III. Operations

Increasing Services for Universal Access

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

In its response, the state should explain how it will efficiently and effectively use its Wagner-Peyser Recovery Act funds to support the hiring of sufficient levels of staff in the limited time period available for state One-Stop Career Centers to provide universal access and services required to meet the needs of increased numbers of customers in the economic downturn.

Common Data Systems: The State of Illinois has systems in place for the coordination and sharing of data among partner programs as outlined in the Act. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) have long standing data sharing agreements in place. These agreements facilitate access between partner programs to data on common customers while minimizing duplicative systems costs. Shared data facilitates the coordination of services to customers, allows for common reporting, and facilitates the calculation of performance outcomes. Service coordination is enhanced through the use of shared data to determine program eligibility, report on job placements, and track a customer's progression through the workforce development system.

These data sharing arrangements have been used to enhance services and accountability in several ways. Information from the DHS is used to assist in verifying eligibility of TANF and Food Stamp recipients for WIA Title I-B program participation and for verifying eligibility for the Worker's Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Information from IDES is utilized in determining eligibility of dislocated workers for Title I-B services, and Trade (TAA). DCEO matches Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records from IDES to calculate performance outcomes for its WIA Title I-B common customers. IDES uses information from DCEO to report on the status of UI profilees, and to verify continued eligibility of trade-impacted workers for extended benefits. Local level partners also have access to the Illinois Skills Match system to assist in job placement.

DCEO has a robust data system in place to facilitate service to customers. Through the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS), data is stored on each customer from program enrollment through follow-up after job placement. IWDS utilizes an Internet-based browser with a centralized database that supports all Title I-B and Trade Act business functions. As a

result of the co-enrollment pilot, several enhancements and modifications have been made to system functions to improve trade service reporting and tracking, and additional changes are in process. This system is capable of producing reports on common customers such as job seekers, TANF recipients, and UI claimants. When requested, reports are produced for common customers that have received services.

IDES and DCEO are partnering to integrate the existing labor exchange system, Illinois Skills Match (ISM), and the Illinois workNet system. The goal is to have one system that serves the needs of both job seekers and employers. Use of ISM, with necessary enhancements for tracking and reporting performance for the Recovery Act will continue as IDES is investigating additional labor exchange and reporting system options.

Illinois supplements existing data sharing arrangements between IDES and DCEO to include partner program service information. This allows us to meet the requirement for cross-partner program participation periods and to work toward consolidated performance reporting as required by the new WISPR (Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting). In addition a policy providing common participant definitions is under development and will be issued. This policy will assist the LWIAs in providing a streamlined approach to reporting customers.

Illinois workNet also offers convenient, on-demand access to core services and other workforce development services and support. Illinois workNet has the capability of collecting customer information that can be shared with the applicable partner.

Through the use of data sharing agreements and customer services systems, workforce development partners in Illinois are well-positioned to track and report on services provided through all partners' efforts. Access to data is not limited to state level activities. Data is also shared in real time at the local level. Partners can access data on eligibility and receipt of benefits while the customer is present and receiving services.

Recovery Act funding will provide for an increased number of IDES staff. Proposed numbers of additional staff are currently being negotiated. New staff will be hired in all Regions of the state at a volume consistent with the volume of UI claims. The staff hired for the limited time period of the Recovery Act funding will be dedicated to providing more intensive employment services to the increased numbers of individuals filing for unemployment insurance.

Universal Access and Consistency of Services: Illinois issued policy regarding the requirements for a One-Stop center, called Illinois workNet Centers in Illinois, to be considered a comprehensive center, per the requirements of WIA Section 134(c)(2). The state requirements are designed to ensure a level of consistency across centers. The requirements are summarized

in Attachment C, Services Matrix for Comprehensive Centers in Illinois. The state has certified that at least one center in each of the 26 local workforce investment areas meets these standards. The state is also pursuing increased consistency and cost efficient access to universal services through automation. Following are important examples of these efforts.

- **Illinois workNet:** This project uses the Internet to expand access to universal (core) services and improve access to intensive and training services through technology and will help to expand the delivery of workforce services throughout the state. By supplementing the existing physical Illinois workNet Centers and connecting online to an expanded network of agencies and partners (including community and faith-based organizations, technology centers, schools, libraries, and community colleges), the project extends the reach and expands the services of physical Illinois workNet Centers at a fraction of their cost. Implementation of Illinois workNet also leverages current technology investments in state education and various workforce development agencies.
- **BIS Redesign Project:** IDES is in the process of testing and implementing its new Benefit Information System (BIS). The new BIS will provide greater access for individuals in filing unemployment claims and will interface with the Illinois Skills Match (ISM), an online system that provides skills-based job matching services for employers and jobseekers. The new BIS system already provides online UI filing for claimants, offering them access in addition to the phone and in-person filing services now available (see Section II for additional details). When the entire system is implemented, all individuals who are required to register with the employment service will be partially registered when their claim is filed. They will be notified to complete the registration in order to meet the requirements of the Unemployment Insurance Act.
- **Expanded Service Delivery:** Through the process of expanding existing programs and services such as, one-on-one assistance, labor market information analysis and reemployment services, IDES will increase employment service delivery to UI claimants and targeted populations.

The Incumbent Worker Training program was developed in November 2005 through a WIA policy letter. It provides guidance on implementing an approved waiver granting authority to transfer up to ten (10) percent of adult and dislocated worker, allocations to support incumbent worker training programs. These programs assist EDRs and LWIAs in developing a full continuum of training services that address the needs of an existing workforce, the unemployed, underemployed, and new entrants to the labor force. As part of our ARRA strategies for job retention, the Incumbent Worker policy has been revised to decrease the required employer match. A waiver request was submitted to DOL to increase the IW transfer

limit from ten (10) percent to 25 percent, and will be enacted up to the approved level upon approval from DOL.

Section III. Operations

Local Planning Process

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

In responding to this question, states should describe how they are facilitating the use of the local planning process to ensure that local areas are able to update their Local Plans and still quickly and efficiently deliver increased levels of services as intended under the Recovery Act.

Local Planning Process: Each local workforce investment board (LWIB), in partnership with local chief elected officials (CEOs), is required to develop a local plan which must be consistent with the state plan. Illinois issued planning guidelines to CEOs and LWIBs regarding the original submittal of local plans. State planning guidance about the content of local plans conforms to the content requirements listed in WIA Section 118(b). The submittal of local plans must also conform to the process requirements specified at WIA Section 118(c). These requirements include making the plan available for public comment prior to submitting it to the state, accepting comments on the plan, and submitting any comments that disagree with the plan.

The state also issued policy regarding subsequent modifications to local plans. State policy applies the WIA Section 118(c) process requirements to plan modifications. A local plan may be modified for a variety of reasons including significant changes in local economic conditions, changes in the financing available to support WIA Title I-B and partner-provided WIA services, changes to the local board structure, a need to revise strategies to meet performance goals, changes in the methodology for service delivery, or goals of the local board. The state may also require local boards to modify their plans based on changes within the operation of the local area or for compliance with a local corrective action plan based on failure to meet required program performance.

In order for local areas to begin implementing the Recovery Act and to receive the funds in the timeframe outlined in the Recovery Act, local areas were instructed to submit a local plan modification consisting of a letter signed by the CEO and Local Workforce Investment Board Chair requesting that the local plan be extended to June 30, 2010 which is consistent with US DOL's requirement of the states. Local areas were told that they would be required to submit a more comprehensive plan that summarizes how they intend to implement the Recovery Act at a later date.

The state held a technical assistance meeting in late April where a more comprehensive planning process for the Recovery Act was communicated to local administrators and planners in a session dedicated solely to planning. The DCEO Planning Manager also addressed the Illinois Workforce Partnership in early May regarding both the State Plan, and the local plan process. At that time local area leaders were advised the local plan format and questions would very closely follow those in TEGL 14-08 Attachment A, and each LWIA present was provided a hard copy of Attachment A. Over the course of these technical assistance efforts, and regional roundtable meetings on the Recovery Act, the local areas were consistently advised that DOL/ETA asked states to not let the local plan process delay the implementation of the Recovery Act.

The State issued guidance to the local areas outlining the content of the local plans to be consistent with the State Plan and TEGL 14-08. Due to the directive from US DOL that the local planning process should not impede the implementation of the Recovery Act, Illinois waived the 30-day *timeframe* of the public comment period that is mandated in the State's existing local plan modification policy letter to provide for a shorter public comment period. Even though the public comment period is abbreviated, the public comment requirements under WIA section 118 (c) and section 661.345 of the WIA Final Regulations must still be met.

The local areas are to submit their local plans that contain their approach to implementing the Recovery Act as an addendum to their local plans no later than June 30, 2009. Because both the State Plan and the local plans are due at the same time, all workforce development stakeholders have worked in collaboration ensuring that the vision of the Recovery Act is being incorporated into the plans. Local areas were advised to seek guidance from DCEO prior to implementing program changes required immediately by the Recovery Act, especially those related to summer youth employment which began two months prior to the local plan due date.

The Governor delegated authority to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to review and approve local plans. Plans and plan modifications must be submitted with original signatures of all required parties (including the CEO) to DCEO. The plan may be submitted as an entire plan document or as an addendum to the original plan. DCEO maintains records of all local plans and any changes, modifications, and attachments to those plans.

DCEO approves or disapproves local plans and plan modifications in accordance with the process described in WIA Section 118(d). This process requires that a plan submitted to the state be considered approved at the end of the 90-day period beginning on the date the state

receives the plan, unless a written determination to the contrary is provided. The written determination must identify either deficiencies in activities carried out under WIA or that the plan does not comply with WIA. The scope of the review also examines the consistency of local plans with any strategic guidance provided to local areas via inclusion of such guidance in the State Plan.

Section III. Operations

Procurement

Question VIII.F.5. Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the state level to award grants and contracts for activities under title I of WIA, including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts. (§112(b)(16).) (Note: All procurements must comply with OMB requirements codified in 29 CFR Parts 95.40-95.48 and 97.36.)

In answering this question, the state should describe:

- How providers of all youth services will be procured under the Recovery Act. If using funds for summer employment opportunities and the fiscal agent or the state is not operating this program element, please specifically describe procedures for procuring summer employment operational entities and job opportunities.
- How the state will implement the Recovery Act provision that a Local Workforce Investment Board may award a contract to an institution of higher education or other eligible training provider if the local board determines that it would facilitate the training of multiple individuals in high-demand occupations, and if such a contract does not limit customer choice.

DCEO publishes WIA grant opportunities on the DCEO Bureau of Workforce Development website. Each grant opportunity: describes the nature of the initiative including timing, funding, and key program elements; defines eligibility for potential applicants; and the application deadline (if any).

All WIA Recovery Act grants awarded with State discretionary funds, including those grants awarded using a non-competitive method, will be preceded by a Notice of Intent to Award posted on DCEO's website. Each notice will describe the intent of the grant award, the scope of the work involved, the services or products to be delivered and the amount of the award. Each notice will also identify the evaluation process used in the decision to make the award. For grant awards made on a competitive basis, this process will also identify the factors used in the evaluation process, provide for an internal staff review based on these factors and result in a funding recommendation to the Deputy Director. All awards, both competitive and non-competitive, will be approved by the Director or designee.

Summer employment operational entities and job opportunities will predominantly be used, and thus procured, by the local workforce investment areas following OMB requirements and local procurement guidelines. LWIAs may award grants or contracts to institutions of higher learning or other eligible training providers by following established procurement guidelines

and/or by taking advantage of any flexibility provided by Training and Employment Guidance Letters that is passed on to local areas by the State.

The state has a current waiver of procurement of youth providers that may be used when deemed appropriate by DCEO, and also secured approval for an expedited procurement process for summer youth employment programs conducted in 2009 as suggested by DOL/ETA.

Section III. Operations

Technical Assistance

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

In answering this question, the state should describe its strategy for providing training and technical assistance to local areas for all programs funded by the Recovery Act, including whether Recovery Act funds will be used for technical assistance and training to local areas. The state should also address training to be provided to new staff and technical assistance on the creation of a summer employment program.

DCEO moved quickly to provide technical assistance to the field for the American Recovery Act. A series of four regional meetings were conducted (two in late March and two in early April) for key regional decision makers. Individuals invited to attend represented leaders in: healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, labor, economic development, community based organizations and elected officials. Local workforce development invitees included: CEOs, LWIB members and staff, and Title IB Administrators. The presentations and discussion focused on key issues in planning how the state's workforce system could best utilize stimulus funds and to encourage alignment and coordination of ETA workforce funding with other Recovery Act efforts. Summer youth employment and green activities information were also on the agenda.

- The total attendance for the four meetings came to nearly 700 with all 26 LWIAs represented. BWD reached out to other state partners to present at the meetings as well as contribute to the discussions. The Illinois Community College Board, Department of Transportation, Department of Employment Security, AFL-CIO participated in the information sharing event as did other DCEO bureaus which administer numerous programs including: Community Services Block Grant Program, Low Income Energy Assistance Program, Illinois Home Weatherization Program, Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant Program, State Energy Program, Technology and Industrial Competitiveness & Energy Employment Opportunities Grant Program, High Technology School to Work Grant Program, Bridging the Digital Divide Grant Program, Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP), and Small Business Assistance Program.

A statewide ARRA Technical Assistance Roundtable was held April 20 & 21, 2009, to provide more in-depth information to LWIA staff directly responsible for implementation of the Recovery Act. Almost 250 people representing every local

workforce investment area attended the roundtable. In addition to the information presented at the regional meetings, the following topics were addressed:

- Planning - including local plan modification process and issues, state plan modification process update, and incumbent worker projects;
- Policy - including program design, new policies and youth guidance details;
- Performance/Reporting - including IWDS changes for stimulus, timely reporting, performance/IWDS system data entry and implications, outcomes, YSR and assessments;
- Fiscal - including bonus/salary limits, intellectual property rights, cost principles, sub-recipient monitoring, overview of federal/state False Claims Act, support services, pricing of class-sized projects, identifying and reporting accrued expenditures, timeliness of reporting, creating appropriate line items for the grantee report, and emergency procurement procedures for summer 2009 only;
- Illinois workNet including the discussion board, Recovery Act information and other tools available online;
- Innovative Program Models for clients with Multiple Barriers including incumbent workers, unemployed clients, and opportunities through green jobs;
- Registered Apprenticeship – provided by DOL Region V staff.

Eligibility training is underway for new local workforce investment area staff, especially for staff handling summer youth programs.

Technical Assistance Needs:

The local workforce investment boards and Title I-B administrators may request technical from DCEO assistance at any time.

Illinois workNet is increasingly becoming an indispensable tool in providing technical assistance to LWIAs. An online LWIB training module will soon be available through workNet. A two-hour activity is under development to meet the requirements in 08-ARRA-01 (4-14-09) WIA Youth Programs Funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for using Illinois workNet with WIA summer youth programs. Training webinars will be offered to familiarize workforce professionals with utilizing the 2-hour activity. DCEO is in the process of purchasing its own equipment to develop additional webinars on various topics that will be made available

through and stored on the Illinois workNet and DCEO websites. Accessibility to webinars developed by BWD will be very effective in orienting new staff in a timely and efficient manner.

- Additionally, a new Illinois WIA Economic Stimulus Forum has been established and can be accessed through this site. This forum is the primary means for workforce professionals to learn about and respond to the most current information related to the following WIA Economic Stimulus topics: Eligibility, Fiscal, Performance, Trade, and Youth. All posted questions are moderated and a response is posted within one business day. The Illinois WIA Economic Stimulus Forum is moderated by policy staff representing the DCEO Policy Unit.
- DCEO's website includes access to WIA Notices, Policy Letters, TAILs and other pertinent information. Additionally, links are provided to other DCEO bureaus, state workforce partners, and USDOL ETA.

Section III. Operations

Monitoring and Oversight

Question VIII.H. Describe the monitoring and oversight criteria and procedures the state utilizes to move the system toward the state's vision and achieve the goals identified above, such as the use of mystery shoppers, performance agreements. (§112(b)(14).)

In responding to this question, the state should demonstrate, through a monitoring plan or otherwise, that the state monitoring system meets the requirement of 20 CFR 667.410(b)(2) and that the state's plan includes monitoring and oversight of the additional funds provided under the Recovery Act, particularly plans to monitor reemployment services and summer employment, including summer employment worksites.

At a minimum, the state will utilize similar procedures for monitoring and oversight of Recovery Funds as it does with WIA which meets the requirement of 20 CFR 667.410(b)(2). Fiscal and Programmatic monitoring plans are in the process of being developed and will be included in the state's Automation of Compliance Monitoring Events (ACME) system.

These plans will specifically cover monitoring of the summer youth employment component of the Recovery Act. Worksites will be monitored for compliance with statutory, regulatory and policy requirements.

If it is determined that the Recovery Act requires monitoring efforts beyond those already in place, those extraordinary measures will be implemented.

Section III. Operations

Accountability and Performance

Question X.C.1. Describe the state's performance accountability system, including any state-system measures and the state's performance goals established with local areas. Identify the performance indicators and goals the state has established to track its progress toward meeting its strategic goals and implementing its vision for the workforce investment system. (§§112(b)(3) and 136(b)(3).)

- The Recovery Act emphasizes the importance of accountability. Describe the state's overall efforts to hold the state and its local areas accountable for the results of activities funded by the Recovery Act, and how the state will measure whether it has achieved the state's goals for implementation as described in Questions I.C. and I.E. under "State Vision and Priorities."
 - The Recovery Act requires states to report on work readiness to assess the effectiveness of summer employment opportunities for youth. The state should identify its methodology for determining whether a measurable increase in work readiness skills has occurred, and what tools will be used for this determination.
-

Performance Indicators. The State of Illinois adopted the WIA Common Measures for adult and dislocated workers in PY 2007 and for Youth in PY 2008. These measures and accompanying goals will be utilized for WIA Title I-B and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of PY 2009.

The Secretary of Labor has defined three performance measures for adults and dislocated worker programs, and 3 measures for the youth program, which cover all job seeker registrants and served by Title I-B and the ARRA of PY 2009. The measures are defined as follows:

- **Adult Entered Employment Rate (AEER):** Of all adults who were not employed at registration: the number who enter employment in the quarter after exit **divided by** the number who exit during the quarter.
- **Adult Employment Retention Rate (AERR):** Of all adults who are employed in the first quarter after exit: the number of adults who are employed in the second and third quarter after exit **divided by** the number of adults who exit during the quarter.
- **Adult Average Earnings (AAE):** Of all adults who are employed in the first, second, and third quarter after exit: the total earnings in the second quarter plus total earnings in the third quarter after the exit quarter **divided by** the number of adults who exit during the quarter.

- **Dislocated Worker Entered Employment Rate (DEER):** Of all dislocated workers: the number of dislocated workers, who enter employment in the quarter after exit **divided by** the number of dislocated workers who exit during the quarter.
- **Dislocated Worker Employment Retention Rate (DERR):** Of all dislocated workers who are employed in the first quarter after exit: the number of dislocated workers who are employed in the second and third quarter after exit **divided by** the number of dislocated workers who exit during the quarter.
- **Dislocated Worker Average Earnings (DAE):** Of all dislocated workers who are employed in the first, second, and third quarter after exit: the total earnings in the second quarter plus total earnings in the third quarter after the exit quarter **divided by** the number of dislocated workers who exit during the quarter.
- **Attainment of a Degree or Certificate (ADC):** Of those youth enrolled in education (at the date of participation or at any point during the program): the number of youth participants who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate by the end of the third quarter after the exit quarter **divided by** the number of youth participants who exit during the quarter.
- **Placement in Employment or Education (PEER):** Of those youth who are not in post-secondary education or employment (including the military) at the date of participation: the number of youth participants who are in employment (including the military) or enrolled in post-secondary education and/or advanced training/occupational skills training in the first quarter after the exit quarter **divided by** the number of youth participants who exit during the quarter.
- **Literacy and Numeracy Gains (LNG):** Of those out-of-school youth who are basic skills deficient: the number of youth participants who increase one or more educational functioning levels **divided by** the number of participants who have completed a year in the youth program (i.e., one year from the date of the first youth program service **plus** the number of participants who exit before completing a year in the youth program.

Illinois has submitted a waiver requesting a one-year grace period from performance measure outcomes for PY 2009. Should the waiver request be denied, Illinois intends to continue with the current negotiated goals for PY 2009.

State Proposed Goals for WIA Measures. Table 12 provides the state's final negotiated performance goals for each of the above performance measures, for PY 2009 will continue for WIA title IB and for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of PY 2009. PY 2010 Goals will be negotiated with DOL at a later date.

Table 12: Final Negotiated State Levels for Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth Title I-B and ARRA Performance for PY 2009

Measure	PY 2009	
Adult Entered Employment Rate	77.0%	
Adult Employment Retention Rate	84.0%	
Adult Average Earnings	\$11,300	
Dislocated Worker Entered Employment Rate	85%	
Dislocated Worker Employment Retention Rate	91%	
Dislocated Worker Average Earnings	\$15,400	
Youth Attainment of Degree or Certificate	45.0%	
Youth Placement in Employment or Education (PEER)	56.0%	
Youth Literacy and Numeracy Gain (LNG)	33.0%	

Illinois will also use the work readiness attainment rate and the summer employment completion rate for youth served with WIA Recovery Act Resources.

Work Readiness Attainment Rate (WRAR): Of those youth participants served with any Recovery Act funds during the period May 1 through September 30 2009: the count of those that receive Summer Employment Opportunities and had a Work Readiness Goal attained.

Summer Employment Completion Rate (SECR): Of those Youth participants served with a Recovery Act funds during the period May 1 through September 30, 2009: the count of those that successfully completed their summer employment program.

How the State Worked with Local Boards to Determine the Levels. The State consulted with the local workforce investment areas (LWIAs) to help determine the level of each of these performance goals. Input was obtained from each LWIA as part of the overall consultation process for the development of the adult, dislocated worker and youth plan.

First, state and local baseline performance information was produced and provided to each LWIA. This information was produced from historical performance information for WIA programs. This information was made available to each LWIA for its use in estimating its potential performance under the current WIA performance measures.

Second, a planning worksheet was developed for each measure. The worksheets disaggregate each measure into its component parts, so that they can be expressed in terms of the number of WIA Title I-B registrants who comprise the numerator and denominator. This was done to allow the state to sum up the local results and derive an overall planned performance level for Illinois. Finally, this was done to make explicit the definitions of each measure, so that each LWIA would base its planned levels on a shared understanding of the measure definitions. These worksheets were transmitted to the LWIAs for their use in arriving at a planning estimate. The state also provided links to state and local labor market information to assist in calculating performance goals.

The LWIAs submitted their completed worksheets to the state, which used them as input to arrive at a statewide goal for each measure. The negotiation process was completed for the prior two-year plan and the goals established for WIA title IB will continue for PY 2009.

Illinois believes the current performance measures do not support the present economic environment. The employment retention and average earnings measures were predicated on an economic situation or forecast that no longer exists.

Continuous Improvement in State Performance: Illinois remains committed to continuous improvement of its performance within an overall framework that recognizes the importance of setting realistic and attainable goals that enable service to a broader range of individuals and to customers with barriers to employment. The State also takes into consideration the economic setting in which the programs operate.

Optimal Return on Investment of Federal Funds: The greatest return on investment comes from focusing training services on the hardest to serve customers. For youth, this means mostly the out-of-school population and those in-school youth at risk of dropping out. For adults, it means those with limited work histories, a history of welfare dependency, or other serious skill deficiencies. For dislocated workers, it means those with pre-dislocation wages that are high relative to their skill levels. Illinois encourages its local programs to serve these target populations.

Wagner-Peyser Performance Goals:

Labor Exchange Performance Goals for PY 2009

The Illinois Department of Employment Security intends to continue its PY 2008 performance goals into PY 2009 as follows:

Entered Employment Rate (EER): 66.8%

Employment Retention Rate (ERR): 82.8%

Average Earnings: \$14,150

In establishing these goals, IDES reviewed quarterly performance data , unemployment rates and other economic factors, budget projections, and changes in operational procedures. However, as stated earlier, the current performance goals do not support the present economic environment. The Labor Exchange entered employment and employment retention goals were based on economic factors that changed dramatically. The Labor Exchange Program is committed to continuous improvement in implementing the Wagner-Peyser Act and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of PY 2009.

Attachment G

State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

WIA

Exemption from Youth Program Element Competitive Procurement

The state is requesting a waiver of the requirement for LWIAs to competitively procure youth services. This waiver request is an extension of our existing waiver permitting LWIAs to use the Individual Training Account system for procuring training for out-of-school youth. In addition to the use of ITAs for training, most LWIAs can readily use existing case management staff to provide most of the ten youth service elements directly, rather than through service providers. The existing requirements create another layer of staff that is often not needed.

Waiver: The state requests exemption from the requirement for LWIAs to competitively procure youth services. Specifically, the state requests exemption from the requirements for competitive selection of youth providers found in WIA Section 123. This provision would remain in effect for local areas that chose (or were required by the state) to continue competitive procurement of youth services via contractors. Local areas that requested the waiver, and were approved by the state would be exempted from competitive procurement requirements for selected youth program elements, and could provide these elements via grant recipient staff.

Objective: The requested waiver is intended to support the following strategic objectives for Illinois' workforce system:

- Focus WIA training investments on responding to the critical needs of the labor market, including flexible strategies for training for high-paying jobs in skill shortage areas. Position WIA Title I as primarily a targeted training program.

Principles: The requested waiver is consistent with the national strategic direction as described in TEGL 13-06, and in particular supports the following strategic priorities:

- Build a demand-driven system within a regional economic development context;
- Implement system reform, with streamlined governance and alignment of economic and workforce development regions;
- Enhance an integrated service delivery system that focuses on services rather than programs; and
- Advance a vision for serving youth most in need.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Exemption from Youth Program Element Competitive Procurement

Barriers: LWIBs are required to make available each of the ten youth program elements listed in WIA Section 129(c)(2). These youth program elements must be provided via eligible providers of youth activities identified by awarding grants or contracts on a competitive basis (Section 123). The state is aware that under the WIA implementing rule, this competitive procurement requirement does not apply to the design framework of local youth programs when the grant recipient/fiscal agent is the provider of the design framework activity. Therefore, grant recipient staff may provide such as services for intake, objective assessment and the development of the individual service strategy. In addition, grant recipients may directly provide work experience, and private sector unsubsidized employment opportunities to be excluded from the competitive process.

However, these provisions still leave several key youth program elements that could be effectively delivered by grant recipient staff. In addition, in some LWIAs there are so few available providers in the community that competitive procurement is not an efficient mechanism for managing these services. These elements include 1) Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies; 2) Alternative secondary school offerings; 3) Leadership development opportunities; 4) Supportive services; 5) Adult mentoring; 6) Follow-up services; and 7) Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling. Requiring that these elements be provided via competitively procured grants or contracts creates what is often an unnecessary additional layer of program management, which results in fewer youth being served.

**Statutory /
Regulatory
Citation to be
Waived:**

WIA Section 123

**Expected
Benefits:**

The waiver will allow LWIBs to use their own grant recipient staff to provide many of the youth program elements listed in WIA Section 129(c)(2). This will enable WIA funds to be used more efficiently in those LWIAs where there are limited numbers of providers or where the size of the program is small enough that competitive procurement of these elements is not an efficient solution to program management. This would be expected to lead to increases in the numbers of youth served in these areas, or increases in the investments in occupational skills training, since more resources will be available for this purpose.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests
Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Exemption from Youth Program Element Competitive Procurement

On-site Monitoring: If this waiver is granted, the state will accept requests from LWIBs to forego competitive procurement of one or more youth program elements. Such requests will provide a description of the alternative service delivery arrangements, a justification as to why these arrangements will enable improved service to customers, and a description of how these benefits will be measured on an ongoing basis, including how the waiver will enable increased investments in training. In particular, the state will review requests to ensure that the overall efficiency of program operation is being advanced by the waiver request, and will not approve requests where cost savings are not apparent.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Extension of Incumbent Worker Training to Local Areas

As the workforce investment system in Illinois, moves forward in delivering the services that assist in the preservation and creation of jobs toward the nation's economic recovery, there is an increased need to leverage resources that support our efforts. Currently, Illinois has a waiver that allows Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) to use up to 10 percent of the funds allocated to them in the same manner and fashion as statewide activity funds are used. Specifically, we are seeking a waiver to increase the approved 10 percent to 25 percent. This increase will enable LWIBs to develop a full continuum of training services to bolster layoff aversion. In addition, the increase in the funds available to support activities such as incumbent worker training, would provide the state and local areas with the flexibility to specifically target and allocate available funds to support the needs of adults and dislocated workers.

Waiver: Allow local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) to use up to 25 percent of the funds allocated to them under WIA Sections 127, 128, 132, and 133 of WIA in the same manner and fashion as statewide activity funds are now used under WIA Section 134(a)(3)(iv)(I), which allows statewide reserve funds to be used for the “implementation of innovative incumbent worker training programs, which may include the establishment and implementation of an employer loan program to assist in skills upgrading”.

The state recognizes that funds expended for this purpose by LWIBs must continue to be tracked by funding stream and that local areas will continue to be required to meet performance goals for the adult and dislocated worker programs. No separate amount of these funds will be set aside for administration of such activities. Local areas that choose to conduct these activities will continue to work under the current 10 percent limit on local area administration.

**Statutory /
Regulatory
Citation to be
Waived:** WIA Section 128 (a)
WIA Section 133 (a) (1)
WIA Section 134 (a)(3)(A)
WIA Implementing Rule 20 CFR Part 667.140
Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, Division G, Department of
Labor, Training and Employment Services, (1).

Barriers: There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the federal waiver or needed state policy.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Extension of Incumbent Worker Training to Local Areas

Objective: Granting LWIBs authority to increase the portion of their allocated funds for incumbent worker training programs will allow them to develop a full continuum of training services that address the needs of the existing workforce, the unemployed, underemployed, and new entrants to the labor force.

Expected Benefits: It is strongly felt that the ability to offer training programs at the local level that are allowed at the state level such as incumbent worker training will enable LWIBs to develop a full continuum of training services to bolster layoff aversion. In addition, the increase in the funds available to support activities such as incumbent worker training, would provide the state and local areas with the flexibility to specifically target and allocate available funds to support the needs of adults and dislocated workers.

On-site Monitoring: This request was developed because of concerns expressed by local areas, and from the need to immediately respond to the current economic climate. The need for an increase in the ability to transfer funds given extra resources are needed to serve are dislocated workers was discussed extensively with the LWIAs. In addition, the public was provided an opportunity to comment on the details within this waiver.

Once approved, the state will incorporate this waiver into current monitoring procedures in the Automation of Compliance Monitoring Events system.

Attachment G

State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Sequence of Services (core, intensive, training) Exemption

The state is requesting a waiver of the requirement for delivering services to adults and dislocated workers in a prescribed sequence (core, intensive, and training) with services at one level being a prerequisite to receiving services at the next level. This waiver request is to allow LWIAs to offer services in any order or combination, as required by the individual job-seeker and local labor market conditions. The existing system has often resulted in a series of “hoops” a customer must jump through to obtain access to the services they need to obtain training and employment.

Waiver: The State is requesting an exemption from the mandated sequence of services (core, intensive, training) to allow the LWIAs the flexibility to provide services based on the individual customer's needs, especially if their needs dictate bypassing the provision of one or more of the three levels of services. Additionally, this exemption would allow the LWIAs the flexibility to match the services provided based on the local labor market conditions.

**Statutory /
Regulatory
Citation to be
Waived:** Sequence of Services: Section 663.160,165, 240, 250, 310 (a)

Barriers: There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the federal waiver or needed state policy. However, LWIBs would be required to review their entire delivery system and develop and implement local policies that would allow for this added flexibility. To ensure a consistency in determining the order and combination of an individual customer's service plan, local policy will need to outline key factors to review and focus on with regard to the customer's needs. LWIA staff will require training to ensure they understand the overlying principle of setting a plan in place for each customer that maximizes the connection between their needs and the services required to reach reemployment. Local market needs must be taken into consideration in this evaluation process to ensure customers have available opportunities upon completion of their plan.

The State will need to evaluate each local set of policies on an individual basis as each area will have their own unique local market needs and may have specific customer needs or characteristics unique to their area (i.e. a specific population or worker skill set).

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Sequence of Services (core, intensive, training) Exemption

Objective: The requested waiver is intended to allow the provision of services in any order or combination as necessary for the individual customer and local market.

- The intention is not to eliminate any of the three levels of service, rather allow for a more focused sequencing of those services based on need.
- The intention is to provide greater flexibility for the LWIAs to allow for maximum efficiency in serving the customer.
- The intention is to remove artificial barriers to the provision of training, to improve outcomes and facilitate full utilization of increased local funding offered through the stimulus package.

Expected Benefits: The waiver will allow LWIBs to develop local policies that will focus on addressing a customer's needs in achieving reemployment at a wage and skill level consistent with their needs and abilities. It will allow for placing them on a path that meets the needs of the local market. Employers will receive more qualified customers at a time when they are most in need.

Allowing the flexibility necessary to achieve the objectives will reduce or eliminate some of the currently required "step-by-step" activities common with a more rigid application of the sequence of services, which in some cases leads to confusion and frustration (and early exits) of some customers. Flexibility and its ultimate reduction of unnecessary services will result in more efficient utilization of WIA funds and will improve the ability of the State and LWIAs to reach applicable spending targets for the stimulus funds.

Attachment G

State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Sequence of Services (core, intensive, training) Exemption

On-site Monitoring:

If this waiver is granted, the State will accept LWIB requests for similar waivers in their LWIA, review them to ensure they meet the necessary design criteria set forth by the State, and periodically review the LWIAs activities towards supporting their accepted waiver. Waiver requests might include such items as a description of how their request will provide improved service and benefits to the customer, how those benefits will be measured, and how the waiver will enable increased investments in training that will ultimately lead to an increase in reemployment to customers.

The State's ongoing monitoring will ensure the resulting effects of the waiver request include an overall efficiency of program operation and apparent cost savings. In addition the public was provided an opportunity to comment on the details within this waiver.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Employer Reimbursement for On-The-Job Training

The state is requesting a waiver of the employer reimbursement for on-the-job training in WIA Section 101 (31) (B). Specifically, the state is seeking the flexibility to provide employer reimbursement of up-to 100 percent of the wage rate of participants to compensate for the employer's extraordinary costs in placing adults and dislocated workers that have been impacted by the economic downturn.

Waiver: Allow the flexibility to provide employer reimbursement of up to 100 percent of the wage rate of participants to compensate for the employer's extraordinary costs in placing adults and dislocated workers that have been impacted by the economic downturn.

Statutory / Regulatory Citation to be Waived: WIA Section 101(31)(B)

Barriers: There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the federal waiver or needed state policy.

Objective:

- To increase the responsiveness of the LWIAs in dealing with the multitude of worker dislocations occurring during this economic downturn.
- To improve the ability of the LWIAs to respond to changes in the local labor market and better position them to move dislocated workers into jobs created through the economic stimulus package.
- To increase local control for service delivery as economic recovery efforts move forward, while providing for appropriate safeguards against abuse.

Expected Benefits: All Adults and Dislocated Workers, as well as business customers, will benefit from the waiver. Granting the LWIAs the ability to allow employer reimbursement of up to 100% of the wage rate of participants to compensate for employer's costs, increases the pool of employers that will utilize OJT services and provides additional employment opportunities for adults and dislocated workers

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Employer Reimbursement for On-The-Job Training

**On-site
Monitoring:**

This request was developed as a result of concerns expressed by local areas, and from the need to immediately respond to the current economic climate. The need for an increase in the reimbursement of the wage rate will attract a broader pool of employers to employ adults and dislocated workers. This was discussed extensively with the LWIAs. In addition the public was provided an opportunity to comment on the details within this waiver. The State will develop criteria for determining reimbursement rates and will continue to leverage employer resources to jointly meet workforce needs.

Once approved, the state will incorporate this waiver into current monitoring procedures in the Automation of Compliance Monitoring Events system. In addition, the state will increase its oversight of these contracts in LWIAs opting for the waiver, and will provide technical assistance to these LWIAs on how to ensure that resulting contracts are acceptable and employer performance of the OJT contracts is closely monitored.

Attachment G

State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Exemption from Individual Training Accounts - Class Sized Training

The state is requesting a waiver of the requirement to use Individual Training Accounts as the primary means of purchasing occupational training services with WIA allocated formula dollars (not Recovery Act funds) for adults and dislocated workers. This waiver would facilitate the training of multiple individuals in high demand occupations, while increasing training capacity. Customer choice would not be limited. Allowing regular formula dollars to be used in this manner, expands the pool of resources available to local areas in ensuring training capacity can be quickly ramped up.

Waiver: The state requests exemption from the requirement to use ITAs as the primary vehicle for delivery of training services for adults and dislocated workers. Specifically, the state requests exemption from the requirements for ITA usage found in WIA Section 134 (d)(4)(G)(i). This exemption would be extended to all LWIBs via issuance of a policy letter by the state. The use of this waiver would be targeted at training contracts which are in response to critical skill shortages identified via the regional skill shortage planning process.

Statutory / WIA Section 134 (d)(4)(G)(i)
Regulatory WIA Implementing Rule 20 CFR Part 663.400
Citation to be WIA Implementing Rule 20 CFR Part 663.430
Waived:

Barriers: There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the federal waiver or needed state policy.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Exemption from Individual Training Accounts - Class Sized Training

Objective: The requested waiver is consistent with the national strategic direction as described in TEGL 14-08. In addition, the requested waiver is consistent with the national strategic direction as described in TEGL 13-06, and in particular supports the following strategic priorities:

- Support an increase in education, training enrollments, and capacity in a time when many states and educational institutions are experiencing budget shortfalls;
- Target services to meet the changing needs of workers and employers;
- Build a demand-driven system within a regional economic development context;
- Implement system reform, with streamlined governance and alignment of economic and workforce development regions;
- Strengthen partnerships with community and faith-based organizations;
- Increase the use of flexibility provisions in WIA to design innovative programs that fuel economic competitiveness and create employment opportunities for career seeker customers; and
- Utilize an integrated and enhanced performance accountability system.

Expected Benefits: The waiver will allow LWIBs to work with employers and training providers to develop class size contracts with WIA funds. This will enable WIA funds to be used to address critical capacity problems by providing WIA seed funds for training program development. It will also encourage training providers to invest in increased capacity because they will be more likely to do so if there is a prospect of a longer term relationship with the LWIB. Finally, the waiver will enable LWIBs to respond directly to employer requests for significant numbers of persons trained in a particular occupation, because they will be able to enter into a direct class-size contract with one or more training providers to conduct the training.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Exemption from Individual Training Accounts - Class Sized Training

On-site Monitoring: This request was developed because of concerns expressed by local areas, and from the need to immediately respond to the current economic climate. An extensive discussion occurred with the LWIAs.

The state will carefully monitor the implementation of this waiver at the local level, including collection of the following elements:

- The number of LWIBs who develop direct training contracts;
- The number of contracts for development on new training capacity;
- The industries and occupations for which such contracts are developed; and
- The number of persons trained via such contracts.

In addition the public was provided an opportunity to comment on the details within this waiver.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Exemption from sanctions imposed on the state based on WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Measures

The state is requesting a one year grace period from performance measure outcomes for PY 2009. Given the current economic climate, Illinois believes the current performance measures do not align with the implementation and intent of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Shifts in workforce program design are needed to ensure the greatest numbers of those in need are served. With these approaches performance measures should support jobs created or retained and emphasize individuals being served through training. The request for a grace period is not new; this approach was used during the move from the Job Training Partnership Act to the Workforce Investment Act. Implementation of Recovery Act funds, although time limited is of similar magnitude given the urgency and expediency in which services must be delivered.

Waiver:	The State will not be held accountable for WIA performance for adult, dislocated worker or youth measures for PY 2009.
Statutory / Regulatory Citation to be Waived:	Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Section 136 (b) and (c) WIA Regulations 20 CFR 666.100, .110, .120, and .130 TEGL No. 17-05 (February 17, 2006) TEGL No. 17-05, Change 1 (August 13, 2007)
Barriers:	There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the federal waiver or needed state policy.
Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain the states focus on high-wage/high-growth occupations and placements.• Provide greater access to short and long term training.• Match the performance accountability system with the climate of the current economy.
Expected Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removes barriers at the local level to allow LWIAs to focus on the rapid reemployment of individuals into jobs that are expected to be created by the stimulus funds.• Provides greater opportunity to employ and train the neediest individuals in sectors that will lead to high wage and high growth occupations, moving them on a pathway from poverty.• Focuses on entering more dislocated workers into employment that matches the intent of the stimulus funding.• Creates a greater opportunity to focus on long-term training to ensure adults and dislocated workers are able to up-skill or re-skill their abilities to move into positions of the future economy.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Exemption from sanctions imposed on the state based on WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Measures

**On-site
Monitoring:**

This request was developed because of concerns expressed by local areas, and from the need to immediately respond to the current economic climate. An extensive discussion occurred with the LWIAs. In addition the public was provided an opportunity to comment on the details within this waiver. The State will develop criteria for placement into these projects, define the training criteria and will continue to leverage employer resources to meet workforce needs.

Once approved, the state will incorporate this waiver into current monitoring procedures in the Automation of Compliance Monitoring Events system. In addition, the state will increase its oversight of these contracts in LWIAs opting for the waiver, and will provide technical assistance to these LWIAs on how to ensure that resulting contracts are acceptable and performance of the placements is closely monitored.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Employment Recovery Project

As a strategy to rapidly and effectively place adults and dislocated workers into employment opportunities, the state is seeking permission to allow adults and dislocated workers to participate in public sector employment while attending training in a key industry that will lead to a higher skilled and higher paying job. The combined approach of work and training aligns with the intent of the Recovery Act that stresses quick entry of unemployed adults and dislocated workers into employment while at the same time providing training opportunities that up-skill or re-skill workers. Specifically, the state is requesting a waiver from the prohibition to use funds for public service employment in WIA Section 195 (10).

Waiver:	Waive the prohibition to use funds for public service employment.
Statutory / Regulatory Citation to be Waived:	WIA Section 195(10) 20CFR667.264(2)
Barriers:	There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the federal waiver or needed state policy.
Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the responsiveness of the LWIAs in dealing with the multitude of worker dislocations occurring during this economic downturn.• Provide additional resources in the form of labor to government entities implementing "shovel ready" projects.• Offers temporary employment and income support for adults and dislocated workers while enrolled in training.
Expected Benefits:	Adults and Dislocated Workers, participating in the Employment Recovery Project will have access to temporary income that will provide means of support while participating in a training program. In addition, providing access to public sector type projects such as the Employment Recovery Project serves a dual purpose, in that it provides a means to immediate reemployment in the workforce as well as facilitates increased training of individuals for demand occupations.

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State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Employment Recovery Project

On-site Monitoring: This request was developed because of concerns expressed by local areas, and from the need to immediately respond to the current economic climate. An extensive discussion occurred with the LWIAs. In addition the public was provided an opportunity to comment on the details within this waiver. The State will develop criteria for placement into these projects, define the training criteria and will continue to leverage employer resources to meet workforce needs.

The State of Illinois and the State AFL-CIO encourages local workforce areas and local labor council to collaborate on implementing various elements of the Recovery Act. This collaboration should include discussions with local labor organizations regarding the use of Public Service Employment as a means for providing training opportunities. Illinois also encourages local workforce areas to be mindful of the regional economic environment and an organization's history of dislocations when considering the placement of WIA customers in PSE positions and take affirmative action to reach out to labor organizations that represent employees in bargaining units in which PSE are placed.

Once approved, the state will incorporate this waiver into current monitoring procedures in the Automation of Compliance Monitoring Events system. In addition, the state will increase its oversight of these contracts in LWIAs opting for the waiver, and will provide technical assistance to these LWIAs on how to ensure that resulting contracts are acceptable and performance of the placements is closely monitored.

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Recovery Act

Procurement Requirements for Youth Summer Employment Providers

Given the short timeframe for 2009 summer youth implementation, Illinois has encouraged local areas to begin planning for summer employment opportunities immediately and to begin the procurement process for service providers to carry out their summer employment programs. In order to provide the local areas with the opportunity for rapid implementation of the 2009 summer employment program utilizing Recovery Act funding, we are requesting a waiver to expand existing competitively procured contracts by a certain percentage and conduct an expedited, limited competition to select service providers from among those with proven records of success in providing youth services. This limited competition would be applicable to only those service providers with proven records of success in providing summer youth services.

Waiver: Expand existing competitively procured contracts by a certain percentage and conduct an expedited, limited competition to select service providers from among those with proven records of success in providing youth services.

**Statutory /
Regulatory
Citation to be
Waived:** WIA Section 123

Barriers: There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the federal waiver or needed state policy.

Objective: Granting the local areas with the authority to expand their existing competitively procured contracts and conduct an expedited and limited competition among select service providers would allow them to begin implementing an effective summer youth employment program for 2009. It strengthens the local area's ability to meet the goal of utilizing as much of their allocated Recovery Act funds as possible to operate an expanded summer youth employment opportunity during the summer of 2009. Procuring contracts with those service providers with a proven record ensures these summer employment opportunities and work experiences are of high quality.

**Expected
Benefits:** The Youth customers who will participate in the 2009 summer employment opportunities will benefit from this waiver by receiving opportunities and work experience that are of high quality. Also, they will be able to receive these services beginning as soon as possible, rather than have to wait for the normal procurement process to be completed. The local areas will benefit by being allowed the opportunity to begin spending the Recovery Act funds much sooner, thus having the ability to spend a higher majority of those funds during the summer of 2009.

Attachment G

State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Procurement Requirements for Youth Summer Employment Providers

On-site Monitoring: If this waiver is granted, the State will accept LWIB requests to procure contracts with service providers utilizing an expedited process for those providers with a proven record of successful operation of youth employment programs. The State will also ensure that all new service providers accepted meet the goal of providing summer employment opportunities and work experiences that are of high quality.

The State's ongoing monitoring will ensure the resulting effects of the waiver request include an overall efficiency of program operation, as well as opportunities for the youth that are of high quality. Once approved, the state will incorporate this waiver into current monitoring procedures in the Automation of Compliance Monitoring Events system. In addition, the state will increase its oversight of these contracts in LWIAs opting for the waiver, and will provide technical assistance to these LWIAs on how to ensure that resulting contracts are acceptable and performance of the placements is closely monitored.

Attachment G

State of Illinois Waiver Requests

Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Waiver of Performance Measures for Youth who Participate in Work Experience Only Beyond the Summer Months along with the same program design flexibility allowed during summer youth months

Waiver:	Allow the state to use only the work readiness indicator for applicable youth who are out-of-school ages 18 to 24 served with Recovery Act funds beyond the summer months, who participate in work experience only. State also requests the same program design flexibility granted to the summer youth program for youth who participate in work experience only, beyond the summer months.
Statutory / Regulatory Citation to be Waived:	WIA Section 136
Barriers:	There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the federal waiver or needed state policy.
Objective:	Allowing the State to waive the common youth performance measures for out-of-school youth ages 18-24 served with Recovery Act funds beyond the summer months (from October 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010) who participate in work experience only; and use the work readiness indicator as the only indicator for performance for these youth. Also, allow the same program design flexibility stated in TEGL 14-08 for these youth during the waiver period.
Expected Benefits:	<p>Will allow the state the flexibility to better serve vulnerable youth who will benefit mainly from work experience, without facing sanctions that may be imposed on negative outcomes for the youth common measures.</p> <p>Will allow LWIAs to consider program design models that are focused on recruitment of and providing employment for 18 to 24 year olds whose best interest is to be immediately placed in (gainful) work experience.</p> <p>Will allow the LWIAs to transition these youth into the WIA adult program or for further education and training activities that are directly linked to high wage, high demand occupations. LWIAs will have the time and flexibility to work with these youth on an individual basis to ensure a smooth transition into other programs including, but not limited to, permanent employment and/or training.</p>

Attachment G
State of Illinois Waiver Requests
Laying the Foundation for a Stronger Workforce System

Waiver of Performance Measures for Youth who Participate in Work Experience Only Beyond the Summer Months along with the same program design flexibility allowed during summer youth months

On-site Monitoring: The development of this waiver was discussed with the LWIAs and other public venues and will be submitted in our State Plan where a more formal public comment period will be provided.

If approved, the state will incorporate this waiver into current monitoring procedures in the Automation of Compliance Monitoring Events system.

ATTACHMENT H

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DESIGNEES AND PLAN SIGNATURES

Name of WIA Title I Grant Recipient Agency: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Address: 620 E. Adams Street
5th Floor
Springfield, IL 62701

Telephone Number: (217) 558-6423

Facsimile Number: (217) 558-2444

E-mail Address: michael.baker@illinois.gov

Name of State WIA Title I Administrative Agency (if different from the Grant Recipient):
N/A

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Facsimile Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Name of WIA Title I Signatory Official: Mr. Warren Ribley, Director

Address: 620 E. Adams Street
6th Floor
Springfield, IL 62701

Telephone Number: (217) 782-3233

Facsimile Number: (217) 524-0864

E-mail Address: warren.ripley@illinois.gov

Name of WIA Title I Liaison: Ms. Therese McMahon

Address: James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, Ste. 3-400
Chicago, IL 60601

Telephone Number: (312) 814-6028

Facsimile Number: (312) 814-0999

E-mail Address: therese.mcmahon@illinois.gov

Name of Wagner-Peyser Act Grant Recipient/State Employment Security Agency:

Illinois Department of Employment Security

Address: 33 South State Street

Chicago, IL 60603

Telephone Number: (312) 793-9274

Facsimile Number: (312) 793-9834

E-mail Address: maureen.odonnell@illinois.gov

Name and title of State Employment Security Administrator (Signatory Official):

Ms. Maureen T. O'Donnell, Director

Address: 33 South State Street

Chicago, IL 60603

Telephone Number: (312) 793-9274

Facsimile Number: (312) 793-9834

E-mail Address: maureen.odonnell@illinois.gov

As the Governor, I certify that for the State/Commonwealth of Illinois, the agencies and officials designated above have been duly designated to represent the State/Commonwealth in the capacities indicated for the Workforce Investment Act, Title I, and Wagner-Peyser Act grant programs. Subsequent changes in the designation of officials will be provided to the U.S. Department of Labor as such changes occur.

I further certify that we will operate our Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs in accordance with this Plan and the assurances herein.

Typed Name of Governor Pat Quinn

Signature of Governor



Date 6-26-09

Public Comment and Responses

DCEO received input from the following organizations during the public comment period: AFSCME, Chicago Jobs Council, and the Shriver Center. Women Employed submitted material following the close of the public comment period. The full text of the comments received is included as attachments. The following are excerpts of the key points of public comment and responses.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

1. In order to ensure compliance with WIA, regulations implementing both Summer Youth Public Service Employment (PSE) programs and adult worker PSE programs (should a waiver from the U.S. Department of Labor be granted) must include the requirement that employers consult in advance with labor organizations representing its employees.

Response:

The State Plan Modification includes several passages that encourage Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) and local labor councils to collaborate on implementing various elements of the Recovery Act. This collaboration should include discussions with local labor organizations regarding the use of Public Service Employment as a means for providing training opportunities. Illinois also encourages local workforce areas to be mindful of the regional economic environment and an organization's history of dislocations when considering the placement of WIA customers in PSE positions and take affirmative action to reach out to labor organizations that represent employees in bargaining units in which PSE are placed.

Chicago Jobs Council

1. The need for state-level investment to support the delivery of services and the kind of collaboration that we think is necessary to reach the most disadvantaged populations. We noticed that many of the state strategies outlined in the plan consist of encouragement to and communication with the local areas about the development of strategies to reach individual job seekers. We recommend below that the state use its discretionary resources to incent the kind of service delivery strategies and collaboration that are needed to reach low-income individuals. Using the state's resources to incent and support local collaboration that includes community-based partners will also support the effective expansion of the bridge strategies that the state plans to focus on.

Response:

Illinois generally concurs with Chicago Jobs Council (CJC) that state resources should be used to incent desired activity, including the targeting of resources at specific activities and the need to strengthen collaboration between organizations that impact workforce development. Using WIA Policy Letters and local planning guidance, DCEO has directed local areas to establish policies to allow for needs related payments and other supportive services when appropriate to those customers that are deemed through local policy to be in need of those types of services in order to complete training .

Public Comment and Responses

The State Plan modification specifically refers to priority of service for low-income and TANF recipients that may not have access to services from other sources. In addition, Governor's Policy Letter 99-01 mandates that 51 percent of local formula funding must be targeted for low-income customers. This policy letter also covers Recovery Act funding. The modification also specifically encourages collaboration with community based organization and potential expansion of their programs.

State grants will fund training for new and incumbent workers including a major focus on low-skill and low-wage workers through bridge programs. The State has, and will continue to provide accelerated support for Social Enterprise OJT / transitional employment programs. DCEO has used its policy-making authority as a strategy to encourage the use of bridge programs by modifying minimum training expenditure policy to allow bridge program expenditures to count toward meeting expenditure requirements for training. The evaluation tool used in reviewing applications for state funded Grant Opportunities provides extra weighting for proposed projects targeting customers with barriers to employment or evidence of established relationships between community based organizations and local workforce areas. The State Plan modification specifically promotes partnerships between education institutions, extension offices and non-profit organizations.

The State enthusiastically supports the concept of strengthening partnerships among and between state and local agencies. Through the Recovery Act Regional Roundtables and a follow-up Technical Assistance Conference for local area staff, the State invested significant time, effort and resources to provide information to key individuals in every region of the state. DCEO and the Illinois Workforce Partnership collaborated on these meetings to reach leaders in the private sector, education, community based organizations and appointed and elected leaders to facilitate linkages between their respective organizations. Local areas were encouraged to enter an ongoing dialogue with their community colleges as well as local labor councils to develop class-size and pre-apprenticeship focused training opportunities that increase the number of customers and types of customers served.

Illinois has also cultivated non-traditional partners such as public libraries, community-based organizations and other local venues through the Illinois workNetTM web portal.

The State appreciates CJC's acknowledgement of our support of both lateral cross-system collaboration and state-local collaboration. However, setting a goal for the number of new local partnerships, as CJC suggests, may not have the intended effect to improve service delivery. We believe it is better to let partnerships develop where and when they add tangible value to service delivery, rather than set an arbitrary quota where creating partnerships would add unneeded bureaucratic effort to meet this new requirement.

2. Opportunity to develop specific strategies to reach at-risk youth. We noted a couple of instances where guidance from DOL requested specific strategies related to at-risk youth, but none were outlined. Because at-risk youth face unique challenges to labor market participation and success even when the economy is strong, we believe that at-risk youth are more vulnerable in this recession. The transitional jobs and pre-apprenticeship strategies pointed to by DCEO for all youth, are specific strategies that we recommend for at-risk youth, but must be tailored for that population.

Public Comment and Responses

Response:

The State is continually looking for effective strategies to provide services to at-risk youth and welcomes input from our partners and other interested parties. We encourage local areas to work with at-risk youth and to try innovative approaches to service delivery for this population. Illinois has set aside a significant percentage of Recovery Act WIA funding for innovative projects targeted at youth, including at-risk youth.

State funded projects are intended to incent innovative practices across a variety of key economic sectors, such as healthcare, manufacturing, transportation/distribution, information technology, agriculture and green activities. There will be opportunities for activities in each of these sectors to impact at-risk and out of school youth, and job seekers of all wage and skill levels. The local areas were encouraged to consider how at-risk customers with barriers to employment, both adult and youth, could be better served with Recovery Act funding. Statewide grant opportunities will be made available that will provide an opportunity for innovative approaches to address these issues. One example is the Community Gardens initiative, which provides state funding to support summer employment opportunities for youth and is a deliberate attempt to reach at risk youth with Recovery Act funding.

In addition to these types of projects, Illinois has taken other tangible steps to help at risk youth. Illinois workNet provides all youth with access to updated career awareness information, job readiness training as well as educational material intended to help them develop into workforce-ready adults. DCEO has adjusted state policy to encourage the use of bridge programs by allowing for such costs to count toward the forty percent minimum training expenditure requirement.

Shriver Center

1. Address the needs of all low-income people regardless of skill level, work history or other barriers to employment.

Response:

The State of Illinois is committed to providing appropriate services for individuals eligible for WIA and Wagner-Peyser funded activities. It is our belief that individuals willing to commit to developing the skills necessary to enter or reenter the workforce should be met by a system ready to provide a full range of services. These services range from soft-skill work readiness services, to occupation-specific skill training and supportive services so that individuals can start on the path to reach their fullest potential.

DCEO is collaborating with the Illinois Community College Board and the adult education community to establish bridge programs that will help low income, low skill persons. DCEO provided significant match funding for the Shifting Gears initiative and changed state policy to allow bridge program costs to count toward the forty percent minimum training requirement and to require local areas to

Public Comment and Responses

establish policy on needs related payments and other supportive services intended to help low income persons.

DCEO is also looking to the Job Training and Economic Development (JTED) program to provide insight on successful programs and providers that could be adapted for WIA customers. There are several very successful JTED providers that could potentially provide best practice program models for WIA. Some of these were highlighted at a Recovery Act technical assistance event for local areas. The workforce development needs of low-income individuals are as varied as the individuals themselves and the state and local workforce systems are committed to helping this population.

2. Work toward greater representation of women and people of color in the construction industry.

Response:

The Illinois workforce development system is committed to equal opportunity for all. DCEO is working, and will continue to work with organizations such as: the Urban League and Chicago Women in Trades to ensure training opportunities targeted at women and people of color.

DCEO has collaborated with the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Home Weatherization program, community colleges, the Illinois Workforce Partnership Labor Task Force, and the State AFL-CIO to encourage local labor councils and local workforce areas to find ways to develop ongoing partnerships for placing WIA customers in construction trade training. We also facilitated having DOL Region V staff provide information on innovative ways to use WIA funding to support registered apprenticeships.

The State strongly encourages the local areas to consider collaboration with non-traditional partners or programs with a history of proven effectiveness. This will allow regions to leverage established expertise and non-WIA funding to align resources for greater overall efficiency and effectiveness in serving more customers or providing enhanced services to at risk or other targeted populations.

Although not funded by WIA or Wagner-Peyser, the DCEO Employment Opportunities Grant Program (EOGP) works to expand the number of individuals in historically underrepresented populations who enter and complete building trades apprenticeship programs and achieve journey-level status within building trades unions. Information on this program was provided to local areas as a potential resource for assisting qualified customers.

Public Comment and Responses

Women Employed

We strongly support the integration of bridge programming and career pathways throughout this plan and the references to work with community colleges and community-based organizations to serve the needs of targeted populations. However, we believe that the plan should be more specific about how this work will be done, providing a more coherent blueprint for the state's recovery efforts related to key industries.

Response:

We appreciate Women Employed's support for the integration of bridge programs and career pathways with our community college partners. We believe that it is better to speak to these efforts in a general fashion in the State Plan so as not stifle local creativity in implementing these efforts. At the local area technical assistance conference DCEO provided several examples of how community based organizations provide training and other services to clients with barriers to employment. The plan modification refers to modeling proven methods for services to at risk populations used in the JTED program. DCEO has also funded such career pathway activity via organizations targeting minorities, such as Instituto del Progreso Latino.

These projects provide viable service delivery models that can potentially be adapted to other targeted populations. Each area will have the latitude to develop diverse program solutions based on the needs and realities of the regional economy, availability of training providers and community based organizations. Illinois will incorporate best practices developed regionally into the statewide program as they emerge.

